

# Language Learning Strategies from the Perspective of Learning Context

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## Abstract

Learning context, as an important influence on language learning strategy (LLS), has received more attention in recent years. For the purpose of better strategy choices in different learning contexts and language achievements, this study investigated LLS from the perspective of learning context. Participants were 44 doctoral students recruited in ESL learning context (the US) and EFL learning context (China). Data were gathered through a mixed-methods research design with the use of *the Language Strategy Use Inventory (LSUI)*. The results showed that the participants in both learning contexts reported to use similar LLSs in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, some strategies were used significantly more often in one learning context than the other (e.g., *Imitate the way native speakers talk* was used more often in ESL context; *Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I'm talking to can understand what is being said* is used more often in EFL context). The results also showed that a diversity of additional LLSs were differently used in each learning context. The findings revealed that learning contexts have influence on strategy choice. Furthermore, insights for future LLS research in contexts were offered.

**Keywords:** language learning strategy (LLS), learning context, mixed-methods study, ESL, EFL, the language strategy use inventory (LSUI)

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, among numerous emerged theories in LLS research, *Complexity Theory* and *Eclecticism* (Griffiths, 2018) has received attention. Complexity theory asserts that the complex nature of LLS use depends on relationships with (1) the learning context (situation), (2) the learning target and (3) individual learner differences; all of them interact with each other in extremely complex patterns (Griffiths & Inceçay, 2016, p. 26). Eclecticism suggests to “view the learners as a complex, dynamic, cognitively active, contextualized, goal-orientated individual who operates within a social environment, and whose learning is mediated by interaction with various others according to his or her own individual needs and characteristics. And all of these various factors influence the strategies that learners are willing or able to choose” (Griffiths, 2018, p. 58). The two theories both emphasize learning context (used interchangeably with learning environment and learning situation) as an important component in LLS research.

Learning context, however, as one of the important components in *Complexity Theory* and *Eclecticism*, has been neglected. Until recent years, it has been recognized as a major effect on learning outcomes and strategy choices (Gao, 2010; Oxford, 1996). Grenfell and Macaro (2007) claimed that the learning context was a major influence on the way that learners used strategies. Therefore, they emphasized “the need to contextualize LLS in an environment that facilitate strategic growth on the part of the learner” (p. 22). Griffiths (2018) also highlighted the worthiness of studying LLSs in contexts:

Clearly, no human activity, including language learning, takes place in a vacuum, and learning environment may well have a marked influence on the strategies that learners are willing or able to choose. But which strategies are going to be useful for which environment? (p. 110)

Griffiths (2018) argued that learning context must obviously be a factor when considering LLS effectiveness. She particularly pointed out how LLS effectiveness could be impacted compared an EFL/foreign language environment to a target language environment. For instance, students who study the target language in EFL/foreign language environment have well-recognized difficulties (Kawai, 2008); LLSs such as “watching TV in the target language to learn idioms”, “listening to people talking in the target language on the bus to practice understanding natural speech”, or “reading target language newspapers to expand vocabulary” (Griffiths, p. 22) probably will not be easy or even possible. As for students in a target language environment, the learning environment itself is not sufficient to guarantee successful learning because:

In reality, students often find it difficult to cope in learning and living situations which may be very different from those they are used to, and where they are linguistically, culturally, and socially challenged in ways which may threaten their very sense of identity, and severely affect motivation (Griffiths, 2018, p. 22).

What Griffiths (2018) concluded, in other words, can be interpreted as: students in both foreign language environment who face

challenges in their own familiar learning context and students in target language environment who leave their own familiar learning context to study in a foreign language-speaking country may well need LLSs to help them cope with their learning environment. However, studies which investigate the influence of context on LLS have been quantitatively limited, much less of those compare LLS use in different contexts. For the purpose of filling in the research gap, the research question of this study aimed to probe what strategies learners use in two different learning contexts – English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learning environment and investigate the influence of learning context on the choice of LLSs.

## 2. Literature Review

An early comparative study conducted by Riley and Harsh (1999) explored the extent to which learners of English were aware of, developed and used LLS, and the effect of guided reflection on LLS. They compared Japanese learners of English in two different learning environments – an EFL environment (Japan) and an ESL environment (America). A total of 82 similar learners participated in their study, including 28 Japanese ESL students studying in Hawaii, and 28 Japanese EFL students studying at a university in Japan, with another 26 EFL university students in Japan serving as a control group. The methods used to gather data were *Strategy Inventory Survey* adapted from Oxford's (1990) *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (the SILL)* and participants' written feedback. The study first found that ESL students reported greater use of LLS than EFL students. Second, the study found that there was no significant difference in the degree to which ESL and EFL learners perceived LLS to be useful. Third, the study found that there were both similarities and differences between EFL and ESL learners. For instance, six of the top ten strategy items (e.g., "When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use body movement, or draw pictures" "If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing") identified by both ESL and EFL were the same. As for the differences, some strategies were favored by EFL learners (e.g., "I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word" "I say or write new English words several times") and some strategies were preferred by ESL learners (e.g., "I try to talk like native English speakers" "I start conversations in English"). One of the aims of Riley's and Harsh's study was to investigate the effects of exposure to or instruction of LLS by comparing the kinds of strategies that were used and/or considered useful by similar learners in ESL and EFL environments.

Another related empirical research to the present study was conducted by Gao (2010). Aiming to achieve a rich and contextual picture of learners' strategy use, Gao reported his longitudinal ethnographic study of exploring mainland Chinese students' language learning experiences with a focus on their shifting strategy use before and after their arrival in an English medium university in Hong Kong. The results showed that participants, prior to coming to English medium university, had used memorization strategies extensively to memorize words, grammar rules, textbook texts, English essays, and speeches to achieve exam-related success. Other frequently used strategies among the participants included taking extracurricular courses and employing private English tutors to increase their exposure to English. When the exam pressure declined at the end of their secondary education, motivated participants started focusing more on improving linguistic competence and used more strategies to extend their exposure to English and increase their practice opportunities through a variety of activities, including listening to English songs, watching English movies and reading English books. The results also showed that after arrival in Hong Kong, the new learning context made all the participants attempt to increase their exposure to language input through the strategies of watching English TV programs, listening to the English radio and music, reading English books, newspapers and magazines, as well as using English to surf the internet. Nearly half of the participants reported using English with local students, exchange students and even other mainland Chinese students to practice and improve their speaking English, reflecting the increased necessity of using English at the university.

Another similar study conducted by Li (2014) assumed that the contextual differences between an English as a medium of instruction (EMI) university and EFL university might exert divergent influences on their students' LLS use. In order to investigate how learning context affected learners' strategy use, Liu's study paid attention to the strategic engagement among Chinese English learners in EMI settings within a broader EFL context and examined the differences in LLS use among two groups of non-English majors learning English in an EFL university and an EMI university in Mainland China. EFL universities are common in China Mainland while EMI universities are much fewer. The study assumed that the contextual differences between the two universities might exert divergent influences on their students' strategic engagement in the learning of English. The study recruited 241 participants, among which 122 were EMI learners and 119 were EFL learners. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews. Results show that the EMI learners demonstrated a higher level in their overall use of learning strategies than the EFL learners. The EMI learners employed meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies the most, and affective, social and memory strategies the least. The EMI learners had statistically significant differences from the EFL learners in the overall level of and in four specific categories of learning strategies including meta-cognitive, cognitive, affective, and social strategies. The findings of the study indicated that EMI learning context had significant influence on students' LLSs.

To conclude, the discussed studies all investigated LLSs in different contexts, especially compared target language environment and EFL/foreign language environment. However, these studies have their limitations. Riley's and Harsh's (1999) study was conducted over two decades ago; it may not be able to offer new insights for LLSs nowadays, though it was highly related to this study. Furthermore, LLSs used by learners over two decades ago may have changed now, for example, computer-aided or technology-based LLSs may be used more often and widely than before. Gao's (2010) was a case study with participation of our students only. It had a small number of participants, which makes it difficult to be sure of whether those findings would also apply to general L2 learners. Li's (2014) study employed Oxford's (1990) the *Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (the SILL)* which has been popular in LLS research. However,

this questionnaire has received criticisms, for instance, “with so many contextual influences on strategy choice, it seems that a single instrument could not possibly be applicable and useful to all possible groups of language learners” (Woodrow, 2005, p. 96). Therefore, to avoid the limitations, this study investigated LLSs used by learners nowadays in ESL and EFL environments with a larger number of participants and a different but effective questionnaire.

### 3. Research Questions

What language learning strategies do students use in ESL and EFL learning environments?

### 4. Methodology

#### 4.1 Participants

Participants were recruited in two different learning environments via snowball sampling. The 44 participants were all native speakers of Chinese; 25 were from five public universities in China and 19 from three public universities in the US. Their average age was 27 years old including 17 females and 27 males. The average years of their English study was 15. All participants were doctoral students and considered as higher level students. It is hoped that the LLS use of higher levels students might be good models for lower-level learners. The participants specialized in various fields of study.

#### 4.2 Instruments

This study used a background survey (adapted from Cohen, 2011) to gather general information of students (e.g., age, gender, major, years of English study) before collecting data. The information from the background survey was not analyzed and coded because it was not directly used to answer the research question. A strategy questionnaire (see Appendix) – *Language Strategy Use Inventory (the LSUI)* was used to collect data. The LSUI was created by Cohen, Oxford, and Chi (2003) and was modified for this study. The LSUI does not compute mean scale scores; it was described as “broke new ground as a skill-based means of researching strategy use” (White, Schramm, and Chamot, 2007, p.96).

#### 4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed through the SPSS program for descriptive statistics. The frequency and mean of data for LLSs used by the participants were summarized; the variability of the scores was shown via standard deviation. The qualitative data were analyzed through the “classic method” (Holiday, 2015, p.53) which includes steps of coding, determining themes, constructing an argument, and going back to the data. The present study focused on examining *what* LLSs that students use, therefore, in the LSUI only strategies that students *used* were counted when measuring the strategy use. In other words, option A “*I use this strategy and like it*” and option B “*I have tried this strategy and would use it again*” were collapsed. Because they actually both indicate that students do *use* a strategy regardless their attitude of “like it” or “would use it again”. LLSs that students did not use were excluded in measurement because option C and D indicate that students do not use a specific strategy. For each LLS, the frequency was determined by calculating how many participants reported that they used the LLS (i.e., how many participants chose option A or B).

Qualitative data from the questionnaire were first transcribed and translated, and then grouped according to the four open-ended questions (i.e., all data from open-ended question one [speaking] were put together, all data from open-ended question two [listening] were put together, etc.). When coding the data, coding patterns were identified. For example, if a participant says, “I memorize new words when I hear them in daily life and use them in my own speaking” and another says, “I learn useful expressions in conversations and keep them in mind for later use”, then a pattern is identified and grouped as one speaking strategy “Memorize useful expressions for later use in my own speaking”. For another example, if a participant describes a strategy in the open-ended questions that is very similar or the same as one or more of the closed-ended items, then this strategy is also excluded. The reason for excluding such strategies is because qualitative data of the questionnaire was meant to reveal strategies that are *additional* to the strategies already listed in the LSUI.

#### 4.4 Reliability of Coding

The quality of coding procedure was first self-checked by the researcher, and then checked by a colleague in applied linguistics field. The researcher’s self-checking processes included the following steps. First, questionnaire quantitative data were scrutinized. The frequency of each LLS reported by the participants was recalculated to ensure accuracy. No calculation errors were found. Second, the questionnaire qualitative data were scrutinized. The checking identified several coding errors. For example, the listening strategy on the LSUI “Listen to talk shows on the radio, watch TV shows, or see movies in the target language” and the additional listening strategy reported by the participants “Get myself immersed in hearing English as often as possible such as listening to news, shows, and music” are considered as overlapped strategies. So, the later one is excluded.

The quality of coding procedure was also checked by a second coder who was a linguistic colleague. She executed similar processes as the researcher did. First, questionnaire quantitative data were checked and calculated. No errors were found. Second, questionnaire qualitative data were partially checked (10% of the transcripts were randomly chosen for checking). She identified the reported LLSs by the participants and coded two of the LLSs. Her identification of LLSs was a 99% match with the researcher’s.

### 5. Results

Table 1 shows that the participants in both learning environments reported to use all the 26 listening strategies. The mean and standard deviation indicate very slight differences of listening strategy use in the two learning environments. However, some strategy items were

reported by many more participants in one learning environment than the other. For instance, the strategy “Imitate the way native speakers talk”, which was used by 89% of the ESL participants and only 28% EFL participants; the strategy “Practice ‘skim listening’ by paying attention to some parts and ignoring others”, which was used by 47% ESL participants and 72% EFL participants.

Table 1. Listening Strategies in the LSUI Used by the Participants

Contexts	Strategy Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
ESL	26	76.92	16.33
EFL	26	73.38	17.00

Table 2 shows that the participants in both learning environments reported to use all the same 18 speaking strategies. A slight lower variation in the standard deviation of EFL learning environment indicates that the EFL participants had smaller gap in using the strategies. However, some strategy items were reported by many more participants in one learning environment than the other. For instance, the strategy “Regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers” was used by 79% ESL participants but 48% EFL participants; the strategy “Use words from my own language but say them in a way that sounds like words in the target language” was used by 16% ESL participants but 41% EFL participants.

Table 2. Speaking Strategies in the LSUI Used by the Participants

Contexts	Strategy Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
ESL	18	66.94	22.03
EFL	18	64.78	17.69

Table 3 shows the participants in both learning environments reported to use all the same 12 reading strategies. The mean and standard deviation indicate that the use of reading strategies was of high similarity in ESL and EFL learning environments. Only one strategy “Read a story or dialogue several times until I understand it” was used by 74% ESL participants but 96% EFL participants.

Table 3. Reading Strategies in the LSUI Used by the Participants

Contexts	Strategy Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
ESL	12	83.75	12.09
EFL	12	81.33	13.36

Table 4 shows the participants in both learning environments reported to have all the same 10 writing strategies. The mean and standard deviation indicate that the use of writing strategies was highly similar in ESL and EFL learning environments. Only one strategy showed a slight noticeable frequency difference, that is, “Use reference materials such as a glossary, a dictionary, or a thesaurus to help find or verify words in the target language”, which was used by 95% ESL participants but 72% EFL participants.

Table 4. Writing Strategies in the LSUI Used by the Participants

Contexts	Strategy Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
ESL	10	85.10	12.17
EFL	10	80.40	15.02

Apart from the listed strategy items (n=56) in LSUI, some of the participants also wrote down their own LLSs as additional strategies (in Table 5). These additional strategies do not overlap with the listed ones in LSUI because the overlapped strategies were excluded. Most of the reported additional listening strategies were either simply used by the ESL participants or the EFL participants. Only one strategy was used by participants in both learning environments, that is, “Listen to English songs and try to understand the lyrics”. Nearly all the reported additional speaking strategies were simply used either by the ESL participants or the EFL participants. Simply one strategy was used by participants in both learning environments, that is, “Memorize useful expressions for later use in my own speaking”. Most of the reported additional reading strategies were either used only in ESL or EFL learning environment. Only one strategy was used by the participants in both environments, that is, “Learn and collect new words from readings”. Nearly half of the additional writing strategies were only used either by the ESL or EFL participants. Another half were used by participants in both learning environments (“use computer-aided writing tools to revise my papers”, “write research papers as much as possible”, etc.).

Table 5. Additional LLSs Reported by the Participants

LLSs	ESL	EFL
<b>Listening</b>		
Listen to English songs and try to understand the lyrics	Yes	Yes
Make phone calls in English and listen to how native speakers express themselves in authentic ways	Yes	No
Watch ESL podcast for one hour each day	Yes	No
Enlarge my vocabulary and pronounce each word correctly to understand what I hear	No	Yes
Practice my listening by joining ESL/EFL class by which I can have either face-to-face or online conversations with friends from different countries	No	Yes
Collect useful sentences I hear from such as news, dialogues, and science articles, and write them down	No	Yes
<b>Speaking</b>		
Memorize useful expressions for later use in my own speaking	Yes	Yes
Do shadow speaking (repeat the lines) when I watch English TV series	Yes	No
Record my own voice and play it back to see if there's anything I need to pay attention to	Yes	No
Watch some language learning videos that introduce phrases or slangs commonly used by native speakers, and then try to use them when I talk	Yes	No
Read English aloud to practice my pronunciation	Yes	No
Develop a habit of speaking English to myself	Yes	No
Learn from the mistakes that non-native speakers often make	Yes	No
Learn different dialects of English when traveling around	Yes	No
Choose an accent I like and imitate the way native speakers speak	No	Yes
Use learning APPs to practice speaking	No	Yes
Find internship opportunities in foreign companies where English is used	No	Yes
Try to speak faster when speaking in English	No	Yes
Translate movie lines from Chinese into English orally	No	Yes
Practice TOEFL speaking test to improve speaking	No	Yes
<b>Reading</b>		
Translate movie lines from Chinese into English orally	No	Yes
Learn and collect new words from readings	Yes	Yes
Discuss scholarly articles with my peers and professors before I read them to get general information	Yes	No
Simplify complex sentences in reading for understanding such as replacing an object-clause with an object	Yes	No
Do written translation practice between English and Chinese for a deeper understanding of the texts	Yes	No
Limit my reading time on a given reading text because such practice forces me to finish reading within time limit	No	Yes
Read with questions like what information do I want to get from the text, and what are the main points?	No	Yes
Pay special attention to key information in a text such as statistics, time, keywords, and key sentences	No	Yes
<b>Writing</b>		
Use computer-aided writing tools to revise my papers	Yes	Yes
Write research papers as much as possible	Yes	Yes
Enlarge my vocabulary extensively	Yes	Yes
Learn writing skills from the leading scholars in my field of study and imitate their writing styles	Yes	Yes
Take writing classes to learn writing skills	Yes	Yes
Outline well-written articles that I read and conclude what makes them good, and then learn from them	Yes	No
Read my writings out loud to see if they are fluent	Yes	No
Try to use the English language of thought when writing not simply translating Chinese sentences into English	Yes	No
Go to the writing center of my university for help	Yes	No
Read academic writing related books to learn writing skills	Yes	No
Do translation to practice my writing skills, for example, I first translate English news into Chinese, and then paraphrase it in my own words and compare it with the original text	No	Yes
Write diary or journal in English	No	Yes

To conclude, participants in ESL and EFL learning environments reported to use all the same 66 strategy items (including listening, speaking, reading, and writing strategy) in the LSUI. However, some LLSs were used much more frequently in one learning environment than the other. Apart from the 66 close-ended strategy items, participants also reported LLSs which were additional to the LSUI. These LLSs complement the listed strategy items in the LSUI. Though participants reported some similar LLSs in both learning environments, most of the reported additional LLSs were differently used in each learning environment.

## 6. Discussion

The findings showed that students in both learning environments used a wide range of strategies to facilitate their language learning. Influenced by the learning environment, most of the LLSs were either used by students in one environment or another, though some of them were used in both environments. This study reinforced the general pattern that students use a variety of LLSs in contexts (e.g., Riley and Harsh, 1999; Gao, 2010; Lafford, 2004; Liu, 2014; Li, 2007; Griffiths, 2006; Parks and Raymond, 2004; Adams, 2006). Besides, this study indicates that LLS choices are influenced by learning environment of students. For instance, in listening strategies, the strategy item “Imitate the way native speakers talk” was used much commonly by students in target language environment than the students in EFL/foreign language environment, which possibly indicates the impact of learning contexts on the choice of strategy use. Because students are in a target language environment such as the US, they have plenty of opportunities to hear native speakers talk, and that makes this imitating strategy more possible. Though students in EFL/foreign language environment such as China can use this strategy too, the fact is, there is much less opportunities to hear native speakers talk in everyday life. In speaking strategies, the strategy item “Regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers” used more frequently by target language environment may imply that the environment has influence on students’ strategy choice. Because to regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers, a dominant English-speaking context seems to have more opportunities compared to China’s non-English-speaking learning context. Moreover, the additional speaking strategy “Find internship opportunities in foreign companies where English is used” used by students in EFL/foreign language environment obviously showed contextual influence because EFL/foreign language environment students are more likely to refer to “foreign companies where English is used”.

### 6.1 Limitations of the Present Study

This study has its limitations. First, methodologically, it did not adopt any new research tool along with the existing ones to investigate LLSs. Cohen and Griffiths (2015) proposed that there is a need to choose and construct new research tools to use along with existing ones. Second, the English proficiency of the participants were not evaluated. They were assumed as higher level learners simply because they were doctoral students who have to write in academic English frequently, which requires high proficiency in English. If their language proficiency were accurately measured, the elicited data might be more accurate. Third, the number of the participants could be larger. This study had 44 participants for questionnaire (the LSUI) data collection. If a larger number of participants were used, the data elicited might be richer.

### 6.2 Implications for Future Research

This study has suggestions for future LLS research. First, studies are needed on how the three elements – the learning context (learning environment or learning situation), the learning target (e.g., study for personal interest or for exams), and individual learner difference (e.g., personality, ethnicity, age) in *Complexity Theory* and *Eclecticism* interact with each other and influence learners’ LLS use. A large number of LLS studies have been long focused on individual learner differences and a much smaller number of studies have focused on investigating learning contexts and strategy use. Effective strategy uses and better language outcomes are unseparated with all the three elements. Thus, future studies are advised to take a step in the direction of investigating how these elements work together to better facilitate language learning. For example, what LLSs that learners with different personalities (individual learner difference) use when studying for exams in a specific learning context (or environment), and how useful the strategies are.

Second, future studies which use LSUI to investigate LLSs are suggested to updated it before using. Though the reliability and validity of LSUI have been testified, it may not be suitable for language learners at different proficiency levels or in any specific learning context because it was not specifically designed for higher level students. The results of the present study did not find much different strategy use from close-ended strategy items in LSUI but identified many additional LLSs from open-ended questions. In other words, participants identified lots of LLSs that are particularly useful, and those LLSs are not listed on the LSUI. This might indicate that the LSUI needs to be updated. So, for future studies, the items in LSUI need to be modified and updated according to actual circumstances such as adding more strategies for more proficient learners and deleting some for young learners such as children.

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## Appendix

### Language Learning Strategy Inventory (the LSUI)

The purpose of this inventory is to find out more about yourself as a language learner and to help you discover strategies that can help you master English. Mark the item that describes your use of each listed strategy. The categories are:

**I use this strategy and like it (mark A);**

**I have tried this strategy and would use it again (mark B);**

**I've never used this strategy but am interested in it (mark C);**

**This strategy doesn't fit for me (mark D).**

Please note that "target" language refers to the English language.

#### Listening Strategy Use

##### Strategies to increase my exposure to the target language:

1. Attend out-of-class events where the new language is spoken.
2. Listen to talk shows on the radio, watch TV shows, or see movies in the target language.
3. Listen to the language in a restaurant or store where the staff speak the target language.
4. Listen in on people who are having conversations in the target language to try to catch the gist of what they are saying.

##### Strategies to become more familiar with the sounds in the target language:

5. Practice sounds in the target language that are very different from sounds in my own language to become comfortable with them.
6. Look for associations between the sound of a word or phrase in the new language with the sound of a familiar word.
7. Imitate the way native speakers talk.
8. Ask a native speaker about unfamiliar sounds that I hear.

##### Strategies to prepare to listen to conversation in the target language:

9. Pay special attention to specific aspects of the language; for example, the way the speaker pronounces certain sounds.
10. Try to predict what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.
11. Prepare for talks and performances I will hear in the target language by reading some background materials beforehand.

##### Strategies to listen to conversation in the target language:

12. Listen for key words that seem to carry the bulk of the meaning.
13. Listen for word and sentence stress to see what native speakers emphasize when they speak.
14. Pay attention to when and how long people tend to pause.
15. Pay attention to the rise and fall of speech by native speakers—the "music" of it.
16. Practice "skim listening" by paying attention to some parts and ignoring others.
17. Try to understand what I hear without translating it word for word.
18. Focus on the context of what people are saying.
19. Listen for specific details to see whether I can understand them.

##### Strategies for when I do not understand some or most of what someone says in the target language:

20. Ask speakers to repeat what they said if it wasn't clear to me.
21. Ask speakers to slow down if they are speaking too fast.
22. Ask for clarification if I don't understand it the first time around.
23. Use the speakers' tone of voice as a clue to the meaning of what they are saying.
24. Make educated guesses about the topic based on what has already been said.
25. Draw on my general background knowledge to get the main idea.
26. Watch speakers' gestures and general body language to help me figure out the meaning of what they are saying.

*What other listening strategies do I use?*

#### Speaking Strategy Use



**Strategies to practice speaking:**

45. Practice saying new expressions to myself.
46. Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level in using them.
47. Think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way.

**Strategies to engage in conversation:**

48. Regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers.
49. Initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible.
50. Direct the conversation to familiar topics.
51. Plan out in advance what I want to say.
52. Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation.
53. Anticipate what will be said based on what has been said so far.
54. Try topics even when they aren't familiar to me.
55. Encourage others to correct errors in my speaking.
56. Try to figure out and model native speakers' language patterns when requesting, apologizing, or complaining.

**Strategies for when I can't think of a word or expression:**

57. Ask for help from my conversation partner.
58. Look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym.
59. Use words from my own language, but say them in a way that sounds like words in the target language.
60. Make up new words or guess if I don't know the right ones to use.
61. Use gestures as a way to try to get my meaning across.
62. Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I'm talking to can understand what is being said.

*What other speaking strategies do I use?*

**Reading Strategy Use****Strategies to improve my reading ability:**

63. Read as much as possible in the target language.
64. Try to find things to read for pleasure in the target language.
65. Find reading material that is at or near my level.
66. Plan out in advance how I'm going to read the text, monitor to see how I'm doing, and then check to see how much I understand.
67. Skim an academic text first to get the main idea and then go back and read it more carefully.
68. Read a story or dialogue several times until I understand it.
69. Pay attention to the organization of the text, especially headings and subheadings.
70. Make ongoing summaries of the reading either in my mind or in the margins of the text.
71. Make predictions as to what will happen next.

**Strategies for when words and grammatical structures are not understood:**

72. Guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the context of the reading material.
73. Use a bilingual dictionary to get a sense of what the equivalent word in my native language would be.
74. 74. Use a target language dictionary to see how words are defined by means of other target language words.

*What other reading strategies do I use?*

**Writing Strategy Use****Strategies for basic writing:**

75. Practice writing the alphabet and/or new words in the target language.
76. Plan out in advance how to write academic papers, monitor how my writing is going, and check to see how well my writing reflects what I want to say.
77. Try writing different kinds of texts in the target language (e.g., personal notes, messages, letters, and course papers).

78. Take class notes in the target language as much as I can.

**Strategies for writing an essay or academic paper:**

79. Find a different way to express the idea when I don't know the correct expression (e.g., use a synonym or describe the idea).

80. Review what I have already written before continuing to write more.

81. Use reference materials such as a glossary, a dictionary, or a thesaurus to help find or verify words in the target language.

82. Wait to edit my writing until all my ideas are down on paper.

**Strategies to use after writing a draft of an essay or paper:**

83. Revise my writing once or twice to improve the language and content.

84. Try to get feedback from others, especially native speakers of the language.

*What other writing strategies do I use?*

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