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***The Role of Learning Strategies in Enhancing  
Students' Achievements: a Case study of EFL  
Students at the University Centre of Mila***

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master Degree in  
*Didactics of Foreign Languages*

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## **Dedications**

### Fatine's Dedication

In the name of Allah, the most merciful

to my parents: who believe in me and stand by my side since my first day at school, seeing the proud in your eyes today let me forget all the stress and tiredness of this year.

To my beloved family; brothers and sisters for their support.

To my dear partner "Yousra Lemzerri".

To my friends; who made this journey full of excitement and adventures.

Thank you !.

## Yousra' s Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to:

My father, mother, sisters and brother for their support.

My friends and to the team of “hope ambassadors” for their encouragement.

All people who were by my side till the end of this journey especially my partner Fatine Belkadri .

Thanks a lot!

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We would like to thank all the teachers who were truly so kind and helpful, and who were ready to answer our questions and give advice whenever needed.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the teachers and students at Mila University Center who participated in the study by filling out questionnaire.

## **Abstract**

This dissertation aims to check the learning strategies used by high achievers, and how these strategies are related to their academic achievement, and to determine if all the high achievers are using a learning strategy, also to find whether there are some differences in the student's way of achieving their achievement. The findings revealed that the overall use of learning strategies by the students is high where memory and cognitive are the most frequently used strategies, and affective strategy is the least frequently used. Additionally, there are statistically no significant differences between male and female students in the use of the overall strategies and in the use of the six categories of strategies. The results imply that certain strategies contribute to student performance more than other strategies. It is hypothesized that if students employed learning strategies in their learning process, they would be high achievers. So, in order to achieve the preceding aims, a questionnaire is conducted with third-year, master one and master two English high achieving students at the University of Mila. Thus, fifteen students are given a questionnaire to answer. In addition, their grades are obtained from the English Department's result table to determine those students' proficiency level. The results obtained from the questionnaire confirmed the above hypothesis and led us to conclude that the use of language learning strategies effect positively students' achievement.

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**CARE:** Creating Mental Linkages, Applying Images and Sounds, Reviewing Well, and Employing Actions.

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**LS:** Learning Strategies

**LLS:** Language Learning Strategies

**PhD:** Doctor of Philosophy

**PRAC:** Practicing, Receiving and Sending Messages, Analyzing and Reasoning, and Creating Structure for Input and Output.

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Résumé

## General introduction

### 1. Background to the Study

The general concept of using strategies to enhance learning is not new. For learning strategies, there are a vast number of strategies such as highlighting important ideas and summarizing. These strategies are often so simple that it is easy for students to take them for granted, but it must be remembered that the strategies themselves have to be learnt initially before they could be used.

Since ages, educational researchers like Gu (2005) and Milano(1997). Ullius (1998) who have attempted establishing theories, methods, approaches, classroom tactics, and instructional materials that help in a better learning process. At the same time, there has been a focus on how learners treat new information and what types of strategies they employ to understand, learn or recall the information. Researchers thought that no single learning strategy can guarantee educational success; thus, more recent researchers such as Chamot ,O'malley (1987) and Oxford (1990) have conducted studies specifically on Language Learning Strategies (LLS), indicating that the application of Language Learning Strategies may enhance the language learning and guide learners for being successful or High Achievers .

High achieving students are students who perform much better academically than their peers. While there are benefits to being a high achieving student such as receiving more support from teachers, they also encounter unique challenges such as the increased frequency of bullying.

Professionals in mental health and educational psychology such as Paris, Myers, (1981), Tait and Entwistle (1996), Cho, Ahn (2003) have spent years researching the psychology of high achievers. They have discovered that almost all high achievers share certain

characteristics and outlooks, and use learning strategies that are affected by some factors. Moreover, many researchers such Rubin(1996)studied the relationship between using a learning strategy and being a high achiever, the overall results of those studies are highly encouraging. In general, successful students or high achievers employ more and better learning strategies than unsuccessful students.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Students in any classroom, are classified into active students with high marks and passive learners with low marks, and those who take weak marks. The first ones have high averages, while the latter may or may not reach the average. This phenomenon pushes us to wonder whether high-achieving students at the University of Mila use learning strategies and what type of strategies they use and prefer to achieve their achievements, studying at the university gives us such opportunity to observe, ask, check, and conclude.

## **3. Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to check the learning strategies used by high achievers.

## **4. Research Questions and Hypothesis**

Empirical answers to the following questions are investigated:

- a. Do students with high grade point average employ learning strategies in their learning process?
- b. Are there factors that affect the use of learning strategies by high achievers?
- c. Does the teacher help high achievers in better using of learning strategies?
- d. What type of learning strategies, high achievers find to be more effective?

In the light of the aim and research questions, it is hypothesized that:

If students employed learning strategies in their learning process, they would be high achievers and get better marks from those who did not use any of those strategies.

### **5. Research Methodology**

A questionnaire is given to the sample of the study which included fifteen students at Mila University Center. The subjects are third year, master one and master two high achieving students of the English department. The students are selected according to their academic achievements and identified as those who were in the top-five of their classes. We collect data through an online questionnaire because of some difficulties such as corona pandemic and also some students are from distant cities, so we posted an online announcement on the department of English Facebook group involved by a list of fifteen high achievers at Mila University Center and fortunately they all replied and sent responses via email on the questionnaire.

### **6. Structure of the Study**

This dissertation is divided into two main chapters, the first one is devoted for the review of literature review and the second presents the practical part of the study.

The first chapter is made up of two sections; the first one is dealing with the learning strategies, its definitions, types, characteristics. Whereas the second section is about high achievers; who are they? How they achieve success? And how they use learning strategies in their studies?

The second chapter deals with data analysis, it provides a detailed analysis of the learners' questionnaire. Finally, some recommendations are suggested, as well as some limitations of this study are stated.

## Chapter one: Literature Review

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## **Section One**

### **Learning Strategies**

#### **Introduction**

Many researchers studied the learning strategies and their effect on learners especially in the field of language learning. Oxford (1990, p.1) stated that “Learning strategies concept is important in learning a language because they are tools for active, self- directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence “.

Learning strategies played a significant role in this process. Researchers in the area of learning strategies had posited that there is a close relationship between high strategy used and high achievement or success in language learning like Griffiths (2003) and Oxford (1990) who confirmed that in one of their works. As a matter of fact, successful language learners who had been referred to as effective, efficient, good learners, or high achieving learners, are the learners who reached the ultimate goal, which is language learning. According to Rubin (1975), good language learners take advantage of all practice opportunities, they had a strong desire to communicate, they are not inhibited, they practice, they monitor their own and they attended to the meaning. Rubin also noted that such characteristics depends on a number of variables that vary with every individual. Learners who were engaged in language lessons with a wide variety of learning strategies that they use across different learning contexts or across different language levels. Such strategies had been proved effectively, and beneficially in achieving success.

### **1.1. Definition of Learning Strategies**

Language Learning Strategies had been one of the most exciting research topics. Especially in the field of second/foreign language teaching and learning for decades. Many studies had contributed to our understanding of the important roles that language learning strategies (LLS) played in the acquisition and learning of second or foreign languages.

Cambridge (1998) defined the term “strategy” in its online dictionary as: “a detailed plan for achieving success in situations like war, politics, business, industry or sports “. Many researchers described LLS from different points of view. Bialystok, for example, (1978, p.76) defined LLS as “methods operated in the model of second language learning to exploit available information to increase the proficiency of second language learning”. Also, Weinstein and Mayer (1986, p.315) describe LLS as “The behaviors and thoughts that a learner engaged in during learning that are intended to influence the learner’s encoding process”. In addition, Joan Rubin (1987, p.36) adds his concept of LLS: “strategies which contributed to development of the language system which the learner constructed and affected learning directly”. Rubin (1987) focuses on the strategies of successful learners and states that once identified such strategies; it could be beneficial to less successful learners. The previous definitions provided a general view about the subject studied but Chamot’s research (1987, p.71) gives a clear vision of it, he claims that LLS can be defined as “Techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information”. Later on, Chamot and O’malley (1995, p.1) went beyond the previous definitions to give a more focused definition. They define learning strategies as “techniques and devices used by second language learners for remembering and organizing samples of the second language. One of the ways learners become actively

involved in controlling their own learning is by using strategies. Strategies are the thoughts and behaviors that learners use to help them comprehend, learn or retain information”.

It is remarkable that, since Chamot 's (1987) and Chamot and O'malley (1990) study, the purpose of using LLS has shifted from becoming a good or a successful learner who speaks a second language fluently, to becoming intelligent learner who knows very well about how to learn a foreign language more successfully.

## **1.2. Characteristics of Learning Strategies**

According to the above definitions, it is believed that language learning strategies differ in many ways. Different writers use different terminologies to refer to the strategies. Even though the definitions used for the learning strategies are not similar among the researchers in the field; there are a number of basic characteristics accepted by them. To Oxford (1990) these characteristics are:

1. Allow learners to become more self-directed. Oxford (1990, p.15) claims that “an appropriate use of learning strategies helps learners to take control of their own learning”.
2. Expand the role of teachers. Becoming facilitator after being director and manager.
3. Learning strategies are problem oriented because they are used to solve a problem, complete a task or to attain an objective.
4. Learning strategies are often conscious.
5. Learning strategies are not always observable. Some of them are not easily observable to the human eye. Therefore, Oxford (1990) states that teachers find it difficult to know about learning strategies their learners use.

6. Learning strategies are specific actions taken by learners, they are specific behaviors done by learners to enhance their learning, taking notes, self-evaluating and guessing the meaning of the word.
7. Learning strategies can be taught through strategy training. Cohen (1998) states that its goal is to explore ways that the learners can learn the target language more effectively. Strategy training helps learners become more aware of the strategies they use
8. Learning strategies are influenced by a variety of factors.

The above list of the characteristics of the learning strategies had provided a fundamental concept about them. This review can provide a background to the subsequent part that discussed the classification systems of LLS.

### 1.3. Development of Learning Strategies

There are many researchers who have studied and classified language learning strategies in various ways. The following table summarizes the main background of LLS's classifications and gives a clear description of this process. These classification systems have been proposed by ten researchers.

**Table1. Language Learning Strategy Classification since 1970  
cited in Lee, 2010, p. 139**

<b>LLS Classification</b>	<b>Researcher (s) and the year</b>
1.Planning strategy 2.Active strategy 3.Emphatic strategy 4.Experimental strategy 5.Formal strategy 6.Semantic strategy 7.Practice strategy 8.Communication strategy 9.Monitoring strategy 10. Internalizations strategy	Stern (1975)
1.Active task approach 2.Realization of language as a system 3.Realization of language as a means of	

<p>1.Strategies that directly affect learning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clarification/ verification</li> <li>2.Monitoring</li> <li>3.Memorization</li> <li>4.Guessing/inductive inference</li> <li>5.Deductive reasoning</li> <li>6.Practice</li> <li>7.Processes that contribute indirectly to learning.</li> <li>8.Creates opportunities for practice</li> <li>9. Production tricks</li> </ol>	<p>Rubin (1981)</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Cognitive strategies</li> <li>2.Metacognitive strategies</li> <li>3.Social - affective strategies</li> </ol>	<p>Brown and Palinscar (1982)</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Strategies for coping with target language rules</li> <li>2.Strategies for receiving performance</li> <li>3.Strategies for producing performance</li> <li>4.Strategies for organizing learning</li> </ol>	<p>Carver (1984)</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Meta-cognitive strategies</li> <li>2.Cognitive strategies</li> <li>3.Social strategies</li> <li>4.Communication strategies</li> </ol>	<p>Ellis and Sinclair (1989)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Cognitive strategies</li> <li>2.Meta-cognitive strategies</li> <li>3.Social-affective strategies</li> </ul>	<p>O'Malley and Chamot (1990)</p>
<p>Direct strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Memory strategies</li> <li>2.Cognitive strategies</li> <li>3.Compensation strategies</li> </ul> <p>Indirect strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Meta-cognitive strategies</li> <li>2.Affective strategies</li> <li>3.Social strategies</li> </ul>	<p>Oxford (1990)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Related to the taught program</li> <li>2.Extra to the class</li> <li>3.Bucking the system</li> </ul>	<p>Coleman (1990)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Management and planning strategies</li> <li>2.Cognitive strategies</li> <li>3.Communicative- experiential strategies</li> <li>4.Interpersonal strategies</li> <li>5.Affective strategies</li> </ul>	<p>Stern (1992)</p>

<p>I. Language learning strategies in the classroom related category (CRP):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To be well-prepared for the lessons</li> <li>2. To keep up with the teacher while studying in the classroom</li> <li>3. To get the teacher's attention in the classroom</li> <li>4. To learn new vocabulary in the classroom lessons</li> <li>5. To avoid being distracted while studying</li> <li>6. To solve the problems encountered in the classroom lessons</li> <li>7. To pass the English examinations</li> </ol> <p>II. Strategies in the classroom independent category (CIP):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To expand their knowledge of English vocabulary and expressions</li> <li>2. To improve one's listening skill</li> <li>3. To improve one's speaking skill</li> <li>4. To improve one's writing skill</li> <li>5. To acquire general knowledge in English</li> </ol>	<p>Intaraprasert (2000)</p>
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It is clear that defining language learning strategies is not the only component that remains questioned in the field of LLS, but classifying them is also unanswered, according to Oxford (1990; cited in in Prakongchati, 2007, p. 36).

There are no complete agreements on exactly what strategies are; how many strategies exist; how they should be defined, demarcated, and categorized; and whether it is - or ever will be - possible to create a real, scientifically validated hierarchy of strategies...Classification conflicts are inevitable. It is obvious that researchers like Stern (1983) Ellis and Sinclair (1989), (Oxford ( 1990) have their own classification systems of



language learning strategies, which are derived from their direct experiences, i.e., personal experiences, indirect experiences, i.e., their knowledge and understanding expanded from reviewing other researchers' works and theories or understanding discovered from their own language learning strategy investigations.

#### **1.4. Types of Learning Strategies**

Although a lot of researchers classified the learning strategies, but Oxford's (1990) classification could be the most appropriate one. Ellis (1994, p.64) states that "Oxford's taxonomy is perhaps the most comprehensive classification of Language Learning Strategies to date".

Similarly, to Rubin (1981), Oxford (1990) gathered a lot of language learning strategies and divided them on the basis of strategy functions into two main categories: direct strategies (directly involving the target language) and indirect strategies (supporting direct strategies with internal guide i.e.; self-directed learning).

Oxford (1990, as cited in Prakongchati, 2007, p.71) claims that the strategy system varies in several aspects. It is more detailed and comprehensive. She proposes the categorized language learning strategies by questionnaire data, which divided language learning strategies into six groups: Memory strategies (those used for storage information), Cognitive strategies (the mental strategies learners use to make sense of their learning), Compensation strategies (help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication), Meta-cognitive strategies (help learners to manage their learning), Affective strategies (are concerned with the learner's feelings such as confidence), and Social strategies (involve learning by interaction with others)

For better understanding of all these groups and sub groups, a detailed description of it will be provided in the following part.

### **1.4.1. Direct Strategies for Language Learning Strategies**

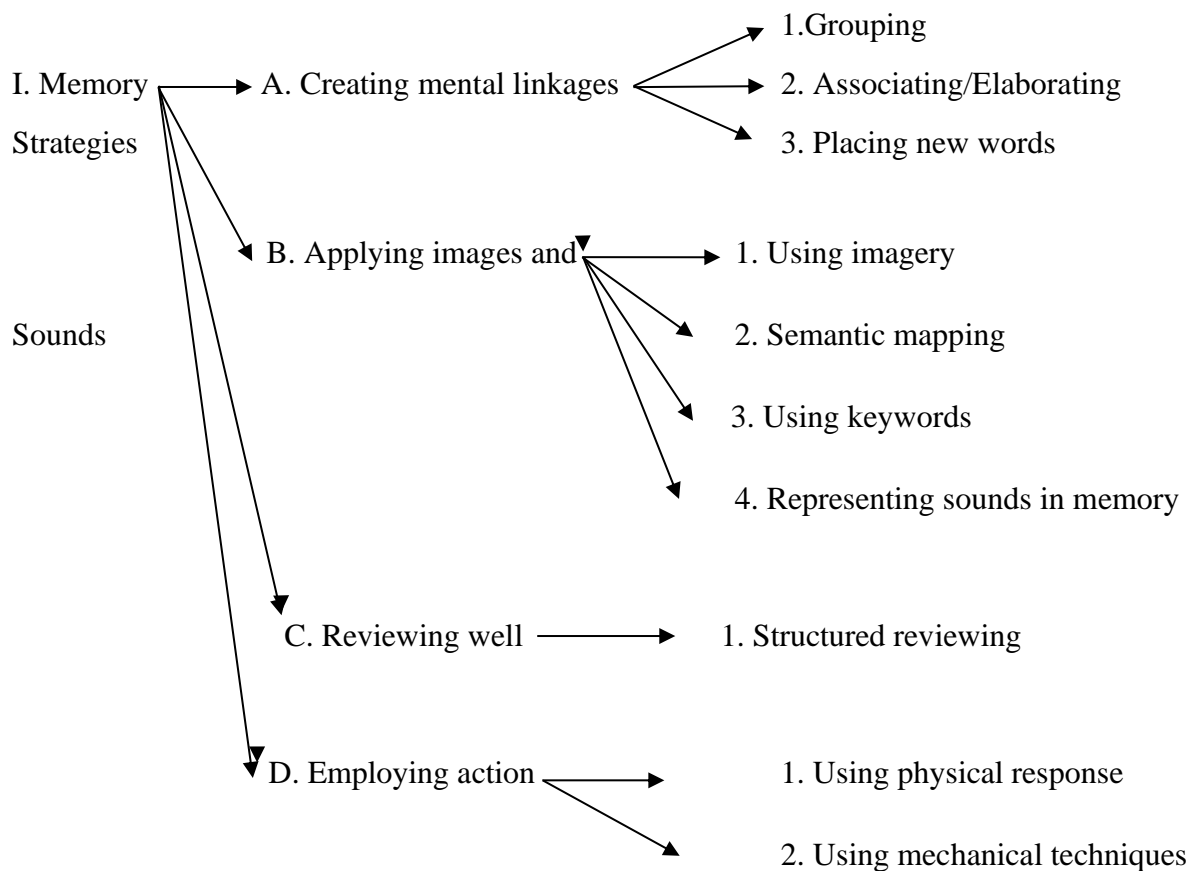
Oxford (1990; cited in Blažková, 2011, p. 21) claimed that Direct Strategies with its three groups (memory, cognitive and compensation) require mental processing of the language, but each group does this processing in a different way and for various purposes. We should mention that direct strategies are aimed at helping learners to identify what is important and uneasy for them in the process of learning.

#### **1.4.1.1. Memory Strategies**

Blažková (2011) claimed that Memory Strategies are important in the process of learning a foreign language since a lot of information are necessary to remember. According to Oxford (1990), there are a number of principles reflected by memory strategies, such as arranging things in order, making associations and reviewing. Since a meaning is included, all these principles must be meaningful to a learner. Memory strategies help language learners transfer information from the basic fact level to the skill level, where knowledge is more automatic. Moreover, it is more easily restored and less possibly that the knowledge will be lost after a period of time when it is not used.

According to Blažková (2011, p.22), Oxford (1990) states that:” Memory strategies frequently imply different types of materials. That is, to create visual images of words and phrases or to give verbal labels to pictures. Memory strategies are divided into four groups: Creating Mental Linkages, Applying Images and Sounds, Reviewing Well, and Employing Actions. The first letter of each of these strategy group spell CARE, an acronym that itself can be considered as a memory aid: “Take CARE of your memory and your memory will take CARE of you”. A detailed classification of memory strategies is given by Oxford (1990) in the figure below.

**Figure1. Oxford's (1990) Classification of Memory Strategies**



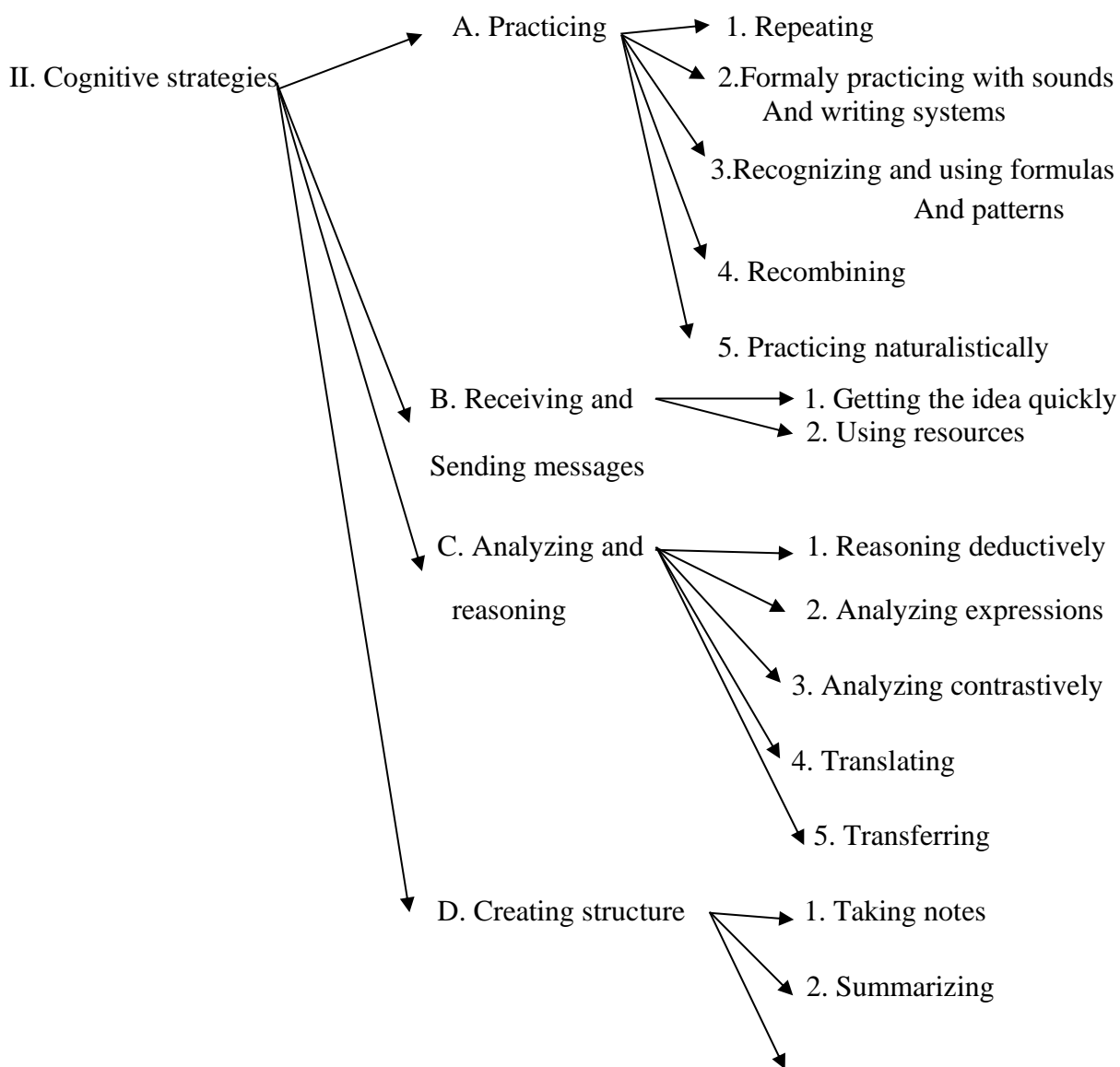
#### **1.4.1.2. Cognitive Strategies**

Blažková (2011) claims that Cognitive strategies play an important role in the process of learning a foreign language. Oxford (1990) divides this group into four groups of strategies: Practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output. The initial letters of each strategy set can be combined to create the acronym PRAC, because Cognitive strategies are practical for language learning.

According to Blažková (2011) Practicing strategies are the most considerable cognitive strategies, although, learners are not all the time conscious of it. Strategies for receiving and sending messages are essential instruments because it can help learners to identify the main

idea through skimming or scanning, and using resources to assist learners to take advantage of a group of resources. Learners tend to “reason out” the new language by developing a formal model based on analysis and comparison. They tend to create new rules and review them when new information is available. Even if this process helps them in many situations, the learners sometimes unreasonably transfer rules or expressions from the mother tongue directly to the new language. Although, it is regarded to be a normal phase of language learning, sometimes language learners get stuck in this phase. Oxford’s (1990) classification of cognitive strategies is presented in the following figure.

**Figure. 2. Oxford’s (1990) Classification of Cognitive Strategies**



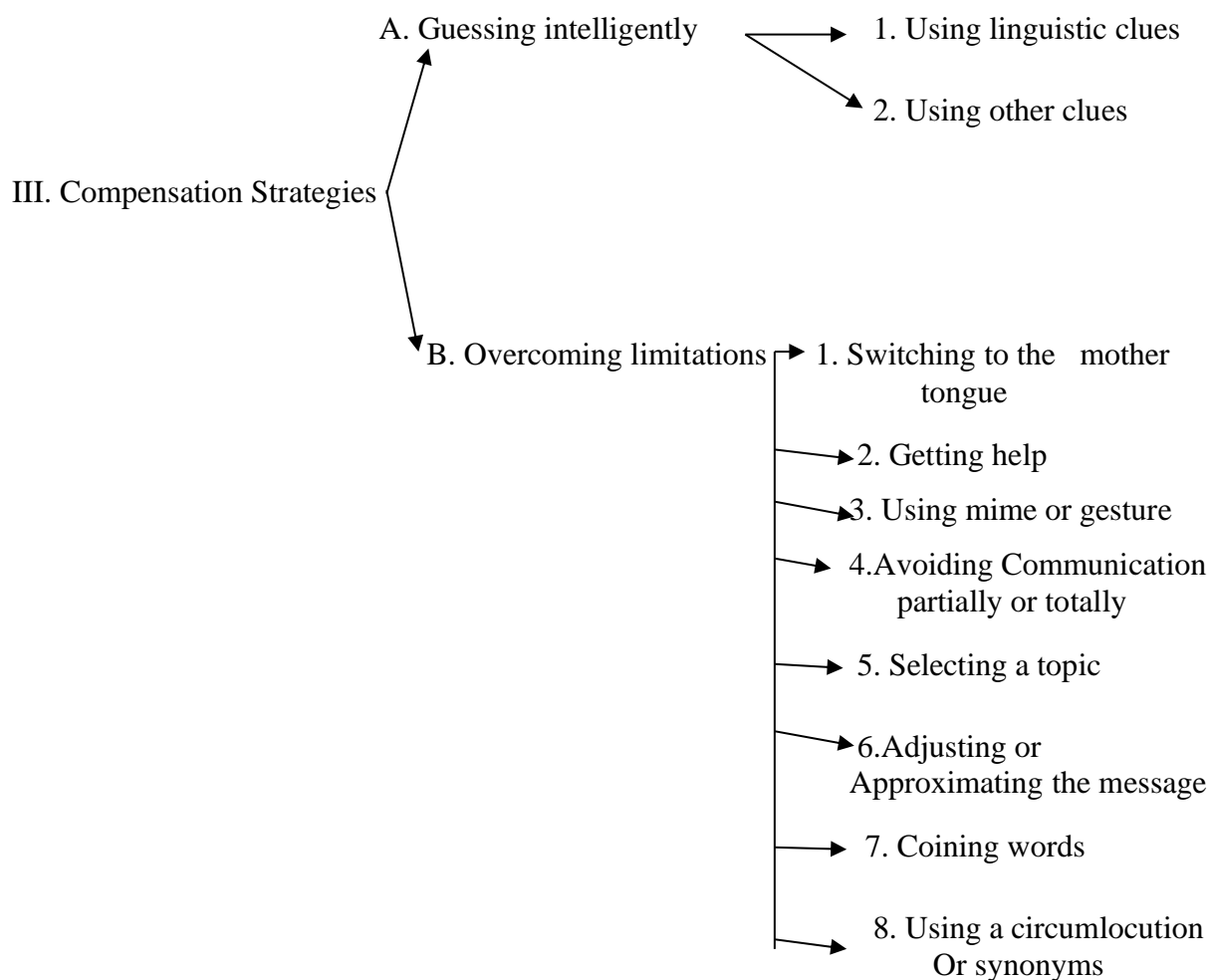
### 3. Highlighting

#### 1.4.1.3. Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies are used by learners to overcome difficulties caused by limitations in the field of knowledge. Learners can use the new language for understanding or production with the help of these strategies. According to Oxford (1990) compensation strategies are expected to compensate for the learners' deficit in grammar and vocabulary. There are two types of compensation strategies: Guessing intelligently in listening and reading, and overcoming the limitations in speaking and writing. Guessing intelligently comprises using a variety of linguistic or non-linguistic clues in order to enable the learners to guess the meaning when they do not know all the words. Concerning guessing strategy, according to Blazková (2011, p.24) : "Advanced learners and even native speakers use guessing when they have not heard something well enough, when they don't know a new word, or when the meaning is hidden between the lines" .

The compensation occurs not only when we want to understand the new language, but also in its production. In this regard, compensation strategies for the production can help learners to use the language, so that they get more practice. Oxford (1990) claimed that using compensation strategies make learners fluent in what they already know. Additionally, asking for help may provide learners with the missing information in the target language. A system of Oxford's (1990) compensation strategies is demonstrated in the

**Figure.3. Oxford's (1990) Classification of Compensation Strategies**



#### **1.4.2. Indirect Strategies for Language Learning**

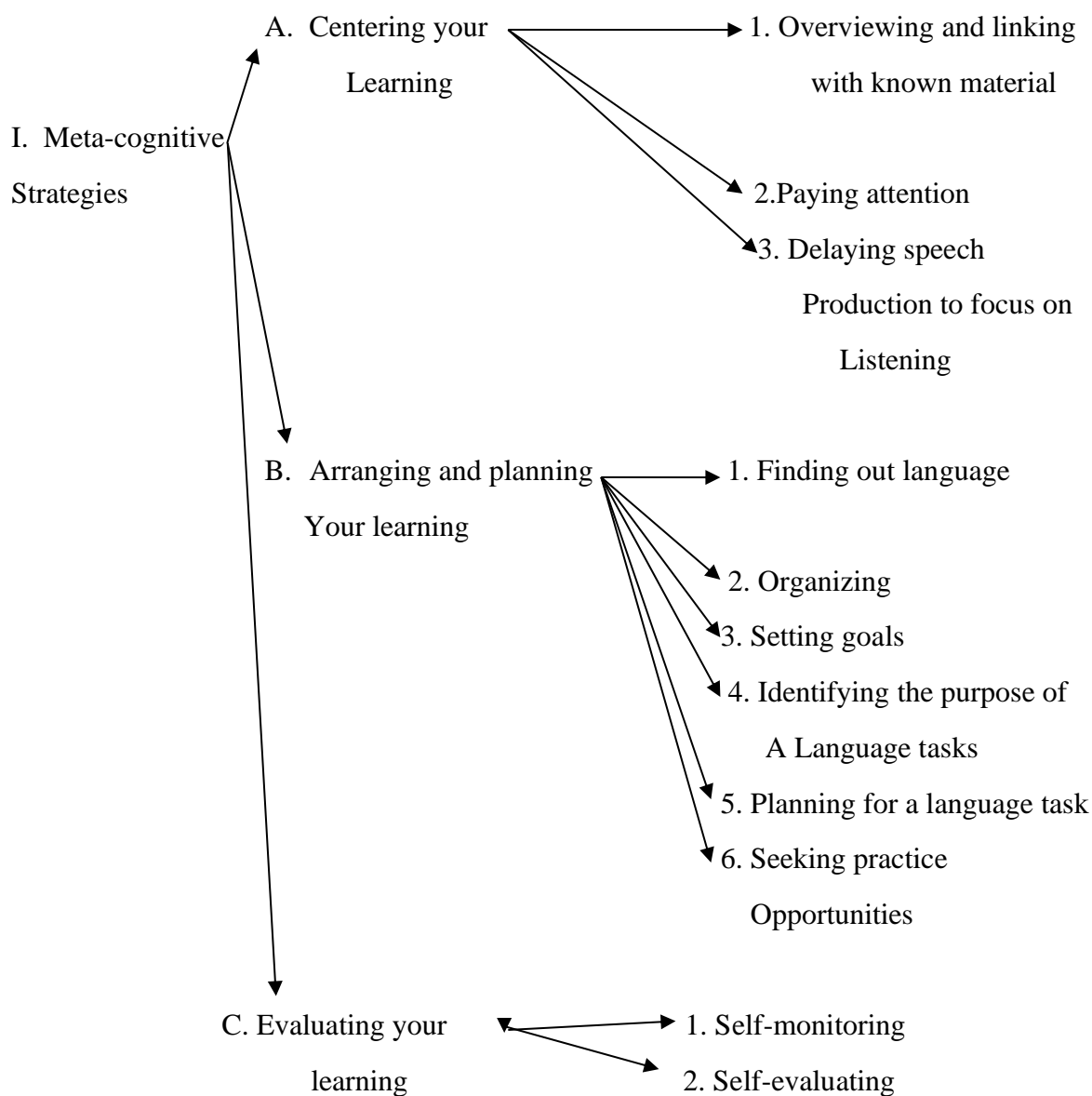
Blazková (2011) states that Indirect strategies (meta-cognitive, affective and social), as already explained in this work, support language learning indirectly, that is, without the including of target language. Oxford (1990) states that indirect strategies are interrelated with direct strategies and they are their exact opposite. She adds that indirect strategies are helpful

in all language situations and they are established in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Indirect strategies focus on a comfortable psychological climate that gives the learners appropriate environment for language learning and makes it easier. In the following part, the three groups (meta-cognitive, affective and social strategies) of the indirect strategies are discussed.

#### **1.4.2.1. Meta-cognitive Strategies**

According to Williams and Burden (1997), meta-cognitive strategies involve an awareness of what one is doing and the strategies one is employing, as well as knowledge about the process of learning. Oxford (1990) states that language learners are often confused by grammatical rules, unfamiliar vocabulary, different writing systems, and different styles of teaching. Blazková (2011) proposes that to get back learner's focus, conscious use of meta-cognitive strategies, namely paying attention and over viewing / linking with already known material, is necessary. In general, meta-cognitive strategies help learners to arrange and plan their language learning in an effective way, notice and learn from errors and evaluate their overall progress. Oxford's (1990) classification of Meta-cognitive Strategies is shown in the figure below:

**Figure4. Oxford's (1990) Classification of Meta-cognitive Strategies**

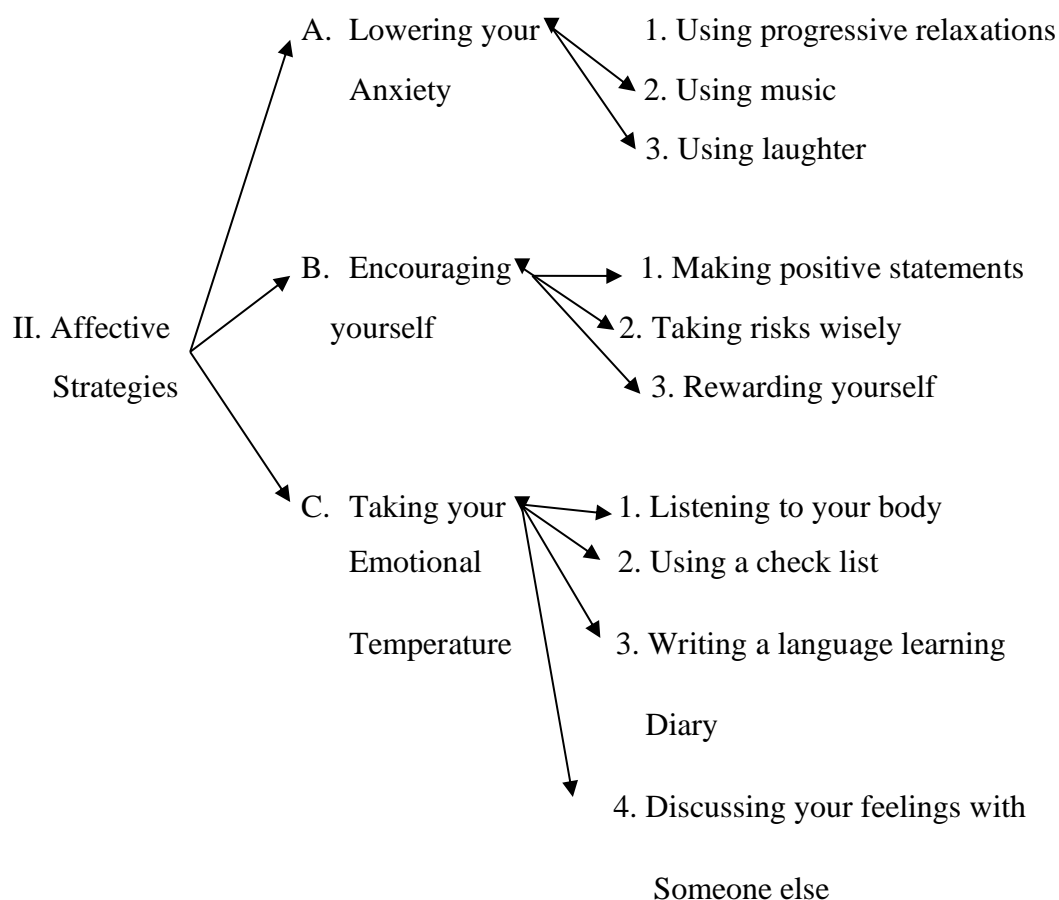


#### 1.4.2.2. Affective Strategies



Blazková (2011) claimed that the affective side of the learner influences certainly language learning success or failure, for instance, positive feelings and emotions can make language learning more enjoyable while negative feelings can hinder development. Regarding positive and negative emotions, the teacher can have a huge impact on the classroom atmosphere. Not only teachers' beliefs and attitudes can influence language learning process but they can also affect it by changing the social structure of the classroom to give students more responsibility, and by providing increased amounts of naturalistic communication. Oxford's (1990) classification of affective strategies is shown in the following figure

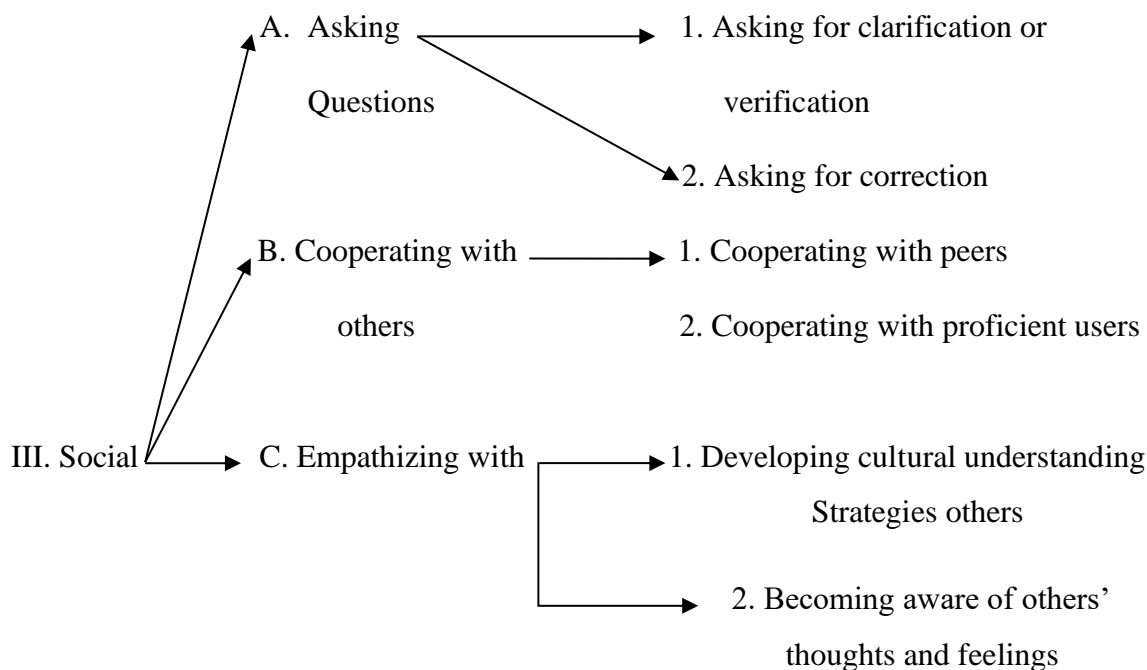
**Figure.5. Oxford's (1990) Classification of Affective Strategies**



### 1.4.2.3. Social Strategies

Blazková (2011) states that language is a means of communication among people; it is considered as a social behavior. Asking questions is one of the important social interactions; it gets learners closer to the meaning and supports their understanding. Asking questions also indicates interest and involvement, furthermore, the response of the conversation partner refers to whether the question was understood and provides indirect feedback about the learner's productive skills. In addition to asking questions, cooperating especially with more proficient users of the target language is important for language learners. Moreover, cooperation requires a group spirit so that the process of language learning can become more enjoyable and achievable.

**Figure.6. Oxford's (1990) Classification of Social Strategies**



This part deals with classifications of Language Learning Strategies. Among the ten classifications mentioned earlier, the most evident differences appear in the main categories of language learning strategies. It can be noticed that the process of introducing classification systems for language learning strategies is far from clearness due to interfering and contradictory opinions. Scholars have different ways of classifying language learning strategies. This depends on their own experiences, their investigation, and their literature review. With respect to earlier researches into Language Learning Strategies, Oxford's (1990) classification of LLS stays more comprehensive and detailed.

### **1.5. The Factors that Influence the Choice of Strategy**

According to Tamada (1996), who synthesized current research on how the following criteria impact the choice of strategy used among students:

#### **1.5.1. Gender**

In numerous researches, females reported higher total strategy utilization than males (although sometimes males exceed females in the use of a certain strategy). Many researches on the influence of gender on LLS selection have been conducted. Politzer (1983) for example, examined the learning strategies of 90 university students in the United States and discovered that female students used social strategies significantly more than males. Also, Oxford and Nyikos (198) investigated 1200 universities and discovered that female students used four out of five strategies more often than males. Ethrman and Oxford (1989) studied 78 university students and discovered that females used four out of ten strategies more frequently than males.

#### **1.5.2. Motivation**

More motivated students tend to use more strategies than less motivated ones, Tamada (1996, p.7) describes the relationship between motivation and LLS choice as:

The degree of expressed motivation to learn the language was the most powerful influence on strategy choice .... The more motivated students used learning strategies of all these kinds more often than did the less motivate students

### **1.5.3 Type of Task**

The nature of the task helps in identifying the suitable strategy to complete the task. According to a study published by the University of Chicago Press in (1988) on sixth graders from eight classes participated in an experiment. In each room, four science lessons with varying levels of cognitive content, procedural complexity, and social organization were observed. Following each lesson, students completed questionnaires designed to assess task involvement and cognitive strategy use. The number of self-regulating, rather than work-avoidant or help-seeking, strategies reported by children was used to define cognitive engagement. Furthermore, detailed transcripts of the lessons were created. Findings indicate that student involvement did not differ significantly by the difficulty of cognitive content, type of social organization, or procedural complexity of tasks. In addition, cognitive engagement was similar for tasks judged as low and high in cognitive difficulty, although students reported using more strategies in the latter situations. Cognitive engagement was lower during small-group work and when tasks were procedurally complex. Qualitative analyses of patterns of teacher behavior suggest that when teachers pressed for mastery as well as for participation, student's cognitive strategy use was higher, and that the importance

of particular behaviors for maintaining this engagement varied according to the lesson. Conclusions stress the need to consider how elements of tasks and teacher behavior operate jointly to promote high student involvement and cognitive engagement in classroom learning

### **1.5.3. Learning Style**

For example, analytic-style students preferred strategies such as contrastive analysis, rule-learning, and dissecting words and phrases, while global students used strategies to find meaning (guessing, scanning, predicting) and to converse without knowing all the words (paraphrasing, gesturing). According to Li and Qin (2006) who conducted a study about the relationship between learning style and Learning Strategy choice in China, the analyses show that learning styles have a significant influence on learners' learning strategy choices. There is evidence that the judging scale correlates positively with seven sets of learning strategies. Thus, it turns out to be the most influential learning style variable affecting learners' learning strategy choices. Compared with low achievers, high achievers are more capable of exercising strategies that are associated with their non-preferred styles. Based on the available research results, it is proposed that learning styles may influence learners' learning outcomes through their relationship with learning strategies.

### **1.5.4. Cultural Background**

Grainger (2012) conducted a study. This study seeks to redress the imbalance by investigating the language learning strategies of learners of Japanese in a foreign language learning environment, focusing on the spoken communication strategies and the impact of cultural background on the choice of strategies. The results of this study suggest that Asian students use more strategies and in different ways than Australian students do. The conclusion made is that language learning environment, as well as multilingual capacity can be an important factor in the choice of strategies.

### **1.5.5. Attitudes and Beliefs**

Prakongchati (2007) reported to have a profound effect on the strategies learners choose, with negative attitudes and beliefs often causing poor strategy use and vice versa. Positive attitude is characterized by devotion and a sense of commitment. A positive attitude toward studying can be developed, enhanced, and polished. As a matter of fact, Guidance and counseling can be extremely helpful in this regard. Also, an engaging curriculum can be very effective in instilling a positive attitude toward learning. Furthermore, a teacher's friendly behavior toward students can go a long way toward the development of a positive attitude.

## **Section Two**

### **1.2. High Achievers**

#### **2.1 Who are High Achievers?**

High achievers are those students with high marks and averages those are students who always classified in the first places, high achievers are students that always get more than the others, they always receive good comments and get rewards from their teachers. Swar et al (1998,) said:” high achievers are students whom approach to learning is primarily to focus on mastery of a given curriculum “. Those students have the capacity to make discussions in a very good level. As Winston, Miller, Ender, &Grites (1984), Kotinek et al. (2010) claim that the term high achieving is used by researchers to refer to students who stand out in terms of their academic abilities. A view that is shared by Kotinek et al (2010) states that the two terms” high achiever” and “gifted” are not synonymous but a student can be described by one or both of these terms.

Based on research by Winston et al (1984) and Kotinek et al (2010); in the present review, high achieving students would be used to refer to students who perform very well in

their studies. It is said that high achieving students are students who perform much better academically than their peers.

## **2.2 How to be a high achiever?**

If we take a look around, we notice one common characteristic shared by all successful people; they are high achievers who know and enjoy what they are doing in life. However, to be a successful learner or a high achiever you must develop a lot of traits, according to Lean Ho(2021) there are eight clues you can follow to become a high achiever:

### **2.2.1 Persistence**

High achievers recognize that learning takes time and persistence is the key to success, as cohen (2005) said: they believe that most people are held back from achieving greatness due to a lack of persistence.

Leon ho (2021, p.1) states that “when it comes to dreams, most people are just in love with the final product and not the process. Successful people on the other hand are in love with both”.

### **2.2.2 Patience**

Many researchers such Prakongchati (2007) confirmed that Persistence and patience are frequently interrelated. High achievers master them both. But there is a distinction between the two terms. Persistence is usually reserved for the known, whereas patience is useful when the unknown strikes. Persistence is demonstrated when you plan ahead of time. In this case, the achiever is constantly working towards his goal while sticking to the established plan. However, patience is tested when that plan unknowingly fails or experience a hurdle. That’s

when there's a good chance of learners backing out. High achievers on the other hand, practice patience and take their time to work through difficulties.

Flett(1994) confirm that your plan or projection is bound to have deviations and discrepancies is a good way to build patience, because learners who can't accept the fact that their plan could fail are the ones who fail the most. High achievers avoid this issue by expecting that their plan will not go exactly as planned.

### **2.2.3 Conceptual Learning**

Mark blark (1999) Saif that Instead of rote learning, high achievers believe in comprehending and grasping concepts. Many high achievers believe that grades are not significant, that is because it is their knowledge that matters, and not their grade.

In real life, the concept is what allows you to use your knowledge and get anything out of it. That is why high achievers devote more time to develop and reinforce their concepts than they do on rote learning.

### **2.2.4 Strong Memory**

Concepts are crucial, for sure. However, after developing a strong concept, there is a lot of knowledge that needs to be memorized. For example by Winston (2005) , language learning needs a minimum of concepts and maximum of memorization. That is why high achievers have a strong memory, which they train hard to improve. In fact, you may find brain and memory games on their phones since they spend a lot of time practicing on their retention abilities.

### **2.2.5 Leading Abilities**

High achievers aas Robin (2007) confirm are frequently influential persons in social situations. This is because people see them as persons who must be respected on the basis of



their knowledge. These elements combine to form a personality that is naturally a leader. The point with this quality is that it isn't always gained directly; it's not like high achievers are taught to lead, it occurs on a subconscious level as result of their learning abilities

### **2.2.6 Discerning Valuable from the Useless**

This quality means to focus on the parts of knowledge that matters the most, Prakongchati (2007) said this will help the learner not only to score good grades but it also allows him to distribute his time to other activities, maintain a social life and work on any side projects he desires. The ability to discern valuable from the useless is something you want to learn, take a look and observe what sort of learning topics or activities consume the most of your time yet are of the least importance to your objective. Furthermore, if the task does not contribute to your goal, it is not worth spending your time on.

### **2.2.7 Questioning**

Questioning yourself and your logic as tang (2015) said that it will uncover aspects of the topic that you do not even know they existed. By questioning as you learn, you will be able to look at the subject from different angles and points of view, which will support you in attaining perspective. In order to use this technique, set aside some extra time to question yourself about what you are attempting to learn, when you are done, go into specifics and ask yourself questions that you probably do not know the answer to. You will be amazed to discover that most answers merely come to your head.

### **2.2.8 Sticking to their Learning Style**

There are many types of learners around us: visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic learners. Tang (2015) said the thing about high achievers is that they know which

learning strategy works best for them. This enables learners to focus their learning methodology according to their preferred style so they can improve their learning.

### **2.3 Benefits of Being a High Achiever**

Being a High Achiever is associated with certain positive features such as: higher self-esteem, receiving greater teacher support and more active seeking of help for problem solving compared to lower achievers.

#### **2.3.1 Self esteem**

Fenner (2010) interviewed 30 male middle school students and reported similar findings of high achieving students indicating higher levels of self-esteem compared to low achieving students. It was stated that social support and experiencing success were important factors that contributed to their higher self-esteem. One limitation of this study was that it was based on a small sample of students and the results might not be representative of the majority of high achieving students. The findings of these studies suggest that the higher self-esteem experienced by these high achieving students might be attributed to having a positive environment and the repeated experience of success.

#### **2.3.2 Teacher's Support**

Babad, Bernieri, & Rosenthal (1989), Babad (1998), Baker (1999) claim that being a high achieving student was also linked to positive relationships and emotional support from teachers. For example, Weinstein & Middlestadt (1979), Brattesani & Weinstein, (1980) report that high achieving students receive more positive feedback and instruction from teachers, as well as more opportunities for further development. Also, Cooper and Good (1983) included teachers and students' perceptions in addition to classroom observations, while Babad (1990) included both teachers and students' perceptions. Both studies reported similar results, with

high achieving students indicating that they received more praise and emotional support from teachers than their lower achieving counterparts. The teachers in both studies however, reported that they gave more praise and emotional support to the low achieving students. These studies highlighted the importance of including information from various sources to allow a more holistic understanding of the experiences of high achieving students as these sources can provide additional information from different perspectives.

### **2.3.3 Active Seeking of Help**

Pollard (1989), Ryan, Hicks, & Midgley (1997) Ryan & Pintrich (1997) notice that students who are high achievers are more likely to seek help compared to their lower achieving peers. Ryan and Pintrich (1997) conducted a study on a group of 13- and 14-year-old students to investigate their help seeking strategies in math class through the use of questionnaires. They found that students who perform well in their math were the most likely to ask for help in their learning. Similar findings of more active seeking of help by high achieving students were also reported by Newman and Goldin (1990), who asked 65 primary school children to fill in a questionnaire about their help seeking behaviors. However, this study was conducted on primary school students and the results might not be easily generalized to students in higher educational institutions. But Ryan, Pintrich, & Midgley (2001) suggest that compared with lower achieving peers, high achieving students are less likely to think that others would associate their difficulties in learning with inability and therefore, are more likely to seek help high achieving students are more likely to seek help because they appear to be less affected by how they are perceived by others.

## **2.4 Challenges of Being a High Achiever**

While there are positive points associated with being a high achiever as mentioned earlier, they also face unique challenges such as: increased levels of stress, and bullying from their peers, as well as exhibiting more maladaptive perfectionist behaviors compared to their peers.

#### **2.4.1 Level of Stress**

High achieving students reported experiencing higher stress levels than their peers in a number of studies such as Myers & Pace (1986), Crystal et al. (1994) Supe (1998). For example, confirms that high school students were asked to indicate their levels of stress in a questionnaire in a study conducted by Crystal et al (1994). The authors found that high achieving students in the United States reported significantly higher levels of stress compared to their lower achieving peers. Their desire to do well in their academic studies, coupled with peer pressure to socialize with their friends so as to be accepted by them, contributed to an increase in stress levels.

However, other studies use physiological measures such as heart rates and blood pressures in the study of stress which have the advantages of being more easily quantified and highly reliable. Hughes (2005) does a study to compare the stress experienced by high achieving and low achieving students through the measurement of their blood pressure levels, the researchers measured the blood pressure level of both high achieving and low achieving students two weeks before a major examination. It was reported that the blood pressure levels of high achieving students were higher than that of their peers, suggesting that the high achieving students experienced higher levels of stress compared to their peers.

#### **2.4.2 Perfectionism Behavior**

Research has identified a relationship between high achievers and perfectionism, Rice et al. (2006) measured the level of stress experienced and perfectionistic behaviors exhibited by a group of high achievers in graduation year at two points in time. One at the beginning of the semester where stress was perceived to be low, and at the end of the semester before the examinations when stress was perceived to be high. They reported that the students indicated more maladaptive perfectionistic behaviors at the end of the semester compared to the beginning of the semester.

### **2.4.3 Bullying**

Olweus (1993) identifies Bullying as aggressive behaviors continuously inflicted on an individual perceived as less powerful, who is unable to protect himself or herself as a result of the imbalance of power. Fordham & Ogbu (1986) Ma (2001) Li (2007) have suggested that high achievers experienced higher levels of bullying compared to their peers. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) interviewed a group of African American high achieving students in a public school and found that they were bullied more frequently than their peers. The students reported engaging in behaviors such as pretending not to work hard to avoid being bullied. Ma (2001) invites students aged 12 and 14 to fill in questionnaires regarding the frequency of bullying incidents. Similar to the previous study, high achieving students reported being bullied more often.

In summary, high achieving students encounter higher incidents of bullying compared to their peers and this might contribute to experiencing higher levels of emotional difficulties such as anxiety and depression as a result.

## **2.5 Types of Learning Strategies Used by High Achievers**

Much research has aimed at discovering what successful learners do Rubin (1975) Chamot et al. (1999) Griffiths (2003) so that the strategies they use can be taught to low achievers. However, there is also research conducted on the strategies that low achievers use and ways to help them improve strategy use. Findings have postulated that high and low achievers use different types of strategies and at different frequency rates. For example, Boggu and Sundarsingh (2014) investigate the language learning strategies among the less proficient learners by means of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. Their findings indicated that the less proficient learners used compensation and memory strategies more frequently than cognitive, meta-cognitive, social, and affective strategies, used by high achievers and more proficient learners. In a similar way, Tang (2015) discovered that high and low achievers vary considerably in meta-cognitive strategy use. High achievers have a more proactive and meta-cognitive behavior, and they are able to use more often strategies such as self-monitoring, planning, setting goals seeking practice, and overviewing in reading; self-evaluating, paying attention, and identifying information. Also, Zewdie (2015) compared the language learning strategy use among high and low achievers. He discovered that both high and low achievers use similar types of strategies. The difference he found was in the time they invest for studying. He stated that high achievers spend time more wisely; that is, they invest and manage their time in a strategic way. For example, they distributed their practice over multiple times while they monitored their performance.

Based on these facts, we can classify learning strategies used by high achievers in the following order: basic, medium, and advanced.

### **2.5.1 Memory Strategy (Basic)**

Considering the history of memory strategies, as Hughes (2005) said they have always been popular in educational circles and can be found throughout history. Memory strategies aided people in remembering and passing on information before literacy became widespread. While literacy has reduced the need for memory strategies, learners are still likely to have used and been taught how to use them in their own education. Many people today use acronyms, associations, physical responses, or reviewing techniques to learn things like the planets in the solar system, piano keys, or body parts. This approach is similarly used by both low and high achievers. Memory strategies are useful in English language learning for storing and retrieving language-related information. There are four types of Memory activities:

#### **2.5.1.1 Creating a Mental Linkage**

This is an incredible tool when learning a language, especially English. Things like grouping language into meaningful units, as Khamkhien, (2010). Associated new information with concepts already memorized, or placing new words and language into a sentence, conversation or story are all types of memory strategies that create links. The key to creating a mental link between new and old information, is that the old information must be personally meaningful to the individual. If they do not create the link, it is less likely to take hold.

#### **Example:**

When working on parts of speech, have students assign a different color to each part of speech (noun/red, adjective/blue, verb/yellow, etc). Then, have your students rewrite their vocabulary list in different colors, according to the words' part of speech. This will allow them to create a mental link between color and part of speech, and can enable them to more easily remember the parts of speech and the classification of vocabulary words.

#### **2.5.1.2 Applying Images or Sounds**

Human beings naturally apply images and sounds to certain feelings, words, and experiences to create links with memory. Griffiths (2003) Think of the feelings that can flood you when you see an old picture, or hear a specific song that your mother used to sing to you. Teaching your students to utilize these tools is invaluable. It can be done in a variety of ways. When students relate new information to meaningful information; create a map or web of words based on meaning; choose keywords with auditory or visual links; or remember information based on sounds, their memory can be activated and strengthened.

**Example:**

When teaching abstract terms, have students take 5 minutes to draw or create a picture to represent the term. For example, if you are teaching the word “compassion,” students may draw a picture of someone helping an elderly person cross the street. This simple link between abstract term and image can help them to remember the meaning of the word to use at a later date.

### **2.5.1.3 Reviewing Well**

If a person has ever learned anything, at any point in time, he will understand the importance of reviewing. Sundarsingh (2014) said We have all heard that our brain is a muscle that needs to be used or we will lose it! This is absolutely correct in English language learning situations. Reviewing well can mean different things to different people, and it often takes students sometimes to figure out what works best for them. Nonetheless, there are a few key principles that apply to everyone, which you should emphasize in your classroom. Make sure to recycle materials and teach students the importance of reviewing frequently and consistently.

**Example:**



One of the best ways to review and/or learn something is to teach it. Putting students into "expert groups" of 3-4, and giving each group a different topic that they have learned to review together. We can structure their planning however we like (teach for 5 minutes, come up with an activity, come up with a set of discussion questions, etc). After the students have had time to talk to their "expert groups." Taking the groups of 3-4 and put the students into "sharing groups." These groups should have 1 person from each of the original groups. In these "sharing groups," the students will take turns teaching and sharing what they are discussed with their "expert groups." This is great for making sure every student has time to talk and teach.

#### **2.5.1.4 Employing an Action**

Zewdie (2015) confirm that Some individuals are more inclined to learning through physical actions, or when relating new information to those actions. While this can be a learning style (kinesthetic), it can also be a language learning strategy to overcome issues with memory. There are a variety of ways to bring kinesthetic learning into the classroom. When learning actions, it can be helpful to act out that action, or if you are going over a new expression it can be helpful to link it to a physical sensation. Simply using activities that get your students moving can also be beneficial. I have had students write terms on index cards in order to physically move and organize ideas. While it is a great activity for employing action, if nothing else, it can help to keep your students awake and engaged!

#### **Example:**

If the students are working on the vocabulary terms for taste, we should try to provide snacks for them to taste as they learn. As you taste the food and discuss the word, model a facial expression for them to associate the new information with. For example, teaching students about the word 'sour,' giving them a little bit of lemon juice to taste, and scrunching their face as many people do when tasting something sour. This connection to physical action will help them make more mental connections between the vocabulary terms.

In fact, the first letter of each of those sets of strategies spells out the word "CARE". This acronym is, in itself, a memory strategy.

### **2.5.2 Cognitive Strategy (Medium)**

According to the British Council (1998), Cognitive strategies are one type of learning strategy that learners use in order to learn more successfully. These include repetition, organizing new language, summarizing meaning, guessing meaning from context, using imagery for memorization. All of these strategies involve deliberate manipulation of language to improve learning. Classifications of learning strategies distinguish between cognitive strategies and two other types, meta-cognitive strategies (organizing learning), and social/affective strategies (which enable interaction).''

High achievers use mind maps, in order to learn and be more productive afterwards using what they learned efficiently. A mind map, or spider-gram, is a strategy for making notes on a topic, prior to writing. It is a structured strategy, which shows the (hierarchical) relationship of ideas, as opposed to an unstructured strategy, such as brainstorming, in which students produce notes at random on paper. Having an organized display of information from the outset of the writing process may help some students, as it is more easily converted into a draft, whereas in brainstorming, the random recording of ideas might lead to problems with the structure of students' texts. High achievers make mind maps spontaneously. Starting with

a topic at the center and then generating a web of ideas from that, developing and relating these ideas as their mind makes associations.

Mind maps work well as their visual design enables students to see the relationship between ideas, and encourages them to group certain ideas together as they proceed.

### **2.5.3 Meta-Cognitive Strategy (Medium)**

According to Flavell (1979), the effective role of meta-cognitive knowledge in many cognitive activities related to language use is conspicuous, e.g., oral communication of information, oral persuasion, oral comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing, to language acquisition, and to various types of self-instruction. Research on meta-cognitive knowledge and language learning has acknowledged a mutual influence in terms of second language learning and highlights the fact that meta-cognitive knowledge should be incorporated in learner training programs to make their learning more efficient.

Anderson (2003) classifies language learning strategies into seven major categories: cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, mnemonic or memory related strategies, compensatory strategies, affective strategies, social strategies, and self-motivating strategies. Meta-cognitive strategies are those learning strategies that oversee, direct and regulate the learning process. These kinds of strategies involve thinking about learning processes: planning, monitoring, evaluating and regulating them. Oxford (2003) advocates for increased learning autonomy in language learning classrooms whereby students are knowledgeable of a variety of different learning strategies and know how to utilize them for maximal learning. Oxford (2003, p.1) believes that “language learning styles and strategies are among the main factors that help determine how - and how well -our students learn a second or foreign language”. When chosen consciously, language learning strategies can act as a key to active, conscious, and purposeful self-regulation learning. Accordingly, enhancing language-learning

requires that learners reflect on how to learn more effectively and efficiently and make appropriate changes to their approach.

Allwright and Little (1990, 1991; cited in Oxford, 2003)

“The goal of meta-cognitive strategy training is, therefore, self-diagnosis, awareness of how to learn target language most efficiently, developing problem solving skills, experimenting familiar and unfamiliar learning strategies, decision making about how to approach a task, monitoring and self-evaluation, transferring successful learning strategies to new learning context, and enabling students to become more independent, autonomous, and lifelong learners”.

Anderson (2003) claimed that there is evidence that meta-cognitive strategies play a more important role in this process than other learning strategies because once a learner understands how to regulate his/her own learning through the use of strategies, language acquisition should proceed at a faster rate ,strategic learners have meta-cognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches, a good understanding of what a task entails, and the ability to implement the strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own learning strengths.

Finally, according to an overview of research by Rahimi & Katal (2011) there is extensive evidence that learners’ meta-cognition can directly affect the process and the outcome of their learning; meta-cognitive awareness rising can improve the level of students’ performance and by implementing meta-cognitive teaching in educational process, desirable educational goals can be achieved. In language-learning education one string of studies has focused on finding the role meta-cognitive knowledge plays in determining the effectiveness of individuals’ attempts to learn another language.

## **2.6 How to Manage High Achievers in the Classroom**

High achievers need to be encouraged to take risks to help overcome any fear of failure. The key is to spend time each day focusing on students' strengths and interests, and to remember that your classroom is a place for developing all sorts of talents in all students. In addition, the director of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented at the University of Connecticut Joseph Renzulli (2014) shares seven strategies to help in providing opportunities for all students to continue growing and learning in the areas where they have the greatest strengths.

### **2.6.1 Provide Open-ended Assignments**

The more teachers offer open-ended learning opportunities in reading, social studies and science the better students they become because this will allow high achieving students to work on a deeper level. Projects that rely on a wide variety of higher-level thinking and give opportunity for real-life learning experiences lead to more pleasure of learning for all students, and this is the ultimate goal by Joseph Renzulli (2014).

### **2.6.2 Create Opportunities for Collaboration**

Joseph Renzulli (2014) insisted that a teacher can use cluster-grouping of high achieving and gifted students for more in-depth group assignments. This will make it easier for him to provide a variety of tasks and contents. If there are not enough students in the class to form a group, the teacher can always collaborate with other teachers from the same grade level to meet the needs of the high achieving students because it makes more sense for the teacher to

devote time looking for advanced options for a group of students than it does for four or five teachers to do this level of work for one student in each classroom.

### **2.6.3 Use Tiered Assignments**

For Joseph Renzulli (2014) **Using** tiered assignments in the classroom will benefit all the students. It will give them the chance to share their knowledge and ideas yet, at the same time, working at a level that is both academically challenging and comfortable. Tiered assignments give the teacher the chance to teach more flexibly and to promote learners' interests as well as meet their needs by giving them the choice of how to present their knowledge; writing a report, making a video tape, giving a speech or conducting research.

### **2.6.4 Let them Pursue Independent Projects**

Allow high achieving students to seek independent study or project work. To keep them interested, Joseph Renzulli (2014) provided to students a few questions and let them select one to solve. Try to make them recognize how their contribution may benefit the school or the larger community to provide even more value to the project. For example, a student may organize a food drive or look for ways to increase cafeteria recycling.

### **2.6.5 Find the Right Books**

The high achievers should have the chance to discover new words and ideas; this is why the teacher must look for beyond –grade-level content by allowing them to read appropriately challenging fiction and nonfiction books that relate to their interests.

### **2.6.6 Aim for School-wide Enrichment**

All students benefit from the same learning opportunities that interest and encourage high achievers. We all desire authentic learning experiences that are exciting and challenging. For that purpose, the teacher should collaborate with administrators and other experienced teachers to implement regular options for deep enrichment school-wide.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter discusses the concept of learning strategies and high achievers in a general overview. It presents definitions of both concepts by different scholars who are giving various definitions, yet they are mostly agreed that learning strategies are steps, behaviors, and techniques used by learners to enhance and facilitate the learning process.

Language learning strategies vary widely and they are divided into different categories. Omalley and Chamot (1990) classified LLS into 3 groups: Cognitive, Meta-cognitive and Socio-affective. Oxford (1990) classified LLS, she divided these strategies into six groups. Direct strategies include memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. And indirect strategies include meta-cognitive, affective and social strategies. In relation to the concept of learning strategies, the chapter also defined the notion of high achievers, its characteristics, benefits and challenges who represent the use of proper strategies that lead to accurate acquisition and success.

## Chapter Two: Practical Part

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## **Introduction**

In the first chapter a literature review is presented, it is about learning strategies by high achievers: illustrated by the different views of many researchers. However, in this chapter, the dissertation is presented in a practical perspective. For the purpose of proving or disproving the previously stated hypothesis, a descriptive method is followed to collect data by addressing a questionnaire to high achievers at Mila University center.

The current chapter provides a detailed analysis of the students' questionnaire. The chapter starts by identifying the population and the sample chosen for studying. Then, describing the questionnaire in detail. After that the results obtained of every question will be analyzed and interpreted. Last, it ends by discussing the data gathered from the questionnaire.

### **2.1 Research Methodology**

This dissertation investigates the learning strategies used by high achievers at Mila University Center by using a quantitative method; the data were collected through a questionnaire composed of fourteen questions which are grouped into four parts.

### **2.2 Population and Sample**

For the purpose of gathering information about the learning strategies that high achievers use in order to obtain success, a questionnaire for high achievers is set. The questionnaire is given to fifteen high achiever of English in Mila University Center, five high achievers of third year, five master one and five master two levels are chosen. These levels are chosen due to their experience and proficiency abilities.

## **2.3 The Questionnaire**

### **2.3.1.1 Description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is made up of fourteen questions which are divided into four parts, these questions are either closed, select alternatives, or open ended in which they give the answer, give justification whenever it is needed and multi option answers are permitted.

- **Part One: Background Information** (question 1-2)

This part contains two questions. It seeks collecting general information about the high achievers, their experience, level and objectives.

- **Part Two: Learning Strategies** (question 3-4-5-6)

The focus of this part is on the use of learning strategies by the high achievers and its importance in the learning process for them.

- a) The third question is presented to know whether the high achievers use a learning strategy or not.
- b) The fourth question is asked to know which type of the six learning strategies high achievers use.

- c) The fifth one aims at knowing whether high achievers are aware of the learning strategies' effectiveness.
- d) The sixth question is about which one of the six learning strategies is found to be more effective than the others.

- **Part Three: The Factors and Teachers 'Role in Choosing a Learning Strategy**

(question 7-8-9-10)

This part is devoted to check how high achievers choose the right learning strategy for them and how their teachers are involved in this procedure.

- a) Question 7 suggests six factors that may influence the choice of learning strategy, high achievers are asked to pick the factors that they find to be more influential.
- b) Question 8 asks high achievers to suggest other factors that they have faced in their learning experience.
- c) Question 9 aims' knowing whether their teachers help them in better using of learning strategies or not.
- d) Question10 is related to the ninth question where high achievers who answered with yes in the previous question are likely asked to explain how their teacher helps them.

- **Part Four: The Way High Achievers Succeed** (question 11-12-13-14)

In this part, high achievers are supposed to suggest solutions to low achieving students that may help them in their learning process.

- a) Question 11 is to check whether students of the sample recognize that they are high achievers or not.
- b) Question 12 is asked to know if high achievers think that using a learning strategy in their learning process is what makes them high achievers.
- c) Question 13 suggests five tips to low achieving students to become successful; high achievers are asked to select tips that they found to be beneficial.
- d) The final question is related to the previous one; high achievers are asked to suggest other tips to lower ones in order to achieve success.

### **2.3.2 Administration of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire of this thesis is addressed to the high achievers at Mila University Center in the department of foreign languages. The chosen sample is the first five students of third year, master one and master two classes, they were chosen because they already have experienced the use of learning strategies in the previous language learning tasks which allows them to detect the appropriate strategy. Additionally, they can give ideas about how their teachers help them using those strategies and suggestions to low achieving students to overcome the difficulties they face. The questionnaire is distributed via e-mails because of the special circumstances of the Corona pandemic. Some of the students are from other cities and it is difficult to find them at the university, although those fifteen students had answered the questionnaire.

### **2.3.3 Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire**

- **Part One: Background Information**

**Q1:** How long have you been learning English? (Including study at school)

**Table 2: High Achievers' English Learning Duration**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>percentages</b>
<b>Less than 7 years</b>	0	0%
<b>Between 7 and 10 years</b>	5	33%
<b>More than 7 years</b>	10	67%

Table 2 indicates that none of the high achievers of Mila University Center have studied English for less than 7 years, while the majority of them (67%) have studied English for more than 7 years including middle, and high school years then university. This percentage is probably heightened due to master one and two learners. On the other hand, 33% of them have studied English between 7 and 10 years.

**Q2:** Why do you want to learn English?

### **3: High Achievers 'Purpose of Learning English.**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>percentages</b>
<b>For getting a job</b>	6	37%
<b>For immigration</b>	4	30%
<b>For further education</b>	5	33%

The table 3 shows that results were close; the most frequent aim is learning English for getting a job. Next, further education is what 33% of high achievers seek. Finally, 30% of high achievers are learning English to immigrate.

### **Part Two: Learning Strategies**

**Q3:** Do you use specific strategy to learn?

**Table 4: The Average Extent of Using Learning Strategies by High Achievers.**

options	Respondents	percentages
Yes	13	87%
No	2	13%

Table 4 shows that the majority (87%) of high achievers use learning strategies in their learning process while only 13% do not use any.

**Q4:** Which learning strategy do you use most?

**Table 5: Type of Learning Strategies Used by High Achievers**

Options	Respondents	percentages
Memory strategy	6	40%
Cognitive strategy	5	33%
Compensation strategy	1	7%
Meta-cognitive strategy	2	13%
Social strategy	1	7%
Affective strategy	0	0%

As Table 5 shows, the use of Memory and Cognitive Strategies are the most frequent ones (40%) and (33%), so their usage is basic in their learning process. After that, it comes the Meta-cognitive with medium usage (13%) and finally the Affective and Social Strategies with equal amount of usage (7%). While data indicates that no one (0%) of the high achievers use affective strategy.

**Q5:** Do you think using a learning strategy can help you to learn English more effectively?

**Table6: the effectiveness of learning strategies.**

<b>options</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>percentages</b>
<b>Yes</b>	11	73%
<b>No</b>	4	27%

Question 5 indicates that most high achievers (75%) think that using a learning strategy is really important and contribute a great deal to the learning of English. On the other hand, 4 out of 15 learners think that using a learning strategy does not contribute to English improvement.

**Q6:** Which learning strategy you have found to be more effective

**Table7: the most used strategy used by high achievers:**

<b>Options</b>	<b>respondents</b>	<b>percentages</b>
<b>Memory strategy</b>	7	47%
<b>Cognitive strategy</b>	5	33%
<b>Meta-cognitive strategy</b>	5	33%
<b>Social strategy</b>	4	13%
<b>Compensation strategy</b>	1	7%
<b>Affective strategy</b>	1	7%

This question seeks to discover what types of learning strategies are more effective for high achievers. The sample is permitted to choose more than one option. As the table above shows, Memory Strategy is the most effective one according to High Achievers. After that the Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Strategies with equal percentages (33%). Thirdly Social

Strategy scores a weak amount of effectiveness (13%). Finally, both Compensation and Affective Strategies are seen barely effective (7%) by high achievers.

- **Part Three: The Factors and Teachers 'Role in Choosing a Learning Strategy**

**Q7:** Which of the following factors affect your learning strategy?

**Table 8: Factors Affecting the Learning Strategies**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>gender</b>	2	13%
<b>Cultural background</b>	8	53%
<b>Type of tasks</b>	7	47%
<b>Motivation</b>	10	67%
<b>Attitudes and beliefs</b>	6	40%
<b>Tolerance and ambiguity</b>	3	20%

The purpose of this question is to recognize the effect of some factors on the high achievers' learning strategies (multi options is permitted). Results show that motivation is the most affecting factor (67%). Next the cultural background of the learner happens to be a remarkable affecting factor (53%). Also type of tasks affects the learning strategy by a medium amount of (47%) and this is probably due to clearness and complexity of the given task. Thus, attitudes and beliefs have been shown to have an effect (40%) on the learning strategy use. In addition, tolerance and ambiguity marked a small effect (20%). Finally, gender has been seen as a weak factor (13%) which barely affects the learning strategy.

**Q8:** Are there any other factors that affect your learning strategy?

**Table 9: Other Factors Affecting the Learning Strategy**

<b>options</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
----------------	--------------------	--------------------



<b>Yes</b>	7	47%
<b>No</b>	8	53%

As the table shows; 53% of high achievers think that there are other factors affecting their learning strategies, from their own experience they may face other factors rather than the ones mentioned in question 7. While 47% of them claim that they have not faced any other factors in their learning process.

**Q9:** Does your teacher help you use learning strategies more effectively?

**Table 10: Teachers' Involvement in the Use of Learning Strategies**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Yes</b>	1	7%
<b>No</b>	14	93%

Question9 indicates that the majority of high achievers (93%) assert that their teachers are not involved in this process. While one out of 15 (7%) high achievers claim that their teacher actually helps them in using learning strategies.

**Q10:** What does your teacher do to help you use more effective strategies?

In this question, high achievers who answered with yes in the previous question, are recommended to give further explanations of how their teacher helps them using more effective strategies. The student answered by:

1. When my teacher knows my or his students' preferences, he would help them by diversifying the activities he delivers to them according to their needs and preferences.

- **Part four: The Way High Achievers Succeed**

**Q11:** Do you consider yourself as a high achiever?

**Table 12: Successful Learners' Recognition That They Are High Achievers.**

options	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	10	67%
No	5	33%

In this question; successful learners are asked if they consider themselves as high achievers. 67% of them answered by Yes; they recognize that they are learning much better than their peers. While 33% of them see themselves as normal learners despite their high grades.

**Q12:** Do you think using a particular learning strategy is what makes you a high achiever?

**Table 13: The Use of Learning Strategies within High Achievers**

options	Respondents	percentages
Yes	8	53%
No	7	47%

Question 12 indicates that 53% of high achievers think they are successful because they use a particular learning strategy. While 47% think the opposite, they may give credit to other personal factors.

**Q13:** What do you suggest to other learners to become high achievers?

**Table 14: Suggestions for Learners to Become High Achievers**

<b>options</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>percentages</b>
<b>Using a learning strategy</b>	10	67%
<b>Reading</b>	9	60%
<b>Practice</b>	12	80%
<b>Setting goals</b>	11	73%
<b>Patience and persistence</b>	7	46%

This question permits high achievers to give five suggestions to low achievers in order to achieve success according to their proficiency (multiple answers are permitted). Most of them think that practice and setting goals are the main solutions to overcome failure (80%) and (73%). While 67% think that using a learning strategy is beneficial to them. 60% of them prefer reading to perform better. On the other hand, only 46% of them support being patient and persistent.

**Q14:** Do you have other suggestions to become a high achiever?

This question aims at finding solutions to low achieving students in order to become successful ones. High achievers suggested a variety of solutions which could be summarized as follow:

1. Having a positive attitude and looking forward to what you will learn.
2. Managing your time and setting schedules.
3. Using notes in the classroom.
4. Getting organized.
5. Asking for help from your teacher, tutor or partner whenever you face difficulties.
6. Studying from different resources.

#### **2.4 Discussion of the Results**

The analysis of the data collected from the high achievers' questionnaire serves in drawing a set of results concerning the learning strategies used by high achievers at Mila University Center.

The high achievers have been studying English for more than 7 years so they have developed a high level of performance and ability within the field and most of them master the language in order to get a job in addition to other reasons like further education, i.e. getting a PhD or even to immigrate. And some of them are studying English to reach the 3 purposes.

The findings also show that students with a high level often use learning strategies, especially Memory, Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Strategies because they find them to be more effective in improving their English. Also earlier finding reports that the use of Learning Strategies could be affected by several factors like: cultural background of the

learner, motivation and also attitudes and beliefs, although some of the high achievers indicate that there are other factors which affect their use of learning strategy like: learning environment and time.

Also, some of the successful learners do not recognize that they are high achievers; they see themselves as normal learners, while others recognize that fact and give credit in their success to: practice, using a particular learning strategy, reading or to their own abilities. Thus, they raise importance to the usage of learning strategies and suggest solutions to low achievers in order to overcome failure.

## **Conclusion, Recommendations and Limitations**

This chapter discusses the learning strategies used by high achievers at Mila University Center in the department of foreign languages, particularly English. From the students' questionnaire, it is clear that the overall use of learning strategies by the high achievers is found high and that their cultural background, type of task and motivation have statistically a significant effect on frequency of overall strategy use. As a matter of fact, it is found that, consequently, whenever the students use English language learning strategies frequently their level of achievement is higher.

The results of this research help students to raise awareness in the use of learning strategies. Thus, an important usage of them will help students to improve their level. On the other hand, teachers should take into account students' differences in their teaching and help them to better use strategies.

At the end of this chapter, it is necessary that the learning strategies research continues, for a better understanding of the learning and teaching process. Although the previous theories investigations and collected data are beneficial in many aspects, the learning strategies still have not been investigated enough. Therefore, further research is highly recommended to conduct experimentations, interviews, focus groups and observations. These types of studies may provide wider information of learning strategies. Also, other studies should investigate the learning strategies use at different ages and different educational levels like middle or high school. In addition, more research on the factors that affect strategy choice would be valuable. Also investigating the effect of training on learning strategies use, including the success of use, is a vital issue to take into consideration in further research.

It is hoped that the current study has presented valuable information to the study of the learning strategies used by the high achievers at Mila University center. As with any other

study there are some limitations, but none of them is a risk to the validity of the research. Though, these limitations may give suggestions for future researchers on how the use of learning strategies might be further investigated. The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. Since the questionnaire is the main instrument in this study, its data are based on self-report, so it is possible in the questionnaire that students overestimate or underestimate how frequently they use certain strategies.
2. The participants in this study are limited to high achievers of third year, master one and master two students at the department of English language at the University of Mila. This excludes the first- and second-year English language students, and also the students from different departments.
3. Most research regarding high achieving students is derived from quantitative studies which have identified the various areas in which these students differ from the average student. However, a more holistic understanding of these high achieving students might be better achieved through both empathizing with and making sense of their experiences, using qualitative research methodologies.
4. The sample of the study is 15 students only; this prevents us from generalizing to the whole population.

## **General Conclusion**

This dissertation is created to provide the base for research dealing with the issue of learning strategies used by high achievers in the process of English language learning. As a matter of fact, the process of establishing definitions for language learning strategies remains no consensus; in this study, learning strategies are considered as conscious behaviors or thought processes used in performing learning actions, whether observable (behaviors or techniques) or unobservable (thoughts or mental processes), or both. Concerning language learning strategy classification systems, they are also variedly suggested. This is because of the classification standards which are derived from researchers' individual differences; i.e., their personal experiences, their own investigations, or their reviews of other researchers' theories. Regarding our research, Oxford's (1990) classification is crucial.

However, in every university, it is noticed that in spite of being exposed to the same teaching modalities and adopting seemingly similar strategies, some students perform much better than their peers, who are known as high achievers.

In an attempt to answer this research's questions and test the hypothesis, a questionnaire is adopted; it is addressed to fifteen high achievers from the department of English in Mila University Center. The findings of this research paper provide answers to the research questions and confirmed the hypothesis.

This dissertation is composed of two main chapters. The first one presents the theoretical framework which is composed of two sections; the first one deals with the



learning strategies, while the second deals with high achievers. Whereas in the second chapter; the research methodology, the results and their interpretations are provided.

In general, it can be concluded that the use of learning strategies can make learning more dynamic, promoting more effective, participative and social learning, encouraging cooperation/teamwork and preventing the meaningless mechanical memorization of material studied. Similarly, the use of these strategies can enable students to better organize their studies and to work in a more orderly, coherent and planned way that leads to high academic achievements.

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## Appendix: Questionnaire

Dear students,

The present questionnaire is attempting to collect data that will help us to learn more about learners' needs and to help us gain a more accurate picture of learning strategies used among students. You are asked to answer the following questions. Thank you so much for your participation. Tick the right box or write in the space provided.

1-How long have you been learning English? (Including study at school)

Less than 7 years

Between 7 and 10 years

More than 7 years

2-Why do you want to learn English?

For getting a job

For immigration

For further education

3-Do you use a specific strategy to learn?

Yes  No

4-Which learning strategy you use most?

Memory strategy

Cognitive strategy

Compensation strategy

Meta-cognitive strategy

Social strategy

Affective strategy

5-Do you think using a learning strategy can help you to learn English more effectively?

Yes  No

6-Which learning strategy have you found to be more effective?

Memory strategy

Cognitive strategy

Compensation strategy

Meta-cognitive strategy

Social strategy

Affective strategy

7-Which of the following factors affect your learning strategy:

Gender

Motivation

Cultural background



Attitudes and beliefs

Type of tasks

Tolerance and ambiguity

8-Are there any other factors that affect your learning strategy?

Yes  No

9-Does your teacher help you use learning strategies more effectively?

Yes  No

10-What does your teacher do to help you use more effective strategies?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11-Do you consider yourself as a high achiever?

Yes  No

12-Do you think using a particular learning strategy is what makes you a high achiever?

Yes  No

13-what do you suggest to other learners to become high achievers?

Using a learning strategy

Reading

Practicing

Patience and persistence

14-Do you have other suggestions to become a high achiever?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Thank You

### ملخص

تهدف هذه المذكرة إلى معرفة استراتيجيات التعلم المستخدمة من قبل المتفوقين، وكيفية ارتباط هذه الاستراتيجيات بأدائهم الأكاديمي. وكذلك التحقق مما إذا كان جميع المتفوقين يستخدمون استراتيجيات التعلم، والتحقق مما إذا كانت هناك اختلافات كبيرة في استخدام استراتيجيات التعلم لدى الطلاب فيما يتعلق بكفاءة المستويات. كشفت النتائج أن الاستخدام العام لاستراتيجيات التعلم من قبل الطلاب مرتفع. حيث تكون الذاكرة والإدراك هما الإستراتيجيات أن الأكثر استخدامًا. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الطلاب والطالبات في استخدام الاستراتيجيات العامة أو في أقسامها الستة. تشير النتائج إلى أن بعض الاستراتيجيات تساهم في أداء الطلاب أكثر من الأخرى. من المفترض أنه إذا ضمن الطلاب استراتيجيات التعلم في عملية التعلم الخاصة بهم، فيكونون متفوقين. لذلك من أجل تحقيق الأهداف السابقة، يتم إجراء استبيان مع طلاب السنة الثالثة ليسانس، ماستر واحد و ماستر اثنين من معهد اللغات الأجنبية (لغة انجليزية) في

جامعة ميلة. وهكذا يتم تقديم استبيان لخمسة عشر من الطلاب المتفوقين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم الحصول على درجاتهم من جدول نتائج قسم اللغة الإنجليزية لتحديد مستوى كفاءة هؤلاء الطلاب. أكدت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من الاستبيان الفرضية المذكورة أعلاه وقادتنا إلى استنتاج أن استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة له تأثير إيجابي على تحصيل الطلاب

## Résumé

Cette thèse vise à étudier les stratégies d'apprentissage utilisées par les élèves très performants et comment ces stratégies sont liées à leurs performances scolaires, à vérifier si tous les élèves très performants utilisent des stratégies d'apprentissage et à rechercher s'il existe des différences significatives dans les stratégies d'apprentissage des étudiants en matière de compétence. Les résultats ont révélé que l'utilisation globale des stratégies d'apprentissage par les élèves est élevée là où la mémoire et les stratégies cognitives sont les stratégies les plus fréquemment utilisées, et la stratégie affective est le moins fréquemment utilisé. De plus, il n'y a statistiquement aucune différence significative entre les étudiants

masculins et féminins dans l'utilisation des stratégies globales et dans l'utilisation des six catégories de stratégies. Les résultats impliquent que certaines stratégies contribuent à la performance des élèves plus que d'autres. On suppose que si les élèves impliquaient des stratégies d'apprentissage dans leur processus d'apprentissage, ils seraient très performants. Ainsi, afin d'atteindre les objectifs précédents, un questionnaire est mené auprès d'étudiants de troisième année, de master un et deux anglais très performants à l'Université de Mila. Ainsi, une quinzaine d'étudiants se voient remettre un questionnaire à répondre. De plus, leurs notes sont obtenues à partir du tableau des résultats du département d'anglais pour déterminer le niveau de compétence de ces étudiants. Les résultats obtenus à partir du questionnaire ont confirmé l'hypothèse ci-dessus et nous amènent à conclure que l'utilisation de stratégies d'apprentissage des langues a un effet positif sur la réussite des élèves.