

## Language Learning Strategies

**Strategy:** A detailed plan for achieving success in situations such as war, politics, business, sport, etc.; or the skill of planning for such situations.

Rebecca Oxford (2001, p. 362) defines language learning strategies as “specific behaviors or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning”. In other words, language learning strategies refer to the mental or behavioural activities employed by L2 learners that would facilitate L2 learning process. Language learning strategies are “among the main factors that help determine how- and how well-our students learn a second or foreign language” (ibid., p. 359). They constitute the necessary tools that the L2 learner uses for the purpose of achieving competence in the target language. Researchers have categorized language learning strategies in a variety of ways. Oxford’s (1990) strategy classification system has been acknowledged by many scholars as being comprehensive and detailed. She classified learning strategies into:

1- **Cognitive strategies** are the mental strategies that enable learners to manipulate the language material in direct ways, e.g., through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, etc.

## Reading task:

***Before reading a text:*** Examples of strategies: previewing the text for orientation to its content; presetting with questions that need to be answered; calling to mind what one already knows about the topic.

***During reading:*** Examples of strategies: periodically trying to summarize; highlighting important parts of the text; taking notes, etc.

**2- Metacognitive strategies** are the strategies that help learners regulate and manage their own learning; that is, strategies that allow students to plan, control, and evaluate their learning.

***- Metacognition refers to individuals' awareness and management of their learning processes.***

Learners who are equipped with good metacognitive strategies are aware of their learning and they know how and when to employ the most relevant strategies to accomplish a given task; they know how to accomplish a particular task in the most effective way. They plan their learning in advance, monitor their learning during the task performance, and evaluate their learning after task accomplishment.

**3- Compensatory strategies** are the strategies that learners use to make up for insufficient knowledge needed for understanding and producing language (guessing from the context in listening and

reading; using synonyms and “talking around” the missing word to aid speaking and writing; using gestures, etc.)

4- **Affective strategies** are the strategies that learners use to control their emotions and attitudes about learning. Identifying one’s mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself for good performance, and using deep breathing or positive selftalk, have been shown to be significantly related to L2 proficiency.

5- **Social strategies** are the strategies used by learners which facilitate engagement in the target language through interaction with other speakers of L2 (asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner, and exploring cultural and social norms).