

ANNA MANTOVANI
University of Padova, Italy

Investigating language learning strategies through the strategy inventory: A study among immigrant adolescents in Italian secondary schools

ABSTRACT. Adolescent learners of Italian as a Second Language (L2) often face multiple challenges, requiring the use of diverse Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) to support acquisition. This article presents a theoretical framework for LLSs (Rubin 1987) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), drawing on established categorizations and recent insights from the Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2020). The research aims to investigate the LLSs that students perceive themselves as using when learning L2 Italian. Subsequently, an inventory adapted from the SILL, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford 1990), was administered to 157 immigrant students aged between 11 and 19 from nine secondary schools in Northeast Italy. The discussion will outline the development of this tool and evaluate its efficacy in reflecting on LLSs. The data analysis revealed that the students with a foreign background are medium strategy users ($M = 3.09$), predominantly employing indirect L2 learning strategies, and demonstrate a correlation between low usage of LLSs and their proficiency in Italian. Moreover, strategies are influenced by cross-cultural differences among adolescents. Thus, to enhance the effectiveness of language acquisition within this demographic, it is advisable to promote the adoption of cognitive, social, and compensatory learning strategies. This can be achieved by prioritizing goal-oriented and collaborative tasks, as well as bottom-up and inside-out language learning activities.

KEYWORDS: Italian as a second language (ISL), language learning strategies (LLSs), newly arrived migrant students, proficiency, secondary school, strategy inventory for language learning (SILL).

1. INTRODUCTION

The recent updates to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) outlined in the Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2020), and the Recommendations of the Council of Europe (2022), advocate for a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of strategy and Language Learning Strategies (hereafter referred to as LLSs) as well as their application in second language acquisition (SLA) and learning. Kumaravadivelu (2006) argues that students derive greater meaning and practicality from their learning experiences when they possess an

understanding of how to learn effectively. Additionally, maintaining consistent behavior and thought patterns aligned with desired outcomes is vital for success in the language acquisition process, including the comprehension and retention of new vocabulary, language usage, and proper grammatical structures (Kumar et al. 2022: 577). Meeting the diverse needs of newly arrived migrant learners (0–5 years) with limited proficiency in L2 presents a significant challenge, particularly as these students may be unaware of the potential benefits of employing learning strategies and adapting to different learning styles (Oxford 1996).

For these reasons, the primary aim of this paper is to evaluate the strategies employed by immigrant students in their language-learning endeavors and to assess the extent to which these strategies are utilized. This will be achieved using a structured questionnaire that measures strategy frequency, based on Oxford's SILL, i.e., the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (1990). The evaluation process includes not only the translation but also the modification of the original SILL model to suit the Italian context, based on collected data.

This research presents a comprehensive examination and categorization of LLSs (§2). Following this, §3 and §4 explain the research questions (RQs), methodology, and research context, drawing from data collected in secondary schools. §5 is dedicated to presenting findings derived from data analysis, while §6 delves into prospects for advancing methodologies and techniques related to LLSs within secondary education settings.

2. THE COMPLEXITY IN DEFINING LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

It is crucial to clarify at the outset that LLSs lack a universally accepted definition in the scholarly literature. As Cohen and Henry (2020) observe, disagreement persists regarding the very nature of LLSs, particularly whether they should be understood as mental activities, and to what extent they involve conscious or semi-conscious thoughts and behaviours that learners employ with the explicit aim of improving their knowledge and understanding of an L2. Macaro (2006: 325) identified nine unresolved issues surrounding LLSs; among these, two remain especially relevant: (1) the lack of consensus on where LLSs are located, whether they occur internally, as cognitive operations, or externally, as observable actions, and (2) the absence of agreement on what LLSs actually are, that is, whether they consist of knowledge, intention, action, or a combination of the three.

One of the earliest definitions of LLSs was proposed by Selinker (1972), as one of the five distinct psycholinguistic processes that contribute to shaping

interlanguage systems¹. Selinker described LLSs as cognitive activities occurring at both conscious and unconscious levels, involving the processing of L2 data to convey meaning (Selinker et al. 2000). This suggests that the development of interlanguage may also be influenced by students' approaches to language materials. Expanding upon the role of students in employing learning strategies, Williams and Burden (1997) proposed that during learning tasks, students engage various resources in diverse ways to complete or solve the activity, which can be considered a learning strategy process. Recently, according to Kumar et al. (2022), strategy in language learning is a collection of techniques that students can use to learn the language. Similarly, the Council of Europe (2001) defines a strategy as any organized course of action, adopted with a specific purpose, and selected by the learner to accomplish a particular task (par. 2.1). Its broader context, the Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2020) advocates for a teaching and learning approach that values interaction as fundamental for the co-construction of meaning, thus rendering the process more engaging for immigrant students. It delineates strategies into four categories: i) production, ii) reception, iii) interaction, and iv) mediation. This approach aims to enhance learning outcomes by encouraging collaborative learning and dynamic interaction within the educational environment.

Overall, these categories provide educators with a framework for designing diversified and interactive learning experiences that promote meaningful engagement and the effective development of communicative competence within SLA (Oxford et al. 1989). Within the context of multilingual classrooms, especially with students at lower proficiency levels (A0 – A2), examining how these strategies apply to the teaching and learning of Italian L2 becomes pertinent, enhancing the inclusion of students with a foreign background within the Italian educational system. This effort resonates with the principles outlined in *The New EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation* (European Commission 2020) and the related Council of Europe's (2021) recommendation, which advocates for measures promoting equality, inclusion, and participation in education.

¹ The other components are native language transfer, overgeneralization of target language rules, transfer of training, and communication strategies. Interlanguage can be defined as a reconstruction process that starts with an initial hypothesis and gradually becomes more complex. Cf. Nemser (1971); Corder (1981).

2.1. Taxonomy of language learning strategies

There are various approaches to classifying LLSs. In a similar vein, Rubin (1981; 1987), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and Oxford (1990) proposed a classification system for LLSs based on classroom observation and data collection. Their classification consists of strategies that directly impact learning and those that indirectly affect learning. Building upon O'Malley and Chamot's classification of metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies, this paper adopts Oxford's taxonomy, which further distinguishes:

- direct strategies, which encompass memory strategies (SILL Part A), cognitive strategies (SILL Part B), and compensation strategies (SILL Part C), which necessitate mental processing of the target language;
- indirect strategies, which include metacognitive strategies (SILL Part D), affective strategies (SILL Part E), and social strategies (SILL Part F). More recently, Oxford (2016) comprised metacognitive, social, and affective terms in meta-strategies domains;

Oxford's taxonomy encompasses 50 items and is widely regarded as user-friendly for educators (Amerstofer 2018). These items are categorized into the six previously mentioned strategy categories (i.e., cognitive, metacognitive, memory, compensation, social, and affective strategies), each delineating a specific strategic action. Furthermore, Oxford's (2016) latest model, the S²R, i.e., the Strategic Self-Regulation Model, expands the identification of strategy categories, emphasizing their functional flexibility and overlap.

Over the past two decades, the construct of LLSs has been at the centre of considerable debate, particularly regarding its conceptual clarity and methodological validity. Despite Oxford's taxonomy being considered extremely comprehensive and appealing for L2 learners (Amerstofer 2018: 499), the strategies inventory administered aims to address criticisms of the SILL taxonomy. Notably, these criticisms, articulated by Dörnyei (2005), highlight that the SILL taxonomy primarily concentrates on quantifying how often strategies are utilized, rather than assessing the effectiveness or impact of the strategies themselves. Critics have emphasized that self-report instruments such as SILL may fail to differentiate clearly between strategies, skills, and more stable learner traits. In response, Tseng et al. (2006) proposed reframing strategic learning within the broader theory of self-regulation, focusing on learners' ability to manage motivation, cognition, and behaviour throughout the learning process. They further argued that instruments designed to assess self-regulation, such as their proposed questionnaire, can offer a more psychometrically reliable measure of strategic learning than traditional strategy scales. Similarly, Rose (2012) reconceptualizes strategic learning from a dy-

namic, socio-cognitive perspective that integrates metacognitive, cognitive, and memory-related processes.

Accordingly, the present study acknowledges this theoretical evolution and positions itself at the intersection between traditional strategy-based approaches and the self-regulatory paradigm. While the notion of LLS remains valuable for examining metacognitive awareness in multilingual learners, the analysis also considers learners' strategic behavior as part of a broader system of self-regulated learning processes, especially within contexts of linguistic diversity and L2 acquisition. Even though coming up with a definite classification of LLSs is still debatable (Macaro 2006), it is useful to have categories to investigate LLSs that immigrant adolescents use. In the Italian context, within the framework of post-method², an effort to classify learning strategies has been undertaken by Torresan (2022), who proposed a categorization into five groups of strategies (for a total of 73), following the work of previous scholars: i) cognitive, ii) linguistic, iii) metacognitive, iv) regulative, v) dynamic, and social mediation. Torresan defines these strategies as "hinges" (2022: 43) that connect the abstract and the concrete realms of language learning by promoting pupils' active participation. In other words, strategies can concretely bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and their practical application in plurilingual classroom settings, supporting the development of language skills through interactive and dynamic activities.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Despite advancements, research on LLSs and their association with language proficiency in the context of Italian as an L2 among adolescents remains limited. This stands in contrast to the body of literature available for English as a Foreign Language, EFL (among others, Zarei & Baharestani 2014; Habók & Magyar 2018; Malpartida 2021; Habók et al. 2022). Consequently, two guiding research questions (RQs) have been formulated for the study:

RQ1. What are the LLSs that adolescents report more frequently for Italian as an L2, both in direct and indirect forms?

RQ2. Is there a significant relationship between the use of language learning strategies and proficiency in Italian L2?

² The post-method is an orientation that emerges from the ashes of the communicative approach, seeking to offer flexible guidelines (Torresan 2022: 15). It articulates itself through micro-proposals such as the Lexical approach and the Drama approach. Cf. Torresan (2022); Kumaravadivelu (2006).

Understanding these RQs can guide the development of more targeted and sustainable educational policies and practices, tailored to the linguistic and cultural specificities of the students involved.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative approach, utilizing data gathered from the adapted Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and analyzed using the Jamovi 2.3 version (2022). Descriptive statistics were applied to calculate the mean, median, and standard deviation (SD) for each of the 20 items administered to the learners.

Participants were classified based on their grade levels, spanning from sixth to ninth grade, and including those enrolled in Diploma programs at the Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA, *Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti*), equivalent to the conclusion of the eighth grade. Additionally, participants were stratified by gender (M; F). Detailed information regarding the distribution of the sample based on both grade level and gender is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample

Grade	Italian Grade	M	F	Total
Sixth grade	Prima media	19	12	31
Seventh grade	Seconda media	13	11	24
Eighth grade	Terza media	15	13	28
Ninth grade	Prima superiore	7	9	16
Provincial Centers for Adult Education	Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti (CPIA)	49	9	58
Total		103	54	157

4.1. Participants

Data were collected from 157 secondary school students with a foreign background from nine public schools in Northeast Italy. The age range of the sample was 11–19 years. 147 (93.6%) were immigrant students in middle school and CPIAs for the achievement of the Diploma of eighth grade, and 10 (6.4%) were immigrant students in high school. Teachers stated that none reported a hearing, language, or learning disability.

Within the sample, there were 103 males (constituting 65.6%) and 54 females (constituting 34.4%). This gender imbalance reflects broader national enrolment patterns in CPIA settings, where a higher proportion of male learners typically arrive from abroad on their own, often leaving their families in their country of origin, and consequently access adult education pathways in greater numbers than women (cf. Table 1). It is noteworthy that recent data from Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito (2023) indicate that males exhibit a higher likelihood of premature school dropout compared to females. Moreover, the participants represented a diverse array of linguistic backgrounds, encompassing 19 languages: Albanian, Arabic, Bambara, Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, German, Hindi, Mandinka, Pashtu, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Sinhala, Spanish, Thai, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Wolof.

Schoolteachers informally assessed their proficiency in Italian through observation and classroom assessments. It was determined to be between the beginner / elementary level (CEFR A1–A2). Participants whose proficiency exceeded the A2 level were excluded from the study to ensure greater homogeneity of the sample.

4.2. Research instrument: The 20-item strategies inventory

A 20-item Strategies Inventory, adapted from the SILL Version 7.0 ESL / EFL (1990) and S²R model by Oxford (2016), was revisited and employed for self-assessing the frequency of students' LLS usage. Originally consisting of 50 items regarding strategies of language use distributed across six sections, the SILL underwent restructuring and simplification to facilitate completion within one hour. Following Oxford's original taxonomy, the adapted Inventory is classified into five broad categories: memory (items 1–5 / SILL Part A), cognitive (items 6–12 / SILL Part B), compensation (items 13–15 / SILL Part C), metacognitive (items 16–18 / SILL Part D), socio-affective (items 19–20 / SILL Part E and F).

To suit adolescent participants in Italian secondary settings, the following modifications were made while ensuring the framework of the SILL remained intact:

- a) Translation into Italian (L2).
- b) Incorporation of examples and simplification to align with the proficiency level of A1+ / A2 QCER. Item 1 states: "Collego le parole che so già in italiano con nuove parole che ora sto imparando (come unire i pezzi di un puzzle)", i.e., "I connect the words I already know in Italian with new words and phrases I am learning (like putting pieces of a puzzle / jigsaw together).

- c) Deletion of 30 out of the 50 items. The reasons are twofold: cognitively, within the one-hour time frame allocated by schools, it would have been overly burdensome for foreign students to comprehend and furnish non-hurried responses. Additionally, certain assessment items would have been inappropriate for administration to students. This could be due to their recent introduction to the classroom environment (e.g., SILL 38. I think about my progress in learning English) or because the items are overly complex for students at the elementary level to understand (e.g., SILL 33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English).
- d) Students were instructed, though not required, to provide comments alongside the items to convey their feelings or incorporate personal information as desired.

Students had to answer using a 5-point Likert scale with the poles being “never or rarely true” (1) to “always or almost always true” (5). Students with a low proficiency in L2 can identify the strategies yet still some struggle in learning the language; on the other hand, they can be unaware of their learning strategies and therefore give random responses (Pavičić Takač 2008: 133). For this reason, this work incorporated a visual search strategy for students, i.e., color coding, which has proven effective in numerous studies (e.g., Michalski 2014; Zhang et al. 2022). Using color coding in the Likert scale provides a visual cue that aids students in quickly and accurately interpreting and categorizing the content they are searching for. This approach leverages visual perception, making it easier for students to differentiate and prioritize linguistic information, ultimately leading to more efficient and successful search outcomes.

The assigned task and accompanying instructions administered were – as follows (cf. Appendix A for the complete inventory and its Italian translation):

“How true is this for you on a scale from 1 to 5? Mark your answer with an “X”. Remember: there are NO right or wrong answers.” –

- Point 1: rarely / never (0–25%)
- Point 2: only sometimes (25–50%)
- Point 3: so-so, half the time true, half the time not (50%)
- Point 4: almost always true (50–75%)
- Point 5: always true, true (100%)

*I watch TV in Italian, watch movies in Italian on Netflix or at the cinema, and use social networks in Italian.*³

These modifications aim to assist adolescents with a lower level of Italian proficiency in better comprehending the proposed item strategies.

³ Example item from the adapted inventory (Oxford 1990), SILL No. 15: “I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English”.

4.3. Data collection

The SILL, comprising 20 items, was administered between December 2023 and January 2024 across nine classrooms distributed among nine secondary schools in Northeast Italy, including one technical institute, three CPIAs, and five middle schools.

The total administration time averaged approximately 60–65 minutes. Recognizing that not all adolescents may be aware of their learning strategies and may provide random responses, a pre-reading session was conducted with participants to prevent misunderstandings. This session also included presenting examples and moments of reflection to prepare the students for personal responses.

Throughout the study, the researcher ensured the confidentiality of participants' identities and protected the privacy of their opinions.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this section, the study's findings on adolescents' LLSs are presented. In Table 2, various scores were interpreted following the guidelines provided by Oxford (1990) and those established in the recent study by Zou and Lertlit (2022: 713):

Table 2. Score specifications

Score	Frequency	Specifications
3.5–5.0	High	The strategy is highly employed
2.5–3.49	Moderate	The strategy is moderately employed
1.0–2.49	Low	The strategy is employed to a limited extent

Descriptive statistical analysis of the mean, mode, and SD to evaluate major and minor frequencies were calculated for data analysis, as shown in Table 3.

As shown in Table no. 3, adolescents reported a moderate level of use of LLSs, ranging between 2.5 and 3.49, with a mean of 3.09 ($M = 3.09$).

It can be observed that the most frequent strategies with high mean and mode are items no. 9 (SILL 17), item no. 17 (SILL 35), and item no. 18 (SILL 40). These strategies entail the act of notetaking and messaging in Italian, active listening during Italian conversations, whether with friends or teachers, and proactively attempting to initiate conversations with Italian speakers. The data underscore the strong willingness among immigrant learners to actively engage in the L2

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

Strategy No.	Classification	Mean	Mode	SD	Frequency
<i>Item 1</i>	Memory	2.84	3.00	1.11	Moderate
<i>Item 2</i>	Memory	3.11	3.00	1.34	Moderate
<i>Item 3</i>	Memory	3.00	3.00	1.24	Moderate
<i>Item 4</i>	Memory	3.10	3.00	1.43	Moderate
<i>Item 5</i>	Memory	2.80	3.00	1.25	Moderate
<i>Item 6</i>	Cognitive	3.15	4.00	1.41	Moderate
<i>Item 7</i>	Cognitive	3.00	3.00	1.32	Moderate
<i>Item 8</i>	Cognitive	3.33	5.00	1.37	Moderate
<i>Item 9</i>	Cognitive	3.54	5.00	1.40	High
<i>Item 10</i>	Cognitive	3.18	4.00	1.18	Moderate
<i>Item 11</i>	Cognitive	2.56	1.00	1.40	Moderate
<i>Item 12</i>	Cognitive	2.99	3.00	1.43	Moderate
<i>Item 13</i>	Compensation	2.85	3.00	1.27	Moderate
<i>Item 14</i>	Compensation	2.63	1.00	1.39	Moderate
<i>Item 15</i>	Compensation	3.29	3.00	1.32	Moderate
<i>Item 16</i>	Metacognitive	3.36	3.00	1.25	Moderate
<i>Item 17</i>	Metacognitive	3.56	5.00	1.28	High
<i>Item 18</i>	Metacognitive	3.60	5.00	1.34	High
<i>Item 19</i>	Socio affective	3.12	3.00	1.23	Moderate
<i>Item 20</i>	Socio affective	2.88	3.00	1.31	Moderate

community, both within the school through interaction with peers and outside the school by maintaining contact with Italian friends through messaging apps or social networks. It is noteworthy that item no. 8, which pertains to watching TV in Italian, viewing films on Netflix or in cinemas in Italian, and using social networks in Italian, exhibits a mode of 5.00 ($SD = 1.37$). Many adolescents report infrequent visits to cinemas in their comments, while they consistently use TikTok and Instagram in L2 Italian. This result emphasizes the need to expand real-life tasks carried out in school environments to strengthen LLSs, employing technologies for the learning of Italian L2.

Conversely, the least employed LLSs include trying to remember new words or phrases solely based on their placement on a page, blackboard, or computer screen (item 5); searching for words in students' native language that resemble new Italian words (item 11); and relying on gestures when facing difficulties in recalling Italian words (item 14).

5.1. Discussion

In response to RQ1, indirect strategies were identified as the most employed LLSs, i.e., metacognitive strategies ($M = 3.5$, items 16–18). This outcome aligns with the findings of Rismayana (2017) and Oxford (2016: 71), both of whom investigated the use of strategies as predictors for English as a Second Language (ESL) proficiency. However, it deviates from the findings of O'Malley et al. (1985), who observed a higher incidence of cognitive strategies in their research compared to metacognitive strategies. In terms of frequency, cognitive strategies ($M = 3.1$, items 6–12) are followed by socio-affective strategies ($M = 3$, items 19–20), memory strategies ($M = 2.97$, items 1–5), and compensation strategies ($M = 2.92$, items 13–15). Specifically, the category of memory strategies is consistent with observations made in several recent studies (among others, Kuna-saraphan 2015; Tieocharoen & Rimkeeratikul 2019). Nevertheless, the results regarding compensation strategies do not align with certain recent studies (Charoento 2017; Zou & Lertlit 2022), which researched Chinese and Thai EFL students, revealing that compensation strategies are the most frequent. One of the main reasons for this misalignment may lie in the composition of the sample. Indeed, in the present study, the percentage of Asian participants represents only a portion of the sample (20.3%). Since strategic L2 learning is contingent upon a multitude of factors (Amerstorfer 2018: 513), individual learner differences and culture influenced the measurement of the strategies employed (Oxford 1996). For instance, in strategy no. 12, unlike their counterparts from other foreign backgrounds, Chinese, Bangladeshi, and Sinhalese students reported frequently relying on translation into their mother tongue, utilizing free multilingual translation services such as DeepL and Google Translate for completing homework assignments.

Secondly, concerning the response to RQ2, it is pertinent to acknowledge that the present study includes students with an elementary proficiency QCER ($M = A1+$). Consequently, the relationship observed between the SILL and Italian L2 proficiency levels in the responses of immigrant adolescents suggests a potential correlation between low employment of cognitive, socio-affective, memory, and compensation strategies and their language proficiency. Different scholars (e.g., Oxford 2011; Habók et al. 2022) have demonstrated a significant correlation between SILL use and proficiency levels. This suggests that there exists a direct relationship wherein increased usage of LLSs by students corresponds with higher levels of proficiency, as reported by numerous studies (Zarei & Baharestani 2014: 33).

6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The data analyzed in the previous section led to the following general outcomes, some of which call for further research. Specifically, the prevalence of metacognitive LLSs highlights the need for targeted interventions to diversify and enhance language learning approaches.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that LLSs be adapted to suit specific tasks and goals (Oxford et al. 2004; Oxford 2011) and that an action-oriented approach be utilized in collaborative tasks (Council of Europe 2020: 31). This methodology underscores active participation and interaction among learners as essential components for reaching educational goals. It advocates for the utilization of laboratory settings, facilitating engagement in practical exercises. What is more, it promotes the cultivation of meaningful dialogue and discourse among students and educators, fostering critical thinking, reflection, and the exchange of ideas. Following Rubin's (1975) idea, the behaviors and strategies employed by proficient language learners could be passed on or taught to other learners, suggesting that through observation and practice, less proficient learners can adopt and emulate the effective learning techniques used by those who have achieved a higher level of proficiency in the target language. This concept underlines the potential for peer learning and the role of educators in facilitating the dissemination of successful language learning strategies within a learning community. As Kumaravadivelu (2003) posits, educators should engage in negotiation to facilitate integration, maximize learning opportunities, and foster students' autonomy, as well as their cultural and social awareness within educational environments.

To accomplish this goal, schoolteachers should encourage bottom-up and inside-out language learning activities that encompass cognitive, interactional, and compensatory dimensions to facilitate the integration of foreign adolescents. Consequently, activities should be designed for vocabulary building through word roots and prefixes, and learners should be encouraged to analyze and discuss authentic media sources in L2, such as news articles, movies, music, or podcasts. Particularly for students with lower proficiency levels, it would be necessary to define strategies in alignment with the competencies outlined in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2020). These strategies encompass a range of activities, including brainstorming sessions, setting learning goals, adjusting strategies accordingly, and engaging in small-group communication (Naughton 2006). Furthermore, employing techniques such as word inference, contextual clue identification, gesture, body language interpretation or visual aids, language simplification, and seeking clarifica-

tion can markedly improve both communication efficacy and comprehension levels⁴.

The research is limited to describing the most frequently reported LLSs that immigrant adolescents claim to apply when learning L2 Italian. The focus is therefore on the strategies they self-report using, rather than on those they demonstrably put into practice, two dimensions that do not necessarily coincide, and for which future research is strongly encouraged. As stressed by Ellis (1996), the development and implementation of LLSs should consider a variety of factors (e.g., age, aptitude, intelligence, attitude, and motivation), which this study calls for in future research. Likewise, it would be interesting to follow the research by looking up different tests (i.e., interviews, semi-structured interviews, surveys) for assessment strategies in multicultural classrooms, since strategies are both observable and unobservable (Purpura 1999). Furthermore, it would be interesting to administer the SILL in students' L1 to gather more information about their judgment of personal strategies.

Ultimately, understanding the effectiveness of the LLSs in the Italian context provides educators and policymakers with valuable insights to facilitate informed decision-making. This includes enhancing the inclusivity promoted by a plurilingual approach, as detailed by the Council of Europe (2001 par. 1.3), thus better addressing the unique challenges encountered by learners with a foreign background in secondary school settings.

REFERENCES

- Amerstorfer, C.M. (2018). Past its expiry date? The SILL in modern mixed-methods strategy research. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(2), 497–523.
- Chamot, A.U. / O'Malley, J.M. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Charoento, M. (2017). Individual learner differences and language learning strategies. *Contemporary Educational Researches Journal*, 7, 57–72.
- Cohen, A. / Henry, A. (2020). Focus on the language learner. Styles, strategies, and motivation. In: N. Schmitt / M.P.H. Rodgers (eds.), *An introduction to applied linguistics* (pp. 165–189). New York: Routledge.
- Corder, S.P. (1981). *Error analysis and interlanguage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe (2020). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – companion volume*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

⁴ For further details and a comprehensive analysis of activities and strategies in multicultural classrooms, see Chapter 3 of the Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2020).

- Council of Europe (2021). *Council recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma equality, inclusion, and participation*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32021H0319%2801%29>
- Council of Europe (2022). *Council recommendation of 28 November 2022 on pathways to school success and replacing*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H1209%2801%29>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ellis, N.C. (1996). Sequencing in SLA: Phonological memory, chunking and points of order. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 18, 91–126.
- European Commission (2020). *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, Inclusion and participation for 2020–2030*. Brussels: European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package_en
- Habók, A. / Magyar, A. (2018). The effect of language learning strategies on proficiency, Attitudes and school achievement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(2358), 1–8.
- Habók, A. / Magyar, A. / Molnár, G. (2022). Investigating the relationship among English language learning strategies, language achievement, and attitude. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13(867714), 1–9.
- The Jamovi project. (2022). *jamovi* (Version 2.3). <https://www.jamovi.org>
- Kumar, T. / Roy, V.K. / Yunus, M.M. (2022). Adopting learning strategies for English language learning. *Journal for Educators, Teachers, and Trainers*, 13(6), 575–581.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kunasaraphan, K. (2015). English learning strategy and proficiency level of the first year students. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 197, 1853–1858.
- Macaro, E. (2006). Strategies for language learning and for language use: Revising the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(3), 320–337.
- Malpartida, W.M.F. (2021). Language learning strategies, English proficiency and online English instruction perception during covid-19 in Peru. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14, 155–172.
- Michalski, R. (2014). The influence of color grouping on users' visual search behavior and preferences. *Displays*, 35, 176–195.
- Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito (2023). *Analisi longitudinale sulla dispersione scolastica aa.ss. 2012/2013 – 2021/2022*. https://miur.gov.it/documents/20182/0/Focus_Analisi_longitudinale_dispersione_aa.ss+1213_2122.pdf/79d95ceb-3fbb-4f57-b96a-9594bf7d9413?version=1.0&t=1703761486369
- Naughton, D. (2006). Cooperative strategy training and oral interaction: Enhancing small group communication in the language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(2), 169–184.
- Nemser, W. (1971). Approximative systems of foreign language learners. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 9, 115–123.
- O'Malley, J.M. / Chamot, A.U. / Stewner-Manzanares, G. / Russo, R. / Kupper, L. (1985). Learning strategy applications with students of English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(3), 557–584.
- Oxford, R.L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House.
- Oxford, R.L. (1996). *Language learning strategies around the world: Cross-cultural perspectives*. Honolulu, HI: Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center, University of Hawai'i Press.

- Oxford, R.L. (2003). *Language learning styles and strategies: An overview*. Learning Styles & Strategies / Oxford, GALA, 1-25. <http://web.ntpu.edu.tw/%7elanguage/workshop/read2.pdf>
- Oxford, R.L. (2011). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Harlow: Longman & Pearson Education.
- Oxford, R.L. (2nd ed.) (2016). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies: Self-regulation in context*. New York: Routledge.
- Oxford, R.L. / Cho, Y. / Leung, S. / Kim, H.J. (2004). Effect of the presence and difficulty of task on strategy use: An exploratory study. *IRAL*, 42, 1-47.
- Oxford, R.L. / Lavine, R.Z. / Crookall, D. (1989). Language learning strategies, the communicative approach, and their classroom implications. *Foreign Language Annals*, 22, 29-39.
- Pavičić Takač, V. (2008). *Vocabulary learning strategies and foreign language acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Purpura, J.E. (1999). *Learner strategy use and performance on language tests: A structural equation modeling approach*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and Cambridge University Press.
- Rismayana, R. (2017). The correlation between language learning strategies and proficiency level of English department students in Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM). *English and Literature Journal*, 4(2), 37-50.
- Rose, H. (2012). Reconceptualizing strategic learning in the face of self-regulation: Throwing language learning strategies out with the bathwater. *Applied Linguistics*, 33(1), 92-98.
- Rubin, J. (1975). What the 'good language learner' can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9(1), 41-51.
- Rubin, J. (1981). Study of cognitive processes in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 2(2), 117-131.
- Rubin, J. (1987). Learner strategies: theoretical assumptions, research history and typology. In: A.L. Wenden / J. Rubin (eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 15-30). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 209-231.
- Selinker, L. / Baumgartner-Cohen, B. / Kinahan, C. / Mathieu, E. (2000). Researching learning strategies in the second language acquisition. In: M. Dakowska (ed.), *English in modern world* (pp. 19-25). Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang.
- Tieocharoen, W. / Rimkeeratikul, S. (2019). Learning strategies and teaching methods in Thai and Vietnamese universities. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(3), 99-112.
- Torresan, P. (2022). *Un alfabeto di 73 lettere: strategie per la didattica linguistica*. Milano: Pearson Academy.
- Tseng, W.-T. / Dörnyei, Z. / Schmitt, N. (2006). A new approach to assessing strategic learning: The case of self-regulation in vocabulary acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 27(1), 78-102. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/ami046>
- Williams, M. / Burden, R. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers. A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zarei, A.A. / Baharestani, N. (2014). Language learning strategy use across proficiency levels. *I-manager's Journal on English Language Teaching*, 4(4), 27-38.
- Zhang, M. / Gong, Y. / Deng, R. / Zhang, S. (2022). The effect of color coding and layout coding on users' visual search on mobile map navigation icons. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1-14.
- Zou, B. / Lertlit, S. (2022). Oxford's strategy inventory for language learning: English learning of Chinese students in Thai University. *LEARN Journal*, 15(2), 705-723.

Badanie strategii uczenia się języka za pomocą inwentarza strategii. Studium przeprowadzone wśród nastoletnich uczniów z doświadczeniem migracyjnym we włoskich szkołach średnich

ABSTRAKT. Nastoletni imigranci uczący się języka włoskiego jako drugiego (L2) stają przed wieloma wyzwaniami, które wymagają stosowania różnorodnych strategii uczenia się języka (LLS). Artykuł przedstawia wybrane założenia teoretyczne dotyczące strategii uczenia się i przyswajania drugiego języka (SLA), z wykorzystaniem klasycznej literatury przedmiotu i najnowszych spostrzeżeniach zawartych w publikacji Council of Europe (2020). Celem projektu jest zbadanie strategii uczenia się języka stosowanych podczas nauki języka włoskiego. W badaniu uczestniczyło 157 uczniów imigrantów w wieku od 11 do 19 lat z dziewięciu szkół średnich w północno-wschodnich Włoszech. Wykorzystano inwentarz strategii opracowany przez Oxford (1990): Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. W dyskusji nakreślono rozwój tego narzędzia i oceniono jego skuteczność w badaniach nad strategiami. Analiza danych wykazała, że uczniowie pochodzący z rodzin imigranckich stosują strategię na średnim poziomie ($M = 3,09$), wykorzystując głównie pośrednie strategie uczenia się języka. Badanie wykazało ponadto korelację między niskim poziomem wykorzystania strategii uczenia się języka a poziomem biegłości ucznia w języku włoskim. Na sposób użycia strategii wpływają także różnice międzykulturowe wśród nastoletnich uczniów. W związku z tym, aby zwiększyć skuteczność przyswajania języka w tej grupie demograficznej, zaleca się promowanie stosowania strategii poznawczych, społecznych i kompensacyjnych. Sprzyja temu stosowanie zadań zorientowanych na cel i opartych na współpracy oraz aktywności typu *bottom-up* i *inside-out*.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: język włoski jako drugi język (ISL), strategie uczenia się języka (LLSs), nowo przybyli uczniowie z doświadczeniem migracyjnym, biegłość językowa, szkoła średnia, inwentarz strategii uczenia się języka (SILL).

ANNA MANTOVANI

University of Padova, Italy

anna.mantovani.1@phd.unipd.it

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6792-5668>

APPENDIX

Appendix A. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Adapted into Italian for Foreign Learners.

'How true is this for you on a scale from 1 to 5? Mark your answer with an "X". Remember: there are NO right or wrong answers.'

1	Number 1. Rarely, never (0–25%)
2	Number 2. Only sometimes (25–50%)
3	Number 3. So-so: sometimes true, sometimes not (50%)
4	Number 4. Almost always true (50–75%)
5	Number 5. Always true, true (75–100%)

SILL 1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.

Italian: 'I connect words I already know in Italian with new words I am currently learning (like putting together pieces of a puzzle).'

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

SILL 2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.

Italian: 'I try to use new words in Italian when I write and speak so that I can remember them better.'

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

SILL 3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word.

Italian: 'I connect the sound/word of a new Italian word and an image or a picture of the word to help remember the word.'

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

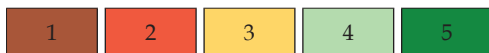
SILL 5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.

Italian: 'I use Italian songs or phrases from films and television programmes to remember new words.'

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

SILL 9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Italian: 'I remember new Italian words or phrases by remembering their position on the page, on the board, or on the computer screen.'



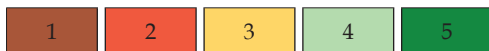
SILL 10. I say or write new English words several times.

Italian: 'I repeat or write new Italian words several times.'



SILL 14. I start conversations in English.

Italian: 'I start conversations in Italian, without any problems or fear.'



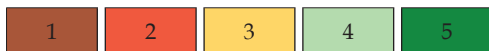
SILL 15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.

Italian: 'I watch TV in Italian, watch movies in Italian on Netflix or at the cinema, and use social networks in Italian.'



SILL 17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.

Italian: 'I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in Italian.'



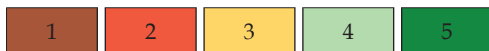
SILL 18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.

Italian: 'After an initial quick reading in Italian, I go back and read it again carefully.'



SILL 19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.

Italian: 'I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in Italian.'



SILL 22. I try not to translate word-for-word.

Italian: 'I translate word by word into my mother tongue.'



SILL 24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.

Italian: 'To understand Italian words I do not know, I make guesses or invent new words.'



SILL 25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.

Italian: 'When I can't think of a word during a conversation in Italian, I use gestures.'



SILL 29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Italian: 'If I can't think of an Italian word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.'



SILL 31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.

Italian: 'I notice my Italian mistakes and use that information to help me do better.'



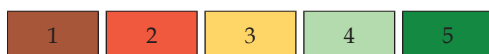
SILL 32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.

Italian: 'I pay attention when someone is speaking in Italian.'



SILL 35. I look for people I can talk to in English; SILL 47. I practice English with other students.

Italian: 'I look for people or students I can talk to in Italian.'



SILL 40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.

Italian: 'I try to speak and write in Italian even when I am afraid of making mistakes.'



SILL 42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.

Italian: 'I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using Italian.'

