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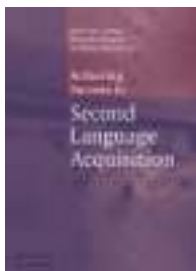
Achieving Success in Second Language Acquisition

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Chapter

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Appendix B
Learning strategies taxonomies

Poulisse taxonomy

Nanda Poulisse (1990) suggested a taxonomy for compensation strategies in French as a foreign language. These were used by Poulisse and her colleagues to research how students compensate when they find themselves in conversations that are above their heads. The result was that four kinds of compensation strategies are used:

- holistic (using words that share the concept);
- analytic (e.g. describing features of the concept);
- transfer; and
- appeal for assistance.

Tarone taxonomy

Elaine Tarone (1980) has suggested five categories in her taxonomy:

- avoidance (topic avoidance and memory abandonment);
- paraphrase (approximation, word coinage, and circumlocution);
- conscious transfer (literal translation and language switch – this one might get you into more trouble than it gets you out of);
- appeal for assistance, and
- mime (use of nonverbal language).

For the most part, she is referring to speaking strategies used for communication. See chapter 10 for a detailed description of managing communication situations.

Oxford taxonomy

One of the most widely used taxonomies was suggested by Oxford (1990). In this taxonomy, she breaks learning strategies into six kinds:

- cognitive, such as analysis, applying background knowledge, and prediction, among others;
- metacognitive, such as self-evaluation of progress, planning language study, and reviewing, among others;
- affective, such as keeping diaries and positive self-talk, among others;
- social, such as joining a language table or asking questions, among others;
- compensation, such as paraphrasing, guessing from context, and circumlocution, among others; and
- memory, such as using mnemonics and keywords, among others.

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (*SILL*) is available in a number of languages for determining your strategy usage. It conforms to Oxford's categories and can be found online at www.syjy.com.cn/english/ xingkc/05.doc.

Chamot & O'Malley taxonomy (CALLA)

Chamot and O'Malley (1994) developed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), which comprises academic content, language skills, and learning strategies. The language learning strategies that they use in this framework include the following categories:

- metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring one's progress, and evaluating success);
- metacognitive knowledge (understanding how learning happens, understanding what learning is about, knowing what strategies to select for effective learning);
- cognitive strategies (rehearsal, organizing, elaborating, etc.); and
- social/affective strategies (interacting with others/managing one's emotional response).