

THE LANGUAGE LEARNING  
STRATEGIES OF STUDENTS AT A  
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES  
AND HOW STRATEGY USE  
CORRELATES WITH LEARNING  
SUCCESS

Master's thesis  
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<p>Kielenoppimisstrategiat ovat keinoja, joita oppijat käyttävät ohjaamaan ja tehostamaan omaa oppimistaan. Oppimisstrategioiden monipuolisen käytön on havaittu vaikuttavan kielenoppimisen onnistumiseen. Oppimisstrategioiden käytössä on kuitenkin tärkeää, että oppijat osaavat soveltaa oikeaa oppimisstrategiaa eri oppimistilanteissa. Tämän takia on tärkeää, että oppijoita ohjataan strategioiden käytössä, jotta he kehittyvät omien strategioidensa arvioijina ja osaavat soveltaa strategioitaan.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, millaisia oppimisstrategioita ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijat käyttävät, onko opiskelijoiden strategioiden käytön ja heidän menestyksensä pakollisella työelämän englannin kurssilla välillä yhteys sekä millaisia kokemuksia ja mielipiteitä opiskelijoilla on strategiakoulutuksesta. Oppimisstrategioiden suhdetta oppimistuloksiin työelämän Englannin opetuksen kontekstissa on tutkittu hyvin vähän. Tutkimus toteutettiin monimuototutkimuksena, jossa hyödynnettiin sekä laadullisia että määrällisiä menetelmiä. Aineisto koostuu strategiakyseystä, johon vastasi 78 opiskelijaa, sekä neljän opiskelijan haastatteluista. Tutkimus toteutettiin yhdessä ammattikorkeakoulussa.</p> <p>Ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijat käyttivät suurinta osaa oppimisstrategioista kohtalaisen usein. Strategiat kielitaidon puutteiden kompensointiin olivat useimmiten käytettyjä strategioita opiskelijoiden keskuudessa, ja muististrategioita taas käytettiin harvimmoin. Kurssilla paremmin ja huonommin menestyneiden oppilaiden strategioiden käytön välillä havaittiin myös eroja. Kun yksittäisten strategioiden käyttöä tarkasteltiin, havaittiin, että paremmin kurssilla suoriutuneet opiskelijat käyttivät eri oppimisstrategioita useammin ja käyttivät useampia strategioita hyvin usein kuin heikommin menestyneet. Sama toistui sekä loppuarvosanoja ja opiskelijoiden tyytyväisyyttä tutkittaessa. Kognitiiviset strategiat, jotka liittyivät kielen kanssa toimimiseen, kuten lukeminen, korostuivat. Tutkimuksessa ilmeni, että opiskelijat eivät juuri muista saaneensa näkyvää ohjausta oppimisstrategioiden käytössä. Opiskelijoiden asenne strategiakoulutusta kohtaan oli kuitenkin positiivinen. Opiskelijoiden mielestä olisi tärkeää, että heidän yksilölliset piirteensä ja tarpeensa otettaisiin ohjauksessa huomioon ja heille annettaisiin keinot arvioida strategioidensa sopivuutta. Jatkotutkimus voisi keskittyä opiskelijoiden välisiin eroihin sopivien strategioiden käytössä ja erilaisiin tapoihin toteuttaa strategiakoulutusta ammattikorkeakouluissa.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the study of language learning, it is important to consider learners and how they learn languages. There is great interest towards the actions which learners take to accomplish learning tasks, also known as language learning strategies (LLS), and how these actions could be guided. Language learning strategies have been widely studied over the course of decades, and different definitions and classifications for language learning strategies have been proposed (Rubin 1981; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990; Griffiths 2003). Language learning strategies, as defined by Griffiths (2013: 15), based on years of discussion in the field, are actions chosen by learners to regulate their own learning. The topic of language learning strategies is complex and there are many different aspects from which one can approach studying them, such as their effect on learning success, different factors affecting which strategies students choose and which strategies are needed in different situations.

The context of learning is also a matter of interest in studying language learning strategies. The role of the English as a language of commerce, technology and science has resulted in the increased importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), a model where language teaching focuses on the immediate needs of the learner (Hutchinson and Waters 1987; Dudley-Evans and St John 1998; Basturkmen 2006). English teaching in Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland follows the model of ESP in which the focus is on the vocational needs of the student (Kantelinen and Airola 2009: 38). English teaching in Universities of Applied sciences is an interesting topic for research, as it is meant to provide learners with the language skills they need to practice their future profession and take part in international cooperation (Government Decree on Polytechnics 1129/2014, 4§, 5§, 7§). The education that the students receive must be conducted according to the actual needs of their occupation and their learning should be as effective as possible if they are to use English after graduation.

There have been some studies on language learning strategies in the context of ESP studies. However, these studies have so far mostly focused on instruction in the use of one strategy type (Atay and Ozbulgan 2007; Akbani and Tahririan 2009) or have been limited to examining how frequently learners use certain broad strategy groups (Shah et al. 2013). Little research has been done on the more specific strategies used by ESP learners and how strategy use correlates with success in ESP learning. Furthermore, there is very little research on the strategies of ESP learners in Finland. Mason (1991) studied the strategies of Finnish

university students taking an ESP course. This study was conducted over 20 years ago. Thus, there is definitely a need for a more recent study on the topic.

The present study was a mixed method study, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to study the learning strategies of Finnish ESP learners in a University Applied Sciences. The goal of the study was to recognise how students use language learning strategies and if strategy use is connected to greater success in learning English. An online strategy survey based on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning by Oxford (1990) was used to find out how frequently students use different strategies. A total of 78 students answered the survey. Additionally, four students were interviewed on their strategy use and their views on strategy instruction. A quantitative analysis was conducted for the frequencies and correlations of the strategy questionnaire while content analysis was used to analyze the interviews.

To put the findings of the present study into context, it is important to understand how language education is conducted in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences. This thesis consists of three parts. First, I will discuss the theoretical framework of the study. I will examine past research into language learning strategies and strategy instruction to see which factors affect strategy use and how strategy use contributes to successful language learning. I will also discuss the features of ESP and the state of language education in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences. Second, I will discuss the research question and the methodology of the present study. I will explain how the data for the study was collected and analyzed. Third, I will present the results of the study. I will discuss what the questionnaire data and interviews reveal about the strategy use of students of target University of Applied Sciences and which strategies relate to successful learning in this context. I will also examine the views and attitudes of the interviewed students towards strategy instruction. Finally, I will discuss the implications of the results and give suggestions for further study.

## **2 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES**

### **2.1 Defining language learning strategies**

This chapter examines the theoretical framework of language learning strategies and the characteristics that defines these strategies. The differences between languages learning strategies as cognitive skills and language skills, the level of consciousness and learners' strategies choices, goal-orientation and the role of language learning strategies in self-regulation are examined. In the study of language learning strategies, the first important issue to address is their definition. Oxford (1990:1) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations." O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 55) draw from the cognitive theory of language learning and argue that language learning strategies are cognitive skills. Griffiths (2013: 15) describes language learning strategies as conscious activities learners take to manage their own learning. Macaro (2006: 325) argues that a goal, a situation and a mental action are the elements needed to describe a strategy. Learners' management of their own learning process and the nature of strategies as actions or activities are elements that appear across these different definitions.

There are, however, many issues related to the definition of learning strategies. Dörnyei (2005: 190) argues that research focus should be directed towards self-regulation, a more dynamic process, rather than the individual strategies of learners. However, Griffiths (2008: 85) notes the circular nature of this argument, which leaves open the question of what actions learners take to regulate their learning. According to Griffiths, as strategy use is one of the factors that constitute the learners' self-regulation of their learning, both self-regulation and strategy concepts are necessary to explore. When studying how learners regulate their learning, it is important to recognise the actions which they take towards this regulation, in other words, their learning strategies. Furthermore, while Dörnyei (2005: 163) criticises the lack of singular, consistent definition of language learning strategies, multiple features, such as strategies role as actions and their goal-orientations, emerge constantly across language learning strategy research. Based on the debate and consensus on the field, Griffiths (2008: 87) defines strategies as "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own learning."



O'Malley and Chamot (1990) view language learning strategies as cognitive skills, which suggests that they can be learned and improved. Rubin (1987: 16) argues that teachers can promote learning strategy use by supporting learners in identifying the strategies which work best for them or by directly suggesting alternative strategies. Oxford (1990: 12) also argues that teachability makes strategies distinct from learner traits, such as personality, which can be more difficult to change. Thus, if use of appropriate strategies leads to better learning outcomes, the teacher can help learners perform better by aiding them in adopting more appropriate strategies. As Griffiths (2013: 145) notes, while cognitive theory suggests that language learning strategies can be taught and learned, the topic of language instruction is still controversial. Grenfell and Macaro (2007: 12-13) claim that the argument that LLS can be taught is weakened by implications that strategy use is affected by context. Griffiths (2013: 173), however, argues that while context affects strategy use, teachers can help learners adapt their strategies to new contexts. Since strategies are considered tools, teaching how to apply these tools in different situation is also part of strategy instruction process. The context-dependency of language learning strategies does not render strategy instruction impossible, but it is something that teachers must address to support their students' learning. Strategy instruction will be discussed further in chapter 2.5.

While learning strategies are cognitive skills, it is important to separate them from *language skills*. Oxford (1990: 5-6) defines language skills as ability or proficiency in language use, most notably in terms of speaking, writing, listening and reading. Macaro (2006: 331) explains that skills are measurable, and in addition to the four skills discussed by Oxford (1990) the use of mixed skills can also be measured, such as in the case of reporting and translations. He argues that skills can be measured both in the terms of success at a specific task, based on the criteria set for the task, and the rate at which skills are acquired. Thus, language skills are linked with one's language use and the development of a learner's skills is reflected in their language use. Griffiths' (2013: 12) proposed distinction for skills and strategies states that skills are how learners use language, while strategies are actions taken to achieve a learning goal. Learning strategies are always linked with the intention to develop one's language skills. Griffiths (2013: 12) also notes that if skills are used for the means of learning, skills can act as strategies. Making such simple distinctions is not, however, always easy, since as Griffiths (2013: 6) remarks, it is not easy to recognise if one performs an action simply for the purpose of communicate or receive information, or to practise their language use.

Macaro (2006: 325-326) proposes that there is a distinction between strategies and subconscious activities, as strategies are processed in working memory and are accessible to the learner, while subconscious activities are mostly automatic and the learner displays very little control over them. Griffiths (2013: 9) suggests that rather than conscious and unconscious, deliberate and automatic would be a more suitable distinction in the use of learning strategies. Cohen (1998: 4) argues that a level of consciousness is always present in strategy use, though learners might not always focus their full attention to their usage. While learners may not be aware of how they use strategies in the process of completing a learning task, it is not impossible for them to contemplate and evaluate their strategy use. Thus, learning strategies are not unconscious, since they can be accessed by the learner, but in the process of the learning task they can be employed deliberately or automatically. Oxford (2011: 296) goes as far as to claim that strategy use is always deliberate. Griffiths (2013: 9-10), however, argues that learning strategies can appear as either deliberate or automatic, as experienced learners may be unaware of the strategy choices they make, while novice learners and learners consciously trying out new strategies have to make deliberate decisions. Cohen (2007: 34-35) argues that despite the disagreement of the specific level of consciousness, majority of learning strategy experts agree that some level of consciousness is present in strategy use.

One of the core theoretical assumptions of learning strategies is that some learners are more successful than others and the use of language learning strategies can promote successful learning. Rubin (1987: 15) suggests that all other traits being similar, some learners are more successful due to difference in cognition and metacognition. She further provides the assumption that successful learners also show variation in the aspects that make them successful. Hosefield (1979, as cited in Rubin 1987: 16) assumes that identifying strategies used by successful learners can be used to help less effective learners improve their foreign language learning. Cohen (2007: 43) notes that there is a consensus among experts that strategy use enhances learning, and employing appropriate strategies can make faster and easier. The role of learning strategies in successful language learning will be discussed in chapter 2.4.

The use of language learning strategies is goal-oriented. According to Macaro (2006: 328), human action is typically driven by a purpose and an aim to reach a goal. Use of learning strategies is not different in this regard. There is a great deal of variation in the goals between

individuals and situations (Griffiths 2013: 11). Oxford (1990: 8-9) argues that the main goal of learning strategies is reaching communicative competence. Different sets of strategies serve different functions in reaching this one overall goal of learning strategy use. She (1990: 8) also argues that to reach communicative competence, the learners must be able to use language realistically and in a meaningful ways, and learning strategies can help learners to better participate in such communication. This is not unique to language learning strategies, but follows the general understanding of communicative competence in language learning research. Macaro (2006: 328) maintains that explicit goal-orientation is a key feature of a strategy and specific goals aid in describing separate strategies. According to Oxford (1990: 8-9) the use of language learning strategies can improve the learners' communicative competence both in general and by developing certain aspects of their competence, such as improving grammatical accuracy through the use of memory strategies. Griffiths (2013: 11) insists that goal-orientation is what sets strategies apart from skills, which are related to language use, such as writing or speaking.

Oxford (1990: 11) highlights that language learning strategies are tools, which are used to solve problems and complete tasks. Memory strategies, for example, are used to remember something that has been previously learned. Thus, each strategy has a specific set of challenges they can be used to overcome. Related to this problem solving, Wenden (1987: 7) and Oxford (1990: 11) argue that language learning strategies are specific actions that learners take to improve their learning experience. These learning strategies are not all-encompassing, broad ideas that learners apply in their studies, but clear learning actions, such as note taking or repeating phrases. Learning strategy use, however, is not the only trait which defines how successful a learner is, nor do strategies exist in isolation from other individual aspects of the learner. Oxford (1990:11) notes that language learning strategy use and how problem solving actions are carried out are affected by other learner traits, such as their competence and motivation.

Learning strategies are also relevant to learner autonomy and learners' regulation of their own learning. There is a consensus on the field that learners' strategy use is connected to their self-regulation and learning management (Cohen 2007: 44). Wenden (1991: 15) defines learner autonomy as a combination of learning strategies, knowledge about learning and attitudes that allow learners to use these elements appropriately and independently. Oxford (1990: 10) draws attention to the importance of self-direction in language learning and argues

that learning strategies help students improve their self-direction skills. Language learning is a process which is not limited to settings where an instructor is present, which is why learners need to be able to assess and develop their own learning. Griffiths (2013: 12-13) argues that the ability to think about one's learning beyond the immediate task at hand is crucial for learners to manage their own learning process. Thus, metacognition is a central element of self-regulation of learning. Understanding learning strategies is a tool for learners to observe their own learning process and develop their language skills. Andersson (2008: 108) argues that good learners develop metacognitive skills that make them less dependent on others. Oxford (1990: 10) notes that in addition to making learners aware of different language learning strategies, it is also important that they become motivated to take responsibility of their own learning. She also emphasises that self-direction is a gradual process in which learners little by little become more accustomed to their responsibilities on their learning.

Learning strategies are actions that learners take to enhance their learning and make learning more enjoyable. Strategies are goal-oriented and are used by learners to complete specific learning tasks. Learners make choices regarding their strategy use, but these choices may not always be deliberate as learners become accustomed to applying certain strategies more automatically. Since learners can make choices regarding their strategies, these choices can also be affected through instruction to help them use the appropriate strategies for task at hand. Thus, based on prior research and debate on the nature of learning strategies, in this thesis, language learning strategies are defined as conscious, teachable actions taken by learners to regulate and enhance their language learning.

## **2.2 Strategy taxonomies**

Learners employ many different strategies when learning new languages. According to Oxford (1990: 9) the primary goal of strategy use is communicative competence in target language. This reflects the general ideas of language learning which emerged at the time. Strategies affect the learning process and competence on multiple levels. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 43) highlight that learners use learning strategies to develop their sociolinguistic competence as well as linguistic competence. Language learning strategies are used to both learn the structure of target language and learn about the language and its sociocultural context. Different learning strategies can be grouped together based on the way they affect learning. However, there are many different approaches to forming these broader categories for language learning strategies. In this chapter, I discuss the different approaches

to creating strategy taxonomies for language learning strategies.

Rubin (1987: 23-27) recognises three separate categories of strategies used by learners: cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies. Oxford (1990: 16) divides language learning strategies into two main groups, direct and indirect strategies, which she further divides into eight sub-groups. Direct strategies directly involve the manipulation of the target language and include memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies include social, affective and metacognitive strategies (Oxford 1990: 16). These strategies are related to how learners manage their own learning and behaviour. O'Malley's and Chamot's (1990: 44-45) taxonomy separates learning strategies into three categories, including cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategies. Many of the same specific strategies appear across each of these taxonomies, but are grouped slightly differently across different categories.

Oxford (1990: 43) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 44) define cognitive strategies as strategies that involve the learner manipulating the target language and input to enhance their learning. Rubin (1987: 23) lists analysing, synthesising and transforming language as cognitive processes that learners use to develop their knowledge of language. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 44) the use of cognitive strategies can be limited to the specific learning tasks. Oxford (1990: 43) argues that strategies employed for practising the target language are among the most important cognitive strategies. Practice strategies include repeating words and structures and grouping and recombining language input (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 45; Oxford 1990: 19; Rubin 1987: 24). Learners also use deduction and reasoning by recognising and using rules to better understand language (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 45; Rubin 1987: 25). Part of this process, as suggested by O'Malley and Chamot (1990:45) and Oxford (1990: 19) is transfer, learners using known information for new learning tasks. Oxford (1990: 19) classifies using note taking, summarising and highlighting to manage input and output as cognitive strategies. Learners utilise a wide array of cognitive strategies, but these strategies are all characterised by their relation to target language input and learners manipulating this input to enhance their learning.

There are different views for categorising strategies related to memorisation. Rubin (1987: 24) classifies memorisation as a cognitive strategy, while Oxford (1990: 17) argues that these strategies are a separate strategy group. Memory strategies, according to Oxford (1990: 39), are based on arranging learned elements in order, making associations between them and

reviewing. Creating mental links, according to Oxford (1990: 39) is achieved by grouping and elaboration or association, which are classified as cognitive strategies by O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 45). Learners group language items into meaningful units based on semantics and syntax (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 45; Oxford 199: 40). Elaboration or association means creating relations between information and these links can be formed between new items or between old and new information (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 45; Oxford 1990: 41). One method of memorising and recalling information addressed by both Oxford (1990: 42) and Rubin (1987: 25) is the use of keywords. Oxford (1990:40) also notes that learners rarely report using these strategies, which could be caused by either them simply not using them or being unaware of using them. Memory strategies are used to organise and create links between information from target language input, which is why they can be categorised as cognitive strategies. However, due to the number of different strategies for memorisation, they can be also be classified as their own strategy category, separate from other cognitive strategies.

Language learning is not typically a solitary endeavour but includes interaction with other people. Oxford (1990: 145) identifies three types of social strategies: asking questions, cooperation and empathising with other people. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 45) explain that learners can ask their teacher or peers for clarification, additional information or rephrasing. Further question types noted by Oxford (1990: 146-147) are asking for someone to alter their output by, for example, slowing down or asking for correction Thus, learners can use questions to not only gain additional information or clarification, but also to ask others to alter their output. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 45) define cooperation as a strategy that language learners use with their peers for problem solving, sharing information and peer feedback. Oxford (1990: 147), however, argues that cooperation also includes learners working with more proficient language users, such as native speakers. Strategies for developing empathy identified Oxford (1990: 145) include learners developing understanding of different cultures and observing other people's behaviour to better understand their thoughts and feelings. She (1990: 146) argues that empathy is important for both communication and language learning. Understanding other people and cultures can be an important motivator for learning a language. Oxford (1990: 146) also argues that the use of social strategies is hindered by competition endorsed in schools, which leads to anxiety in learners. Due to the social nature of language learning, understanding social strategies is important when observing how learners interact with other people in the target language.

Metacognitive strategies are strategies for learners to monitor and direct their own learning processes (Rubin 1987: 25). Oxford (1990: 136-137) describes metacognitive strategies as helping students coordinate their learning process and helping them focus when they encounter large amounts of new information. The strategy which learners use to focus on specific learning task by choosing to look for specific words or phrases is called selective attention by O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 44). Oxford (1990: 136) includes selective attention in a group of strategies which learners can use to centre their learning and she argues that it is connected to how learners recall and associate prior knowledge with a new activity and how learners choose to focus on listening over speech production while developing their comprehension skills. The ability to plan one's learning helps learners achieve their goals. Planning as a language learning strategy includes learning about language learning as a concept, organising conditions for learning, setting goals, identifying the purpose of and preparing for language tasks and looking for opportunities for practice (Oxford 1990: 139). Wenden (1991: 27) notes that planning can take place both before and during a task. She explains that through planning while performing a task, objectives and means for achieving them can change based on the learner's performance. Learners also monitor and evaluate their learning. Oxford (1990: 140) argues that monitoring and evaluating are closely related, as learners monitor their errors in producing and understanding the target language and evaluate their progress in the language. Wenden (1991: 27-28) remarks that monitoring happens while planning or performing a language task, while evaluation takes place after attempts at learning or using the language, focusing on the outcome of the attempt. A central feature of metacognitive strategies is that they are not specific to language learning, but affect how people generally control their own learning.

In addition to managing their learning process, learners also use strategies to manage their emotions and motivation. Learners use affective strategies to lower their anxiety, encourage themselves and assess their feelings, motivation and attitudes in relation to language tasks (Oxford 1990: 140, 144). O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 45) explain that one strategy learners use to convince themselves that they will accomplish learning tasks and reduce their anxiety is self-talk. Oxford (1990: 143) suggests that anxiety reducing strategies include using music and laughter, and using meditation, breathing or progressive relaxation techniques. She further notes that these strategies have both a physical and a mental aspect. Oxford (1990: 143) also mentions self-talk or making positive statements as a strategy for learners to encourage themselves. Other encouragement strategies she presents include controlled risk-

taking and rewarding oneself for successful performance in target language. Anxiety-lowering and encouraging strategies both involve learners finding ways to alter their mental state as more favourable for language learning. Strategies for assessing one's emotions and motivations, also called "taking your emotional temperature" (Oxford 1990: 144), include learners observing signals from their body, using checklists and learning diaries to identify their feelings, attitudes and motivations and how they change, and sharing their feelings with others. As Oxford (1990: 144) explains, if learners are not aware of their feelings and why they feel the way they do, they will not be able to control them.

According to Oxford (1990: 47) compensation strategies help learners overcome limitations in knowledge and use new language for production and comprehension. She divides these strategies into two categories: guessing intelligently, and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing. By using these strategies, learners are able to engage in communication despite their limitations, which further improves their learning. Oxford (1990: 49) defines guessing strategies as using both linguistic and non-linguistic clues to make educated guesses. Linguistic clues may come from the learner's prior knowledge of the target language, their first language or other languages, which the learner uses to deduct the meaning of an unknown word or expression. Rubin (1987: 23) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 45), however, classify guessing as part of cognitive strategies. This categorisation is also possible, as guessing involves direct analysis of language. While this strategy is useful when the learner is familiar with a language similar to the target language, it is also prone for mistaken guesses if similar words in two languages have different meanings. Oxford (1990: 49-50) presents a wide variety of non-linguistic clues that learners can use to make more accurate guesses, such as context and situation, topic, structure of a text, as well as "general knowledge" (Oxford 1990: 50). Using non-linguistic clues with linguistic clues, learners can make more accurate guesses. Oxford (1990: 48) notes that guessing strategies are also used by more advanced learners and native speakers in situations where they encounter new words or fail to hear something well enough.

Strategies for overcoming limitations allow learners to produce expressions in target language despite limited knowledge (Oxford 1990: 48). These strategies introduced by Oxford (1990: 50-51) range from controlling the direction and contents of communication by partially or completely avoiding communication, selecting conversation topics and adjusting the message to manipulating one's own output by using non-linguistic gestures, switching to one's mother tongue, coining new word, and using synonyms and circumlocutions



(describing concepts). Oxford also classifies getting someone to help as a compensation strategy. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 45), however, include asking for help from others under social/affective strategies. It is notable that strategies for overcoming limitations as proposed by Oxford are best suitable for verbal communication, which is why it is possible to view them as social strategies. Tarone (1978, as cited in Tarone 1981: 286) and Rubin (1987: 26-27) categorise many of these strategies, such as word coinage, use of synonyms and switching languages as *communication strategies*. Furthermore, according to Griffiths (2013: 13-15), such communication strategies cannot necessarily be classified as learning strategies if they are merely used to accomplish communication. She argues that the strategies must be used to learn from communicative situation. This illustrates the complicity of creating strategy taxonomies, as different strategies can be seen as belonging to multiple different categories through their functions and features.

### **2.3 Variables affecting learning strategy choices**

In this chapter, the different variables which affect the strategies chosen by learners are examined. Griffiths (2013: 10) recognises three types of factors that affect strategy choices: individual, contextual and purpose. Individual factors are related to the learner. These include aspects such as their age, sex, nationality, proficiency, motivation and learning style (Grenfell and Macaro, 2007: 13; Griffiths, 2013: 10). Learning environment and methods used for teaching are contextual factors. The purpose of learning, or the learning goal, also affects which strategies need to be employed. These factors affect which learning strategies learners use and how frequently they are used. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) studied variables affecting reported learning strategy use of undergraduate students studying French, Spanish, German, Russian and Italian. They recognised five strategy factors used by the students using the SILL questionnaire and studied variation in reported use of these five strategies. Green and Oxford (1995) studied effect of gender and proficiency level in learning strategy use among Puerto Rican English language learners. Multiple factors related to learners themselves, context and the present task affect which strategies learners choose to use.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 163) define learning styles as including both the cognitive approach a learner has to learning and their attitudes. Both what learners feel works for them in learning and what they believe to be effective and important contribute to the formation of a learning style. According to Nel (2008: 49-50), learning styles include learners preferences for instruction and environment, how they obtain and process information and their

personality. While, as discussed above, learning strategies are specific actions learners take to manage their learning and complete specific tasks, learning style is a broader concept of how learners learn and what their views on learning are. It has been well recognised that learning strategy use is tied to learning style (Cohen, 1998: 15; Griffiths, 2013: 27). Oxford and Burry-Stock (2003: 10-11) argue for a particularly strong connection between sensory preference and learning strategy use. Rossi-Le (1989: 73-75) found, for example, that auditory learners frequently used memory and metacognitive strategies, while this learning style predicted less frequent use of strategies for authentic language use. Macaro (2006: 331) characterises the cognitive aspects of learning styles as *cognitive styles*, the habitual choosing of strategies learners employ to accomplish different learning tasks.

Oxford and Nyikos (1989: 295) in one of the earliest studies on motivation and the use of language learning strategies found that highly motivated learners used a larger number of strategies more frequently than less motivated learners. Oxford (1990:13) also found that, in general, motivated learners not only use more strategies, but are also able to select more appropriate strategies for the task at hand. Motivation does not simply affect the general frequency of strategy use, but also affects which strategies learners choose to complete tasks. Macaro (2006: 330) asserts that motivation and language learning strategies interact in the formation of learners' strategic plans. Thus, the role of the teacher is important in motivating learners in both language learning and strategy use. Learners need to be made aware of why what they are learning is important. Macaro (2006: 331) argues that clusters of strategies form plans with broader learning objectives when compared to individual strategies, and motivational components shape plans and affect how efficiently learners can carry them out. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 160) also recognise the significance of learners' motivations. Learners who have experienced successes in their language learning are more likely to approach new tasks with more enthusiasm and motivation than less successful learners (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 160-161). Providing learners with positive experiences is important in terms of motivation. Learners need enough support to complete given learning tasks. However, this can be challenging in environments where learners of very different skill level are present. The level of confidence that learners have for their own language learning skills can greatly support or hinder their learning.

Oxford (1990: 13) also notes that motivation is related to learning purpose, the purpose for which a learner wants to learn the target language, which in turn affects the strategies the

learner uses most frequently. Griffiths (2013: 69) draws attention to different kinds of motivation for learning languages and variation in the learning strategy use of students with different learning motivations. She argues that learners studying English for further education and future employment report both higher average frequency of strategy use and higher number of strategy items used frequently when compared to learners with personal reasons, such as travel. Griffiths (2013: 70) argues that her findings suggest that external motivators are more powerful in driving learners to succeed, but also acknowledges that it is also possible that an internal motivation, possibly one the learners' are unaware of, is also necessary to drive learners to work towards their goal. It should also be noted that in addition to learners possibly being unaware of some of their motivations, learners can also have multiple internal and external motivators which affect their learning and their motivations can change during the learning process. Griffiths (2013: 70) notes that due to the complexity and very individual nature of motivation, clear division of external and internal motivations is difficult. Yet, motivation is apparently strongly linked to both language learning strategy use and successful learning.

The relationship between age and learning strategy use has not been widely studied (Oxford 1989: 238; Griffiths 2013: 74). According to Oxford (1989: 238), while studies on adult learners suggest that the learning strategy use of older learners seems more sophisticated, this is most likely due to motivational factors rather than age. Oxford, however, does not further elaborate what is meant by more sophisticated use of strategies. Furthermore, motivational factors are not necessarily linked to age and younger learners with similar motivators as older learners could thus display similar strategy use patterns. Griffiths (2013: 74) found no correlation between strategy use frequency and age. Comparing the frequency of strategy use between younger (age 14 to 23) and older (age 24 to 64) learners on a five-point scale, she found that the average reported frequency of LLS use of both groups was identical. It is possible that when studying the strategy use of learners of different ages, other factors affect strategy use more than age. While older learners may have learned language in different settings and through different methods, and have different experiences with exposure to English, age itself does not appear to be a factor in strategy use variance.

In their study, Green and Oxford (1995: 278) found a significant connection between higher proficiency in English and learning strategy use. They found that 22 of 50 items in the SILL questionnaire varied significantly with course level (prebasic, basic and intermediate) and

seventeen of these strategies were used more frequently by more proficient learners (positive variation). Out of the strategies showing positive variation, 11 were cognitive, 3 metacognitive, 1 affective and 2 social strategies (Green and Oxford 1995: 280). These results suggest that the use of cognitive strategies is important in developing language proficiency. Griffiths' (2013: 64) findings also support the idea that frequent use of cognitive strategies characterise advanced language learners. Green and Oxford (1995: 274) also observed that only a single strategy, noticing when one is tense or nervous, displayed negative variation, being used more frequently by less proficient learners. In another study, Watanabe (1990, as cited in Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995: 9) found that frequency of strategy use also correlated with students' self-reported proficiency, with students rating themselves higher also using most SILL strategies more frequently. This was true for all strategy categories, except for social and affective strategies. Proficiency and language learning strategy use are linked and more proficient learners, whether self-reported or measured by course level, tend to use certain strategies more frequently.

The findings on the effect of gender on strategy choices are mixed. In their study, Oxford and Nyikos (1989: 295) found that female students reported higher frequency of strategy use in three out of five strategy factors studied, while male students did not report higher frequency of use in a single category. This suggests that gender is a significant factor in strategy use variation. A later study by Green and Oxford (1995: 272-273) also supports the argument that women report more frequent use of multiple language learning strategies. However, they note that there was little overlap between the strategies used more frequently by female learners and strategies used more frequently by proficient learners (Green and Oxford 1995: 290). Thus, difference in strategy use does not explain proficiency differences between men and women. Griffiths (2013: 75) found no statistically significant difference in reported frequency for strategy use between male and female learners. Since Griffiths (2013: 75) argues that women tend to be more motivated towards language learning and, as discussed above, motivation significantly affects learners' strategy use, it is interesting there is little difference in the frequency of strategy use between men and women. Shah et al. (2012: 157) in their study on strategies of students in Malaysian universities, however, found that women generally used learning strategies more frequently than men with the difference being statistically significant in the case of social, affective and memory strategies. These mixed results show that this aspect of learning strategy use still needs exploring. It is possible that

strategy use differences between can be linked to cultural differences, which will be discussed below.

Studies have shown that culture affects learning strategy use. This applies to both the learners' national cultural background and the culture in which language learning takes place. In her study, Griffiths (2013: 72) found that European learners used strategies more frequently when compared to Japanese, Taiwanese and Korean learners. Most notably four of the strategies used more frequently by Europeans are related to reading and communicating with other people in English. Griffiths (2013: 72) hypothesizes that this is due to European learners' first languages being more similar to English in terms of grammar and vocabulary, using similar writing system, which in turn may pose additional learning obstacles for Asian learners, as well as the different way in which youths in Europe and Asia are generally taught to communicate. Chamot (2004: 18) remarks that learning context and cultural values can greatly affect learning choices. Both the learner's own culture and the learning culture of the educational system can affect the acceptability of strategies. For example, an organised educational system which emphasises competitive tasks and a culture in which competition is appreciated can lead learners to prefer strategies for learning individually rather than cooperatively (Chamot 2004: 18). Oxford (1989: 243) also acknowledges that strategy use can be shaped by both explicit and implicit rules of the learning environment. The values of the learners' culture and the educational system in which they are learning can affect which strategies they use.

Macaro (2006: 328) proposes that language learning strategies are both transferable and situation-specific. He (2006: 329) argues that strategies used need to change if the goal or learning situation change or if the learning outcome is unsatisfactory. Learning strategy use is adaptable, as different situations require different sets of strategies to be employed. Griffiths (2013: 10) explains that distance learners, for example, may need different strategies compared to contact learners due to them being physically isolated from their teacher and peers. She also draws attention to the requirements to the teaching methods and argues that to be successful learners learning in a grammar-translation environment need different strategies and those learning in a more communicative environment require different sets of strategies. The need to achieve different goals and the methods available to learners both shape which strategies they employ.

## 2.4 Learning strategies and language learning success

Studying the significance of language leaning strategies in successful language learning is a complex matter and results have been mixed. Green and Oxford (1995: 289) and Griffiths (2003: 373) found in their studies that overall more successful learners used significantly more strategies than less successful one. However, conflicting findings have also been made. Ehrman and Oxford (1995: 78) found that only the use of cognitive strategies showed significant correlation with higher learning success. Griffiths (2013: 53) argues that the mixed results of studies on strategy use frequency and successful learning call for further study of which strategies successful learners use. In addition to overall frequency of strategies used, the individual strategies, learning goals and learning context also needs to be examined. In this chapter, I will discuss what previous research into language learning strategies reveals about their role in learning success.

Oxford (1990: 1) argues that appropriate use of strategies leads to learners achieving both greater proficiency in target language and higher self-confidence. The topic of grouping strategies and the significance of different strategy groups in successful learning is a controversial one and results of studies are mixed. Oxford (1990: 8-9) argues that different strategies affect different aspects of competence in target language. She (1990: 136, 140) also argues that metacognitive strategies and affective strategies are especially important in language learning. Griffiths (2013: 56) found that while advanced level learners use more strategies frequently than elementary level learners, a similar relationship was not observed between the sub-groups in Oxford's taxonomy. Thus, observing differences between broad strategy groups is not enough, but individual strategies must also be examined. This also creates the possibility of finding new ways of grouping strategies which affect learning success.

While Griffiths (2013) questions the validity of grouping strategies, she still found differences in which strategies elementary and advanced level learners prefer to use. She (2013: 59-61) found that nine strategies were actually employed more often by elementary level learners. She calls these *base* strategies. Griffiths (2013: 60) draws attention to the notion that five of these strategies are memory strategies and two are affective. The affective base strategies include solitary strategies (writing a diary) and interactive strategies which are limited to the learner's introspection (talking about feelings related to language learning). Griffiths' (2013: 59-60) findings suggest that memorisation plays a large role in the early

stages of language learning. Lower level learners' strategy use focuses on memorizing language items and introspection over interaction.

Metacognitive strategies, according to Griffiths (2013: 61-63), are frequently used by both elementary and advanced level students, supporting Oxford's (1990: 136) claim of their significance as well. Yet, results on the effect of metacognitive strategy use on success in language learning are mixed. While Zahedi and Dorrmanesh (2008) found that there was no significant correlation between the use of metacognitive learning strategies and academic success of Iranian distance learners of English, Griffiths (2008: 90-91) found that higher level learners used metacognitive strategies more frequently than lower level learners. Griffiths (2013: 61-63) found that strategies related to interaction and strategies requiring cognitive engagement with the language, such as practising pronunciation and following media in the target language, are similarly used frequently by learners across all levels. She calls these twelve strategies the *core* strategies of language learning. These types of strategies "contribute significantly to the learning process of the more successful students, although not being in themselves sufficient to move the less successful students to higher proficiency levels" (Green and Oxford 1995: 289). While advanced learners seem to abandon some strategies and adopt new ones, these strategies generally form the basis for learning throughout the learning process.

While Griffiths (2013: 62) found that strategies for cognitive engagement are frequently used by students of all proficiency levels, highly frequent use of certain cognitive strategies also correlates with higher learning success (Green and Oxford 1995: 280; Ehrman and Oxford 1995: 78). Thus, while these strategies are not only used by the most proficient students, the use of these strategies and greater success in language learning seem to be linked. Griffiths (2013: 63-64) found that cognitive strategies were the largest SILL strategy group (n=7) among the 15 strategies used frequently by advanced level students, which she calls *plus* strategies. She characterises these strategies as setting the advanced learners apart from the elementary learners, as they account for over 10% of the differences between the class levels. The use of cognitive strategies seems to generally be important for success in language learning.

Griffiths (2013: 67-68) notes that while some core strategies, such as metacognitive strategies, are completely absent from the list of plus strategies, they are still frequently used by advanced level learners. She argues that successful learners do not limit themselves to a

narrow set of strategies, but instead employ multiple core and plus strategies, which she calls the *core-plus repertoire*, in their learning. Frequent use of strategies related to interaction, vocabulary and reading, tolerating ambiguity, paying attention to relations and patterns, as well as managing one's emotions and feelings characterise advanced learners (Green and Oxford 1995: 280; Griffiths 2013: 63-66). An important observation made by Griffiths (2013: 67) is that basic memorisation strategies are not among the strategies frequently used by advanced learners. Success in strategy use requires the learner to use a wider range of strategies for both manipulating the target language and interacting with others to managing their own feelings.

In addition to factors of successful language learning which can be observed and measured from outside, what happens within the learner's mind is also relevant when observing learning success. Oxford (1994: 4) emphasises that in second language and strategy research, it is important to examine the learner as a whole person, not simply focusing on intellectual aspects. Second language self-confidence relates to how learners view their relationship with the second language, specifically how well they believe they are able to communicate in the language (McIntyre et al. 1998: 551). McIntyre et al. (1998: 548) argue that pleasant language learning experiences help learners develop self-confidence. Thus it is also important to see how the language learners perceive their own development and how their confidence in their own language proficiency develops, and how learning strategies relate to this development.

It is also important to take into account the learning context and the task requirements this imposes. As Oxford (1990: 1) argues, learning success is achieved through the use of appropriate strategies. Vann and Abraham (1990: 190-191) found that unsuccessful learners failed to apply the appropriate strategies to language tasks. While learners may use strategies frequently, if the strategies they use are not appropriate for the task at hand, their learning is impeded. Porte (1988, as cited in Griffiths 2003: 370) found that while underachieving students in private schools in London reported frequent use of learning strategies, these strategies were the ones they had learned to use in their native countries. Failure to adapt one's strategy use to the tasks at hand can hinder language learning.



## 2.5 Strategy instruction

A key question of strategy instruction and training, as illustrated by O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 151), is whether or not less successful learners can be taught to use appropriate strategies to improve their learning. If learners are made more aware of their strategies and they receive help in using strategies that fit the language task they are completing, their learning should improve. Grenfell and Macaro (2007: 13) argue that the assumption that language learning strategy use is contextual makes the teachability of these strategies a questionable matter. However, Belmont et al. (1982, as cited in Chamot 2004: 20) found that learners were able to transfer strategies between task when teacher helped them with metacognition and managing their learning. Thus, proper instruction also helps learners use relevant strategies across different tasks. Yet, there are multiple factors that affect the success of strategy instruction, such as the learners' motivation, the contents and language of instruction, cultural differences and language of instruction. Teachers also must make the choice whether learning strategies are taught implicitly and explicitly and whether the instruction should be separate or integrated into subject teaching. In this chapter, I will discuss the theoretical framework for language learning strategy instruction and how it should be conducted effectively.

Wenden (1987: 12) emphasised that the goal of strategy instruction is not just teach separate strategies, but also change the way the learner views language learning. If this is not achieved, she argues, learners could resist training, making it useless. Learners must view the use of strategies as meaningful to be motivated to pay attention to learning them. Griffiths (2013: 169) argues that as motivation correlates with both course level and frequency of strategy use, one can expect any positive change in the learner's' motivation to affect their chances for successful learning. According to Wenden (1987: 160), promoting the learners' motivation can be achieved by both rationalising the purpose of the training and providing feedback to enable them to assess how effective the training has been for them. The key is helping learners see for themselves how strategy instruction promotes their own learning.

When providing strategy instruction, teachers are faced with the problem of what to include in their teaching. Oxford (1990: 204-205) argues that needs analysis is required to determine which strategies are included in strategy training. As context and task affect which strategies are suitable, it is important to consider what the learners aim to accomplish. This also helps motivate learners. Wenden (1987: 161) argues for the superiority of language instruction

which includes the use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies being taught together. Metacognitive strategies are needed for the learners to observe their learning and assessing their progress, but they must be supported by cognitive strategies for learning to occur. Griffiths' (2013: 162) approach to which strategies should be the focus of language instruction is based on her categorisation of *base*, *core* and *plus* strategies. She (2013: 163-164) argues that while *base* strategies are frequently employed and even useful on elementary level learning, and thus should not necessarily be discouraged, strategy instruction should not focus on them, but encourage learners develop higher level strategy use. In terms of *core* strategies, Griffiths (2013: 164) draws attention to the importance of metacognitive strategies as means for students to reach a degree of autonomy. Other important *core* strategies that Griffith emphasises are strategies related to real world interaction, including strategies for pronunciation, resource use, interaction and functional language use. Out of the *plus* strategies used by higher level learners Griffiths (2013: 164) argues that strategies for tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty and reading strategies are especially important, as reading can be motivating and can promote cultural awareness, while tolerance for ambiguity enables learners to learn even when their knowledge is not perfect.

Oxford (2011: 176) draws attention to the importance of culture in strategy instruction, arguing that any instruction should be relevant to the sociocultural context in which the learners operate. Oxford (2011: 177) emphasises that teachers should be aware of their cultural bias in strategy instruction, as to not dismiss culturally appropriate, functional strategies as inappropriate when expanding learners' strategy repertoire. Griffiths (2013: 169) argues that while she found that European learners reached higher class levels when compared to other nationalities, it should not be assumed that expanding the strategy use of learners from other cultural backgrounds to the strategies frequently used by European student would automatically lead better learning results. Yet, she believes that these results can be useful in making decision on strategy instruction for other nationalities as well.

Beginner learners may not have to capacity to understand instruction in the target language (L2), but instruction should start as early as possible, rather than waiting until learners are already proficient in the language (Chamot 2004: 20). Thus, instruction in the learners' first language (L1) can be useful on the elementary level. In some studies, mixing the learners' L1 and L2 has also been found to be successful (Chamot 2004: 20; Oxford 2011: 183). In this way, the teacher can be sure that learners understand the concept of strategies while also

providing constant exposure to L2. The amount of L2 use can be steadily increased as the learners' proficiency increases. However, this may not be possible in classrooms where all learners do not share the same first language (Chamot 2004: 20; Oxford 2011: 183). Considering the classroom situation and the learners' proficiency levels is important when the teacher makes choices on the language of instruction.

Whether to keep learners aware of strategy instruction or teach learning strategies implicitly in language teaching is one of the key questions in planning strategy instruction. Research on L2 acquisition suggests that explicit instruction should be favoured (Chamot 2004: 19; Oxford 1990: 207 and Oxford 2011: 181). Oxford (1990: 207) argues that learners should be completely informed in strategy instruction, as having learners know which strategies they are using makes it possible for them to evaluate the effectiveness of their strategy use and makes transferring strategies from one task to another easier. The problem of implicit instruction is that while learners may acquire strategies without realising, they are not necessarily aware of what they are doing to learn and how they could adapt their strategy use when facing new language tasks.

According to Oxford (1990: 206), integrating strategy training with language training should be favoured, as it helps the learners see strategies in proper context. She notes that while a detached strategy training program can also be used, it should be followed by an integration of strategies and language studies. Chamot (2004: 19) also argues for a combination of explicit instruction in which the strategy instruction is integrated into coursework. She also argues that strategies should be taught by all subject teachers, since in this manner learners can transfer from one class to another. Oxford (1990: 206) remarks that by integrating language training and strategy training, it is possible to gradually transfer the responsibility of strategy choices and use from the teacher to students. This helps students improve their own self-regulation and helps them learn without the teacher's guidance.

Defining and recognising language learning strategies can be difficult and many different views have appeared across decades. However, despite much debate, a degree of consensus certainly exists. The nature of learning strategies as chosen actions which can be affected through instruction has emerged again and again. Language learning strategies affect language learning and there are differences between the strategies of learners of different proficiency levels. Recognising the strategies used by learners and studying which strategies are associated with more successful language learning is important for teachers to help their

students choose more appropriate strategies for different learning situations. Instruction must be based on knowledge of learning strategies and this knowledge must also be passed on to learners to motivate them. As many different factors affect strategy choices and effectiveness of strategies, there is still much room for research in terms of language learning strategies and strategy instruction.

### **3 ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) AND ENGLISH TEACHING IN UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES IN FINLAND**

#### **3.1 English for specific purposes**

In this chapter, I will discuss the definition and features of English for specific purposes (ESP). Basturkmen (2006: 9) defines ESP as a practical approach to language teaching, as the aim is to get the learner to reach a predetermined goal in the most efficient way possible. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 4) insist that ESP always functions in connection with the activities of a specific field or discipline and the activities that learners need to carry out in this field. Engineers or medical workers, for example, face very different language use situations in their occupations, which means ESP courses for them must be designed accordingly. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 5) argue that ESP is most likely to be designed for adult learners with intermediate or advanced English skills. This is why ESP is very suitable for higher education. As Räisänen and Fortanet-Gómez (2008: 12) note, since English is so widely used, students are expected to come into higher education with prior knowledge of the language, which has led to ESP becoming the norm of English teaching in European higher education.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 5) and Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 19) argue that the concept of ESP emerged in the late 1960s. While the idea behind ESP has existed for a long time, it was in the 1960s when the need and interest towards developing ESP emerged following the rise of English as an international language (Dudley-Evans and St. John 1998: 19). As English became more prevalent in a globalising world, more and more people found that they needed to learn English to operate internationally. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 7) also attribute the development of ESP to changes in how language was viewed. They explain that as the aim of linguistics moved from describing the grammar of English to understanding that there are notable differences in how language is used in different settings and situations, it should be possible to base English teaching on recognising the learner's situation-specific needs. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 20) recognise register analysis, rhetorical and discourse analysis, study skills analysis and needs analysis as historical trends of approaching ESP, especially English for academic purposes. They (1998: 30) explain that the trend in ESP is to accept that there are different valid approaches and mix materials and methodologies in ESP education, which is why there is no single dominating movement in ESP. It should be

noted that this idea is not unique to ESP but is recognised in language education in general. As there are still many different reasons for ESP education even today, no single, dominating approach to ESP education has emerged more recently.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 12) argue that as the purpose of an ESP course is to help learners function in target language situations, identifying the target situation is the starting point of all ESP education. Needs analysis must be conducted to define and focus the contents of an ESP course. In simple terms, needs analysis is used to establish what should be taught and how the teaching should be conducted (Dudley-Evans and St. John 1998: 121). In course design, needs analysis is crucial for defining the contents and methods for the course. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 125) further illustrate that needs analysis should determine professional and personal information about the learners, the learners' current language skills and their lacks, the learners needs from the course, information on language use in target situation, and information about the course environment. Basturkmen (2006: 18) maintains that proper needs analysis makes the course more motivating for learners, as they can see how what they are learning is relevant. Thus, it is important that the needs of all ESP course participants are as similar as possible. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 165) note that it can be difficult to meet the expectations of students of multiple different disciplines in a single ESP class.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 4) note the difference in the role of the teacher in ESP class when compared to general English classes. Since the learners already possess knowledge of their own field, the role of the teacher in an ESP class is close to that of a language consultant, which leads to more equal positions between the teacher and the learners. The cooperation between language teachers and subject specialists is also important and ESP teachers may have to work with people responsible for the learners' development outside the ESP course (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 164). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 16) explain that the cooperation between subject specialists and ESP teachers can range from the ESP practitioner familiarising themselves with the situations of the learner field of work or study, or the subject specialist and the ESP teacher collaborating on designing course materials to team-teaching. In team-teaching, the subject expert and the ESP teacher work together in teaching a single class.

### **3.2 English teaching in Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland**

Universities of Applied Sciences are higher level education institutions in Finland. To discuss the language education in the target institution for this study, it is important to discuss the legislation which provides the guidelines for education at Universities of Applied Sciences. In this chapter, I will discuss the features of the Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland and how legislation affects their curriculum design and language education.

The Polytechnics Act (932/2014, 4 §) states that the purpose of Universities of Applied Sciences is to provide education for work as an expert and support the students' professional growth, as well as do research that serves education and industry and commerce. Lifelong learning is emphasised in the Government Decree on Polytechnics (1129/2014, 4§). The decree also addresses the need for sufficient communication and language skills for international cooperation. The education students receive at universities of applied sciences must help them develop their expertise in their field after graduation and help them adapt to new challenges in their profession. Kantelinen and Airola (2009: 37) argue that as the language requirements for working life in Finland change and increase, utilising needs analysis to understand what the students need in working life communication is important for language teachers

While legislation guides curriculum design, there is no national curriculum for universities of applied sciences. It is stated in the Polytechnics Act (932/2014, 14 §) that universities of applied sciences are in charge of designing their curricula. This means that the actual contents of language studies vary between institutions. Kantelinen and Airola (2009: 41) found that while universities of applied sciences generally implemented professionally oriented approaches in language teaching, inconsistencies exist both between and within institutions. This means that while students receive language education designed to aid them in their professional life, what the actual contents of their studies are varies.

The Government Decree on Polytechnics (1129/2014, 7 §) states that in addition to fluency in Finnish and Swedish students completing a bachelor's degree at universities of applied sciences should have sufficient written and oral skills in one or two foreign languages. Graduates should be proficient enough in foreign languages to practice and advance in their profession. The decree directly links language skills to occupational needs. Kantelinen and Airola (2009: 38) argue that foreign language education in universities of applied sciences

follows the language for specific purposes model, as themes and contents of language courses are connected to the students' professional fields.

The backgrounds of students in Finnish universities of applied sciences are very heterogeneous. As defined in the Polytechnics Act (932/2014, 25 §) one is eligible to be accepted as a student if they have an upper secondary school degree, a three-year minimum vocational school degree or corresponding studies, an adult vocational school degree or a foreign degree which makes one eligible to apply for higher education in the country in question. This leads to a situation where there are notable differences in the number or foreign language courses that the students have taken prior to taking their first language courses at a University of Applied Sciences. A student entering a University of Applied Sciences with an upper secondary school degree has studied at least six courses of English with 38 hours of contact lessons per course, while a student with a vocational school background may have studied only two courses with 16 hours of contact teaching (Kantelinen and Airola, 2009: 36). Thus, language education at Universities of Applied Sciences must help students of very different levels of experience with English reach the same level of proficiency after graduation. This is also noted by Kantelinen and Airola (2009: 36) who argue that this variance in entry level skills provides an interesting challenge for language teachers in Universities of Applied Sciences.

### **3.4 English teaching in the target University of Applied Sciences**

As there is no national curriculum for language studies at Universities of Applied Sciences, it is important to look at how language teaching is conducted in the target institution for the present study. Promoting international proficiency through studies and exchange programs is mentioned as one of the goals of language studies in the target institution (University of Applied Sciences Core Curriculum, 2014: 6). This is achieved through the combination of English language subject studies, as well as language and communication studies. What skills and factors constitute international proficiency and strategies how different studies and programs contribute to achieving this goal are not further discussed in the curriculum.

All students enrolled in a Finnish language program in the target institution must study one compulsory English course, called English for Working Life (University of Applied Sciences Core Curriculum, 2014: 5). The study load of the course is 4 ECTS credits, translating to a



total of 108 hours of work. Contact teaching covers approximately 35 hours of the total load. (English for Working Life course description, 2014). Thus, the course requires a great deal of autonomous work from the students. The course follows the ESP model, focusing directly on English required for working life. The course contents cover terminology central to the students' field, language for job applications and spoken language situations in working life, producing and understanding factual texts, and multicultural work (English for Working Life course description, 2014). The course description does not further specify the types of spoken language situations covered on the course. Students working on different fields will face different language use situations, which is why in addition to field specific terminology, practising language use situations typical for their future profession is also important. The course also includes a field-specific part, which can be completed, for example, in the form of project work, a work portfolio, familiarizing oneself with work in their field (English for Working life course description 2014). This allows the students to choose a way to apply their language skills in the context of the course and their subject studies.

The range of final grading for English for Working Life is from zero to five, with zero meaning that the student has failed the course. The evaluation criteria for the course are decided by the teachers and they are based on B2 skill level in English on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. (English for Working life course description 2014) Proficiency in both spoken and written communication is considered in evaluation. After the course, the students are not only expected to produce complex and fluent speech and text, but also be able to apply what they know in a way typical for language use situations in their future profession (English for Working Life course description 2014). Understanding different speakers is also one of the criteria for evaluation. While students may struggle with nuance and speech that notably deviates from standard language use, they are expected to understand a variety of different speakers of English (English for Working Life course description 2014). In their future professions, the students may have to communicate in English with speakers of different native and non-native speakers of various levels of proficiency, which is recognised in the course design. In general, the ability to participate in English language communication is at the centre of course evaluation.

### **3.5 Language learning strategies and the ESP setting**

Dudley-Evans and Waters (1998: 191) argue for the need to help ESP learners develop

learning strategies suitable for their own field. However, little research has been conducted on the role of learning strategies in ESP setting. Atay and Ozbulgan (2007) and Akbari and Tahririan (2009) have studied the role of language learning strategies in ESP context from the point of view of vocabulary learning. Broader studies on the learning strategy use by ESP learners have been conducted by Mason (1991) and Shah et al. (2012).

Atay and Ozbulgan (2007) studied the effects of memory strategy instruction on the vocabulary recall of Turkish army aviation pilots studying air traffic terminology. They (2007: 46) found that memory strategy training increased the variety and frequency of use of memory strategies, with connecting new words to previous experience and semantic mapping being the most frequently used strategies post-instruction. They (2007: 45-46) also found that the group receiving instruction scored higher in a vocabulary gain test. This suggests that memory strategies aid in recall of field specific terminology. However, Atay and Ozbulgan (2007: 48) recognise that their study only concerned short-term effects of memory strategy instruction. Thus, while the memory strategy instruction is useful when ESP learners need to quickly learn occupational terminology for a specific task, it is unclear how useful these strategies are for their future development and various different language use situations that they face in their career.

Akbari and Tahririan (2009) studied the vocabulary learning strategies of Iranian medical and paramedical students. They studied the personal, task-related and context-related factors which affected the learners' adoption of different vocabulary strategies. They (2009: 58-59) found that the learners' motivation for learning and anxiety had major effect on which strategies the learners used. Akbari and Tahririan (2009: 59) argue that students in ESP context require explicit teaching of both vocabulary and strategies to improve their own learning. This supports Chamot's (2004: 19) arguments for preferring explicit and integrated strategy instruction. Based on these findings it seems to be beneficial to integrate strategy instruction into ESP teaching.

Shah et al. (2012) studied which learning strategies are used by ESP learners in Malaysia. They studied if the students' strategy use frequencies were different between genders, students attending different English courses and students pursuing different degrees. They (2012: 156) found that social strategies were used most frequently by the students, while memory strategies were used most infrequently. In general, the students used different language learning strategies at high or medium frequency. As discussed in chapter 2.3, they

Shah et al. (2012: 156-154) found that significant difference in strategy use frequency was found in the use of social, memory and affective strategies, with women using these strategies more frequently. They (2012: 160) also found that the students' strategy use also varied between the three different ESP courses, English for Academic Purposes for all students, English for Occupational Purposes for Economics and Management Science students and English for Occupational Purposes for Engineering students. They argue that the different demands of the courses affect the students' strategy choices.

Mason (1991: 33) studied the language strategy use of Finnish agriculture students learning English. Her (1991: 35) study examined which language learning strategies students reported using and which strategies they regarded useful. A list of 14 learning strategies proposed by Rubin and Thompson (1982) was used for the study. The frequency of strategy use was not examined in the study. Mason (1991: 59) found that students who performed better on the course did not report using more strategies, nor were they more aware of the strategies when compared to the students with lower performance. She notes, however, that students did not report all strategies that they were using based on observation. Thus, it is possible that the reason better performing students did not report using more strategies could be related to their low awareness of their strategy use. Furthermore, Mason (1991: 62) suggests that students should be made more aware of what each strategy involves. It is possible that students did not report using certain strategies despite using them because they did not recognise the strategy item on the list. Students could have been confused by what is meant by being creative or using different styles of speech. This highlights the importance of accurate descriptions of strategies in strategy questionnaires.

## **4 THE PRESENT STUDY**

### **4.1 Research questions and rationale**

There is little research into the learning strategies of Finnish ESP learners and how strategy use relates to successful learning in Finnish ESP education. Prior studies on ESP and language learning strategies have examined which strategies ESP learners use and how the strategies can be affected. However, the relationship between strategy use and successful learning in ESP setting has not been widely studied. Furthermore, prior studies, such as that by Shah et al (2013) have focused on the broad strategy categories rather than examining individual strategies. Mason's (1991) study on ESP students at a university in Finland was conducted over two decades ago. As strategy use is affected by culture and successful language learning in different settings requires one to use different strategies, it is important to study which strategies are used by Finnish learners today and how their strategy use is reflected in their learning success. The following research questions were set for the present study:

1. What kinds of language learning strategies do students in the target institution report using?
2. Are there differences in the strategy use of more and less successful students and does strategy use correlate with successful learning in an ESP setting?
3. How do University of Applied Sciences students view language learning strategy instruction?

The first research question forms the basis of the study. As many factors cause variance in learning strategy use, it is first important to establish what kinds of strategies students of the target institution generally use. The strategy use of all students gives an indication which strategies Finnish learners of English prefer in general. While, as noted by (Kantelinen and Airola, 2009: 36), students at Universities of Applied Sciences come from different backgrounds, they have started learning English in the same school system, and share the same general cultural and linguistic background.

To answer the second questions, differences between more and less successful students were examined. Students were divided into groups based on their academic achievement and satisfaction towards their development in English during the course, and the strategy use

frequencies of the groups were compared. The final grade indicates how well the students achieved the goals of the course and their proficiency in completing ESP tasks. However, I was not only interested in the students' level of proficiency at the end of the course, but also how they developed during the course. In addition to final course grade, the students' satisfaction towards their own development was examined, since the purpose of language teaching in Universities of Applied Sciences is to prepare students for language use situations in their professional life, which is why it is important that language education supports the development of their self-efficacy and self-confidence. Thus, in addition to studying successful learning from the point of view of achieved course grade, I also decided to study the students' perception of how they developed during the course. In addition to comparing the frequencies of strategy use among different groups, I also studied the correlation between strategy use, final course grade and students' satisfaction to find out if the differences in the use of a specific strategy or a strategy group were statistically significant in terms of learning success.

The final question dealt with the students' past experiences with and attitudes towards strategy instruction. The aim was to see how students perceive strategy instruction and how willing they would be to receive instruction in learning strategies. This data was gathered from student interviews. Students were asked if they recalled what kinds of strategy instruction they had received in the past and if they feel that it would be easy for them to change their own strategy use through instruction. If the instruction was to support ESP learning, it would need to be conducted at the institution. Thus, the students were also asked how they feel that strategy instruction should be conducted as part of their University of Applied Sciences language studies.

## **4.2 Data and methods**

The participants for this study were degree students at a Finnish University of Applied Sciences. The group was limited to Finnish L1 speakers to avoid variance in results due to different L1 background. The study consisted of a learning strategy questionnaire and an interview. In the end, 78 students answered the strategy survey. As the survey was distributed through multiple channels, such as mailing lists and newsletters, and some students received the survey through more than one channel, it is difficult to accurately define the total number of students who received the survey. As academic achievement on the compulsory English

language course was one of the variables examined in this study, students who had already completed the course and been evaluated were studied. The final grade of the course was used as a scale for the students' English proficiency in an ESP setting. Students were also asked to rate their own development in English during the course. In addition to the survey, four students were interviewed on their strategy use and attitudes towards strategy instruction.

The student questionnaire was conducted as an online questionnaire and was delivered to the students of the target institution multiple times between May 2016 and February 2017. The questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix 1. The questionnaire was distributed through the target institution's student union's weekly newsletter and mailing lists for recent English for Working life course participants. The questionnaire was created on the Webropol online survey platform and was first completed by pilot study participants (n=6) before it was sent to the final study participants and feedback from the pilot study was used to clarify the wordings of certain questions. The questionnaire was in two parts. The first part included questions on the student's participation and performance on the English for Working Life course. First, they were asked whether they completed the course as a contact or distance learning course and how they were graded. Next, they were asked to evaluate how happy they were with how their language proficiency in English had developed during the course and how much effort they had put towards completing the course. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of a learning strategy questionnaire. The questionnaire used was the 50-item Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire for speakers of other languages learning English (Oxford 1990: 293-296). The SILL questionnaire was chosen as the due to its reliability and validity (Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995). The questionnaire will be further discussed in chapters 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.

Many of the same channels as those used for the questionnaire were used to find participants for the interview. Students were contacted through mailing lists, the student union newsletter and social media. Like the questionnaire, the interviews were also piloted. One pilot interview was conducted before the actual interviews for the study. The interviews were conducted as single participant interviews in October and November 2016. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. The original Finnish interview questions and their English translations are included in Appendix 2. The interview consisted of three sections. The first part was to find out more about the participants. I wanted to know what languages they had studied and what they felt was easy or difficult for them in studying languages, more

specifically English. Information on the participants is listed in Table 1.

**Table 1. The interview participants**

Name	Languages studied
Aarne	English, Swedish and Russian
Bea	English and Swedish
Cecilia	English, Swedish and Japanese
Daniel	English and Swedish

The second one dealt with the students strategy use. The aim of this section was to find more information to support and expand upon the findings of the questionnaire. The final part dealt with strategy instruction. In this section, students were asked about their prior experiences with language instruction and their opinions on how strategy instruction should be conducted. The structure and analysis of the interview data will be further discussed in chapters 4.2.4 and 4.2.5.

### **4.2.1 Mixed method study**

A mixed method study was chosen as the method for the present study. In a mixed method study both quantitative and qualitative methods are used in a single study (Dufva 2011: 134). The use of multiple methods makes it possible to explore new aspects of a phenomenon in a single study and even increase the reliability of a study (Hirsjärvi and Hurme: 2008: 38). In this study, a strategy questionnaire and a learner interview were chosen as the methods. While the information from the strategy questionnaire shows how students generally use language learning strategies, how and why they choose specific strategies cannot be determined from the questionnaire answers. Thus, I also wanted to receive additional information on the students' strategy use through interviews. Interviewing was also used to get information on the students' attitudes towards strategy instruction. Next, I will discuss how these methods were implemented in the present study.

### 4.2.2 Strategy questionnaire

The students' language learning strategy use was mapped with a self-report questionnaire. There are many good reasons for choosing questionnaire as a tool for studying groups of people. Not only are questionnaires efficient in terms of time, but they are also very versatile in terms of situations, topics and participants (Dörnyei, 2003: 9-10). Questionnaires are great tools for gathering information on people's opinions and actions (Vehkalahti 2008: 11). When attempting to study the ways in which a large demographic studies or uses language, questionnaires are a useful tool, as they are quick to fill. As Dörnyei (2003: 9) notes, thanks to modern statistics software, processing the data is also rather straightforward.

The questionnaire included a section of background questions for the students. For this study, the form of completion the course (contact or distance learning), final course grade, students' satisfaction towards their self-perceived development and self-rated effort put towards course work were initially chosen as the variables to be studied with the students' strategies. Close-ended questions were used for background questions, as they leave less room for subjectivity (Dörnyei 2003: 35; Oxford 1990: 199). In both the form of completion of the course and achieved course grade, students chose out of the options presented to them. For measuring the students' satisfaction towards their development, a Likert scale was used. A Likert scale is widely used in questionnaire studies and it is important that the scale is a continuum from one extreme to another (Vehkalahti 2008: 35). For students' satisfaction, a five-point scale ranging from *1=not at all satisfied* to *5=very satisfied* was used. However, to map the effort students had put into the course work, a percentage scale from *0%=I did nothing* to *100%=I did my best* was used. In the end, academic achievement in the form of course grade and satisfaction towards one's own development were chosen as the variables to be examined along with strategy use frequency.

The second part of the questionnaire was the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990). The version used was the 50 item version 7.0 designed for foreign and second language learners of English (Oxford, 1990: 293-296). The SILL questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale, which learners use to rate the frequency of their strategy use from *1=never or almost never* to *5=always or almost always* (Oxford 1990: 199). The reliability of SILL is one of its main appeals. The internal consistency reliability of a scale is measured using the Cronbach Alpha, and a reliability coefficient of at least 0.70 should be expected for a L2 survey (Dörnyei 2003: 112). The Cronbach Alphas for SILL questionnaires have



consistently been greater than 0.91 when employed in the participant's' native language, and its reliability remains fairly high when administered to EFL learners in English (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995: 6-7). In the present study, the questionnaire was translated to Finnish to minimize the effect of the participants' language proficiency on the reliability of the study. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 11) also argue that the validity of SILL is supported by the lack of social desirability of the answers it produces. This means that learners taking the SILL are truthful in evaluating their strategies.

Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 2) recognize that the problem of self-report scales is that they do not show how learners utilize strategies when completing specific language tasks. In the present study, the interview data was used to support the self-report survey data to find out more information on how and when learners employ different strategies. Furthermore, in the scope of the present study, the self-report data on the students' average overall strategy use was sufficient to see, which strategies correlate with successful learning in the ESP setting. While the course contains many different tasks, the final grade and students' development during the course are affected by these multiple tasks.

### 4.2.3 Questionnaire analysis

The initial preview of the data was done on Webropol's reporting system. At this point, I checked how the answers to the background questions were divided to determine how they could be grouped and if any variables should be filtered out. The mode course completion and learners' self-rated effort towards the course were divided too unevenly for reliable analysis to be made, so they were not considered for the analysis. At this point, I also noticed that a mistake in the translation of one of the SILL items, *I notice if I am tense of nervous when I am studying or using English* (item 42), caused the meaning of the phrase to be ambiguous and the item was excluded from the analysis. Thus, 49 of the 50 SILL items were examined for this study. In terms of academic achievement, students were split into two groups based on their final course grade. Students who had achieved a grade from 1 to 3 were designated as *low-intermediate-achieving* (n=21) and students who achieved a 4 or a 5 were designated as *high-achieving* (n=57). Grades 1 to 3 were grouped together, since there were very few students (n=9) whose grade was very low (1 or 2). The students' satisfaction towards their development was more evenly distributed, so students who were gave a 1 or 2 rating for their development were classified as *the least satisfied* (n=23) and those who rated their development 4 or 5 were named *the most satisfied* (n=21).

The data was next exported from Webropol to SPSS, a statistical software used to analyze qualitative data. In the software, the variables were simplified and data was transformed so that usage means of specific strategies in different groups of students could be observed. Most of the coding was done by the software. After the data for strategy use frequencies and correlations was exported from the software, I rearranged the output data into more condensed tables, simplified the variable headings and edited the formatting of numbers.

There are two types of statistics that are observed in quantitative analysis: descriptive data and inferential data. Descriptive statistics, according to Dörnyei (2003: 114), include range, mean and standard deviation and are used to present the data in a clear way. However, inferential statistics, such as statistical significance are needed to generalise upon the data (Dörnyei 2003: 114-115). The means for strategy use frequency were calculated for each of examined student groups and across all students. Strategies were divided into those used infrequently, modestly frequently and highly frequently. Strategies used at a frequency of 3.5 or higher were designated as being *used highly frequently*, and strategies used at frequency lower than 2.5 were designated as *infrequently* used. Strategies use frequency between these two values was classified as *modest* use (mean = 2.5000 to 3.4999). (Oxford 1990: 291) The means were examined to see, which strategies were used frequently or infrequently by the students and if there were differences in the usage frequencies between more and less successful students.

According to Vehkalahti (2008: 54), a mean is a fitting statistic for most situations, but it is also important to study other variables as well. Thus, in this study, in addition to means, the correlation between strategy used frequency, final course grade and learner satisfaction was also examined. This was done to see not only how the most and least successful or satisfied students use language learning strategies, but how strategy use relates to learning success across all students. The threshold for statistical significance in this study was set at 0.05, which Vehkalahti (2008: 88) describes as the generally applied threshold for significance. This means that correlation was considered statistically significant if the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05. In tables, statistically significant correlations have been marked. Findings showing significance at  $p < 0.01$  level have been marked separately to draw attention to item with notably more significant correlation. It should be noted, however, that due to the relatively small number of participants for the questionnaire ( $n=78$ ), the all the variables in present study cannot be necessarily generalised for all students. They do, however, still indicate statistical significance. Vehkalahti (2008: 88) emphasises that statistical significance

does not always necessarily mean that the finding is significant, but that it is a tool for the researcher to interpret their results.

The strength of the relationship is also defined by how far the value of correlation coefficient is from zero, zero meaning no correlation exists and value of 1.0 or -1.0 meaning perfect positive and negative correlation respectively (Vehkalahti 2008: 77-78). Vehkalahti (2008: 78) that defining how close to zero the value of correlation coefficient must be for the correlation to be considered nonexistent is a matter of interpretation. For the present study, the values for the strength of correlation from -0.099 to 0.099 were considered non-existent, values from -0.299 to -0.100 or 0.100 to 0.299 were considered weak, values from -0.499 to -0.300 or 0.300 to 0.499 were considered moderate and values equal or lower than -0.500 and equal or higher than 0.500 were considered strong.

#### **4.2.4 Interview**

Four students were interviewed on their strategy use, as well as experiences on and attitudes towards strategy training. The aim of an interview is not only to learn about the phenomenon being studied, but to also learn about the interviewees' attitudes and experiences (Dufva 2011: 132). A theme interview, a form of semi-structured interview, was constructed based on the preliminary results of the strategy questionnaire. In a theme interview, the same themes are discussed with all participants, but the form and order of the questions can change (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2008: 47-46). In the present study, the strategy section of the interview focused on which strategies learners use to overcome specific language tasks and how often they consciously think about their strategy use. The second part of the interview dealt with the students' prior experience on strategy instruction and their attitudes towards receiving instruction in learning strategy use.

The interviews were conducted as solo interviews. The advantage of a solo interview is that it is possible to spend more time on exploring a single person's view on the topics (Dufva 2011: 135). This leaves more time for asking clarification and additional questions on new aspects of the topic that emerge during the interview. Dufva (2011: 135) also notes that it is easier to discuss topics that the interviewee would be hesitant to talk about in a larger group. In one-on-one interviews there is less peer pressure to give socially desirable answers (Cohen 1998: 29). When learners are interviewed individually, they can talk about their own learning more freely, without conforming to repeating what has been said by other participants previously.

This allows the researcher to receive more individual answers.

A semi-structured interview model allows the researcher to set the themes of the interview, but also leaves room for both the researcher and the learner to explore aspects of the phenomenon being studied that may not have been clear when the interview was originally constructed (Cohen 1998: 28; Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2008: 35). In the present study, this allowed the interview participants to freely express aspects of their strategy use, such as which factors in a task affect their strategy choices. An interview also allows the researcher to ask for clarification and find more about a specific topic through additional question (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2008: 35). This freedom and richness of answers does, however, have its downsides. As participants are free to discuss the topics from their points of view and all the answers cannot be anticipated, analyzing and reporting individualized interview data can be difficult (Cohen 1998: 28; Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2008: 35).

#### **4.2.5 Interview analysis**

The student interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is a general term for qualitative analysis, in which the interview data is divided into themes, categories and types (Dufva 2011: 139). The first part of the interview in the present study was built around the strategy questionnaire, which is why it was also logical to analyze the interview data through strategies. For the second part of the interview, which related to learners' perception of strategy training, the past experience, attitudes towards trying out new strategies, opinions on how strategy training should be conducted and personal motivators for trying new strategies were examined.

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008) recognize description, labelling, combining and interpretation as the phases of interview analysis. The interviews for this analysis were recorded and transcribed. To protect the anonymity of the participants, a pseudonym was assigned for each of them. Before the interview material was examined in more detail, the general description of what the interviewees had said was made. Description, as Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 145) explain, forms the basis of the interview analysis and in this phase the characteristics of the participants, events and the phenomenon being examined are mapped. In the next phase, the different themes that emerged in the interview were labelled. This phase also included combining, as different strategies that the interviewees mentioned were categorized according to how they relate to strategy items in Oxford's (1990) strategy inventory. This was the phase

in which the connections between the questionnaire and interview data were drawn. In addition to which strategies the students used, any factors that they mentioned affecting their use of the specific strategies were also connected to the strategy in question. For the strategy instruction section of the interview, the amount and type of instruction the students had received, their readiness, conditions and motivations for receiving strategy instruction and their views on how strategy instruction should be conducted in university of applied sciences language education were examined. The last phase was interpreting the results. As Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 251) remark, interpretation of the results reveals the social significance of the findings and clarifies the examined phenomenon. I sought to not only find how what the interviewees told about their strategy use relates to the statistical data of the strategy use of students in the target institution, but also find explain their views and to find connections between their strategy uses, experiences and beliefs.

## 5 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

**Table 2. Reported mean frequency of SILL strategy groups use across all students and correlation between use frequency, course grade and learner satisfaction.**

SILL category	Average frequency across all students	Correlation with course grade		Correlation with satisfaction towards perceived development	
		Pearson correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed) (p)	Pearson correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed) (p)
Memory	2.2236	- 0.290**	0.010	0.270*	0.017
Cognitive	3.0934	0.198	0.082	0.327**	0.004
Compensation	3.5021	0.130	0.258	0.146	0.201
Metacognitive	2.7393	0.047	0.683	0.221	0.052
Affective	2.5462	-0.028	0.809	0.147	0.198
Social	2.7821	0.098	0.392	0.254*	0.025

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

Memory strategies were used least frequently by all students and it was the only strategy category with a frequency below the infrequent (mean = lower than 2.5) use threshold. Memory strategies were also the only strategy category to show statistically significant correlation with final course grade. Memory strategy use correlated negatively with final course grade. The correlation was weak but statistically significant ( $r=-0.290$ ,  $p=0.010$ ). Interestingly, however, memory strategy use showed weak and statistically significant positive correlation with how satisfied students were of their own development in English during the course ( $r=0.270$ ,  $p=0.017$ ). It should be noted that the negative correlation between memory strategy use and final grade does not mean that memory strategy use necessarily causes students to fail, but that less proficient users are more likely to prefer these strategies. This correlation supports earlier findings that less proficient learners favour memory strategies (Griffiths 2013: 60).

Cognitive strategies were the second most frequently used strategy category across all students. While cognitive strategy use did not show significant correlation with academic achievement, it showed modest and significant correlation with students satisfaction for their development ( $r=0.327$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). Students who frequently reported frequently employing cognitive strategies were also happier with how their language proficiency developed during the course. This is interesting, as Green and Oxford (1995: 274) found in their study that cognitive strategy use showed positive variance in course level, meaning that more successful

learners used these strategies more frequently. Wharton (2000: 218) found no significant variance when studying learning strategy use and learners' self-rated proficiency.

Compensation strategies were the most frequently used SILL strategy category across all students. It was also the only category which was used highly frequently (mean = 3.5 or above) by all students. This suggests that students frequently employ strategies for overcoming difficulties in communication and understanding English. Wharton (2000: 2018) found that compensation strategies were the second most frequently used strategy category by students in Singapore and the use of cognitive strategies showed positive variation by self-rated proficiency. In the present study, however, compensation strategy use did not significantly correlate with learning success. Magogwe and Olivier (2007: 247) found that Botswanan learners across all levels used compensation strategies least frequently. This suggests that use of compensation strategies varies greatly across cultures.

Metacognitive and affective strategies were both used moderately frequently (mean = 2.5000 to 3.4999) by all students. Affective strategy use was barely above the 2.5 threshold for highly infrequent use, while metacognitive strategies were used slightly more frequently. Neither strategy category showed significant correlation with course grade or students satisfaction for their development. These strategies were used at a bare moderate frequency by all students alike regardless of learning success and as a group, they did not relate to learning success.

Social strategies were reported as being used at a moderate frequency across all students. Social strategy use showed weak but significant correlation with satisfaction towards one's development ( $r=0.254$ ,  $p=0.025$ ). Learners employing social strategies frequently were also more likely to be more satisfied with their development during the course. However, social strategy use did not have significant correlation with final course grade. This is interesting, as Green and Oxford (1995: 274) found that social strategies were used more frequently by more proficient learners.

Most learning strategies were used at a moderate frequency by the participants. The exceptions were memory strategies, which were used infrequently, and the highly frequently used compensations strategies. Aside from memory strategies, which showed negative correlating with final course grade, there was no statistically significant correlation between the students' use of other SILL strategies and their academic achievement. The use of memory strategies, cognitive strategies and social strategies, however, correlated with the

students' satisfactions for their development. Since most SILL categories did not correlate with academic achievement and half of them did not correlate with learner satisfaction, the differences in the use of individual strategies should be examined. The following chapters will discuss how frequently the students reported using individual SILL strategy items and the relationship between the use of the strategies and successful learning.

## 5.1 Memory strategies

The average frequency of memory strategy usage among all students was 2.2237, indicating very infrequent usage (mean = lower than 2.5). For individual strategies, two thirds of memory strategies were below this threshold. Strategies for thinking about relationships (item 1), using new words in a sentence (item 2) and using the locations of words on a page to remember them (item 9) were the only memory strategies which were not used very infrequently. Using rhymes (item 5) and physically acting out new words (item 7) were tied for the least frequently used memory strategies, followed by using flashcards (item 6). Similar findings were made by Griffiths (2003: 375) in her study of international students in New Zealand.

### 5.1.1 Memory strategies and academic achievement

**Table 3. Memory strategy use means for students with a low-intermediate (L-M) and a high (H) grade and all students, and statistical correlation between grade and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	L-M	H	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
1	I think of relationships	2.8095	2.9474	2.9103	0.077	0.503
2	I use new words in a sentence	3.6190	3.1579	3.2821	-0.190	0.096
3	I create images of new words	2.6190	2.4561	2.5000	-0.163	0.154
4	I make mental pictures	2.5714	2.3684	2.4231	-0.104	0.364
5	I use rhymes to remember new words	1.3333	1.2982	1.3077	-0.099	0.390
6	I use flashcards to remember new words	2.0476	1.1228	1.3718	-0.468**	0.000
7	I physically act out new words	1.4286	1.2632	1.3077	-0.119	0.298
8	I review English lessons often	2.6190	1.9649	2.1410	-0.242*	0.033
9	I use location to remember new words	3.2857	2.5789	2.7692	-0.159	0.164
		2.4815	2.1286	2.2236		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.



\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

There were some differences in the strategies of high-achieving and low-intermediate-achieving students. High-achieving students' use of memory strategies was along the lines of average among all students. They did not use any memory strategies very frequently, which is interesting, as Griffiths (2003: 375) found that thinking of relationships (item 1) was actually used frequently by advanced learners. They used most memory strategies infrequently and used all of them less frequently than low-intermediate students. High-achieving students very infrequently rely on memorisation when learning English. Low-intermediate-achieving students, on the other hand, reported using the strategy of using new words in a sentence (item 2) highly frequently (mean = 3.5 or above). Low-intermediate-achieving students also reported moderately frequent use (mean = 3.2857) of the strategy of remembering the positions of words on a page. As seen in extract 1, Cecilia often relies on this strategy.

(1) Cecilia: --mulla on osittainen valokuvamuisti. Varsinkin, jos kirjassa on hyvin kuvailtu visuaalisesti, niin mä muistan sen sit siitä tai sitten kirjoittamalla sen säännön monta kertaa ylös sitten, nii mä muistan mitä mä oon kirjottanu.

*--I have a partial photographic memory. Especially if something has been described visually well in a book, I can remember it by that or by writing the rule down multiple times, so I can remember what I wrote.*

Interviewer: Entä yksittäiset sanat?  
*How about individual words?*

Cecilia: Joo, siinäkin on käytännössä se, että mä pystyin jopa muistamaan sen järjestyksen sen, missä sanat tulee siellä sanastossa. Mutta tavallaan välillä mä en sitten muista kuitenkaan sitä sanaa, vaikka mä muistan, että se oli viides sana ylhäältä, et se oli siinä kohalla, mut mä en kuitenkaan muista sitä.

*Yeah, in that case too, I could even remember the order of the words on the word list. But in a way, at times I still can't remember the word, even though I know that it is the fifth word from the top, that it was in that position, I still can't remember it.*

The problem of memorising positions of words, it seems, is that there is a risk that while one may have an idea of the word in question and recall its place on the page, it is possible that the meaning of the word still cannot be recalled. As extract 2 shows, Bea said that while it is possible to learn the words themselves through memorisation, learning to use different word forms correctly can be difficult.

(2) Interviewer: Mikä kielissä on ollu sellasta, mikä on ollu sulle helppoa?  
*In languages, what has been easy for you to learn?*

Bea: Sanojen oppiminen. Ne mä opin ulkoo, mutta mä en osaa käyttää niitä just siinä oikeassa muodossa.

*Vocabulary. I learn words by heart, but I cannot use them in the correct form.*

This supports Griffiths' (2013: 59-60) argument that memorisation strategies are mostly used by elementary level learners and abandoned by more advanced learners. While students in this study were not separated into class levels based on their proficiency, the patterns of memory strategy use based on course grade were similar to the patterns of elementary and advanced learners in Griffiths' (2003) study.

Most memory strategies did not significantly correlate with course grade. Two of them, however, showed negative correlation. Using flashcards to remember new words (item 6) showed moderate negative correlation with course grade, and this correlation proved was significant ( $r=-0.486$ ,  $p=.000$ ). This strategy was very rarely used by students receiving high grades. The strategy of reviewing English lessons (item 8) had weaker correlation, but this correlation was still statistically significant ( $r=-0.242$ ,  $p = 0.033$ ). This strategy is a classic memorisation strategy for vocabulary, in which words are memorised with very limited context and learned individually. Daniel was critical of the effectiveness of this type of memorisation, as can be seen in extract 2.

(3) Daniel: --jos itelle joku opettaa sit jotain, nii sen pitää olla sit semmosta aktiivista oppimista esimerkiks keskustelujutu on ollu aika semmosia, missä oppii niinku eniten. Et, jos tulee joku, niinku moniste, missä on niinku jotain sanoja, nii ei niistä muista sit mitään. Et katot sanan jostain sanakirjasta ja kirjoitat sen siiheen, nii ei se jää päähän sillee.  
*--if someone teaches me something, it has to be active learning, conversation exercises, for example. Like, if you get, like, a sheet of paper with some words, you can't remember anything about them. If you look up a word in a dictionary and write it down, you won't remember it.*

While flashcards were used very rarely by both low-intermediate-achieving and high-achieving students, reviewing English lessons was used more often by low-intermediate learners. However, at 2.6190, the average was barely above the infrequent use threshold. It would seem that less successful students are more likely to rely on strategies for reviewing and memorising previously learner language items.

### 5.1.2 Memory strategies and development satisfaction

**Table 4. Memory strategy use means for the least satisfied (LS), the most satisfied (MS) students and all students, and statistical correlation between satisfaction and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	LS	MS	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
1	I think of relationships	2.7391	3.5714	2.9103	0.327**	0.004
2	I use new words in a sentence	3.0000	3.7143	3.2821	0.254*	0.025
3	I create images of new words	2.2609	3.0000	2.5000	0.211	0.064

4	I make mental pictures	2.4348	2.4286	2.4231	0.027	0.811
5	I use rhymes to remember new words	1.3478	1.4286	1.3077	-0.025	0.830
6	I use flashcards to remember new words	1.5652	1.5714	1.3718	0.011	0.925
7	I physically act out new words	1.3478	1.4286	1.3077	0.047	0.685
8	I review English lessons often	1.7826	2.5238	2.1410	0.278*	0.014
9	I use location to remember new words	2.8261	3.0000	2.7692	0.106	0.356
		2.2043	2.4795	2.2236		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

The most satisfied students reported using memory strategies relatively infrequently. Satisfied students thought about relationships (item 1) and used new words in sentences (item 2) highly frequently (mean = 3.5 or above). However, they reported using five memory strategies very infrequently. The most satisfied students reported rarely using mental images, rhymes, flashcards and the strategy of acting out new words. The least satisfied students did not report using any memory strategies frequently, and in addition to using the same strategies as the ones that the most satisfied students used infrequently, they also reported using strategies for creating images of new words (item 3) and reviewing English lessons (item 8) infrequently (mean = lower than 2.5). The overall use of memory strategies by both the least and the most satisfied was infrequent.

In general, memory strategy use correlated positively with student's satisfaction with their development. However, with most strategies this correlation was very weak and not significant. There was moderate and statistically significant correlation between learner satisfaction and thinking about relationships ( $r=0.327$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). Using new words in a sentence to remember them had weaker correlation with satisfaction, but this satisfaction was still significant on  $p<0.05$  level ( $r=0.254$ ,  $p=0.025$ ). It is notable that both of these strategies were used very frequently by the most satisfied students. In addition, reviewing lessons also had weak but statistically significant correlation with satisfaction ( $r=-0.278$ ,  $p=0.014$ ). Most memory strategies, however, had very little correlation with satisfaction for development. Using rhymes was the only strategy which correlated negatively with satisfaction, but this correlation was very weak and not significant ( $r=-0.024$ ,  $p=0.830$ ).

## 5.2 Cognitive strategies

Three cognitive strategies were reported as being used highly frequently by all students. Watching TV and movies (item 15) was the most frequently used cognitive strategy (mean = 4.6026) among all students. Other studies have also found that learners generally use this strategy frequently (Griffiths 2003: 375). With the exception of Aarne, all students interviewed for this study said that they often watch series and movies in English. In extracts 4 and 5, Daniel and Bea express that they mostly watch TV series in English, but have different approaches to using subtitles.

(4) Daniel: Katson kaikki sarjat englanniksi. En käytä tekstityksiä.  
*I watch all series in English. I don't use subtitles.*

(5) Bea: Ku jotain sarjoja katsoo, nii nehen mä katon käytännössä täysin englanniksi ilman tekstityksiä.  
*When I watch some series, I basically always watch them fully in English without subtitles.*

In general, the use of different English language resources was common. Reading for pleasure in English (item 16) also passed the 3.5 mean threshold across all students. Interview participants also mentioned using various different media resources, such as games, news broadcasts and websites. Trying not to translate word for word was also reported as being used very frequently by all students. Griffiths (2013: 65) relates this strategy to the students' tolerance for ambiguity. The three cognitive strategies used frequently by all students are connected, as both watching TV series and reading effectively requires one to tolerate a certain level of ambiguity. While both auditory and visual input can be useful in learning, for some, it can be easier for one to follow English media, such as movies, if they do not have to focus on subtitles, as Daniel expresses in extract 6.

(6) Daniel: Menee ainakin itellä, jos tarteis lukee tekstejä -- ei pystyis keskittyy siihen leffaan. Kuitenkin ymmärtää englantia niin hyvin, nii jos ei ymmärrä yhtä sanaa, niin ei se jää haittaamaan itteä.  
*For me at least, if I had to follow subtitles -- I couldn't focus on the movie. I understand English so well that if I can't understand one word, it won't bother me.*

### 5.2.1 Cognitive strategies and academic achievement

**Table 5. Cognitive strategy use means for students with a low-intermediate (L-M) and a high (H) grade and all students and statistical correlation between grade and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	L-M	H	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
10	I say or write new words several times	3.8571	3.1579	3.3462	-0.273*	0.016
11	I try to talk like a native speaker	2.3333	3.0877	2.8846	0.253*	0.025
12	I practise the sounds of English	3.0000	3.3509	3.2564	0.113	0.324
13	I use the words I know in different ways	2.8571	3.3333	3.2051	0.266*	0.019
14	I start conversations in English	2.4762	3.0877	2.9231	0.214	0.060
15	I watch TV or movies in English	4.3333	4.7018	4.6026	0.361**	0.001
16	I read for pleasure in English	3.1429	4.0175	3.7821	0.397**	0.000
17	I write notes, messages, letters and reports	2.4286	3.1053	2.9231	0.227*	0.045
18	I skim read and then read carefully	3.2857	3.0877	3.1410	-0.178	0.118
19	I try to look for similar words in Finnish	2.3333	1.9825	2.0769	-0.113	0.327
20	I try to find patterns in English	2.5238	2.6842	2.6410	0.131	0.253
21	I divide words into parts I understand	2.8095	2.6667	2.7051	-0.089	0.439
22	I try not to translate word for word	3.4762	3.7544	3.6795	0.219	0.054
23	I make summaries	2.2381	2.1053	2.1410	0.019	0.886
		2.9354	3.1516	3.0934		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

Low-intermediate-achieving students reported repeatedly saying or writing new words to remember them (item 10) highly frequently, while high-achieving students did not. In fact, this strategy had moderate negative correlation with final course grade ( $r=-0.273$ ,  $p=0.016$ ). This is interesting, as Griffiths (2003: 375, 2013: 65) found this strategy, along with other strategies relating to vocabulary, looking for words in one's own language (item 19), dividing words into parts (item 21), to be strategies used by more advanced learners. In the present study, however, all of these strategies were used less frequently by more successful learners. Bea frequently used writing words down as a learning strategy. In extract 7, Bea explains that this strategy was effective for learning new words. However, as becomes apparent in extract

8, she felt that this strategy did not help her learning inflections and proper grammatical use of words was more difficult.

(7) Bea: Sanakokeisiin luin silleen, että mulla oli aanelonen, mitä mä kirjoitin sitten täyteen ja junnasin niitä sanoja.

*I studied for vocabulary exams by taking a sheet of paper, writing it full of words and kept rehearsing the words.*

(8) Bea: Mä en vaan hahmota sitä, miten niinku se kielioppi menee, miten ne sanat pitäis laittaa, missä järjestyksessä ja miten mä taivutan sanoja.

*I just can't picture how the grammar goes, how the words are supposed to be arranged and how I conjugate words.*

Griffiths (2013: 65) notes that while vocabulary seems to be important to language development, she argues that the approach on vocabulary has shifted away from the use of word lists. While writing down can be used efficiently, writing down sets of words is not very different from reading through word lists. It seems that effectively learning vocabulary items through repetition does not translate to learning success in the English for Working Life course.

In addition to the strategies used infrequently (mean = lower than 2.5) across all students, low-intermediate-achieving students reported infrequently trying to talk like native speakers, starting conversations in English and writing reports, messages and letters. It is notable that two of these strategies exhibited positive correlation with final course grade. Trying to talk like native speaker, which Griffiths (2013: 62) classified as a *core* strategy, and which relates to engaging cognitively with the target language, showed weak, but significant correlation ( $r=0.253$ ,  $p=0.025$ ). Students who paid attention to their own speech and tried to emulate native-like speaking tended to achieve higher grades. As discussed above, many of the cognitive strategies involving writing and vocabulary were more frequently used by students with lower achievement. Writing letters, reports and messages, strategy requiring the use of more complex writing skills, however, correlated positively with course grade ( $r=0.227$ ,  $p=0.045$ ), as did using the words one know in various ways ( $r=0.266$ ,  $p=0.019$ ). Even though the correlation is not strong, producing different kinds of written texts and using one's vocabulary broadly are connected with higher course grade.

As discussed above, all learners frequently reported watching English language TV series and movies and high-achieving students reported reading for pleasure highly frequently (mean = 3.5 or above). While also very frequently used by both high and low-intermediate-achieving students, watching series and movies still correlated with course

grade on a moderate and highly significant level ( $r=0.361$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Reading for pleasure had even stronger correlation with final grade ( $r=0.397$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The importance of reading also became apparent in extract 9. Cecilia discussed her struggle with English in the upper grades of elementary education and how she later found English easy in upper secondary school.

(9) Interviewer: Kun se englannin opiskelu muuttu helpommaksi, niin muistatko mistä se johtu?

*When you felt that studying English became easier, can you remember what was the cause?*

Cecilia: En oikein. Kai se oli se, että mä aloin lukea englanniksi kirjoja, että yks kirjasarjakin, niin ne lopetti sen suomentamisen kesken, niin ainut vaihtoehto oli lukea se englanninkielinen alkuteos.

*Not really. I think the reason was that I started reading books in English, since there was this books series which they stopped translating in the middle of it, so the only option was to read the English language original work.*

These findings support previous findings on the connection between reading and successful language learning (Griffiths 2013: 66). Students who frequently read and followed English language entertainment media achieved higher grades on the course. There seems to be a clear connection between success in language learning and use of different resources for engagement with English language.

### 5.2.2 Cognitive strategies and development satisfaction

**Table 6. Cognitive strategy use means for the least satisfied (LS), the most satisfied (MS) students and all students, and statistical correlation between satisfaction and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	LS	MS	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
10	I say or write new words several times	3.3043	3.6190	3.3462	0.126	0.271
11	I try to talk like a native speaker	3.0000	3.1905	2.8846	0.066	0.568
12	I practise the sounds of English	3.0870	3.3810	3.2564	0.091	0.427
13	I use the words I know in different ways	2.8696	3.6190	3.2051	0.272*	0.016
14	I start conversations in English	2.6087	3.1905	2.9231	0.165	0.149
15	I watch TV or movies in English	4.4783	4.7619	4.6026	0.190	0.097
16	I read for pleasure in English	3.5217	4.4286	3.7821	0.253*	0.025
17	I write notes, messages, letters and reports	2.6957	3.1905	2.9231	0.188	0.100
18	I skim read and then read carefully	3.0000	3.2381	3.1410	0.072	0.528

19	I try to look for similar words in Finnish	1.8696	2.0476	2.0769	0.035	0.760
20	I try to find patterns in English	2.3913	3.1429	2.6410	0.259*	0.022
21	I divide words into parts I understand	2.3913	3.0000	2.7051	0.218	0.055
22	I try not to translate word for word	3.6087	3.9524	3.6795	0.117	0.307
23	I make summaries	1.6957	2.5238	2.1410	0.314**	0.005
		2.8944	3.3776	3.0934		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

Students who were very satisfied with their language development reported using five cognitive strategies highly frequently, while those who were the least satisfied frequently used three. Conversely, while the most satisfied students only reported very infrequently using the strategy for looking for similar words in Finnish, which was used very infrequently across all students, the least satisfied students used a total of four strategies infrequently. Both the most and the least satisfied students frequently watched movies and TV and read for pleasure. Both also avoided translating word for word. The most satisfied students, however, also reported using words they have learned in different ways, as well as writing or saying new words multiple times, highly frequently. It is interesting to note that while repeatedly writing and saying new words correlated negatively with final course grade, the same was not true for development satisfaction. Finding patterns in English, dividing words into recognisable parts and making summaries were also used very infrequently by the least satisfied students.

Four cognitive strategies had significant correlation with development satisfaction. While the correlation between reading for pleasure and learner satisfaction was not as strong as the correlation between reading and achieved grade, it was still significant ( $r=0.253$ ,  $p=0.022$ ). The same was true for using words one knows in different ways ( $r=0.272$ ,  $p=0.016$ ). Varied vocabulary use and reading as strategies are thus connected to both the students own perception of their development and actual academic achievement on the course. Recognising patterns in English also had weak, but statistically significant correlation with satisfaction ( $r=0.259$ ,  $p=0.022$ ). Making summaries, interestingly, had moderate and highly significant correlation with learner satisfaction ( $r=0.314$ ,  $p=0.005$ ), while being quite infrequently used across all students.



### 5.3 Compensation strategies

Compensation strategies were the most frequently used SILL strategy category across all students. The mean for usage for all students was 3.5022. Four out of six compensations strategies were used highly frequently by all students. However, studies with students of other nationalities have found rates of compensation strategies to be much lower (Magogwe and Olivier 2007: 345; Wong 2005: 255). Most frequently used strategies were strategies for reading without looking up every single word (item 27) and using synonyms (item 29). Extracts 10, 11, 12 and 13 show that reading without checking was a frequently used strategy by the interview participants.

(10) Bea: No, vähän katon sitä yhteyttä, että siitä se yleensä aukeekin, että mitä sillä sanalla tarkoitetaan.

*Well, I usually look at the context, which usually clarifies, what is meant by that word.*

(11) Aarne: -- jos se ei oo millään tavalla häiritsevää, ehkä arvioin sen sanan, että onks tää nyt tän tekstin kannalta kuinka oleellinen. Kyllä mä oon niin laiska, että mä aika usein hyppään yli.

*If it is not in any way interfering, I might estimate how essential this word is for the text. I am so lazy, that I quite often just skip.*

(12) Aarne: --jos mä opiskelen vaikka niiku logistiikan peruskursseja kuljetuksesta, jossa mä niiku päättelen, vaikka onko mun syytä tietää miten nämä trukit eroo toisistaan, niin kyllä mä sitten sen kaivan jostain

*-- if I'm studying, for example, like, basic courses of logistics on transportation, in which I deduce, like, do I have to know how these two trucks are different, then I will look it up*

(13) Cecilia: Jos se sana on semmonen, niiku oleellinen, et se niinku toistuu monta kertaa, niin sit mä tarkastan sen, mikä se on, mutta jos se on vaikka joku asiayhteydestä pääteltävissä, niinku jotkut adjektiivit on, niin mä en tarkasta sitä: Että mulla on paljon sanastoa, mistä mulla on hämärä mielikuva, että se luultavasti tarkoittaa tätä. Koska siitähän ei tuu mitään, että hirveen hidasta lukemista, jos joka sanan mitä ei tiiä tarkistaa sanakirjasta.

*If the word is, like, essential, like, it is repeated in the text multiple times, the I will check what is it, but if I can deduce it from the context, I won't check it. I have lots of vocabulary, like adjectives, whose meaning I vaguely know. Because it is impossible to read if you check the dictionary for every word you don't know.*

Students prefer reading without looking up every unknown word for the sake of convenience, as checking the dictionary at every turn would make reading cumbersome. The use of this strategy is also connected to the frequency of appearance and the importance of the unknown words. As Aarne and Cecilia said, they check words if they feel that they are very important or appear in the text very often.

### 5.3.1 Compensation strategies and academic achievement

**Table 7. Compensation strategy use means for students with a low-intermediate (L-M) and a high (H) grade and all students, and statistical correlation between grade and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	L-M	H	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
24	I guess the meaning of unfamiliar words	3.6667	3.8070	3.7692	0.136	0.235
25	When I can't think of a word, I use gestures	3.8095	3.7193	3.7436	-0.013	0.909
26	I make up words if I don't know the right ones	2.7143	2.3333	2.4359	-0.185	0.106
27	I read without looking up every new word	3.6190	4.2105	4.0513	0.188	0.099
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next	2.3810	2.5965	2.5385	0.094	0.412
29	If I can't think of a word, I use a synonym	4.2381	4.5614	4.4744	0.330**	0.003
		3.4048	3.5380	3.5021		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

While most compensation strategies were used highly frequently (mean = 3.5 or above) by all students, some differences existed between high and low-intermediate-achieving learners. Guessing the meaning of new words, reading without looking up every new words, trying to guess what the other person is trying to say next and using synonyms were used more frequently by high-achieving students. However, using gestures and making up words were used more frequently by low-intermediate-achieving students. Using synonyms, however, was the most frequently used strategy for overcoming oral production difficulties for low-intermediate-achieving students. High-achieving students reported making up words very infrequently. Low-intermediate-achieving students reported infrequently making predictions about what another person is going to say next.

Most compensation strategies did not significantly correlate with final course grade. The differences in the usage means between low-achieving and high-achieving students were mostly minimal. However, using synonyms (item 29) had moderate and highly significant correlation with academic achievement ( $r=0.330$ ,  $p=0.003$ ). Students who frequently employed synonyms to replace a word they had forgotten also achieved high grades on the

course. This supports Griffiths (2013: 77) argument that students should be encouraged to use their vocabulary flexibly and expanding learners' vocabulary to enable this is important. While the use of gestures was also employed highly frequently by successful learners, the significant correlation of synonym use indicates that extensive vocabulary and lexical flexibility support academic achievement in ESP learning environment.

### 5.3.2 Compensation strategies and development satisfaction

**Table 8. Compensation strategy use means for the least satisfied (LS), the most satisfied (MS) students and all students, and statistical correlation between satisfaction and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	LS	MS	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
24	I guess the meaning of unfamiliar words	3.5652	4.1905	3.7692	0.265*	0.019
25	When I can't think of a word, I use gestures	4.0870	3.7143	3.7436	-0.094	0.412
26	I make up words if I don't know the right ones	2.8261	2.6190	2.4359	-0.064	0.579
27	I read without looking up every new word	4.0435	4.0952	4.0513	-0.025	0.826
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next	2.2174	3.2857	2.5385	0.319**	0.004
29	If I can't think of a word, I use a synonym	4.4348	4.5714	4.4744	0.089	0.436
		3.5290	3.7460	3.5021		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

The same strategies very used highly frequently by the most and the least satisfied students. Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words, reading without looking up every word and using synonyms to replace forgotten words were used more frequently by the most satisfied students. The least satisfied students more frequently used gestures and made up new words. The least satisfied students reported guessing what the other person will say next very infrequently. With the exception of this one strategy, the usage frequency of the strategies of the least satisfied, the most satisfied and all students were very similar.

Two compensation strategies correlated with the students' satisfaction for their development. Guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words had weak but significant correlation with

satisfaction ( $r=0.265$ ,  $p=0.019$ ). Students who are able to read texts effectively without checking every word felt they developed more on the course. Trying to guess what the other person will say next, while only being used moderately frequently by the most satisfied students, had moderate and highly significant correlation with satisfaction ( $r=0.319$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). Students who felt that they were happy with their development during the course were good at making intelligent guesses in both reading and listening situations.

#### 5.4 Metacognitive strategies

The most frequently used metacognitive strategies used among all students were strategies for learning from one's mistakes (item 31) and paying attention to people speaking English (item 32). However, strategies related to planning one's English studies (item 34) and setting clear learning goals (item 37) were reported as being used very infrequently. Students also reported rarely consciously looking for opportunities to speak or read in English (items 35 and 36).

The interview indicated that student management of their English learning is highly tied to situation. Students explained that they mostly consider their learning and how to be more effective when it is relevant to their other studies. As seen in extracts 14 and 15, Aarne and Bea said that they actively think about their own learning when they know that they will have to use English in their studies.

(14) Aarne: -- On joskus kyllä käyny niin, kun rupee miettimään, että jos on ollu, oon tienny, että on kaks englannikielistä kurssia, niin oon sitten yrittäny vähän jotakin logistiikkaan liittyvää netistä hakea. Jotain uutisia, että pääsee vähän siihen englannin ajatteluun.

Ajattelemaan sitä asiaa englanniks.

*Now, that I think about it, it has happened, that if there has been, if I've had two courses in English, I have tried to find something related to logistics online. Some news to be able to get into thinking in English. To think about the subject in English.*

(15) Bea: No silloin tulee joo, aktiivisesti mietittyä, kun on kurseja missä joutuu käyttämään englantia ja tietää, että on tosi huono siinä, varsinkin tekstin tuottamisessa, mikä nyt saas tuolla [ammattikorkeakoululla] on joka välissä läsnä, niin sitä koittaa miettiä.

*Well, then I, yeah, I actively think about it, when I have courses where I have to use a lot of English and I know I'm really bad at it, especially producing texts, which is always present at [institution], then I try to think about it.*

Students feel to need to examine and manage their learning when they anticipate encountering tasks that may prove difficult for them. It seems that in these cases their motivation is very task specific. They seek to find ways to accomplish the tasks present on

the specific course in their studies rather than improve their English skills overall. For them, English is a tool used to overcome other academic tasks.

### 5.4.1 Metacognitive strategies and academic achievement

**Table 9. Metacognitive strategy use means for students with a low-intermediate (L-M) and a high (H) grade and all students, and statistical correlation between grade and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	L-M	H	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
30	I try to find many ways to use English	2.8571	3.0702	3.0128	0.064	0.033
31	I use my mistakes to help myself improve	3.1429	3.7544	3.5897	0.299**	0.430
32	I pay attention to someone speaking English	3.4762	3.6667	3.6154	0.186	0.137
33	I try to find ways to be a better learner	2.9048	2.5088	2.6154	-0.124	0.104
34	I plan my schedule to have time to study English	2.3333	1.7719	1.9231	-0.201	0.019
35	I look for people I can talk to in English	2.1905	2.2982	2.2692	0.043	0.570
36	I look for opportunities to read in English	2.2381	2.5088	2.4359	0.108	0.041
37	I have clear goals for improving my English	2.5238	2.4561	2.4744	0.010	0.442
38	I think about my progress in learning English	2.9048	2.6491	2.7179	-0.039	0.149
		2.7302	2.7427	2.7393		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

Both high-achieving and low-intermediate-achieving reported using three metacognitive strategies infrequently. There were, however, differences in which strategies they used and how frequently. Both strategies for looking for opportunities to use English were used slightly more frequently by high-achieving learners. The mean frequency of looking for opportunities to read in English was just barely above the 2.5 threshold for infrequent use. This is interesting, considering how frequently high-achieving students reported reading for pleasure in English. The strategy for having clear goals for improving one's English (item 37) was used very infrequently by high-achieving students, but moderately infrequently by low-

intermediate-achieving students. Other strategies used more frequently by less successful students were findings ways to be a better learner (item 33), planning one's schedule to find time to study English and thinking about one's progress in English. It seems that more successful students do not feel the need to focus on their learning and personal progress.

Two strategies were used highly frequently by high-achieving learners. High-achieving students reported frequently using their mistakes to improve (item 31) and paying attention to someone speaking English (item 32). Learning from mistakes proved to correlate with course grade. The use of this strategy has been connected to advanced learners in previous studies (Griffiths 2008: 61, 2013: 77). The correlation was barely below the threshold of moderate correlation, but the correlation was very significant ( $r=0.299$ ,  $p=0.008$ ). Successful students are able to recognise their mistakes and learn from them.

The relatively low usage frequency of metacognitive strategies among high-achieving students is rather surprising. Previous studies (see Griffiths 2003: 375-376; Oxford and Green 1995: 281) have shown that strategies for trying to find ways to be a better learner (item 33) and thinking about one's progress (item 38) are generally used frequently by learners of all proficiency levels. However, the present data shows that the frequency of using these strategies was barely above the infrequent use threshold across all students. Even high-achieving students used these strategies at a moderate frequency. Furthermore, while Green and Oxford (1995: 280) found that having clear goals for learning English and looking for people with whom to speak English correlated positively with class level, high-achieving students in present study reported using both strategies very infrequently.

## 5.4.2 Metacognitive strategies and development satisfaction

**Table 10. Metacognitive strategy use means for the least satisfied (LS), the most satisfied (MS) students and all students, and statistical correlation between satisfaction and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	LS	MS	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
30	I try to find many ways to use English	2.8261	3.4286	3.0128	0.241*	0.033
31	I use my mistakes to help myself improve	3.3478	3.7143	3.5897	0.091	0.430
32	I pay attention to someone speaking English	3.4348	3.8571	3.6154	0.170	0.137
33	I try to find ways to be a better	2.4783	2.9524	2.6154	0.185	0.104

	learner					
34	I plan my schedule to have time to study English	1.6522	2.4286	1.9231	0.264*	0.019
35	I look for people I can talk to in English	2.2174	2.1905	2.2692	-0.065	0.570
36	I look for opportunities to read in English	2.0870	3.0000	2.4359	0.232*	0.041
37	I have clear goals for improving my English	2.3043	2.4762	2.4744	0.088	0.442
38	I think about my progress in learning English	2.4783	3.0000	2.7179	0.165	0.149
		2.5362	3.0053	2.7393		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

The most satisfied learners reported using metacognitive strategies more frequently than the least satisfied learners. The most satisfied learners used two metacognitive strategies highly frequently, while the least satisfied learners did not use any of them highly frequently. Three strategies were used highly infrequently by the most satisfied students, while the least satisfied students reported using six metacognitive strategies infrequently. In general, with the exception of looking for people with whom to speak English (item 35) the most satisfied students used all metacognitive strategies more frequently than the least satisfied students.

Both the most and the least satisfied learners reported very infrequently planning their schedule to find time to study English (item 34), looking for people to speak English with (item 35) and having clear goals for improving their English (item 37). While being used infrequently by the most satisfied students as well, scheduling time to study English had weak but significant correlation ( $r=0.264$ ,  $p=0.019$ ) with satisfaction for language development. While finding time to study more English did not necessarily lead to higher grades, students using this strategy were personally more satisfied with their development in English during the course. Strategies which were used infrequently specifically by the least satisfied learners were trying to find ways to be a better learner (item 33) and thinking about one's progress in learning English (item 38).

The strategies used highly frequently by satisfied students were using one's mistakes to improve (item 31) and paying attention to people speaking English (item 32). Interestingly, these strategies were also used very frequently by learners who achieved high grades. Unlike

in the case of academic achievement, neither strategy showed significant correlation with development satisfaction.

## 5.5 Affective strategies

Affective strategies were reported as being used very infrequently by all students. When we observe individual strategies, 60% of affective strategies were used infrequently across all students. Prior studies by Green and Oxford (1995: 281) and Griffiths (2003: 375-376) also show that learners use most affective strategies very infrequently or only moderately frequently. Item 39, trying to relax when one is nervous, was used at a moderate rate across all students. However, the overall reported frequency of affective strategy use in the present study was even lower than in other studies. At 2.5462, the average frequency of use across all students was just above the threshold for infrequent use, barely falling into the moderate (mean = 2.5000 to 3.4999) range. This suggests that the students use a rather narrow toolset of strategies for affect.

Most frequently used affective strategies across all students involve managing one's fears. While students strive to manage their emotions, they do not share them. Both using diaries to record one's feelings (item 43) and talking to others about one's feelings (item 44) were used very infrequently across all learners. Rewarding oneself for successes was also used quite infrequently.

### 5.5.1 Affective strategies and academic achievement

**Table 11. Affective strategy use means for students with a low-intermediate (L-M) and a high (H) grade, and all students and statistical correlation between grade and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	L-M	H	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
39	I try to relax when I'm afraid of using English	3.2857	3.3684	3.3462	0.070	0.544
40	I encourage myself to speak even when I'm afraid	3.3810	3.8596	3.7308	0.277*	0.014
41	I reward myself for doing well	2.6667	2.4035	2.4744	-0.139	0.225
43	I write my feelings in a diary	1.1905	1.1228	1.1410	-0.133	0.246
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel	2.2381	1.9649	2.0385	-0.216	0.057
		2.5524	2.5438	2.5462		



Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

High-achieving learners reported using more affective strategies infrequently than low-intermediate-achieving learners. Highly infrequently used strategies among high-achieving learners included rewarding oneself for doing well (item 41), writing one's feelings in a diary (item 42) and talking to others about their feelings (item 44). Low-intermediate-achieving students also used diaries and talking about their feelings to others very infrequently, but reported moderate use of rewarding themselves for doing well. Both low-intermediate- and high-achieving students reported moderate using strategy item 29, trying to relax when they are afraid of using English. High-achieving students reported encouraging themselves to speak when they are afraid (item 40) highly frequently, while low-intermediate-achieving students reported using this strategy at a moderate frequency.

Rewarding oneself for doing well and talking to others about one's feelings were strategies used more frequently by low-intermediate students than high-achieving students. These strategies, as well as writing one's feelings down in a dictionary, showed negative correlation with final course grade, but in case of every strategy, this correlation was not statistically significant. Only one affective strategy correlated significantly with academic achievement. Encouraging oneself to speak English even when afraid showed weak but significant correlation with final course grade ( $r=0.277$ ,  $p=0.014$ ). Managing one's fear has also been connected to successful learners in previous studies (Green and Oxford 1995: 280; Griffiths 2013: 66).

### 5.5.2 Affective strategies and development satisfaction

**Table 12. Affective strategy use means for the least satisfied (LS), the most satisfied (MS) students and all students, and statistical correlation between satisfaction and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	LS	MS	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
39	I try to relax when I'm afraid of using English	3.3478	3.2857	3.3462	-0.015	0.899
40	I encourage myself to speak even when I'm afraid	3.6087	3.8571	3.7308	0.099	0.391
41	I reward myself for doing well	2.3043	2.7619	2.4744	0.200	0.078
43	I write my feelings in a diary	1.0435	1.2381	1.1410	0.214	0.060
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel	1.9565	2.0952	2.0385	0.053	0.645

		2.4522	2.6476	2.5462		
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Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

The least satisfied students used affective strategies less frequently. With the exception of trying to relax when one is afraid (item 39) all affective strategies were used more frequently by the most satisfied students. Both the least and the most satisfied students reported highly infrequent use of strategies for writing one's feelings down in a diary and talking to others about how they feel. The least satisfied student reported infrequently using the strategy of rewarding themselves, while the most satisfied students reported using this strategy at a moderate frequency. This is another example of a strategy, which appeared to be used more frequently by lower achieving and more satisfied students. While rewarding oneself may not be used by the most successful learners in terms of academic achievement, it can help students feel better about their development.

Strategies for managing one's fears were reported as being used quite frequently by all students and there was little difference between the least and the most satisfied students in this regard. The strategy of trying to relax when one is afraid of using English was used at a moderate frequency by both groups and across all students. The least satisfied learners reported using this strategy slightly more frequently. Encouraging oneself to speak was used slightly more frequently by the most satisfied students, but it was used highly frequently by the least satisfied, most satisfies and across all students alike.

In the case of most affective strategies, the frequency of use was higher among the most satisfied students compared to the frequency across all students. Yet, the only affective strategy used highly frequently by the most satisfied students was also used highly frequently by the least satisfied students. Furthermore, none of the affective strategies showed any significant correlation with the students' satisfaction towards their development. Affective strategy use does not seem to make a difference in students' self-perceived development during the course.

## 5.6 Social strategies

While the average frequency of social strategy use was moderate, half of the strategies in the social group were reported as being used infrequently (mean = lower than 2.5), while one was used highly frequently (mean = 3.5 or above). All students reported infrequently asking for

correction (item 46) when they talk and asking help from English speakers (item 48). All students also reported infrequently practising English with other student (item 47). These findings are interesting, as Griffiths (2003: 376) found that students of all levels made at least a moderately frequent use of all social strategies. The participants of the present study seemed to be much less social learners in comparison.

All students reported highly frequent use of the strategy of asking others to speak slowly or repeat (item 45). While students reported rarely using strategies related to their own language production in oral language use situations, they use strategies for understanding others more frequently. Another strategy related to this, asking questions in English (item 49) was used at a moderate frequency across all students. While students practise with others infrequently, when they do, they use strategies to control the communication and input they receive. Trying to learn about the culture of English-speaking people (item 50), was also used at a moderate frequency, indicating that culture is of interest to students in the target institution.

### 5.6.1 Social strategies and academic achievement

**Table 13. Social strategy use means for students with a low-intermediate (L-M) and a high (H) grade and all students, and statistical correlation between grade and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	L-M	H	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
45	I ask others to speak slowly or repeat	3.9048	3.9474	3.9359	-0.045	0.697
46	I ask for correction when I talk	2.3810	2.3684	2.3718	0.042	0.718
47	I practise English with other students	2.2381	2.3333	2.3077	0.046	0.688
48	I ask for help from English speakers	1.9524	2.3509	2.2436	0.083	0.469
49	I ask questions in English	2.3333	3.1404	2.9231	0.276*	0.014
50	I try to learn the culture of English speakers	3.0952	2.8421	2.9103	-0.004	0.973

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

Both high-achieving and low-intermediate-achieving students reported highly infrequent use of asking for correction (item 46), practising English with other students (item 47) and asking help from English speakers (item 48). It is interesting that even high-achieving students reported rarely asking for help or correction. Both low-intermediate- and high-achieving

students, however, reported highly frequent use of strategy item 45, asking others to speak slowly or repeat. This is in line with earlier findings, which suggest that asking other learners to adjust their speech for one to better understand what they are saying is used frequently by learners across all proficiency levels (Green and Oxford 1995: 280; Griffiths 2013: 62).

The most notable difference between low-intermediate-achieving and high-achieving students is the use of questions in English (item 49). While even high-achieving students did not use this strategy highly frequently, the average of 3.1404 indicating moderate use frequency, low-intermediate-achieving students reported using the strategy infrequently. This strategy showed weak but significant correlation with final course grade ( $r=0.276$ ,  $p=0.014$ ). More successful students are also more likely to ask questions in English, while less successful students tend to avoid this. Green and Oxford (1995: 280) found a positive correlation between asking questions as course level. However, the frequency of asking questions among high-achieving students is still rather low, as Griffiths (2003: 376) found that this strategy was used frequently by learners in general at an average frequency of 3.3 and even more frequently by advanced learners at an average frequency of 4.1. Using this strategy seems to contribute to higher academic achievement in ESP setting of the course, but it is underused by students.

## 5.6.2 Social strategies and development satisfaction

**Table 14. Social strategy use means for the least satisfied (LS), the most satisfied (MS) students and all students, and statistical correlation between satisfaction and strategy use mean.**

SILL	Paraphrased statement	LS	MS	All	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p)
45	I ask others to speak slowly or repeat	4.0870	4.1905	3.9359	0.093	0.416
46	I ask for correction when I talk	2.2174	2.9048	2.3718	0.295**	0.009
47	I practice English with other students	2.2609	2.6190	2.3077	0.143	0.211
48	I ask for help from English speakers	2.0870	2.5238	2.2436	0.159	0.164
49	I ask questions in English	3.0000	3.2381	2.9231	0.069	0.550
50	I try to learn the culture of English speakers	2.5652	3.5238	2.9103	0.293**	0.009
		2.7029	3.1667	2.7821		

Highly frequent strategies marked with green and highly infrequent marked with red for emphasis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level (2-tailed)

Asking others to speak slowly or repeat (item 45) was used highly frequently by both the most and the least satisfied students. Interestingly, in both groups the average frequency was higher than the average frequency across all students. The most satisfied students did not report using any social strategies highly infrequently. The least satisfied students, however reported highly infrequent use of asking for correction (item 46), practising English with other students (item 47), and asking help from English speakers (item 48). All of these strategies were used highly infrequently across all students, but the most satisfied students used them at a moderate rate. The most notable difference among these three strategies emerged in asking for correction. This strategy had weak but significant correlation with the students satisfaction with their development ( $r=0.295$ ,  $p=0.09$ ).

While the least satisfied students reported moderate use of the strategy, just barely above the 2.5 threshold, the most satisfied students using it highly frequently. Trying to learn about culture showed weak but statistically significant correlation with the students satisfaction of their own development ( $r=0.293$ ,  $p=0.009$ ). The results of prior studies on developing cultural understanding and its effect on successful learning have been mixed. Green and Oxford (1995: 281) found that this strategy did not show significant correlation with course level and found that it was used at a moderate frequency by learners of all levels. Griffiths (2003: 376), however, found that advanced students used the strategy highly frequently.

## **5.7 Summary of strategies used by the students**

The results of the present study support earlier findings (see Green and Oxford 1995: 285; Griffiths 2003: 273; Griffiths 2008: 88) that more successful learners generally use a greater number of strategies highly frequently and generally use learning strategies more frequently. With the exception of memory strategies and affective strategies, different SILL strategy groups were used more frequently by high-achieving students than low-intermediate-achieving students, and all SILL groups were used more frequently by the most satisfied students than the least satisfied. High-achieving students reported using 11 strategies highly frequently (mean = 3.5 or above), while low-intermediate-achieving students reported highly frequent use of 8 strategies. The difference in the number of strategies used highly frequently was even greater between the least and the most satisfied students, with the most satisfied students using 16 strategies highly frequently and the least satisfied using 9. The difference in the number of infrequently (mean = lower than 2.5) used strategies should also be noted. The

least satisfied students reported using 22 strategies highly infrequently, while only 10 strategies were used highly infrequently by the most satisfied learners.

While cognitive strategies as a category did not show significant correlation with successful learning, cognitive engagement with English correlated with learning success. Cognitive strategy group had the greatest number of individual strategies showing positive correlation with final course grade ( $n=5$ ) and learner satisfaction ( $n=7$ ). Watching movies and TV series in English and trying to talk like a native English speaker both correlated higher final grade, while using one's available vocabulary in multiple ways correlated with higher satisfaction towards one's own development. This supports earlier findings on the importance of cognitive strategy use in successful learning (Ehrman and Oxford 1995: 78; Griffiths 2013: 62, 67). Reading seemed especially important in terms of successful learning, as reading for pleasure showed significant positive correlation with both academic achievement and satisfaction. Furthermore, looking for opportunities to read in English showed positive correlation. Reading without looking up every new word was also used highly frequently by all students.

It is interesting to note that several strategies showed significant correlation with learning success but were not used highly frequently by the most successful students. Trying to talk like a native speaker, using one's vocabulary in different ways, writing notes, letters and messages in English, and asking questions in English all correlated significantly with higher final course grade, but were only used at a moderate frequency by high-achieving learners. Three of these strategies were used highly infrequently by low-intermediate-achieving students. It is notable that three of these strategies are part of the cognitive strategy group. Seven strategies showed significant positive correlation with learner satisfaction, while only being used at a moderate frequency by the most satisfying learners. These strategies were more evenly divided across different strategy categories.

## 6 STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES ON AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

To understand strategy use and how the students view strategy instruction, it is worth examining the instruction they have received prior to attending the target institution. When asked about the strategy instruction that they have received prior to their studies at the target institution, the interviewees struggled to recall what kind of instruction they had received, as seen in extracts 16, 17 and 18.

(16) Bea: Ei oikeestaan, et se oli niiden työkirjojen kautta, ja sit ne menetelmät, mitä tunneilla on käytetty, on jotain just kielioppeja käyty läpi, nii niitä on käyttäny kotona. Mut ei oo erikseen sitte niiku muihin keinoihin opettaja ohjannu, ku mitä on tunneilla käytetty.

*Not really, it happened through workbooks, and then there were the methods that were used in class when we studied some grammar, those I have used at home. But then the teacher has not instructed in using any other methods than the ones used in class.*

(17) Cecilia: Ei oo jääny mieleen muuta ku toi, että panttää ulkoa. On varmaan joskus, mut ei muistu tarkemmin mieleen.

*I can't remember anything but memorizing. Probably at some point, but I can't recall more specifically.*

(18) Daniel: Ei varmaan tullu peruskoulussa. Ehkä mainittiin jotain juttuja, niiku, että mitä voi tehdä, että oppii.

*The probably was nothing in elementary school. Maybe something was mentioned, like, what you can do to learn.*

The students did not recall receiving explicit instruction in the use of language learning strategies. While this does not mean that they have never received any strategy instruction in school, it does suggest that the instruction has been mostly implicit. Bea explained that the strategies she uses have been mostly shaped by what was in the English workbooks used at school and how English was studied in class. Oxford (1989: 243) argues that learners' strategy use is often influenced by the non-explicit methodology used in a language program. In extract 19, Bea discusses one of the downsides of this type of instruction.

(19) Bea: Meillä vaihtu opettajat niin tiheeseen ala-asteella, meillä ei ollu puolta vuotta yks englannin opettaja, nii se teki sen, että kun sä totuit siihen yhteen tyyliin, niin opettaja vaihtu ja hänellä taas oli eri käytännöt, nii se hidasti sitä oppimista ainakin mun kohdalla, ku ei ollu sitä tiettyä rutiinia, että miten tunnilla käydään asita läpi, tai miten niitä opetetaan.

*Our teachers changed so often in the lower levels of elementary school, we didn't have the same teacher for half a year at a time, which made it so that when you got used to one style, the teacher changed and they had different methods, which slowed learning at least for me, because we didn't have a routine for how things were discussed in class or how they were taught.*

When teachers enforce the use of different learning strategies in classroom teaching but learners are not made aware of this, it can cause confusion. More proficient learners can find

it easier to adapt and use new strategies or keep applying the ones they have learned previously, but learners who struggle with learning the language, like Bea, can be confused when they try to change the way they study to match what is being taught by the teacher. Oxford (1989: 243) remarks that teachers should recognize the strategies that their students use and shape their own methodology accordingly. In doing so, teachers can limit the amount of confusion struggling learners face in trying to learn both the language and the new strategies.

The students' views on of strategy instruction they had received during their studies at the target institution were mixed. The students did not recall learning strategies being explicitly mentioned, which means that like on the previous levels of schooling, the instruction seems to have remained mostly implicit. Extracts 20 and 21 illustrate how different activities on the English course directed the students to try new approaches to learning.

(20) Bea: Tehtävät oli monipuolisia. Niiden tehtävien kautta tuli se ohjaus käyttää kieltä eri lailla. Ja justiin meillä oli niitä äänityksiä, mitä piti tehdä ja sit oli parikokeet, et meidän piti keskenään keskustella ihan, et me saatiin se kurssi läpi. Sit oli, tota, paljon englanninkielisiä tehtäviä vielä, mihin piti vastata mahdollisimman laajasti. Sit oli esseitä, mitä piti tehdä. Tosi monipuolinen oli lopulta se kurssin sisältö.

*Exercises were varied. The instruction to use language in different ways came through the exercises. And we had those recordings we had to do and we had pair-exams, so we had to have conversations to pass the course. Then there were many English exercises that required broad answers. Then there were essays we had to write. The contents of the course were very comprehensive.*

(21) Daniel: Tuol oli just, että, jos kiinnostaa, nii voi lukee tämmösen artikkeli, joka on tosi hyvää oman alan englantia ja sit jotain videoita, että kattokaa tämä. Jotain YouTube-videoita oman alan jutuista. Niissäkin oli tosi paljon hyvää sanastoa. Mut ei meilläkään mitään hirveesti niiku painoettu mihinkään tiettyyn oppimiskaavaan.

*There [target institution] we were told, that if we are interested, we can read an article, which is really good English for our field, and then there were some videos we were told to watch. Some YouTube videos on our field. They also had some good vocabulary. But they did not emphasize any specific formula for learning.*

Bea felt that the versatility of different tasks during the English for Working Life course directed her towards trying different learning strategies. She did not recall anyone telling her to use specific strategies, but that completing the tasks required her to try different approaches. Daniel also felt that no specific way of learning was emphasized, but he recalled being instructed to read articles and watch videos which included English specific to his own field. These accounts suggest that language learning strategies are not discussed separately on the course, but the design of the course still encourages the use of different strategies.



The students were accepting towards the idea of receiving language learning strategy instruction. While they had different views on how easy it would be for them to change their own strategy use, none of them expressed that they would be against trying new strategies if they received instruction. In extracts 22, 23, 24 and 25, the interview participants discuss their willingness to try new strategies and how likely it would be for them would continue using these strategies.

(22) Aarne: Ei kai se selvii millään muulla, ku kokeilemalla, mut sit varmaan siinäkin tapahtuu niin, että mitkä totee hyväks, niin ne on sitten, ne tuntuu hyvältä ja ne sitten, mitkä ei sitten ei.  
*Probably the only way to know is to try, but I what would happen, I think, is that those that you find to be good, they are the ones that feel good and the ones that don't, won't.*

(23) Interviewer: Jos joku neuvois sua, että kokeile opiskella näin niin et pistäs hanttiin?  
*If someone told you to try another way to learn, you wouldn't be against it?*

Bea: En todellakaan, et kieltenopiskelu on mulle ollu vaikeet, nii mä tykkäisi, että jos ois joku semmonen helpompi, toimivampi, nopeempi ja käytännöllisempi tapa oppia, ku et sä jonnaat puoltoista tuntia illassa jotain sanoja, et sä opit ne.  
*Definitely not, since learning languages has been hard for me, so I would be happy if there was a simpler, better working, faster and more practical way to learn than to repeat words one and a half hour every evening to learn them.*

(24) Cecilia: No se riippuu ihan, niiku, minkälaisista se ois. Mä tykkään ite enemmän itsenäisestä opiskelusta, että en halua ryhmätöitä tai esiintymisiä ja paritöitä.  
*Well, it depends on what it would be like. I prefer working independently, meaning I don't want to do group work or presentations or pair work.*

Interviewer: Mutta jos tulis ohjausta siihen, että miten itsenäisesti voisit opiskella, niin olisitko halukas lähtemään opiskelemaan uusia tapoja  
*But if you received instruction on how to study independently, would you be willing to try new ways?*

Cecilia: Joo, kyllä.  
*Yeah, yes.*

(25) Daniel: Kyl se varmaan tulis kokeiltua, mutta en tiiä pysyiskö siinä. Jos tietenkin huomais, että se on hyvä, että huomais että täähän on helppoa ja kivaa, niin sitten tulee varmaan tehtyä. Mutta sitte jos on joku semmonen, et ei ihan lähe, eikä oo kivaa eikä opi hirveesti, nii todennäköisesti ei sitten tulis tehty.  
*I would probably try, but I don't know if I would keep it up. Of course, if I noticed that it is good, if I noticed that this is easy and fun, then I would probably do it. But if there was something that does not work, and it's not fun and I don't learn much, I probably wouldn't do it.*

A constant theme in the interviews was that students wanted to evaluate for themselves how different strategies work for them. It is interesting that Bea and Daniel both mentioned specifically that strategies need to make learning easier and more enjoyable, which is one of the key features of learning strategies (Oxford 1990; Griffiths 2013). Oxford (1989: 244) argues that one of the factors of successful strategy instruction is helping learners evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies. The interviewed students also expressed the desire to

evaluate and choose the most appropriate strategies for themselves. They felt that they would most likely use strategies that they felt were most helpful and drop the ones they feel do not work for them. Thus, it would be important to help them make accurate evaluation on their strategy use and if they are using the strategies in proper context. Chamot (2004: 14) remarks that all learners can benefit from learning to manage and evaluate their learning through the use of metacognitive strategies.

Cecilia also brought up her personal preference to learn alone. Oxford (1989: 241) argues that there is a strong connection between language learning strategy use and learning style. Taking the learners' personal learning style into account would be important for successfully engaging them in strategy instruction. If a learner is forced to use strategies that go strongly against their own learning style, it is more likely that they are less motivated to use them. This can result in them resisting further strategy instruction.

Students had different opinions on how strategy training should be conducted as part of language studies in the target institution. Students had different views on the integration of the studies and who should receive strategy instruction. In regards to the timing of the instruction, the consensus was that strategy instruction should start as early as possible, as can be seen in extracts 26 and 27.

(26) Aarne: -- sen pitäis alkaa ihan siinä opintojen alussa. Periaatteessa siinä ku meillä on se viikon intensiivinen tutustumisjakso koko siihen koulusysteemiin ja järjestelmään, niin siinä vois ehkä paremmin sitten kertoa tämän, että jos se koulutusohjelma sisältää englanninkielisiä kursseja. Ja sitte että siellä tulee se työelämän englanti, pakollinen opintojakso. Niin että, jo etukäteen siihen valmentaa että niinku sen ajattelun saa siihen Englantiin, että mitä voi tehdä, että sen ajattelun itse saa siihen Englantiin, jos ei koe, että on vielä sillä tasolla.

-- *It should start right at the beginning of the studies. Basically when we have the one week intense familiarization period for the entire system, they could tell you this, that if the program contains English language courses. And that there is the English for Working Life, a compulsory course. So, one should be trained in advance to think about English, and what you can do to start thinking about English if you feel that you are not on that level yet..*

(27) Bea: Varmaan vaatis jo ihan oman kurssinsa sitä. Että sitten pystys ihan toteuttamaan kaikkien kielten kanssa sitä. Mut se vaatis sen pohjan jo jonnekin ala-asteelle. Että pääsis harjoittelemaan niitä tapoja, miten pystyy oppimaan, ja sitten myöhemmin opintojen aikana aika ajoin muistuttaa niistä.

*It would probably require a course of its own. So you could put it into practice with all languages. But that would require that its base to be somewhere in elementary education. So you could practice the ways you can learn, and then later in the studies you could be reminded of them.*

While Aarne felt that strategy instruction should start at the beginning of studies in a University of Applied Sciences, Bea felt that strategy instruction would need to start in elementary education for it to be effective later on. Both felt that starting language instruction early is important for learners to be able to start thinking about their learning and what they

can do to learn better. Bea felt that a separate program or course for language learning strategy use would be necessary for students to be able to apply what they learn across different languages. This is interesting, considering how she felt that the variety of tasks in her studies had helped her develop her own strategy use. One would assume she would prefer the integration of strategy instruction.

The interviewees felt that planning strategy instruction should focus on the students. Their needs and interests should be taken into account when conducting strategy instruction. As can be seen in extracts 28, 29, 30 and 31, the interview participants had different views on what the methods for getting students motivated to participate in strategy instruction would be.

(28) Aarne: Jos miettii ammattikorkeakoulua, nii se työelämälähtöisyys on siinä aika merkittävä mun mielestä, että tavallaan siinä kohti se kielen niiku opetuksen suunnitelukin voisi pohjautua siihen, mikä on tulevaisuuden tarve niiku työmarkkinoilla. Ja se ois mun mielestä aika hyvä ohjaamaan, että millä tavalla nämä strategiat siinä kielenoppimisessa niin tehdään.

*An if you think about Universities of Applied Sciences, work life orientation is significant in my opinion, so in a way planning language teaching could also be based on what is needed in the labour market in the future. And that, in my opinion, would be good guidance for how strategies are taught in language teaching*

(29) Cecilia: Varmaan opiskelija pitäisi saada ensin kiinnostumaan siitä asiasta. Mut en mä osaa sanoa muuta siihen.

*The student would probably need to be made interested in the topic. But that is all I can say.*

(30) Daniel: Mun mielestä, jos yrittäs tuoda tollasta, niin sen pitäis olla semmoinen vapaaehtoinen juttu.

*In my oppinion, if you treid something like that, it should be an optional thing.*

(31) Daniel: Kaikkeehan pitää antaa opiskelijalle mitä voi kokeilla oppiakseen, että mun mielestä oli hyvä, et meilläkin oli lähtötasotestit, et mitä kaikille pitäis antaa. -- Jos joku ei oo hyvä englannissa, nii ois se hyvä, että opettaja on siinä rinnalla ja esittää toisia mahdollisuuksia, miten vois oppii.

*Students should be given everything that they can try to learn, so in my opinion it is good that we had starting level tests, to find what everyone needs – If someone is not good at English, it would be good that the teacher is at their side and presents other options for ways one can learn.*

These extracts highlight the need to focus on the students' needs and explaining how strategy instruction can help them be more effective learners. Daniel felt that strategy instruction, if conducted as part of language studies at Universities of Applied Sciences, should be voluntary. Daniel focused on the students' proficiency and felt that less proficient students need strategy training more. Cecilia also felt that it would be important that the students are interested in receiving strategy instruction. Taking the students' feelings towards strategy instruction into account is important. Oxford (1989: 244) argues that negative attitudes can impede strategy training. If the students are not interested or feel that they do not need strategy instruction, they are less likely to try new strategies. Aarne felt that like language teaching in the target institution in general, strategy instruction should also be guided by the

students' needs in their future profession. This could be a strong motivating factor for the students. Chamot (2004: 19) remarks that open discussion about language tasks and how different strategies can help them accomplish them helps students get motivated to try new strategies. In the context of ESP, occupational needs would form a good basis for this discussion.

The interviews revealed that the students had received little explicit strategy instruction. Their strategy use has mostly been shaped by the classroom environment, learning materials and tasks and teachers' preferred methods of teaching. The students were positive towards the idea of receiving strategy instruction, but felt that they should be given the option and means to evaluate which strategies work for them rather than being forced to use specific strategies. Students need to not only be made aware of different strategies, but also how these strategies can help them be better learners. If the students feel that there is no point in learning new strategies, the instruction is likely to fail. In the context of ESP learning, the students' future occupational needs can be a strong motivating factor. The first step, however, is making the students aware of different strategy options. There is definitely a need for this, as the following excerpt 32 from Aarne's interview illustrates.

(32) Aarne: Nyt ku näistä puhutaan, niin mä oon ihan ihmeissäni, ku ei kukaan koskaan kertonu, että tämmöstä vois olla. Se kertoo siitä, että se puuttuu tällä hetkellä tuolta.

*Now that we are talkin about these, I am completely amazed, since nobody has ever told me that there could be something like this. It tells you that at the moment it is missing there.*

## 7 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of the present study in the larger context of language pedagogy and research. I will examine the implications of the results of the present study in terms of language teaching in the Finnish educational system. I will also discuss the limitations of the present study and possibilities for future studies on learning strategy use and instruction in Finnish ESP learning.

The findings of this study support the idea that language learning strategies should be taken into account in language education. More successful learners both in terms of academic achievement and personally perceived development used strategies more frequently and used a greater number of strategies highly frequently. This suggests that including language learning strategy instruction in language teaching is beneficial. Students generally had a positive attitude towards language learning. Chamot (2004: 20) argues that strategy instruction should start as early as possible to help the students be more successful and more motivated. The students interviewed for this study also agreed that strategy instruction should begin as early as possible. While strategy instruction should also be conducted in ESP education to help students transfer their strategies to new tasks, starting strategy instruction in elementary education would allow the learners more time to develop their understanding of their strategies and make transfer easier.

The study also highlighted that the definition of successful learning also matters in studying which strategies lead to success. In the present study, very few strategies showed correlation with both final course grade and learners' satisfaction towards their own development. While memory strategy use, for example, correlated negatively with final course grade, the same was not true for the learners' satisfaction towards their own development, as students who were happier with their development were also more likely to use memory strategies more frequently. This suggest that while generally higher frequency of strategy use leads to better perceived development, which strategies are used is more important for to complete specific language tasks. If the aim of the program is to help students be able to complete specific tasks, as is in the case of ESP, recognizing which strategies are important for success and instructing the students in their use becomes important.

The importance of students being able to evaluate their own learning and strategy use became apparent in the present study. Students want to be able to decide for themselves, which

strategies work for them, and want guidance in choosing the right strategies. Yet, the results show that students presently do not frequently evaluate or plan their own learning. Metacognitive strategies were generally used infrequently by students and interviewees also said that they do not actively think about how they are learning but rely on what they have learned in elementary education. As Andersson (2008: 62) and Griffiths (2013: 77) argue, metacognition is important in successful language learning. Language teachers should strive to make the learners more aware of their learning. This would make conducting language training more effective, as learners would be able to make more accurate assessments of which strategies they are using and which strategies help them complete different task, instead of relying on a narrow set of strategies in every context.

Compensations strategies and cognitive strategies seem to form the foundation for success on the English for Working Life course. Both Oxford and Green (1995: 289) and Griffiths (2013: 61) recognize that strategies used highly frequently across all students are important in addition to the strategies specially used by more advanced learners. Compensation strategies were generally used highly frequently across the studied group of students, while the use of different language resources and engagement with target language appeared as a defining characteristic of the most successful students in the present study. While the same strategies did not often correlate with both academic success and learners' satisfaction, cognitive engagement appears to be important for both. Both interview and questionnaire data suggests that the participants generally follow English language media frequently and are rather skilled readers. Students on higher education level are able to tolerate ambiguity in reading and use context to guess the meaning of words they do not know. Encouraging the use of compensation and cognitive strategies can support performance in ESP language programs.

The present study has certain limitations. While the questionnaire data show which strategies are used by the most successful students and how their strategy use differs from other students, no meaningful analysis of the strategies of the least successful students was possible. Due to the small number of participants who had received a low grade ( $n=9$ ), the strategies of the unsuccessful students in the terms of academic achievement could not be studied. Vann and Abraham (1990: 190-192) highlight the importance of studying how unsuccessful students use strategies and what kind of instruction they would benefit from. Further research should be conducted on the strategies of unsuccessful ESP learners to learn which strategies they use and how they apply their strategies to ESP learning tasks.

The sample size of the present study was quite small ( $n = 78$ ). Thus, making generalizations for larger demographic groups based on the results is not possible. A larger sample size would be needed to make such generalizations reliably. The present study also focused on the relationship between strategy use and learning in a single ESP language program. As discussed before, there are differences in the ways language teaching is conducted in different Universities of Applied Sciences. Since context and task requirements affect which strategies are most suitable for successfully completing the task, it is possible that the results of a similar study in a different institution would be different. Different strategies could be relevant for success in a different language program. Furthermore, as all participants had already completed the course, the effect of the course itself on their strategies could not be assessed. Students should be studied both prior and after the course to determine if their strategy use changed during the course and if the variation in strategy use between the students was different before and after the course.

As discussed in chapter 3.2, students of Universities of Applied Sciences come from various different backgrounds. The present study did not examine the differences in strategy use of students based on their background. It could be beneficial to study how students of different educational backgrounds use and view learning strategies to better plan instruction. As Chamot (2004: 19) notes, there are still mixed views on whether strategy instruction should be integrated or taught as separate courses, although integration is currently favored. While integration may be a good option in most cases, whether separate strategy intervention programs should be organized for less proficient students should be examined. Since all students of different backgrounds are expected to meet the same requirements at the end of their studies, whether strategy instruction could help close the gap between students with different amounts of prior experience with English should definitely be examined.

## 8 CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to examine the language learning strategy use of students at a Finnish University of Applied Sciences. The study focused on which strategies learners used, how strategy use correlated with successful learning and how students viewed strategy instruction. The strategy use frequencies of the students were examined using an online strategy questionnaire. 49 strategy items based on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning by Oxford (1990) were examined for this study. I also interviewed four students to learn more about how and when they use different strategies. In the interviews, I also discussed the students' past experience with strategy instruction and their views on how strategy instruction should be conducted.

Students preferred cognitive and compensations strategies over rest of the SILL strategy groups. These two strategies were the only strategies with usage frequencies greater than 3.0 on the five point scale, with compensation strategies being the only strategy group used highly frequently (mean = higher than 3.5, Oxford 1990: 191). Metacognitive, affective and social strategies were used less frequently, but at moderate frequency. Memory strategies were used least frequently and were the only SILL category which the students generally reported using highly infrequently (mean = lower than 2.5).

There were differences in the strategy use by more and less successful students. Students who achieved higher final grade used most learning strategies and strategies in general more frequently and used a greater number of strategies at a high frequency compared to other students. A similar pattern emerged when strategies of the students who were the most satisfied with their own development during the course were compared to those who were the least satisfied. Eight individual SILL strategies showed statistically significant positive correlation with final course grade and 14 strategies correlated positively with the learners' satisfaction. Cognitive strategies related to engagement with English emerged as significant for both academic success and perceived development. A positive connection between more frequent learning strategy use and successful learning was found in the study.

The students who were interviewed generally remembered receiving little to none strategy instruction in their language studies. They had a positive attitude towards the possibility of receiving strategy instruction but highlighted that it would be important for them to evaluate which strategies work for them. The instruction should take into account their personal



characteristics and needs. They felt that strategy instruction should start as early as possible, with one suggesting that starting strategy instruction in elementary education would be the best option. The need to motivate learners and give them the means to evaluate their own learning emerged as central factors in successful strategy instruction.

The results of the present study suggest that language learning strategies affect the students' success in meeting the language learning requirements in the target institution. As both the students and approaches to English teaching in Universities of Applied Sciences are heterogeneous, there is a need for more research on the topic. Furthermore, if the contents and requirements of language studies follow the needs of work, changes in these needs also affect which language learning strategies are relevant for students to effectively learn English in new contexts.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Online strategy questionnaire

#### 1. Miten suoritit Työelämän englanti –kurssin? \*

- Kontaktiopetuksessa  
 Verkko-opetuksessa  
 Monimuoto-opetuksessa (sekä verkko- että kontaktiopetusta)

#### 2. Minkä arvosanan sait kurssista? \*

2

#### 3. Kuinka tyytyväinen olet kielitaitosi kehittymiseen kurssin aikana? (1 = en lainkaan tyytyväinen, 5 = erittäin tyytyväinen) \*

- 1  2  3  4  5

#### 4. Mikä oli oma kokonaispanostuksesi tälle kurssille? (0% 0 en tehnyt mitään, 100 % = tein parhaani) \*

- 0%  20%  40%  60%  80%  100%

#### 5. Osa A - Arvioi seuraavien väitteiden paikkansapitävyttä asteikolla 1-5. \*

1 = en koskaan tai en lähes koskaan, 2 = en yleensä, 3 = silloin tällöin, 4 = useimmiten, 5 = aina tai lähes aina.

	1	2	3	4	5
Pohdin kuinka oppimani uudet asiat suhteutuvat aiempiin tietoihini englannin kielestä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Käytän uusia oppimiani sanoja lauseissa muistaakseni ne.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yhdistän uuden englanninkielisen sanan ääneen, kuvaan tai mielikuvaan muistaakseni sen helpommin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muistan uuden englanninkielisen sanan luomalla mielessäni kuvan tilanteesta, jossa sanaa käytettäisiin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Käytän riimejä uusien englanninkielisten sanojen muistamiseen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Käytän sana- tai kuvakortteja (flashcard) uusien englanninkielisten sanojen muistamiseen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opettelen uusia sanoja esittämällä ne liikkuen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kertaan usein vanhojen englannin tuntien sisältöjä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Muistan uudet englannin kielen sanat painamalla mieleeni niiden sijainnit esimerkiksi kirjan sivulla, verkkosivulla, taululla tai tienviitassa.

### 6. Osa B - Arvioi seuraavien väitteiden paikkansapitävyyttä asteikolla 1-5. \*

1 = en koskaan tai en lähes koskaan, 2 = en yleensä, 3 = silloin tällöin, 4 = useimmiten, 5 = aina tai lähes aina.

	1	2	3	4	5
Lausun ääneen tai kirjoitan ylös uudet englanninkieliset sanat useita kertoja.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yritän puhua kuin syntyperäinen englannin puhuja.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harjoittelen englannin kielen äänteitä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Käytän osaamiani sanoja monipuolisesti.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aloitan keskusteluja englanniksi.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Katson englanniksi puhuttuja TV-sarjoja ja elokuvia.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Luen huvikseni englanninkielisiä tekstejä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kirjoitan muistiinpanoja, viestejä, kirjeitä ja raportteja englanniksi.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selaan englanninkieliset tekstinpätkät ensin nopeasti läpi, jonka jälkeen luen ne tarkemmin alusta.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yritän päätellä uuden englanninkielisen sanan merkityksen vertaamalla sitä samannäköiseen suomenkieliseen sanaan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yritän tunnistaa toistuvia kaavoja englannin kielestä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selvitän uuden englanninkielisen sanan merkityksen jakamalla sen ymmärrettäviin ymmärrettäviin osiin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yritän olla kääntämättä tekstejä sanasta sanaan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teen englanninkielisiä tiivistelmiä lukemastani ja kuulemastani.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 7. Osa C - Arvioi seuraavien väitteiden paikkansapitävyyttä asteikolla 1-5. \*

1 = en koskaan tai en lähes koskaan, 2 = en yleensä, 3 = silloin tällöin, 4 = useimmiten, 5 = aina tai lähes aina.

	1	2	3	4	5
Yritän arvata uusien englanninkielisten sanojen merkityksiä.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Käytän eleitä, kun en muista sanaa englanninkielisessä keskustelussa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keksin uusia sanoja, kun en tiedä oikeaa englanninkielistä sanaa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Luen englanninkielisiä tekstejä ilman, että tarkistan jokaisen uuden sanan sanakirjasta.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yritän arvata mitä keskustelukumppanini aikoo sanoa seuraavaksi englanninkielisessä keskustelussa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Jos en muista englanninkielistä sanaa, käytän toista sanaa tai ilmausta, joka tarkoittaa samaa.

### 8. Osa D - Arvioi seuraavien väitteiden paikkansapitävyyttä asteikolla 1-5. \*

1 = en koskaan tai en lähes koskaan, 2 = en yleensä, 3 = silloin tällöin, 4 = useimmiten, 5 = aina tai lähes aina.

Yritän keksiä mahdollisimman monia tapoja käyttää englantia.

1 2 3 4 5

Huomaan tekemäni virheet ja käytän tätä tietoa kielitaitoni kehittämiseen.

Olen tarkkana, kun kuulen jonkun puhuvan englantia.

Yritän löytää tietoa siitä, kuinka voin kehittyä englannin kielen oppijana.

Suunnittelen aikatauluni siten, että minulla on aikaa opiskella englantia.

Etsin ihmisiä, joiden kanssa voin puhua englantia.

Yritän löytää mahdollisimman paljon tilaisuuksia lukea englanniksi.

Minulla on selkeät tavoitteet englannin kielen taitojeni kehittämiseen.

Pohdin kehittymistäni englannin kielen oppijana.

### 9. Osa E - Arvioi seuraavien väitteiden paikkansapitävyyttä asteikolla 1-5. \*

1 = en koskaan tai en lähes koskaan, 2 = en yleensä, 3 = silloin tällöin, 4 = useimmiten, 5 = aina tai lähes aina.

Yritän rentoutua, kun englannin käyttäminen pelottaa minua.

1 2 3 4 5

Kannustan itseäni puhumaan englantia, vaikka pelkäisin tekeväni virheitä.

Palkitsen itseni, kun pärjään hyvin englannin opiskelussa.

Huomaan olevani kireä tai hermostunut, kun opiskelen tai käytän englantia.

Kirjoitan tunteitani ylös kielenoppimispäiväkirjaan.

Puhun toisille ihmisille englannin opiskeluun liittyvistä tunteistani.

### 10. Osa F - Arvioi seuraavien väitteiden paikkansapitävyyttä asteikolla 1-5. \*

1 = en koskaan tai en lähes koskaan, 2 = en yleensä, 3 = silloin tällöin, 4 = useimmiten, 5 = aina tai lähes aina.

Jos en ymmärrä jotain englanniksi, pyydän puhujaa hidastamaan tai toistamaan.

1 2 3 4 5

Pyydän englantia äidinkielenään puhuvia korjaamaan virheitäni, kun puhun.

Harjoittelen englantia muiden opiskelijoiden kanssa.

Pyydän apua englantia äidinkielenään puhuilta.

Kysyn kysymyksiä englanniksi.

Pyrin oppimaan lisää englanninkielisten maiden kulttuurista.



## Appendix 2. Student interview questions

### TAUSTA

#### **BACKGROUND**

Mitä kieliä olet opiskellut?

*What languages have you studied?*

Oletko aikeissa opiskella vielä uusia kieliä?

*Are you planning to learn any new languages?*

Oletko kokenut kielten opiskelun helpoksi vai vaikeaksi? Mikä kieltenopiskelussa on helppoa ja mikä hankalaa?

*Have you felt that learning languages has been easy for you or has it been difficult? What has been easy and what has been difficult?*

Mikä motivoi sinua oppimaan vieraita kieliä? Mitä englannin kieli merkitsee sinulle?

*What motivates you to learn foreign languages? What does English mean to you?*

### STRATEGIAT

#### **STRATEGIES**

Millaisia medioita käytät englanniksi? Miten paljon esimerkiksi katsot TV-sarjoja tai luet kirjoja/sarjakuvia? Käytätkö tai oletko käyttänyt medioita tietoisesti oppimiseen? Miten?

*Which kinds of medias do you use in English? How often do you, for example, watch TV series or read books/comics? Do you or have you consciously used media for learning? How?*

Kuinka usein puhut englantia luokan ulkopuolella? Kenen kanssa? Onko sinulla tuttavuuksia, jotka puhuvat englantia äidinkielenään? Mitä opit siitä?

*How often do you speak English out of class? With whom? Do you have acquaintances who speak English as their first languages? What do you learn from it?*

Harjoitteletko englannin puhumista ja ääntämistä itsenäisesti? Miten?

*Do you practice speaking and pronouncing English by yourself?*

Jos sinun täytyy muistaa esimerkiksi jokin kielioppisääntö tai sanoja sanakoetta varten, miten opiskelet?

*If you have to remember, for example, a grammar rule or words for an exam, how do you study?*

Kuinka toimit, jos törmäät sanaan, jota et tunnista tai muista? Entä, jos unohdat sanan esimerkiksi kirjoittaessasi tai puhuessasi?

*What do you do if you encounter a word you do not recognize or remember? How about if*

*you forget a word while writing or speaking?*

Kuinka usein pohdit ja suunnittelet omaa opiskeluasi? Kuinka motivoit itseäsi oppimaan englantia?

*How often do you think about or plan your learning? How do you motivate yourself to learn English?*

Miten opiskelet englantia itsenäisesti? Entä luokassa? Toimivatko jotkut opiskelutavat paremmin luokassa ja toiset itsekseen opiskeltaessa? Miksi?

*How do you study English independently? How about in class? Do certain methods for learning work better in class and others while learning alone? Why?*

Ohjaako luokkaopiskelu tiettyjen menetelmien käyttöön?

*Do you think that studying in a classroom setting guides to use certain methods?*

Opiskeletko kieliä samalla tavoin kuin muita aineita? Miten kielten opiskelu eroaa muista aineista?

*Do you learn languages like other subjects? How does studying languages differ from studying other subjects?*

## **STRATEGIAKOULUTUS** **STRATEGY INSTRUCTION**

Miten helppoa sinun mielestäsi on lähteä kokeilemaan omien oppimismenetelmien muuttamista, jos saat ohjausta erilaisten oppimisstrategioiden käyttöön?

*How easy would it be for you to try to change your own methods of learning if you were instructed in the use of different learning strategies?*

Millaista ohjausta erilaisten oppimistapojen käyttöön olet saanut koulussa? Sisältyikö tällaista ohjausta kieliopinnoihin ammattikorkeakoulussa?

*What kind of instruction have you received on using different learning methods in school? Was this kind of instruction included in the language studies at University of Applied Sciences?*

Miten tällainen ohjaus pitäisi toteuttaa kieliopinnoissa?

*How should this type of instruction be conducted in language studies?*

Millainen ohjaus motivoisi sinua kokeilemaan erilaisia strategioita kieltenopiskelussa?

*What kind of instruction would motivate you to try different language learning strategies?*