

## LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES

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*The object of education is to prepare the young  
to educate themselves throughout their lives.  
Robert M. Hutchins.*

**Abstract.** *This article describes how the language learning strategies that learners prefer in learning professional language at tertiary level can be used for lifelong education. It is well known that in language learning students use various learning strategies, but not all learners are equally successful in their studies.*

*This research is based on the analysis of data obtained from two different surveys of learners' preferred language learning strategies. Respondents spread over two levels of English proficiency and their learning strategies are compared. Self-assessment and reflections on learning outcomes reveal how important or unimportant various learning strategies are and which might be relevant to lifelong learning. The study found that students' preferred individual strategies can be an effective way to foster their motivation for self-development and, in the long run, for the lifelong learning.*

**Keywords:** *lifelong learning strategies, self-assessment, reflective practice, statistical processing, English for Specific Purposes.*

## Introduction

The important part of education is learning how to learn. One of the objectives of a language course is to teach students how to continue learning the language independently after the course has ended. The second valid point is the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own performance in a foreign language which is an important skill for critical thinking. The third valid point is the ability to use high-tech for the benefit of effective learning. Training learners in using strategies of effective learning such as self-monitoring and self-assessing is invaluable in attaining final goals. Fostering learner strategies of effective learning is a factor for successful lifelong self-development.

To ensure effective language learning, language teachers must make professional decisions about methodology and techniques to be used. Decisions made during language instruction depend on various factors, among which the most important are the needs of the individual learner, the goals of the course, the learner preferences and attitudes to the importance of various learner's language skills.

This paper addresses the learners' preferred strategies for language learning. Research implications might be beneficial for fostering sustainable lifelong learning. The major indicators of lifelong learning are the same as of learning strategies and include learners' self-assessment, reflections on their achievements or failures, portfolios, e-learning, strategy training, learner autonomy and creativity in all learning activities. In this study learners' self-assessment, reflections, application of electronic portfolios and training students in developing awareness of their learning strategies have been used.

*The aims of the research:* to investigate lifelong learning strategies of two groups of respondents with different proficiency levels.

*Research methods used:* 1) two sets of the Strategy Inventory; 2) statistical processing of responses; 3) students' reflections.

*The respondents* are the students of two different levels of English proficiency, who study English for Specific Purposes at the Faculty of Social Policy at Mykolas Romeris University.

This article consists of the background review, which includes lifelong learning, learning strategies, and strategy training, followed by the description of respondents and research methods, the results, discussion, conclusions, and references.

## 1. Literature Review

### 1.1. Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is a philosophy that it is never too late for learning. The notion of learning through life is hardly new. Lifelong learning encompasses learning for personal, civic and social purposes as well as for employment. It takes place in a variety of environments in and outside the formal education and training systems. Lifelong

learning implies raising investment in people and knowledge; promoting the acquisition of basic skills, including digital literacy; and broadening opportunities for innovative, more flexible forms of learning. The aim is to provide people of all ages with equal and open access to high-quality learning opportunities, and to a variety of learning experiences. Institutions of higher education have a key role to play in making this vision a reality. The European Union Commission stresses the need for the Member States to transform formal education and training systems in order to break down barriers between different forms of learning.

Language learning is a lifelong activity, for which the European Commission<sup>1</sup> identifies the following specific objectives: 1. learning of a mother tongue plus two other languages, 2. language learning in secondary education and training, 3. language learning in higher education, 4. language learning among adults, 5. encouragement for language learning by learners with special needs, 6. development of a wide range of languages. The action plan of language learning proposes teaching a subject through a foreign language, which would enable learners to use their language skills directly. Language learning in higher education envisages promoting multilingualism. All students should study abroad for at least one term and should gain an accepted language qualification as part of their degree course. According to the European Union Commission<sup>2</sup>, the main indicators of lifelong learning are learner autonomy, reflections on learning, self-assessment, e-learning, creativity and use of portfolios.

There is a variety of widely implemented methods that help people learn successfully: accelerated learning techniques, assessment alternatives, cooperative learning, learning styles, multiple intelligences, application of technology. The role of technology in lifelong learning has become particularly important. The e-learning initiative is part of the European Community's overall *e-Europe* strategy, which was designed at the Lisbon European Council in March 2000. The overall strategy is based on the *e-Europe* communication. A definition of e-learning is an all-encompassing term generally used to refer to computer-enhanced learning, although it is often extended to include the use of mobile technologies such as MP3 players, web-based teaching materials, multimedia, CD-ROMs, websites, discussion boards, e-mail, weblogs, wikis, computer aided assessment, simulations, games, learning management software, etc. World's future economy and society are being formed in the classrooms of today. Students need to be both well educated in their chosen field and digitally literate if they are to take part effectively in tomorrow's knowledge society.

## 1.2. Learning Strategies

The notion of learning strategies was intuitively appealing to researchers and it was embraced with enthusiasm by language teachers, although “there is a lack of an

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1 Activities of the European Union: Lifelong Learning [interactive]. [accessed 23-01-2011]. <<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/s19001.htm>>.

2 *Ibid.*; Activities of the European Union: Action Plan on Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity [interactive]. [accessed 23-01-2011]. <<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11068.htm>>.

unambiguous theoretical definition of the learning strategy construct, and most of the relevant literature in the second language field pretends that with regard of learning strategies everything is more or less okay”, i.e. the definitions of learning strategies offered in the second language literature are rather inconsistent and elusive<sup>3</sup>.

The initial research have generated two well-known taxonomies of language learning strategies: the first one is Oxford taxonomy<sup>4</sup>, and the second one O’Malley and Chamot taxonomy<sup>5</sup>.

Oxford taxonomy consisted of six strategies: cognitive, memory, metacognitive, compensation, affective, and social. Metacognition refers to thinking about cognition or reasoning about one’s own thinking. Most definitions of metacognition include both knowledge and strategy components. Metacognition is often referred to as “thinking about thinking” and can be used to help students “learn how to learn”. Metacognition has been linked with intelligence and it has been shown that those with greater metacognitive abilities tend to be more successful thinkers.

O’Malley and Chamot<sup>6</sup> carried out extensive research into learning strategies by means of the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach which is based on findings in cognitive psychology and is concerned with how knowledge is acquired, stored, and retrieved. Language learners use three main types of strategies. The first is metacognitive strategy, which involves planning and thinking about learning, its monitoring, and evaluating learning outcomes. The second is cognitive strategy, which involves conscious ways of tackling learning, i.e. note-taking, resourcing and elaboration – relating new information to old. The third is social strategy, which means learning by interacting with other people. In their research, usage of metacognitive strategies accounted for 30% of the learners, cognitive strategy was used by 53% of the learners, and social strategy made up 17%. It should be noted that the type of strategy varies according to the task the students are engaged in and their language proficiency. Learning strategies can be identified by administering scientifically sound surveys to learners, and learners should be taught to use different strategies, so that acquired strategies can be transferred to new tasks and subjects. Oxford strategy taxonomy<sup>7</sup> is highly compatible with O’Malley and Chamot taxonomy<sup>8</sup>, if communication strategies are excluded, and social / affective strategies are separated. The resulting taxonomy comprises the following four main components<sup>9</sup>: 1) cognitive strategies, involving the manipulation and transformation of the learning materials; 2) metacognitive strategies, involving higher order strategies aimed at analyzing, monitoring, evaluating and organizing one’s

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3 Dörnyei, Z. *The Psychology of the Language Learner. Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.

4 Oxford, R. L. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. New York: Newbury House, 1990.

5 O’Malley, J. M.; Chamot, A. *Strategies Used by Second Language Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Oxford, R. L., *supra* note 4.

8 O’Malley, J. M.; Chamot, A., *supra* note 5.

9 Dörnyei, Z., *supra* note 3.

own learning process; 3) social strategies, involving interpersonal behaviors aimed at increasing the amount of second language communication and practice interaction with native speakers, cooperating with peers; 4) affective strategies, involving control of the emotional conditions and experiences.

Research into language learning strategies investigates the feasibility of helping students become more effective language learners by teaching them learning strategies<sup>10</sup>. According to Cook<sup>11</sup>, good language learners are those who: 1. find a learning style that suits them; 2. involve themselves in the language learning process; 3. develop an awareness of language as a system and as a communication; 4. pay constant attention to expanding language knowledge; 5. take into account the demands that second language learning imposes.

In the recent years there has been considerable interest in the role of reflection in higher education. The most valuable way to promote a change of attitude alongside the acquisition of skills is encourage the learners to reflect on what they are doing and why. According to Coombi and Barlow<sup>12</sup>, the promotion of learner self-assessment remains one of the main benefits of alternative assessment. Tomlinson<sup>13</sup> suggests that ability to reflect, learning strategies and learners' attitudes are important aspects of learner autonomy that can lay the foundations for lifelong learning.

Active learning in higher education presupposes the ability to think critically, analyze and solve problems, use high-tech competently. Critical thinking skills are not likely to develop spontaneously and need to be improved and trained in English classes<sup>14</sup>. Language learners need to explore different learning strategies, experimenting and evaluating, and eventually choosing their own set of effective strategies.

The study of learner strategies by Griffiths and Parr<sup>15</sup> indicates discrepancies between student and teacher perceptions of language learning strategy use. Students rank social strategies as the most frequent, followed by metacognitive, compensation, cognitive, affective, and memory as the least frequent. Teachers' beliefs are different: memory strategies are the most frequent, followed by cognitive, social, metacognitive, compensation, and affective. Griffiths & Parr<sup>16</sup> claim that it is possible that some of the discrepancies may be due to differing interpretations of the strategy groupings.

The possible implications of learning strategies for teaching are: language learners need to explore different learning strategies, experimenting and evaluating, and eventually choosing their own set of effective strategies.

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10 Chamot, A. U. Issues in Language Learning Strategy Research and Teaching. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*. 2004, 1: 14–26.

11 Cook, V. *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. London: Arnold, 1996.

12 Coombi, Ch.; Barlow, L. The Reflective Portfolio. *English Teaching Forum*. 2004, 42: 18–23.

13 Tomlinson, B. *Materials Development in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

14 Ustunluoglu, E. Language Teaching Through Critical Thinking and Self-Awareness. *English Teaching Forum*. 2004, 42: 2–7.

15 Griffiths, C.; Parr, M. Language-Learning Strategies: Theory and Perception. *ELT Journal*. 2001, 55: 247–254.

16 *Ibid.*

It should be emphasized that learning strategies were never explicitly rejected, and the learning strategies have been taught by English teachers. However the concept of learning strategies is considered to be fruitless for research purposes and the notion of self-regulation is thought to be a more dynamic concept because it refers to multidimensional construct, including cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, behavioral and environmental processes<sup>17</sup>. Learning strategy is only one component of self-regulation which consists of a long list: goal setting, strategic planning, monitoring, metacognition, time management, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, intrinsic interest, evaluation and self-reflection, and feedback. This complex construct of self-regulation still needs to be researched.

### 1.3. Strategy Training

The notion of learning to learn in second language studies has a history of over three decades. Strategy training is defined as the explicit teaching of how, when, and why students should employ language learning strategies to enhance their efforts at reaching language program goals<sup>18</sup>. Since the 1970s, researchers have addressed the need for strategy training in response to the lack of students' awareness of the cognitive tools and strategies available to them. Evaluation of strategy training concerns the changes in learner behavior from the perspectives of task improvement, strategy maintenance, and strategy transfer. The impact of strategy training on the learner not only leads to the improvement of language proficiency, but also engages with the learners' internal changes in the learning process. The theoretical model<sup>19</sup> illustrates the relationship among the dimensions and categories of the changes in the participants' learning processes and emphasizes the need for balancing all the criteria that may contribute to successful learning. Strategy training frameworks aim to achieve the following goals<sup>20</sup>: "to raise learners' awareness about learning strategies; to encourage strategy use; to offer a number of relevant strategies for learners to choose from; to offer controlled practice in the use of strategies; to provide an analysis for students' to reflect on their strategy use."

It is claimed by Cohen<sup>21</sup> that the ultimate goal of strategy training is to empower students by allowing them to take control of the language learning process. However, some researchers caution teachers against investing too much effort into strategy training as this is not likely to be cost-effective, while proponents of strategy training claim that there is enough positive evidence to justify further work in this area<sup>22</sup>.

Most studies evaluating the effectiveness of strategy training for second language learners have quantitatively measured improvements in their test scores following

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17 Dörnyei, Z., *supra* note 3.

18 Chen, Y. Learning to Learn: the Impact of Strategy Training. *ELT Journal*. 2007, 61: 20–29.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Dörnyei, Z., *supra* note 3, p. 178.

21 Cohen, A. D. *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. New York: Longman, 1998.

22 Dörnyei, Z., *supra* note 3.

the completion of strategy training. Chen<sup>23</sup> argues that the evaluation methods must be supplemented by a qualitative analysis of the impact that strategy training has on the learning process; he contributes a theoretical model that illustrates the relationship among changes in participants learning processes and four dimensions for evaluation criteria, namely, the observable changes in learners' behavior, changes in their learning Process strategy changes in approach to study a foreign language, and general changes in attitudes towards language learning.

There are three current models for language learning strategy instruction: SSBI Model<sup>24</sup>, CALLA Model<sup>25</sup>, and by Grenfell and Harris<sup>26</sup>. All these models identify students' current learning strategies through activities such as completing questionnaires, engaging in discussions about familiar tasks, and reflecting on strategies used after performing a task. All the models suggest that the teacher should demonstrate the new strategy. Moreover, current models are based on developing students' knowledge about their own thinking and strategies processes and encouraging them to adopt strategies that will improve their language learning and proficiency. However, students are often unable to transfer strategies to new tasks. Transfer of strategies can increase significantly if teachers help learners understand their own learning processes. The issue of transfer has not been sufficiently investigated. Differences were found between high attaining and low attaining students: high achievers used more metacognitive strategies and were making transfers while low achievers failed to use strategies<sup>27</sup>.

## 2. Respondents and Methods

The respondents were the full-time students who study either psychology or social work at tertiary level. There were 90 participants altogether. The respondents were predominantly females between 19 and 21 years old. Students were spread over two English proficiency levels: pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate according to their score on the Oxford Placement Test at the beginning of the course. The amount of time spent in English classes was 4 hours a week for 2 semesters.

The most frequent and efficient method for identifying students' learning strategies is through self-reported data like questionnaires, interviews or diaries, all of which were employed in this study.

Two sets of the Strategy Inventory were used. The first questionnaire was based on the works of O'Malley and Chamot<sup>28</sup> and McCoy<sup>29</sup>, who used a modified questionnaire

23 Chen, Y., *supra* note 18.

24 Cohen, A. D., *supra* note 21.

25 Chamot, A. U., *supra* note 10.

26 Grenfell, M.; Harris, V. *Modern Language and Learning Strategies: In Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, 1999.

27 Harris, V. Adapting Classroom-based Strategy Instruction to a Distance Learning Context [interactive]. *TESL-EJ*. 2003, 7: 2 [accessed 31-01-2011]. <<http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej26/a1.html>>.

28 O'Malley, J. M.; Chamot, A., *supra* note 5.

29 McCoy, D. Utilizing Students' Preferred Language Learning Strategies for IELTS Test Preparation [interactive]. *EA Journal*. 2006, 23: 3–13 [accessed 10-12-2010]. <<http://www.englishaustralia.com.au>>.

which grouped language learning strategies (metacognitive, cognitive and joint social and affective ones). Due to some obtained uncertainties, we used the different type of Strategy Inventory for language learning, which was based on our students' opinions. First, students worked through the above mentioned questionnaire, then - the Strategy Inventory version by Oxford<sup>30</sup> was applied. Finally, following the brainstorming stage of language learning strategies, students contributed their own ideas on the most important learning strategies. As a result, a new questionnaire was designed. It contains 16 items and appears to be similar to reported by Griffiths<sup>31</sup>, although the latter is twice as long (32 items).

### 3. Results and discussion

The basic instruments for the current study were two surveys on identifying students' strategies in learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP). We used a survey after O'Malley and Chamot<sup>32</sup> and McCoy<sup>33</sup>, and our own designed survey, which reflected our students' preferences.

The questions of the first survey are reproduced in Appendix 1. This is a self-scoring survey which consists of statements, to which students responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The 12 items of the survey are divided into four groups: metacognitive strategies (relating to how learners manage their learning), cognitive strategies (relating to how students think about their learning), social strategies (involving learners by communication with peers), and affective strategies (relating to learners' emotions). Since social and affective strategies are interrelated they are often combined<sup>34</sup>.

The statements of the Strategy Inventory are taken after O'Malley and Chamot<sup>35</sup>, and McCoy<sup>36</sup> and are reproduced in Table 1. The responses of our respondents are shown in 3 columns – positive, negative and uncertain.

The data in Table 1, i.e. the positive, negative and uncertain responses have been quite unexpected because there are no significant preferences in learning strategies. In other words, the responses are almost the same within the error limits: social / affective strategies make total 78%, cognitive - 78%, and metacognitive - 75%. Contrary to our data, in the earlier paper by Griffiths and Parr<sup>37</sup> students ranked metacognitive strategies as the most frequent language learning strategies (6 on a scale from 6 to 1) while cognitive

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30 Oxford, R. L., *supra* note 4.

31 Griffiths, C. Language Learning Strategies: Students' and Teachers' Perceptions. *ELT Journal*. 2007, 61: 91–99.

32 O'Malley, J. M.; Chamot, A., *supra* note 5.

33 McCoy, D., *supra* note 29.

34 *Ibid.*

35 O'Malley, J. M.; Chamot, A., *supra* note 5.

36 McCoy, D., *supra* note 29.

37 Griffiths, C.; Parr, M., *supra* note 15.

and affective strategies are less frequent (3 and 2, respectively). However, in the recent article Griffiths<sup>38</sup> claims that many strategy items in Oxford's typology can be included in more than one group and, thus, the data might be inconclusive. Moreover, some items such as consulting a dictionary were not short-listed in the previous studies of various authors<sup>39</sup>. For this reason, it has been essential to find out what strategies our students prefer to use in mastering their language skills.

**Table 1.** Our findings of the survey on the use of metacognitive, cognitive, and social / affective strategies (after O'Malley & Chamot<sup>40</sup>, and McCoy<sup>41</sup>).

<b>Metacognitive strategies</b>	Positive responses	Negative responses	Uncertain responses
Advanced organizer	78%	12%	10%
Selective attention	75%	10%	15%
Self-management	80%	15%	5%
Self-monitoring and evaluation	70%	10%	20%
Delayed production	70%	10%	20%
<b>Average</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Cognitive strategies</b>	Positive responses	Negative responses	Uncertain responses
Repetition	75%	10%	15%
Resourcing	80%	10%	10%
Translation	80%	10%	10%
Inference	75%	10%	15%
<b>Average</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Social / affective strategies</b>	Positive responses	Negative responses	Uncertain responses
Clarification	75%	10%	15%
Cooperation (pair work)	80%	10%	10%
Participation (group discussions)	75%	5%	20%
Assistance	82%	8%	10%
<b>Average</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>14%</b>

38 Griffiths, C., *supra* note 31.

39 *Ibid.*

40 O'Malley, J. M.; Chamot, A., *supra* note 5.

41 McCoy, D., *supra* note 29.

As it has already been mentioned, we have conducted investigation into learners' preferred learning strategies by brainstorming the issue and generating a different type of Strategy Inventory. A newly designed questionnaire took into account students' reflections on their learning strategies. This Strategy Inventory consists of 16 items and is reproduced in Table 2. Students were asked how often they used the strategy items on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). This new Strategy Inventory was completed by 90 students who were spread over two basic English for Specific Purposes proficiency levels: Pre-Intermediate (PI, 50 students) and Upper-Intermediate (UI, 40 students). The responses were processed by a means of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings in Table 2 include: the statements (column 2), the Mean values  $M$  of students' responses (columns 3 and 5), the Standard Deviations  $SD$  (columns 4 and 6), and the two-tailed significance levels  $p$  (column 7). These results were obtained by computing the Student's  $t$ -test which is applicable in cases of small samples.

The values of  $p$  serve as the indicators whether there is a significance difference between responses of students' groups. If  $p$  is equal to 0.05, it means that the probability that data differ is 95%. If  $p$  is equal to 0.01, it means that the probability for data to be different is 99%. Thus, the  $p$  values that indicate the significant difference between group responses are shown in bold fonts in Table 2. Therefore, in such cases it may be concluded that the lower  $p$ , the better respondents are at using a particular language learning strategy. Obviously, the  $p$  values between 0.138 and 0.614 in Table 2 show that the Means for both groups can be interpreted as statistically close, i.e. there is no significant difference between groups in using these learning strategies.

It can be seen that it is hardly expedient to rank these strategies into metacognitive, compensation, cognitive, affective, social, and memory groups, i.e. in the same way as many researchers have used before, basically because some of them overlap. The most important result is the types of strategies that learners find beneficial to mastering their language skills. Another important point is the comparison of strategy use at different levels of proficiency. As it can be seen, some strategies are more significant at either higher or lower level of proficiency. Students' individual differences outline the virtues and benefits of particular strategy use. The preferential use of certain strategies implies that learners might rely on them in the future, i.e. when the need for language refinement emerges.

As a matter of interest it is worth mentioning that the coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha, which is a coefficient of reliability or consistency of the data, has also been computed by a means of SPSS. A reliability coefficient Alpha of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable in most Social Science research situations. In our case the value Alpha is equal to .87, which shows high reliability of the presented data.

**Table 2.** Statistical data obtained by a means of SPSS software. PI level: 50 students.  
UI level: 40 students.

No	Statements	PI level: Means M	PI level: Standard Devia- tions SD	UI level: Means M	UI level: Standard Devia- tions (SD)	Two- tailed signifi- cance level <i>p</i>
1	<b>Homework assignments</b>	3.62	0.75	3.92	0.76	<b>0.064</b>
2	Pair work in class	3.73	0.64	3.83	0.79	0.510
3	<b>Use of online/paper dictionary</b>	3.82	0.51	4.11	0.49	<b>0.008</b>
4	Listening practice in class	3.91	0.83	3.82	0.85	0.614
5	Revision of tenses	3.85	0.67	3.75	0.77	0.512
6	Learning ESP vocabulary	3.95	0.85	3.80	0.92	0.425
7	Doing linguistic computer tasks	3.27	0.80	3.04	0.85	0.191
8	Watching authentic TV films	3.23	0.92	3.51	0.83	0.138
9	Revision of ESP materials	3.11	0.80	3.36	0.75	0.134
10	<b>Talking to native English speakers</b>	3.24	0.75	3.67	0.76	<b>0.009</b>
11	<b>Listening to English podcasts</b>	3.85	0.62	4.12	0.78	<b>0.071</b>
12	<b>Writing entries to weblogs</b>	3.85	0.62	4.14	0.78	<b>0.053</b>
13	<b>Analyzing one's own mistakes</b>	3.63	0.75	3.95	0.76	<b>0.049</b>
14	Time spent on studying English	3.44	0.70	3.63	0.74	0.216
15	<b>Learning phrasal verbs</b>	3.82	0.50	4.12	0.48	<b>0.007</b>
16	<b>Translation from L1 to L2 and vice versa</b>	3.67	0.50	4.15	0.49	<b>0.005</b>

#### 4. Learners' Reflections

Reflections on learning are usually a novel experience for many students. Some of them do not feel that self-assessment might be supportive to their learning. It should be emphasized that reflections are difficult for students and may be even superficial because they include the ability to evaluate oneself critically. Nevertheless, impartial reflections usually lead to self-knowledge, which is fundamental to learner development, and are employed as a means of monitoring the process of learning. Some researchers as Kuit

et.al.<sup>42</sup> claim that reflection works best in collaboration with others, which is true for the academic staff, but questionable for students, who are very sensitive about losing face.

Our previous research<sup>43</sup> into learners' reflections included an open-ended survey on their achievements in various class activities including tests and written work.

The contents of students' reflections under the self-assessment headlines are available in their weblogs which are incorporated into the teacher's website<sup>44</sup>. The essence of students' reflections can be summarized as follows: 1) students seem to find it easy to carry out reflections on what they did and how they did it, i.e. the difficulty or ease in their performance; 2) students assess their own strengths and weaknesses realistically by exploring experiences and formulating ways for improvement; 3) students are open about preferences, abilities, awareness of achievements, willingness to perfect knowledge and skills.

The effectiveness of reflective strategy depends on the reflective activities and the commitment of the individuals who carry them out. For teachers, students' reflective responses are challenging because they stimulate staff to re-evaluate their teaching.

## Conclusions and Implications

Learners believe that in order to improve their language skills in the future, it is expedient to employ such learning strategies as translation from their native language into the second language and vice versa, use of dictionary with the aim of learning an accurate meaning of the word and its usage, and habitual listening to authentic English. Students' attitudes to various learning strategies essentially differ due to their individual differences.

Learning strategies constitute a useful tool for active learning, promote learner autonomy and prompt proficiency. Due to the benefits and virtues of learning strategies learners increase the effectiveness of learning and extend their knowledge of "know how to learn". Such knowledge lays down foundations to lifelong learning which is essential for every person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The main implications of this study for teachers are to monitor student's individual differences and achievements, encourage students' reflective practice, and obtain feedback on the best learning strategies for a particular learner. Unconventional approach to teaching a unique person rather than a class of very similar people might enhance learning motivation and justify teacher's efforts for improving teaching quality.

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42 Kuit, J. A.; Reay, G.; Freeman, R. Experiences of Reflective Teaching. *Active Learning in Higher Education*. 2001, 2: 128–142.

43 Kavaliauskienė, G.; Darginavičienė, I. Feedback at University Level Studies. *Socialinis darbas*. 2010, 9(1): 132–140.

44 Kavaliauskienė, G. (Studentų darbai 2010 m.) [interactive]. [accessed 23-01-2011]. <<http://gkaval.home.mruni.eu>>.

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**Appendix 1.** Survey of students' metacognitive, cognitive and social / affective strategies (after O'Malley & Chamot<sup>45</sup>, and McCoy<sup>46</sup>).

No	Specification	Metacognitive strategies
1	Advanced organizer	Review materials and prepare for classes
2	Selective attention	Focus on a specific language point at a time
3	Self- management	Arrange the best learning environment
4	Self-monitoring& evaluation	Correction and identification of one's errors
5	Delayed production	Learn by listening, reluctant to talk
		<b>Cognitive strategies</b>
6	Repetition	Imitation of other people's speech
7	Resourcing	Use of dictionary or reference books
8	Translation	Use of translation in learning
9	Inference	Guess the meaning from context
		<b>Social /affective strategies</b>
10	Clarification	Ask for clarification of unknown words
11	Cooperation (pair work)	Active in pair work
12	Participation	Active in group discussions
13	Assistance	Help others and their help in learning

## MOKYMOŠI VISĄ GYVENIMĄ STRATEGIJOS

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**Santrauka.** Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas studentų pasirinktų anglų kalbos mokymosi strategijų universitetinėse studijose panaudojimas mokymosi visą gyvenimą ugdymui. Mokymosi visą gyvenimą filosofija yra ta, kad mokytis niekada nėra vėlu. Gerai žinoma, kad nors mokymosi kalbų studentai naudoja įvairias strategijas, bet ne visiems mokytis sekasi sėkmingai. Labai svarbu yra išmokyti, kaip reikia mokytis. Vienas iš kalbos kurso tikslų yra išmokyti studentus toliau savarankiškai mokytis kalbos kursui pasibaigus. Antras svarbus veiksnys yra studentų kritinio mąstymo sugebėjimas realiai įvertinti savo užsienio kalbos žinias. Trečias svarbus veiksnys, glaudžiai susijęs su efektyviu kalbos mokymusi, yra sugebėjimas naudotis šiuolaikinėmis informacinėmis-komunikacinėmis technologijomis.

45 O'Malley, J. M.; Chamot, A., *supra* note 5.

46 McCoy, D., *supra* note 29.

Šiame tyrime dalyvavo 90 Mykolo Romerio universiteto Socialinės politikos fakulteto skirtingų studijų programų studentai, studijuojantys specialybės anglų kalbą. Respondentai daugiausia buvo moterys, jų amžius svyravo nuo 19 iki 21 metų. Mokymas truko 4 semestrus po 4 akademines valandas per savaitę. Tyrinėjimas paremtas duomenų, gautų atlikus dvi skirtingas apklausas dėl studentų pasirinktos kalbos mokymosi strategijos, analize. Pagal anglų kalbos igudžius respondentai pasiskirstė į du lygius. Buvo palygintos jų mokymosi strategijos. Gauti apklausos atsakymai buvo apdoroti SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) programiniu paketu. Veiklos rūšys, kurių reikšmingumo lygis p didesnis, yra neabejotinai naudingiausios. Savianalizė ir studentų mokymosi rezultatų refleksinis apmąstymas atskleidė įvairių mokymosi strategijų svarbą ir parodė, kurios iš jų gali būti tinkamos mokymosi visą gyvenimą ugdymui.

Tyrinėjimo rezultatai leidžia padaryti išvadą, kad lingvistinis studentų tobulėjimas priklauso nuo jų aktyvaus dalyvavimo asmeniškai planuojant mokymąsi, analizuojant mokymosi rezultatus ir numatant kalbos igūdžių tobulinimo būdus. Studentų individualiai pasirinktos strategijos gali būti efektyvus būdas, skatinantis jų motyvaciją savišvietai, o ilgalaikėje perspektyvoje ir mokymąsi visą gyvenimą.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** mokymosi visą gyvenimą strategijos, savianalizė, refleksinio mąstymo praktika, duomenų apdorojimas, specialybės kalba.

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