



# Language Learning Strategies Based on the Educational Concept of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

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## Abstract

**As the requirement of the educational concept of innovation and entrepreneurship, it is necessary to develop the students' learning ability that is vital for students not only at school but also afterwards. In college English teaching, language learning strategies are beneficial for successfully learning. Many famous researches have given a definition and classifications of learning strategies, where exist some similarities and distinctions. This paper suggests that learning strategies are classified into four strategies at the hierarchical level: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.**

## Keywords

**Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Cognitive Strategies, Metacognitive Strategies, Affective Strategies, Social Strategies**

**Subject Areas:** Education, Linguistics

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## 1. Introduction

The educational concept of innovation and entrepreneurship was put forward in an international conference facing the 21st century education development trend by UNESCO in Beijing in 1989. This concept was emphasized by the UNESCO in the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris in 1998, which showed the innovative educational approaches: critical thinking and creativity. In 2015, the China General Office of the State Council implemented the suggestions of deepening the reform about innovation and entrepreneurship in higher education.

The educational concept of innovation and entrepreneurship is suggested being integrated into college English teaching to improve students' employment and enrich the development of college English teaching. Students

should be taught how to have the autonomous learning ability and how to learn and think critically, which is the basis of innovation and entrepreneurship education. To tap students' basic skills in college English teaching, language learning strategies should be taken priority in.

## 2. Review of Research on Language Learning Strategies

### 2.1. Definitions of Learning Strategies

There is a wide variety of definitions of learning strategies. Some samples of definitions of language learning strategies taken from Rod Ellis [1] listed as follows (Table 1).

Ellis [1] believes that “perhaps one of the best approaches to defining learning strategies is to try to list main characteristics”. He presents the following eight characteristics:

- a. Strategies refer to both general approaches and specific actions or techniques used to learn a second language.
- b. Strategies are problem-oriented. The learner deploys a strategy to overcome some particular problem.
- c. Learners are generally aware of the strategies they use and can identify what they consist of if they are asked to pay attention to what they are doing/thinking.
- d. Strategies involve linguistic behaviors (such as requesting the name of an object) and non-linguistic (such as pointing at an object to be told its name).
- e. Linguistic strategies can be performed in the first language and in the second language.
- f. Some strategies are behavioral while others are mental. Thus some strategies are directly observable, while others are not.
- g. In the main, strategies contribute indirectly to learning by providing learners with data about the second language which they can process. However, some strategies may also contribute directly (for example, memorization strategies directed at specific lexical items or grammatical rules).
- h. Strategy use varies considerably as a result of both the kind of task the learner is engaged in and individual learner preferences.

Synthetically, Ellis presents that learning strategies are the means by which the learner processes the second language input in order to develop linguistic knowledge; learning strategies can be conscious and behavior (e.g. memorization or repetition with the purpose of remembering), or they can be subconscious and psycholinguistic (e.g. inference or overgeneralization).

Although different researchers present different definitions of language learning strategies, it can be concluded that all definitions have something in common. Strategies are actions, behaviors, thoughts, means, steps, techniques, devices or processes and so on which learners often consciously or subconsciously to acquire knowledge and to improve their own progress in internalizing, storing, retrieving, and using the second language. Thus, strategies are the primary determinants of learning outcomes since they are the tools taken by learners to facilitate acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information for active, self-directed involvement that is necessary for developing an second language communicative ability.

**Table 1.** Definitions of language learning strategies.

Sources	Definitions
Stern [2]	“In our view strategy is best reserved for general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner, leaving techniques as the term to refer to particular forms of observable learning behavior.”
Weinstein and Mayer [3]	“Learning strategies are the behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner’s encoding process.”
Chamot [4]	“Learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning, recall of both linguistic and content area information.”
Rubin [5]	“Learning strategies are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly.”
Oxford [6]	“Language learning strategies are behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable.”

## 2.2. Classifications of Learning Strategies

Many researchers at home and abroad have endeavored to make the taxonomy of learning strategies. Different researchers have provided not only different definitions of language learning strategies, but also different classifications of language learning strategies. The earlier studies concerned the characteristics and strategies of successful language learners, but a few attempts were made to classify the strategies into general categories [1]. More influential contributions to classifications of language learning strategies have been made.

### 2.2.1. Rubin's Classifications of Learning Strategies

Rubin [5] asserts there are three types of strategies used by learners that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning: learning strategies, communication strategies and social strategies.

Learning strategies refer to the strategies contributing directly to the development of the language system constructed by the learner, which can be divided into cognitive learning strategies and metacognitive learning strategies.

Cognitive learning strategies refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or syntheses of learning materials.

Metacognitive learning strategies are steps taken before cognitive learning really happens, which are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning.

Communication strategies are less directly related to language learning since their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended. Communication strategies are used by speakers when faced with some difficulty due to the fact that their communication ends out-run their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by a co-speaker.

Social strategies are those activities learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge. Although these strategies provide exposure to the target language, they contribute indirectly to learning since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language

### 2.2.2. Oxford's Classifications of Learning Strategies

According to the effect strategies exert on learning the second language, Oxford [7] has divided learning strategies into two broad categories: direct strategies and indirect strategies. The former consists of strategies that directly involve the target language and require mental processing of the language, while the latter provides indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other means [7].

Direct strategies and indirect strategies support each other; the two main classes are further classified into six subcategories: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

Memory strategies help students store and retrieve new information.

Cognitive strategies enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means and help learners make sense of their study.

Compensation strategies are to make up the gap and overcome difficulties.

Metacognitive strategies are actions to go beyond purely cognitive devices and to provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process; it can facilitate learners in monitoring their regular study.

Affective strategies are those used to assist learning through emotional elements.

Social strategies help students learn through interaction with others.

### 2.2.3. O'Malley and Chamot's Classifications of Learning Strategies

Based on an information-processing model, O'Malley and Chamot [8] distinguished three major types of strategies: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social/affective strategies.

Metacognitive strategies refer to how learners think about learning process, how they plan and monitor learning while it is taking place, and how they use self-evaluation after the learning activity; they are higher order executive skills applicable to a variety of learning tasks

Cognitive strategies involve manipulation or transformation of the material to be learned, that is, the learner interacts directly with what is to be learned; they may be limited in application to specific types of task in learning activities.

Social/affective strategies cover both interaction with another person and exercising control over emotional and affective responses to learning.

### 2.2.4. Cohen's Classifications of Learning Strategies

Cohen [9] defines learning strategies as learning processes that are consciously selected by the learner. Cohen [10] classifies learning strategies into language learning strategies and language use strategies, which are further divided into several classes (Table 2).

In order to facilitate learning process, language learning strategies can identify the material that needs to be learned, distinguish it from other material if need be, grouping it for easier learning (e.g. grouping vocabulary by category into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth), have repeated contact with the material (e.g. through classroom tasks or the completion of homework assignments), and formally commit the material to memory when it does not seem to be acquired naturally (whether through rote memory techniques such as repetition, the use of mnemonics, or some other memory techniques); in order to help learners to apply language that learners have to their current interlanguage, retrieval strategies would be used to call up language material from storage, through whatever memory searching strategies the learner can muster; rehearsal strategies are for rehearsing target language structures; cover strategies help learners to create the impression that they have control over material when they do not; communication strategies focus on approaches to conveying a message that is both meaningful and informative for the listeners or readers.

### 2.2.5. Wen Qiufang's Classifications of Learning Strategies

Since the mid-1980s, some Chinese researchers tended to establish a classification system of language learning strategies suitable for Chinese learners in ESL/EFL settings under the Chinese culture and language background. Wen Qiufang [11] classifies strategies into two broad categories, management strategies, and language learning strategies (Table 3).

Management strategies are actions or steps employed by the learner to organize and arrange effectively a learning activity, including planning for learning, monitoring the learning process, evaluating how well one has learned, and regulating one's emotions.

Language learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to deal with the language materials, including strategies for the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and strategies for learning vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

Language learning strategies are divided into traditional and non-traditional strategies. Traditional strategies refer to the learning strategies that are used in accord with traditional instruction theories, e.g. formal practicing strategies, accuracy strategies and using-mother-tongue strategies, etc. Non-traditional strategies refer to the

**Table 2.** Cohen's classification of learning strategies.

Learning Strategies	
Language Learning Strategies	Language Using Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identifying the material for learning</li> <li>b. Distinguishing it from other material</li> <li>c. Grouping it for easier learning</li> <li>d. Repeatedly engaging oneself in contact with the material</li> <li>e. Remembering it with efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Retrieval strategies</li> <li>b. Rehearsal strategies</li> <li>c. Cover strategies</li> <li>d. Communication strategies</li> </ul>

**Table 3.** Wen Qiufang's classification of learning strategies.

Management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Planning</li> <li>b. Strategy choices</li> <li>c. Self-monitoring</li> <li>d. Self-evaluating</li> <li>e. Self-regulating</li> </ul>	
Language learning strategies	Traditional strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Form-focused strategies</li> <li>b. Accuracy strategies</li> <li>c. Using-mother-tongue strategies</li> </ul>
	Non-traditional strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Function-focused strategies</li> <li>b. Fluency strategies</li> <li>c. Mother-tongue-avoidance strategies</li> </ul>

learning strategies that are used in accord with non-traditional instruction theories, e.g. functional practice strategies, fluency strategies and mother-tongue-avoidance strategies, etc.

### 2.2.6. Chen Xiaotang and Zheng Min's Classifications of Learning Strategies

On the basis of cognitive psychology, Cheng Xiaotang and Zheng Min [12] put forward the more acceptable classification of learning strategies into four strategies: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies, which would be easily accepted by most researchers in China.

In Cheng and Zheng's frame, learning strategies refer to all kinds of strategies that make language learning more effective, which include not only micro-strategies that learners use to finish learning some specific items to the better degree, but also macro-strategies that learners take to plan, regulate, evaluate, etc. the aims, processes and results of language learning, and even learners' knowledge of language learning.

Cognitive strategies are those strategies learners use to be more efficient to identify, understand, retain and extract language knowledge.

Metacognitive strategies help learners to confirm and regulate the learning aims, select learning approaches and techniques, and evaluate and feedback the learning results.

Affective strategies are those strategies learners use to foster, adjust and control emotions in the learning process.

Social strategies are those strategies learners use to apply the gained language knowledge to intercommunication.

### 2.3. Comments on Classifications of Language Learning Strategies

On the whole, Rubin's classification is of unity and coherence. She assumes that learning strategies are involved in receptive process, while communication and social strategies are directed to productive process. However, communication strategies and social strategies can be employed to serve the receptively learning process.

Cohen's classification makes a distinction between language learning strategies and language use strategies, but it is hard to draw the line between language learning strategies and language use strategies. Besides, Cohen's classification does not include metacognitive strategy, which, however, has been demonstrated in both Oxford's and O'Malley and Chamot's classifications. In fact, metacognitive strategy, to some great extent, determines whether language learning will be successful because students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to plan their learning, monitor their progress, or review their accomplishments and future learning directions [8].

There exist some similarities and distinctions between Oxford's and O'Malley and Chamot's classifications. The direct strategies in Oxford's classification are similar to O'Malley and Chamot's cognitive strategies, while Oxford's indirect strategies include O'Malley and Chamot's metacognitive and social/affective strategies.

There also exist some distinctions between Oxford's and O'Malley and Chamot's classifications. O'Malley and Chamot put metacognitive strategies at a higher position than cognitive strategies, which reveals the internal order of the three types of learning strategies while Oxford asserts that her two categories function at the same level, neglecting the monitoring role of metacognition. O'Malley and Chamot consider social/affective strategies as a broad grouping while Oxford treats affective strategies and social strategies separately, so their functions can be identified more obviously than a broad grouping.

Thus, learning strategies are classified into four strategies at the hierarchical level: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies, which would be easily accepted by most researchers in China [12].

## 3. Conclusions

In a second language teaching, teachers should help students to improve the frequency of the strategy use to some extent that students can be often good at using strategies in their learning language. It is necessary for teachers to explain the purpose and utility of language learning strategies in order to make students attach importance to language learning strategies, then, teachers introduce and describe the information about language learning strategies, and model these strategies by actually performing learning tasks in so as to make students acquaint themselves with all kinds of language learning strategies and their use. Anyway, teachers should intend to make not only cognitive strategies and social strategies but also metacognitive strategies, and affective strate-

gies become parts of students' procedural knowledge so as to develop students' learning ability that is vital for students' learning at school and even lifelong learning.

Successful learners attend to language form, also concern meaning or communication, actively involve language learning, are aware of the learning process, and are more flexible to use strategies in accordance with task requirements. Most of the researchers agree to these five differences. As a matter of fact, once identified, such strategies could be made available to the less successful learners to improve their learning. The unsuccessful learners can use many of the same strategies as successful learners; unsuccessful learners are only inactive learners and their apparent inability to learn is due to their not having an appropriate repertoire of learning strategies. It is necessary to study the differences in language learning strategy use between successful learners and less successful learners so as to find in what ways less successful learners are not good as successful learners and teach learners in accordance of their aptitude.

In addition, there are relationships of learning strategies to second language proficiency. Researchers implicate that though these studies have been conducted in different geographical and cultural settings, learners who have better or higher proficiency in language learning generally are found to make more frequent use of the overall strategy and to exert more strategy subcategories, namely, in most cases, there exist significant correlations between learning strategies and language proficiency.

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