

**College of Education for Humanities**

**English Department**



**MA. Studies/ Methodology**

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**Methods of Teaching**

**The Impact of Language Learning Strategies in EFL Teaching**

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## **1. Introduction**

Language learning is a dynamic and multifaceted process that requires effective strategies and meaningful exposure to real-world linguistic contexts. Language learning strategies (LLSs) provide learners with systematic approaches to acquiring, processing, and using language, while authentic materials offer realistic and engaging language input that enhances comprehension and communication skills.

## **2 . Definition of Language Learning Strategies .1**

Language learning strategies are specific techniques or actions used by learners to enhance their understanding, retention, and application of a foreign language (Oxford, 1990). These strategies facilitate autonomous learning and help learners navigate linguistic challenges effectively

## **3 . Types of Language Learning Strategies**

Oxford (1990) categorized LLSs into six main groups:

### **1.Cognitive Strategies**

are learning techniques that help learners strengthen associations between new and known information (Oxford, 1996). These strategies assist in regulating thought processes to achieve goals or solve problems, increasing efficiency and confidence in learning tasks (Cameron & Jago, 2013).

Examples:

- Repetition – Practicing words or sentences multiple times to reinforce memory.
- Translation – Converting words between the target language and the native language to understand meaning.
- Guessing from context – Using surrounding words to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Summarization – Condensing information into key points to improve comprehension.
- Taking notes – Writing down important words, grammar rules, or phrases while learning.

## **2 . Metacognitive Strategies**

involve awareness, analysis, and control of one's cognitive processes, helping learners "think about their thinking" (Teng & Yue, 2022). These strategies assist learners in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. Developing awareness of metacognitive strategies is essential, as they help learners understand tasks, identify useful resources, and set learning goals. For example, a study with 383 grade twelve students found that self-reported metacognitive strategies had indirect effects on language learning outcomes (Saks & Leijen, 2018a).

Examples:

- Setting goals – Defining short-term and long-term language learning objectives.
- Time management – Scheduling regular study sessions for language practice.
- Self-monitoring – Checking one's own progress and identifying areas for improvement.
- Seeking opportunities – Finding ways to practice, such as joining conversation groups or using language apps.

## **3 . Social Strategies**

Social strategies play a crucial role in language learning by facilitating communication and cultural understanding. These strategies include asking for clarification, seeking help, and learning about social and cultural norms. Oxford (1990) identifies three key social strategies: asking questions for clarification or correction, cooperating with others (such as peers or proficient speakers), and empathizing to develop cultural awareness and understanding others' perspectives.

Examples:

- Speaking with native speakers – Engaging in real conversations to practice fluency.

- Joining language groups – Participating in study groups, language exchanges, or online communities.
- Asking for clarification – Seeking explanations when something is unclear.

#### **4 . Affective Strategies**

Affective strategies help learners recognize and manage their emotions related to language learning (Arnold, 1999). Oxford (1990) identifies three main affective strategies: lowering anxiety, encouraging oneself, and assessing emotions. To reduce anxiety, learners can use relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation. Encouraging oneself involves self-motivation, while assessing emotions helps learners reflect on their attitudes and motivations.

Examples:

- Positive self-talk – Encouraging oneself (e.g., “I can do this!”) to build confidence.
- Relaxation techniques – Using deep breathing or meditation to reduce stress before speaking.
- Rewarding progress – Celebrating small achievements to maintain motivation.

#### **5 . Compensatory strategies**

Compensatory strategies help learners overcome limitations in attention, memory, executive function, or other cognitive skills to achieve their learning goals (Kurtz, 2011). In language learning, these strategies are used when learners lack knowledge of an expression or struggle with communication. They assist in both speaking and writing by enabling learners to work around gaps in their knowledge. For speaking, strategies include using synonyms, circumlocution, or gestures to convey meaning. In writing, learners can use synonyms or rephrase ideas to express themselves.

Examples:

- Guessing meanings – Using context clues to understand unfamiliar words.

- Circumlocution – Describing something when the exact word is unknown (e.g., “the thing you use to cut paper” for “scissors”).
- Using gestures – Relying on body language to support communication.

## **6 . Memory strategies**

refer to how learners store information for better memory. Mnemonic strategies help learners store and recall information more effectively by connecting new knowledge to prior knowledge. These strategies enhance memory through techniques such as using keywords, rhyming, body movement (e.g., total physical response), or spatial cues (e.g., the locus techniques).

Examples:

- Association – Connecting new words with familiar images, experiences, or words in the native language.
- Mnemonics – Creating memory aids (e.g., acronyms, rhymes, or stories) to remember difficult words.
- Visualization – Imagining a picture or scene related to a new word.
- Keyword method – Linking a new word to a similar-sounding word in the native language.