CHAPTER THREE

Strategic Competence
(Definitions and Taxonomies)

Introduction

Recently, Bachman and Palmer (1996)\(^1\) have adopted the view that strategic competence can involve all kinds of cognitive activities that work consciously or subconsciously to develop or attain a specific goal within language use or any other discipline. However, most of those who worked on one aspect of strategic competence, in particular, communication strategy put this term to mean the compensation for the missing of knowledge within language production activity. Another discipline in language development emerges to take its position within cognitive learning theory to search for specific kinds of behavior that the learners’ success was accounted for in acquiring language. This kind of research has its beginnings with the successful language learner’s behavior. At later times this kind of research came close to mean strategic competence or strategic behavior to include all parts of the learner abilities (cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective).

However, this researcher considers both communication strategies and learning strategies the main components of language learners’ strategic competence. This is because the strategic behavior of language

production is part of the whole cognitive system, which second language learners can learn from or adopt as learning tools. Also, strategic learning relies mainly on the attainment of success in language production. From this departing point of view, we put both of the two activities: communication strategies and learning strategies in two separate sections, seeking all the details of those previous studies in order to be employed to support the aims of this study, in particular, the types of strategies (learning and communication) used by foreign language learners. This chapter will survey the various definitions and classifications of both learning strategies and communication strategies.

(I) Communication Strategies

Beginnings of communication strategies
Selinker (1972), in his paper on interlanguage, used the term “communication strategy” to refer to one of the processes that were supposed to be instrumental in causing interlanguage errors. He defined communication strategy as “an identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speakers”. However, the identification of these strategies remained a problem spot in the literature of communication strategy. Subsequent definitions too could not sufficiently resolve those problematic issues. As a matter of fact, Selinker also does not appear to be offering any elaborate viable rules for identifying these strategies pertaining to the communicative performance of the second

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3 An earlier version of this paper was read at the Second International Congress of Applied Linguistics Cambridge University, Sep. 1969.
4 Selinker, p. 217.
language learners except that he attributes those deviants to the behavioural strategies of the learners.

**Approaches underlying the taxonomies of communication strategies**

All the varieties in the invented taxonomies of communication strategies reflect specific conceptions on which researchers based their definitions and classifications. Those varieties in classifications and definitions have led to the implementation of different methodologies that caused inconsistency in the results of the empirical studies that followed. That inconsistency in the results is embodied in the worthlessness of studying such phenomenon for solving the essential problem, which is to promote a better understanding of the process underlying the language development of second language learners. Intuitively, we expect that the field of communication strategy research will be suffering from these inconsistencies and worthlessness if the gap between the methodologies of the ongoing studies and the benefits that can be gained from these investigations is not bridged. Also, the bridging of the gap will not be possible if researchers do not overcome the acute diversity in the perspectives towards this very important phenomenon in language acquisition.

Generally, there are two approaches, which seem to dominate the communication strategy research. However, within the same approach there are different methods of defining and classifying communication strategy. The early definitions and classifications of communication
strategy were offered by Tarone (1977). In a later definition and classification, she highlighted the interactive aspects of communication strategies and ignored the psycho ones. Furthermore, she considered “meaning negotiation between at least two interlocutors” a distinctive feature of communication strategy that differentiates it from other phenomena in the study of language use such as learning strategy and production strategy. This approach is called an interactional approach. The second approach is called a psycholinguistic approach. Some methods of that approach are based on a model of speech production and highlighted the problems experienced by the learner in speech reception and in the planning and execution of speech production. This method of Faerch and Kasper (1983) does not completely ignore the cooperative nature of communication strategies but it does not consider it a necessary condition. Within this approach, a different conceptualization has emerged to be based on language processing. This innovative method is adopted by the Nijmegen group and Bialystok. Its most important feature is that “the classification of utterances was based on a description of the processes underlying their production”. They criticized the previous approaches claiming, “the problem with such a classification is that the distinctions in the different types of strategies merely reflect differences in referents and differences in the contexts in which the referents are presented”. This approach developed new classifications by considering

the new criteria of "parsimony, psychological plausibility and generalizability".

Definitions of communication strategies

Varadi (1983) did not offer a definition, rather a framework that was based on a model of speech production and was presented in a schematic diagram in which a second language learner struggled to reach an equivalent utterance to his 'base language' mother tongue. Within these processes, the learner was viewed as a captive of his intended meaning that easily could be produced in his mother language. Then the learner looked for the equivalent utterance in target language in the belief that it was the correct form. At the time the learner faced a difficulty in finding the suitable target language utterance, he resorted to communication strategy. Here the strategy is viewed as a struggle in the mind of the learner, that the intended meaning is being adjusted till it reaches a form that is also liable to another replacement and reduction to suit the adjusted meaning. This process is going on till it reaches a target form that exactly conveys the adjusted meaning in the end. After that many definitions have been followed.

Tarone adopted sorts of definitions and classifications that focused on the interactive aspects of communication strategy. She defined communication strategies as "a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to

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agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared.”

Faerch and Kasper (1983) defined communication strategies as “potential conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal.”

Corder (1983) defined communication strategies as “a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty.” Difficulty is explained by Corder to refer uniquely to the speaker’s inadequate command of the language used in the interaction.

Bialystok (1983) defined communication strategy as “all attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication.”

Ellis (1985) defined communication strategies as “psycholinguistic plans that exist as part of the language user’s communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and serve as substitutes for production plans which the learner is unable to implement.”

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Bialystok (1990) defined communication strategy as “dynamic interaction of the components of language processing that balance each other in their level of involvement to meet task demand”\(^{16}\).

**Taxonomies and classifications of communication strategies**

**Corder’s taxonomy**

Corder describes the way the learner produces language in second language:

“The learner will sometimes wish to convey messages which his linguistic resources do not permit him to express successfully. When in the course of interaction the learner finds himself faced with this situation, he has only two options open to him. He can either tailor his message to the resources he has available, that is, adjust his ends to his means. These procedures are called message adjustment strategies, or risk avoidance strategies. Or he can attempt to increase his resources by one means or another in order to realize his communicative intentions. These strategies are called resource-expansion strategies. These are clearly “success-oriented” though risk-running strategies.”\(^{17}\)

**Message adjustment strategies**

**1-Topic avoidance**

*(a refusal to enter into or continue a discourse within some field or topic because of a feeling of total linguistic inadequacy)*\(^{18}\)

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\(^{16}\) Bialystok, p. 183.


\(^{18}\) ibid.
2-Message abandonment
(trying to communicate the message but finally giving up)\textsuperscript{19}

3-Semantic avoidance
(saying something slightly different from what one intended but still broadly relevant to the topic or discourse)\textsuperscript{20}

4-Message reduction
(saying less or less precisely what one intended to say)\textsuperscript{21}

Resource expansion strategies

All resource expansion strategies are risk-taking where the failure is expected such as misunderstanding or communication breakdown. With these strategies learners exert a great deal of effort on clarifying his intended message to the degree he sometimes repeats the same utterance, avoids using elliptical, focuses on one aspect of the language (often on the content items and ignores the functional ones and ignores grammar) they include four subcategories:

\textsuperscript{19} ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} ibid.
1-Borrowing
(the use of linguistic resources other than the target language, but they include guessing of more or less informed kind, that is, an attempt to use invented or borrowed items, all more or less approximated to the rules of the target language structure as far as the learner’s interlanguage allows)²²

2-Switching
(complete sentence or words in first language)

3-Paraphrase or circumlocution
(getting around your problem with the knowledge you have)²³

4-Paralinguistic devices
(typically gesture)²⁴

5- Appeal for help
(from the interlocutor for a word or expression)²⁵.

Varadi’s taxonomy

The classification of Varadi based on a model of language production in which the second language learner tries to match his intended meaning to the linguistic resources. This model is viewed to involve two contrasted processes: the adjustment of meaning and then the adjustment of form. Meaning in this classification equates the message while the form equates the expression either sentence or words. Within these two adjustments there are two major strategies: replacement and reduction strategies. The reduction strategies or the replacement strategies at the meaning level

²² ibid., p. 18.
²³ ibid.
²⁴ ibid.
²⁵ ibid.
come first and result in either a reduction or a replacement in the form. Varadi identifies the adjustment at the meaning level as a translation of the intention (optimal meaning) in a linguistic (L1) form. If the L2 resources are available the process moves to the adjustment at (L1) form. If not, then a series of two processes work: reducing the optimal meaning to a completely different one or replace it with another meaning which is close to the previous one. On the form level also the same two processes work but either reduce or make paraphrasing or a circumlocution to the (L2) form. If the form is reduced then optimal meaning is fully reduced or replaced till the right form, which conveys the adjusted message, becomes available.

**Adjusted meaning**

1-Reduction (deliberately sacrifice part of the meaning he originally wanted to communicate)\(^\text{26}\)

2-Replacement (manipulation of optimal meaning)\(^\text{27}\)

**Adjusted form**

1-Reduction (elimination of certain formal target elements or reduction in the range of synonymous target forms, i.e. over use of one form at the expense of the others)\(^\text{28}\)

2-Replacement (changing the form through paraphrasing or circumlocution)\(^\text{29}\)

Thus communication strategies in Varadi’s taxonomy involve various kinds of message adjustment. They are of two main types adjustment

\(^{26}\) Varadi, p. 83.
\(^{27}\) ibid.
\(^{28}\) ibid., p. 85.
\(^{29}\) ibid., p. 84.
strategies: adjustment that leads to reducing of the message (reduction strategies) and that leads to replacing the message with another one (replacement strategies). Within each type, two different strategies are involved. Replacement involves either circumlocution or paraphrase. In the reduction strategy Varadi differentiated between two types intensional that is achieved through generalization and extensional reduction that is achieved through approximation.

Faerch and Kasper’s taxonomy

The classification of Faerch and Kasper’s (1983) is based on a model of speech production in which strategic goal is the problem and the product of the execution phase controlled by the strategy is a solution. So, problem orientedness is used as a primary criterion in this taxonomy while consciousness is as a secondary defining criterion. “This taxonomy drew a distinction between two major types of communication strategies: reduction governed by avoidance behavior and achievement governed by achievement behavior”\(^{30}\).

Reduction strategies

They are mainly of two types:

1-formal reduction strategies
2-functional reduction strategies

\(^{30}\) Faerch and Kasper, pp. 36-37.
**Formal reduction strategies**

The second language speaker “communicates by means of a ‘reduced’ system, in order to avoid producing non-fluent or incorrect utterances by realizing insufficiently automatized or hypothetical rules/items”\(^{31}\). This strategy includes four sub-strategies:

a- Phonological  
b- Morphological  
c- Syntactic  
d- Lexical

**Functional reduction strategies**

The second language learner may “reduce his communicative goal in order to avoid a problem. The reduction can attain the character of global reduction, affecting the global goal, or it can be restricted to one or more local goals (local reduction)”\(^{32}\). This strategy is used with these three elements of communicative goals:

a- Actional reduction,  
b- Model reduction,  
c- Reduction of propositional content

**Achievement strategies**

Learner attempts to solve a problem by expanding his communicative resources:

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\(^{31}\) ibid., p. 38.  
\(^{32}\) ibid., p. 43.
Tarone’s typology

The taxonomy of Tarone (1977[^33], cited in Tarone 1983[^34]) is formed of five major strategies. Each of these strategies describes the way a language learner solves the communicative problem. On some occasions the learner stops talking since the communication opens a new topic that seems difficult to be managed. This is because speaking about that topic becomes a risk. Thus, the learner abandons his intent since he feels that he lacks the linguistic resources.

1- Paraphrase

It is “the rewording of the message in an alternate, acceptable target language construction”[^35]. This strategy involves three strategies:

A - Approximation: (the use of a single target language vocabulary item or structure, which the learner knows is not correct, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker.)\(^{36}\)

B - Word coinage: (the learner makes up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept, e.g. air ball for balloon.)\(^{37}\)

C - Circumlocution: (the learner describes the characteristics or elements of the object or the action instead of using the appropriate target language item or structure.)\(^{38}\)

2- Borrowing

This strategy includes two types:

A - Literal translation: (the learner translates word for word from the native language)\(^{39}\)

B - Language switch: (the learner uses the native language term without bothering to translate)\(^{39}\)

3- Appeal for assistance

(The learner asks for the correct term)\(^{41}\)

\(^{36}\) ibid., p. 62.
\(^{37}\) ibid.
\(^{38}\) ibid.
\(^{39}\) ibid.
\(^{40}\) ibid.
\(^{41}\) ibid.
4- Mime

(The learner uses non-verbal strategies in place of a lexical item or action)\textsuperscript{42}

5- Avoidance

Sometimes learner goes into difficult topics that he cannot manage, so he either tries to avoid some parts of that topic or to drawback the whole topic to another one. Avoidance can be of two types:

\textbf{A- Topic avoidance:} (the learner simply tries not to talk about concepts for which the target item or structure is not known.)\textsuperscript{43}

\textbf{B- Message abandonment:} (the learner begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue and stops in mid-utterance.)\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{flushleft}
\textbf{Bialystok’s taxonomy (1983)}
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Bialystok developed a taxonomy that was based mainly on the typology of Tarone (1977) with conceptual reorganization. Its basis was a consideration of the source of the information on which the strategy was based. Bialystok (1983) explained that the information that was incorporated into strategic effort might be derived from “a) the learners’ source language, or any language other than the target language; b) the target language itself, or c) non-linguistic or contextual information given with the situation”\textsuperscript{45}. The proposed taxonomy, therefore, that was based on these distinctions were referred to as:

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\textsuperscript{42} ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} ibid., p. 63.
\textsuperscript{44} ibid.
\textsuperscript{45} Bialystok, p. 105.
First language-based strategies

**Language switch:** (refers to the insertion of a word or phrase in a language other than the target language, usually the learner’s native language.)\(^{46}\)

**Foreignizing native language item:** (is the insertion of non-existent or contextually inappropriate target language words by applying target morphology and/or phonology to the native language lexical item.)\(^{47}\)

**Transliteration:** (reflects the use of target language lexicon and structure to create a, usually non-existent, literal translation of a native language item or phrase.)\(^{48}\)

Target language-based strategies

**Semantic contiguity:** (is defined as the use of a single lexical item which shares certain semantic features with the target item)\(^{49}\)

**Description:** (has three sub classifications which indicate the information which has been incorporated into the description. They are)\(^{50}\).

\(^{46}\) ibid.
\(^{47}\) ibid.
\(^{48}\) ibid.
\(^{49}\) ibid., p. 106.
\(^{50}\) ibid.
General physical properties: (refer to universal features of objects, that is, color, size, material, and spatial dimension)\textsuperscript{51}

Specific distinguishing features: (are usually marked by the surface structure)\textsuperscript{52}

Interactional/functional descriptions: (indicate the functions of an object and the actions that can be performed with it)\textsuperscript{53}

Word coinage: (the creation of target lexical item by selecting a conceptual feature of the target item and incorporating it into the target language morphological system)\textsuperscript{54}

Non-linguistic strategies:

“they refer to the use of non-verbal actions to convey the meaning of a target language item, such as mime”\textsuperscript{55}

Bialystok (1990) classification

In a study investigating the validity of the previous classifications, Bialystok rejected all the taxonomic approaches and tried to classify communication strategies according to a binary system that takes into consideration the criterion of classifying communication strategies according to the difference in the cognitive processing of the utterances rather than the surface structures. She assigned two strategies:

\textsuperscript{51} ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} ibid., 107.
\textsuperscript{55} ibid.
Analysis-based strategy

(It is an attempt to convey the structure of the intended concept by making explicit the relational defining features. The strategies from the descriptive taxonomies that are included in the analysis-based strategy are circumlocution, paraphrase, transliteration, and word coinage where the attempt is to incorporate distinctive features into the expression, and mime where the attempt is to convey important properties.)

Control-based strategy

(It is to switch attention away from the linguistic system being used and focus instead on some other symbolic reference system that can achieve the same communicative function)

Paribakht’s Taxonomy

Paribakht (1985) suggests that there are four approaches which are used to solve the communicative problems: linguistic approach, contextual approach, conceptual approach, and mime.

Linguistic approach

This first major category of communication strategies with which the learner “exploits the semantic features of the target items” that intends to be conveyed.

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57 ibid.
59 ibid., p. 135.
Semantic contiguity: "the speaker exploits items that semantically relate to the target item"\(^{60}\) at a super-ordinate class, positive comparison 'such as analogy and synonym' or negative comparison 'such as contrast and antonymy'.

Circumlocution: This second subcategory of the linguistic approach is "an attempt to describe the characteristics of the concept."\(^{61}\) It includes Physical description, constituent features, locational property, historical property, and functional description.

Meta-linguistic description: "the speaker gives meta-linguistic information on the target item."\(^{62}\)

Contextual approach

The second major approach is an attempt to "exploit the contextual knowledge about the target item rather than its semantic features."\(^{63}\)

There are four subcategories of contextual knowledge:

Linguistic context "the speaker provides the interlocutor with the linguistic context of the target item."\(^{64}\)

Target language idioms and proverbs "the speaker exploits his knowledge of target idioms or proverbs to refer the interlocutor to a specific and popular context where the target item is used"\(^{65}\)

\(^{60}\) ibid.
\(^{61}\) ibid., 136.
\(^{62}\) ibid.
\(^{63}\) ibid., 137.
\(^{64}\) ibid.
\(^{65}\) ibid.
**Transliteration of first language idioms and proverbs** “the speaker exploits one’s knowledge of target idioms or proverb to refer the interlocutor to a specific and popular context where the target item is used.”

**Idiomatic transfer** “it involves reference to some semantic feature of an L1 idiom, as opposed to its actual translation assuming that it will work the same way in the target language.”

**Conceptual approach**

The third major strategy is “an attempt to exploit the speaker’s world knowledge and of a particular situation.” This strategy includes:

- **Demonstration** “creates a concrete context that reflects the target concept.”

- **Exemplification** “refers to examples such as certain people, occasions, or real events that correspond to the target concept.”

- **Metonymy** refers to “a concept that is represented through a prototype member of that concept.”

**Mime**

The fourth main strategy exploits “the speaker’s knowledge of meaningful gestures” to convey his message nonverbally. This strategy includes two sub categories:

- **Replacing verbal output** “this strategy is used by the speaker to substitute for a linguistic output.”

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66 ibid.
67 ibid.
68 ibid., p. 135.
69 ibid., p. 137.
70 ibid.
71 ibid., p. 138.
72 ibid., p. 135.
73 ibid., p. 138.
(II) Language Learning Strategies

Brief History

As a result of the development in the cognitive psychology, which particularly affected language-learning research, a new area of research focused on the learner’s factors has emerged. The first study that targeted the learning strategy was carried out by Carton and Magaud (1966, cited in Hismanoglu, 2000). In the 70s, the learner strategy research led to a remarkable progress in understanding the importance of the learner and his role in the whole learning process. However, at that time the primary concern was on identifying the good language learner’s characteristics, how they learn a second or foreign language. So far, many studies have been commenced aiming at discovering the principles of language learning and the features that are supposed to foster the process of language acquisition.

"Rubin (1975), the well-known American socio-linguist, began to pursue the idea of investigating language learning by studying the

\[\text{Accompanying verbal output } \text{"the speaker uses a meaningful gesture accompanying his verbal output.}"\]

\[74\text{ ibid.}\]
\[75\text{ Aaron Carton and Nancy Magaud, The Method of Inference in Foreign Language Study, (New York: The Research Foundation of the City University of New York, 1966).}\]
\[77\text{ Joan Rubin, “What the Good Language Learner Can Teach Us,” TESOL Quarterly, Vol.: 9/1 pp. 41-51 (1975).}\]
strategies of good language learners”\textsuperscript{78} with the aim once learning strategies were identified, such strategies could be made available to less successful learners. In her study “she observed language classes directly, on videotape, elicited observation from second language teacher and observed in language learning situation. On that basis, she established a provisional list of seven learning strategies”\textsuperscript{79}. “Her classification of strategies was in terms of processes contributing directly or indirectly to language learning.”\textsuperscript{80} In 1975, Stern also proposed a list of ten characteristics that was similar to Rubin’s.

Those early studies marked a new direction in which the focus turned on the learner’s characteristics and needs. Though the focus of such studies was on the characteristics of the good and successful language learner, the main aim was to help unsuccessful language learners. In this respect many propositions were suggested and many studies were commenced that recommended teaching the features of good language learners to those who have difficulties in their language learning. However, still there might be some other factors that always interfere to limit the effect of strategic behavior in learning process; otherwise, such ideas would change so many things and language learning strategies would be the magic prescription for less successful learners to overcome the difficulties in language learning.

Definitions of learning strategies

According to Ellis (1994) the definition of learning strategies is still ambiguous in the sense that it produces a number of problems. He identifies five problems. The first problem addresses the perception of the learning strategies, “whether they are to be perceived of as behavioral (and therefore observable) or as mental, or as both”.

The second problem centers on the nature of the activities that are considered learning strategies. Ellis announces, “there is a considerable uncertainty” in accounting some behaviors as strategies or as techniques. Referring to the definition of Stern (1983)

“strategy was best reserved for general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner, leaving learning techniques as the term to refer to particular forms of observable learning behavior, more or less consciously employed by learner”.

The third problem is “whether learning strategies are to be seen as conscious and intentional or as subconscious”. The fourth problem is “whether learning strategies are seen as having a direct effect on interlanguage development”. The fifth concerns the differences in the opinions about “what motivates the use of learning strategies”. Here are some of the definitions of language learning strategies by some scholars:

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82 ibid.
83 ibid.
84 Stern, p. 405.
86 ibid., p. 532.
87 ibid.
Bialystok (1978) defines learning strategies as "optional methods for exploring available information to increase the proficiency of second language learning."  

Tarone (1980) defines learning strategies as "attempts to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language." Her main emphasis is on differentiating learning strategy from communication strategy.

Faerch and Kasper (1983) stress that a learning strategy "can be conceived of as a process in which the learner gradually develops his interlanguage system by establishing hypothetical rules (hypothesis formation) and by testing them out (hypothesis testing)."

Rubin (1987; cited in Yutaka, 1996) defines learning strategies as those "strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly."  

Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) state that learning strategies are "intentional behavior and thoughts used by learners during learning so

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as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information.”\textsuperscript{93}

Scarcella and Oxford (1992\textsuperscript{94}, cited in Oxford, 2003\textsuperscript{95}) define learning strategies “as specific action, behaviors, steps techniques [or thoughts] used by students to enhance their own learning”.

Cohen, Weaver, and Li (1996) define learning strategies as “the conscious thoughts and behaviors used by students to facilitate language learning tasks and to personalize the language learning process.”\textsuperscript{96}

Alike, Chamot (2004) defines learning strategies as “the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal”\textsuperscript{97}.

**Characteristics of good language learners**

Brown (1987) observes

“during 1970s teachers and researchers came to realize that no single research finding and no single method of language teaching would usher in an era of utopia of absolute, predictable success in teaching a second language. It was observed that certain learners seemed to be successful in spite of methods or techniques. This led to take into


consideration the importance of the individual variation in language learning. Some learners seemed to have capabilities to succeed; some others lacked those capabilities. That observation led some researchers such as (Rubin, 1975 and Stern 1975) to describe good language learners in terms of their personal characteristics, styles, and strategies”.

Rubin (1975, in Brown, 1987) suggests that good L2 learners are willing and accurate guessers, have a strong drive to communicate, are often uninhibited about their weaknesses in the second language and ready to risk making mistakes, are willing to make mistakes, focus on form by looking for patterns and analyzing, take advantage of all practice opportunities, monitor their speech as well as that of others, and pay attention to meaning.

Stern, (1975, cited in McDonough, 1999) claimed that his list of ten strategies is nominated as features that mark out good language learning. Thus, “good language learners are those who have their own personal learning styles or positive learning strategies. They are active in approaching the learning task. They tolerate their and others’ mistakes in the target language, sociable and empathetic with its speakers. They consciously tackle a language using technical know-how about how”. They experiment and plan with the object of developing the new language into an ordered system and revise this system progressively.

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99 Brown, p. 92.
They constantly search for meaning. They have willingness to practice. They have willingness to use the language in real communication. They self-monitor. They have critical sensitivity to language use. They develop the target language more and more as a separate reference system and learn to think in it.

**Problems in classifying learning strategies**

Taking into consideration the various systems underlying the classification of learning strategies, Oxford (1994) has commented, "an apparent failure in agreement on almost two dozen L2 strategy classification systems have been divided into the following groups: (1) systems related to successful language learners (Rubin, 1975); (2) systems based on psychological functions (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990); (3) linguistically based systems dealing with guessing, language monitoring, formal and functional practice (Bialystok, 1981) or with communication strategies like paraphrasing or borrowing (Tarone, 1983); (4) systems related to separate language skills (Cohen, 1990); and (5) systems based on different styles or types of learners (Sutter, 1989). The existence of these distinct strategy typologies indicates a major problem in the research area of L2 learning strategies: lack of a coherent, well-accepted system for describing these strategies."

**Taxonomies of language learning strategies**

Language Learning Strategies have been classified by many scholars such as O'Malley and Chamot 1985, Wenden and Rubin 1987, Oxford 1990

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and Stern 1992. Some of these attempts to classify language-learning strategies will be traced here.

**Rubin's classification of learning strategies**

Rubin, who pioneered much of the work in the field of strategies, makes the distinction between strategies contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to learning. According to Rubin (1987, cited in Hismanoglu, 2000), there are three types of strategies used by learners that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning. These are: 1) Learning strategies, 2) Communication strategies, and 3) Social strategies.

**Learning strategies**

They are two main types of learning strategies that contribute directly to the development of the language system constructed by the learner: cognitive learning strategies and meta-cognitive learning strategies.

*A- Cognitive learning strategies*

They refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Rubin identifies six main cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning: I- Clarification / Verification, II- Guessing / Inductive Inference, III- Deductive Reasoning, IV- Practice, V-Memorization and VI-Monitoring.
**B- Meta-cognitive learning strategies**

These strategies are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning. They involve various processes as: I- Planning, II- Prioritizing, III- Setting goals, and IV- Self-management.

**Oxford's (1990) classification of language learning strategies**

Oxford (1990[^103] cited in Hismanoglu, 2000) divides language learning strategies into two main classes: direct and indirect. They are further subdivided into six groups. In Oxford's classification, meta-cognitive strategies help learners to regulate their learning. Affective strategies are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements such as confidence, while social strategies lead to increase interaction with the target language. Cognitive strategies are the mental strategies learners use to make sense of their learning, memory strategies are those used for storage of information, and compensation strategies help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication. Oxford's taxonomy of language learning strategies is shown in the following:

1- **Direct strategies**

   A- Memory
   B- Cognitive
   C- Compensation strategies

2- **Indirect strategies**

   D- Meta-cognitive strategies
   E- Affective strategies
   F- Social strategies

It can be noticed that much of the recent work in this area has been underpinned by a broad concept of language learning strategies that goes beyond cognitive processes to include social and communicative strategies.

**O’Malley’s classification of learning strategies**

O’Malley *et al.* (1985) divides learning strategies into three main subcategories: meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies.

1) **Meta-cognitive strategies**

   "Selective attention: deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input.

   Self-management: understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.

   Directed attention: deciding in advance to attend in general to learning task and ignore irrelevant distraction.

   Self-monitoring: correcting one’s speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present.

   Self-evaluation: checking the outcomes of one’s own language leaning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.

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105 ibid., p. 33.
Delayed production: consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially through listening comprehension”.

Advanced organizers: making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity.

Self-evaluation: checking the outcomes of one’s own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.

Self-reinforcement: arranging rewards for oneself when a language learning activity has been accomplished successfully.”

II) Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. The following strategies are among the most important cognitive strategies:

Repetition: limiting a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal.

Resourcing: using target language reference materials.

Translation: using the first language as a base for understanding and or producing the second language.

Grouping: recording or reclassifying, and perhaps labeling, the material to be learned, based on common attributes.

Note-taking: writing down the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information presented orally or in writing.

Deduction: consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language.

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106 ibid., pp. 33-34.
Recombination: constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.

Imagery: relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar, easily retrievable visualizations, phrases, or locations.

Auditory representation: retention of the sound or a similar for a word, phrase, or longer language sequence.

Key word: remembering a new word in the second language by a) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word and b) generating easily record images of some relationship between the new word and familiar word.

Contextualization: placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence.

Elaboration: relating new information to other concepts in memory.

Transfer: using previously acquired linguistic and or conceptual knowledge to facilitate new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information.

Inferencing: using available information to guess meanings of new items, predicts outcomes, or fills in missing information.

III) Socio mediation strategies

Cooperation: working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity.

Question for clarification: asking teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation, and or examples.

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107 ibid., p. 34.
Stern’s classifications of learning strategies

Stern (1992[^98], cited in Hismanoglu, 2000) introduced a different classification of learning strategies that are highly based on the new trends in language learning research. Unlike the old one that included ten strategies, this new classification included five main language-learning strategies. They are as follows: management and planning strategies, cognitive strategies, communicative-experiential strategies, interpersonal strategies, and affective strategies.

1-Management and planning strategies

These strategies are related with the learner’s intention to direct his own learning. A learner can take charge of the development of his own program when he is helped by a teacher, whose role is that of an adviser and resource person. That is to say that the learner must: decide what commitment to make to language learning, set himself reasonable goals, decide on an appropriate methodology, select appropriate resources, and monitor progress, evaluate his achievement in the light of previously determined goals and expectations (Stern 1992[^99], cited in Hismanoglu, 2000).

2-Cognitive strategies

They are steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. In the following, some of the cognitive strategies are exhibited:

[^99]: ibid., p. 263.
I- clarification verification
II- guessing + inductive inferencing
III- deductive reasoning
IV- practice
V- memorization
VI- monitoring

3- Communicative - experiential strategies

Communication strategies, such as circumlocution, gesturing, paraphrase, or asking for repetition and explanation are techniques used by learners so as to keep a conversation going. The purpose of using these techniques is to avoid interrupting the flow of communication (Stern 1992\textsuperscript{110}, cited in Hismanoglu, 2000).

4- Interpersonal strategies

The learners should monitor their own development and evaluate their own performance. They should establish contact with native speakers and cooperate with them. They must become acquainted with the culture of the target language, (Stern 1992\textsuperscript{111}, cited in Hismanoglu, 2000).

5- Affective strategies

It is evident that good language learners employ distinct affective strategies. Language learning can be frustrating in some cases. In some

\textsuperscript{110} ibid., p. 256.
\textsuperscript{111} ibid., pp. 265-266.
other cases, second language learners may have negative feelings about native speakers of second language. Good language learners are more or less conscious of these emotional problems. Good language learners try to create associations of positive attitudes towards the foreign language and its speakers as well as towards the learning activities involved (Stern 1992\textsuperscript{112}, cited in Hismanoglu, 2000).

\textsuperscript{112} ibid., p. 266.