

# Language Learning Strategies in the 2020 National Curriculum for English

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**Abstract:** The concept of language learning strategies (LLS) has a central place in the new Norwegian national curriculum for English (LK20). Current research on the new national curriculum has focused on general challenges for teachers, comparisons with the previous curriculum, intersections between LK20 and other international documents, and the value of multilingual teaching and learning. This chapter contributes to this body of research by providing an investigation of LLS in LK20. International LLS scholars mainly discuss taxonomies and skills-based classifications of LLS and signal the need for more research on strategy instruction. In Norway, ELT research reveals that teachers of English are insecure about teaching LLS explicitly in the classroom. Recent research also indicates that there appears to be a degree of uncertainty among teachers concerning the possible conceptualizations of LLS and their distinctions from other related concepts, such as teaching strategies. This chapter explores both explicit and implicit conceptualizations of LLS in LK20 by applying a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The findings indicate that, firstly, LK20 supports the teaching of a variety of LLS found in theoretical classifications and didactic literature. Secondly, LK20 indirectly presents the importance of critical literacy and multilingual skills as types of LLS which have not been explored in the LLS field so far. Finally, the indirect approach to LLS in LK20 may prompt the need to establish governmental programs to support English language teachers in their work with LLS.

## Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of language learning strategies in the new national curriculum for English from 2020 (henceforth LK20). Notably, English language teaching (henceforth ELT) scholars in Norway have provided insightful discussions on various aspects of the new English curriculum, such as: comparisons with the previous curriculum (Simensen, 2020), intersections between LK20 and the *Common European framework of reference for languages* (Speitz, 2020), implications and challenges for teachers (Burner, 2020) and the value of multilingual teaching and learning (Haukås & Speitz, 2020). The present paper aims to contribute to this body of research by focusing on LLS in LK20.

The terms *language learning strategy*, *learning strategy*, and *strategy* seem to be used interchangeably in both research and practice. For the sake of clarity, we employ the term *language learning strategy* (henceforth LLS) for both plural and singular forms. However, the more general term *strategies* is also used to discuss terminologically salient distinctions between LLS and other conceptualizations (see sections II and III).

According to Oxford (2017), there are 33 definitions of LLS, which indicates that it is a complex term with various scholarly conceptualizations. In the present study, LLS are referred to as systematic and conscious steps, including both thoughts and actions, that are selected and used by learners to enhance their language learning and use, both in a short- and long-term perspective. Firstly, this means that learners should have a high level of consciousness regarding their learning progress, goals, and needs. Secondly, learners would have knowledge of a variety of LLS from which they are able to select the most suitable ones to serve their purposes in a certain context related to language learning or language use. In this understanding of LLS, teachers' role would be to guide and support learners in their systematic and purposeful discovery and implementation of LLS in the classroom, thus enabling them to transfer LLS use outside of the classroom.

Studies in applied linguistics and cognitive psychology have contributed to establishing the foundational role of LLS in language learning (Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021, p. xxix). International research on LLS has mainly focused on areas such as self-regulation learning theory (Oxford,

2011) and individual differences between learners concerning, for example, gender (Mitits & Gavriilidou, 2014), age (Peacock & Ho, 2003), socio-economic status (Butler, 2014), educational proficiency (Gavriilidou & Petrogiannis, 2016), and motivation (Platsidou & Kantaridou, 2014). Gavriilidou and Mitits (2021, p. xxx) claim that more research is needed on how LLS may be used for developing linguistic skills in phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax. Further, scholars point out that the LLS field would benefit from more research on taxonomies (Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021), multilingual learners (Mitits & Gavriilidou, 2016), and strategy instruction (Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021). Research on taxonomies and strategy instruction would also include conceptualizations of LLS in official governmental documents such as LK20, which is the topic of the present investigation.

According to Oxford (2002) and Haukås (2012), explicit strategy teaching is most effective and would be best integrated in ordinary classroom activities on a regular basis (Oxford, 2002). Interestingly, Haukås (2012) claims that Norwegian language teachers seem reluctant to teach LLS explicitly, even if they have positive attitudes towards them. Hammershaug (2021) presents similar results in her qualitative study of eight individual interviews with Norwegian lower-secondary teachers of English. Furthermore, she explains that a potential reason for these teachers' reluctance to work with LLS explicitly might be their lack of procedural knowledge of LLS (Hammershaug, 2021, pp. 85–86). Hopfenbeck (2014, p. 44) reports that successful strategy teaching requires teachers to have extensive knowledge of LLS, including how they work and when they are optimal. Consequently, a deeper knowledge and understanding of LLS might lead teachers to adopt an explicit approach to them in the classroom. To gain more insight on this matter, teachers might turn to LK20, which they consider an official guideline for their teaching practices (cf. Gudem, 1990). The investigation of LLS conceptualizations in LK20 may thus provide useful reflections on LLS for all English language teachers, and especially those who might be interested in implementing LLS explicitly in the classroom but feel unprepared to do so.

A possibly challenging aspect of LK20 is that, like the previous curriculum, it “leaves important decisions and interpretations to the

institutional, instructional, and personal domains” (Speitz, 2020, p. 44). Hammershaug (2020) argues that this challenge extends to the conceptualization of LLS in LK20, since it does not seem to provide explanations of LLS or concrete ways of working with them in the classroom. However, it may be argued that an in-depth, theory-based investigation of both explicit and implicit references to LLS may reveal potential guidelines and specific examples of LLS to be used in the classroom. Therefore, this study asks and attempts to answer the following research question and two sub-questions:

How are LLS conceptualized in the new Norwegian national curriculum for English, and what practical guidelines might they provide for English language teachers?

1. Are LLS mentioned explicitly in LK20? If so, where and to what effect?
2. Are LLS mentioned implicitly in LK20? If so, how may these implicit references be interpreted in relation to current LLS taxonomies in ELT?

While this study is similar to the one conducted by Hammershaug in 2021,<sup>1</sup> it differs from it in three main aspects: purpose, theoretical scope, and methodology. In terms of purpose, this study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of LLS in LK20, while Hammershaug (2021) discusses LLS in LK20 as part of a larger project where the focus is on teachers’ conceptualizations of LLS that are based on their understanding of LK20. Concerning theoretical scope, this chapter presents an integrated discussion of established taxonomies of LLS (such as Oxford, 1990) and concrete didactic skills-based approaches to LLS based on various types of language skills, for instance oral and writing skills (see Munden, 2014) and reading skills (see Tishakov, 2020).

As far as methodology is concerned, this study systematically addresses both the explicit and implicit references to LLS by employing a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. In comparison, Hammershaug (2021) employs Goodlad’s curriculum theory (1979) and Tyler’s Rationale (Tyler, 1949), which are especially appropriate for investigating explicit

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<sup>1</sup> Learning strategies in EFL: Teacher perspectives and insights from the 2020 curriculum for English (2021).

occurrences of LLS. In this study, hermeneutic phenomenology is understood as a method for interpreting and explaining texts (cf. van Manen, 2014, p. 26). A hermeneutic phenomenological approach is appropriate here for two main reasons. Firstly, it favors questioning more than reaching fixed conclusions, thus facilitating the discussion of meaning (van Manen, 2014, p. 28). In this particular case, the phenomenon to be investigated is represented by LLS as a concept; subsequently, the researcher engages in a dialogue with the LK20 text to investigate the potential meanings of LLS in LK20. Secondly, phenomenology is concerned with revealing that which is concealed about the phenomenon in question, but which – together with the aspects made visible in the text – constructs the meaning of the phenomenon as a whole (Heidegger, 2010, p. 33). Therefore, both explicit and implicit references to LLS in LK20 were made visible in order to provide potential interpretations of LLS as a phenomenon.

Further, van Manen (2014, p. 257) explains that “examples in phenomenological inquiry serve to examine and express the aspects of meaning of a phenomenon”. In other words, specific examples or instances of LLS are important for discussing the meaning of LLS as a phenomenon. Accordingly, the data set for this study consisted of examples of 15 explicit and five implicit references to LLS. The explicit references were first identified and collected by eliciting the terms *strategy*, *learning strategy*, and *language learning strategy* in LK20. The implicit examples of LLS and guiding principles for using them were collected from LK20 based on the theoretical input discussed in section II, which includes LLS taxonomies and skills-based LLS. It may be argued – and rightfully so – that a different researcher may have used a different set of equally valid theoretical tools to identify implicit examples. However, this is one of the characteristics of hermeneutic interpretations, where the analysis of a text is placed in the researcher’s own socio-historical existence (van Manen, 2014, p. 131). Finally, both the explicit and implicit references to LLS were then analysed based on their immediate linguistic context (O’Keefe & Walsh, 2012: 160) and in connection with established theories, classifications, and findings from within the LLS and ELT research areas.

The value of this study is two-fold. Firstly, it indicates potential venues for further research on LLS which might integrate new perspectives from

the curriculum, such as the focus on critical literacy and multilingual competence. Secondly, it provides useful reflections and concrete examples of LLS for classroom practice, which may be beneficial for stakeholders at various levels, for example in-service and pre-service teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, and other decision-makers at local and governmental agencies.

## **What are language learning strategies?**

### **Conceptualizations of LLS**

The main purpose of an LLS is to facilitate and improve language learning and use for the ordinary learner (see Macaro, 2010; Cohen, 2021) through conscious employment. In a general sense, LLS are “steps taken by students to enhance their own learning” (Oxford, 1990, p. 1). Similarly, Cook (1991) defines LLS as choices which learners make as they learn or use a foreign language, which eventually have an impact on learning. These definitions place an explicit focus on learners, who are responsible for consciously employing LLS for the purpose of supporting and driving their learning process forward. As Oxford (2021, p. 27) explains, an essential characteristic of LLS is that they are used consciously. When a learner has employed a certain LLS to the point that it has become an automated habit, it may no longer be classified as a strategy. In a similar vein, we may draw distinctions between LLS and extramural English activities (henceforth EE). To be more specific, the primary aim of LLS is to purposefully facilitate learning inside or outside the classroom, while the main motivation for EE is to entertain and relax outside the classroom (cf. Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016). While EE may indeed lead to learning beyond classroom walls, such learning typically occurs unintentionally (cf. Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016), without setting learning goals and monitoring the learning process. However, an integrated approach to LLS and EE may be attempted by learners if they become aware of their learning process, set goals, and monitor their language acquisition and development during their EE activities (see Liverød, chapter 9 in this book).

As learners embark on using LLS consciously, Cohen (2021, p. 4) points out that they also need to know what steps or actions to follow when employing a certain strategy. He claims that a recommendation such as “look for clues in the context” may be too vague to provide enough support for learners. This prompts the need for a systematic approach to strategies, which has been advocated by Oxford (1990) and Macaro (2006). In practice, the steps undertaken in a certain strategy would be consciously selected and sequenced to reach the intended goal. For example, when attempting to read and understand a new text, learners may be encouraged by their teacher to use inferencing as an LLS to grasp the message of the text when they do not understand words or stretches of text (cf. Tishakov, 2020, p. 188). For this LLS to become accessible and concrete enough for learners, the teacher would have to provide them with certain steps for achieving this, for example:

- Marking key words in the text
- Guessing the meaning of unknown words from context
- Activating previous knowledge about the topic of the text
- Connecting the ideas conveyed in different sections of the text

This systematic approach may be easily transferred from the classroom setting to everyday-life situations, which would contribute to promoting life-long learning, which is in focus in LK20 (see section III).

Macaro (2006, p. 327) presents strategies as “conscious mental activities which must contain not only an action but also a goal and a learning situation”. If learners are to make these conscious choices, they must first become aware of various LLS, and then explore them in a wide range of learning situations while at the same time being guided by learning goals and monitoring their learning outcomes. Similarly, Hopfenbeck (2014, p. 163) connects LLS to *self-regulated learning* by explaining that the latter involves controlling and monitoring the learning process, where learners can alter their use of LLS based on their needs. To support such a development, teachers would need to adopt an explicit approach, where they present or elicit the LLS to be used, the intended learning outcomes, and the tools needed for measuring these outcomes. This process would also

involve a discussion with the learners about selecting the most appropriate LLS for the intended goal based on their level of proficiency. To illustrate, learners might debate whether checking the meaning of an unknown word in a dictionary or attempting to guess it from context would be most beneficial in the learning situation at hand. Ultimately, implementing such a process implies that teachers would be able to distinguish between LLS and learning styles on the one hand, and LLS and teaching strategies on the other hand.

Fenner (2018, p. 286) claims that there has been a considerable degree of confusion between LLS and learning styles. Learning styles are based on learners' personal preferences, so that, for instance, certain learners may prefer a visual style to an auditory one (cf. Lightbown & Spada, 2006: 59). While it is expected that learners' personal preferences would have an impact on selecting LLS, certain scholars advise against a limited view of LLS based solely on the learning styles represented in a classroom. More specifically, Imsen (2005, p. 354) and Hopfenbeck (2014, p. 23) claim that, because learning styles may change over time, each learner should have the opportunity to test a wide variety of strategies. Providing examples of relevant LLS before the learners choose their preferred LLS to solve a task would allow them to reflect on how their learning preferences might influence their LLS choices and to what extent their choices help them reach their intended goal.

In Norwegian educational settings, terminological confusion between LLS and teaching strategies may be caused by first-language interference, where the Norwegian signifier *læring* refers to two concepts, learning and teaching. Consequently, the Norwegian term *språklæringsstrategier* has two different meanings – *language learning strategies* and *language teaching strategies*, which might be confused since they are typically employed in the same context. For example, in their chapter on writing in English, Lund and Villanueva (2020, pp. 131–137) use the term *strategies* in the subheading “Ideas to practise different text types and strategies” without explaining their conceptualization of the term. Based on the contents of the respective subsection, the term seems to be used to implicitly refer to teaching strategies, learning activities, and teaching materials without distinguishing between them. Similarly, Munden (2014) uses the term

strategies to refer to both LLS and teaching strategies without explaining her choice. More specifically, she presents listening strategies by addressing the learner directly, for example: “Look at gestures and other body language” (Munden, 2014, p. 243), which implies that this is constructed as an LLS. By contrast, she addresses the pre-reading strategies to the teacher, for instance: “Gather what they [the pupils] already know about the topic” (Munden, 2014, p. 263), which indirectly presents this as a teaching strategy rather than an LLS by allowing the teacher to take the central role. Interestingly, this teaching strategy could potentially be transformed into an LLS by working with it explicitly and allowing learners to take an active role, rather than merely answering the teacher’s questions. This is significant because this teaching strategy, as long as it is not made explicit for learners, has a restricted level of transferability to autonomous learning outside of the classroom.

Two main distinctions may be drawn between LLS and teaching strategies. Firstly, LLS are employed actively by learners, while teaching strategies are implemented by teachers (cf. Nunan 1991). Secondly, even though LLS would ideally be taught explicitly, teaching strategies may remain implicit if the teacher so chooses. For example, switching from English to the students’ first language would be an appropriate teaching strategy for clarifying difficult concepts (cf. Muysken & Appel, 2005), but the teacher does not need to present this teaching strategy explicitly to the learners for it to be successful. In the same field of multilingual strategies, an important LLS is drawing comparisons between English and other languages the students already know (cf. Burner & Carlsen, 2019). In this case, however, the teacher would need to present this explicitly as a useful strategy for language learning – and possibly also model it – to ensure that it reaches its full potential both in the classroom and outside formal educational settings, as it may contribute to developing learners’ communicative competence (cf. Hymes, 1972). Consequently, the difference between LLS and teaching strategies is that LLS require explicit teaching and guidance to support students in making conscious choices to achieve the learning goals at hand, while teaching strategies may be successfully implemented, even if they remain implicit for students. Investigating various types of LLS may help further distinguish them from other related concepts.

## LLS taxonomies

There are several different ways in which LLS may be classified, and scholars have not yet reached a consensus on the matter (Fenner, 2018, p. 292; Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021, p. xxx). Oxford (1990) presents a complex categorization of strategies, all of which cover main types of LLS discussed by other scholars (see Chamot & O'Malley, 1990; Harmer, 2015; Macaro, 2006; O'Malley et al., 1985). Oxford's classification also seems to be commonly used as a reference point in Norwegian ELT literature (see Fenner, 2018; Munden, 2014). To begin with, LLS may be classified as *direct* or *indirect* (Oxford, 1990) based on target language use. More specifically, LLS which directly involve the use of the target language are labelled as direct, while LLS which do not are labelled as indirect. For example, "asking clarifying questions" as a listening strategy (Munden, 2014, p. 243) would be classified as a direct strategy, while the strategy about considering gestures and other body language would be classified as indirect because it does not involve the use of the target language. Direct LLS are further classified as: memory LLS, cognitive LLS, and compensation LLS. Memory LLS involve the use of actions and materials, such as images and sounds, to help learners remember target language features. Further, cognitive LLS involve ways of dealing with learning, such as practicing the language, taking notes, summarizing, and writing journals. For example, comparing English with other languages by creating personalized multilingual vocabularies (cf. Krulatz et al., 2018) is a concrete cognitive strategy which facilitates vocabulary learning in English and other languages. Further, compensation LLS refer to ways of overcoming challenges in speaking and writing, for example switching from the target language to another language during a conversation where a learner does not know or remember certain words in the target language. The purpose of this switching is to bridge the communication gap and continue the conversation. In the case of transparent words, even switching to a language which is not common to both interlocutors might help. To illustrate, a speaker of Norwegian and a speaker of Romanian who generally communicate in English might understand the concept of *library* without using English by instead using either the Romanian word *biblioteca* or the Norwegian word *bibliotek*, because these are transparent words. It may be noted that

this LLS is more likely to be suggested by a teacher using primarily communicative teaching methods rather than natural methods, where the focus is on the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom. To avoid using another language, teachers adopting mainly natural methods might recommend other compensation strategies, for instance rephrasing or using gestures and facial expressions to explain an unknown word or phrase. However, while these strategies work well for concrete concepts, they might be more difficult to implement for abstract ones.

Indirect LLS are classified as metacognitive LLS, affective LLS, and social LLS. Since they do not involve the direct use of the target language, they would correlate more closely with communicative teaching methods, which encourage discussions about pragmatic aspects and contexts of language use. Metacognitive LLS typically refer to planning, monitoring, and assessing learning processes. Affective LLS concern how learners feel about the target language and involve ways of lowering their anxiety and taking their emotional temperature. Social LLS refer to interacting with others by asking questions and cooperating with others, and may be understood in relation to Vygotsky's theory of learning (see Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) in at least two ways. Firstly, learners may expand their zone of proximal development (henceforth ZPD) in language knowledge and skills by receiving guidance from teachers or more proficient language users. Secondly, having the use of LLS modelled by a more proficient language user may help learners to employ known LLS when they face new challenges, thus eventually expanding their ZPD and becoming independent learners.

Importantly, Oxford argues that the six main types of LLS she presents rely on each other (Oxford, 1990) in that learners should be introduced to multiple LLS within each of the categories to help them master various aspects of language learning and become self-regulated learners. To accomplish this goal, teachers would first require detailed knowledge of various types of LLS and how these could be taught explicitly. Secondly, teachers would also benefit from reflecting on how LLS could be connected to their own teaching practices and methods in order to develop balanced approaches to teaching (cf. Drew & Sørheim, 2009). Thirdly, teachers would need to develop a critical understanding of how LLS are presented in the national curriculum for English.

## A discussion of LLS in LK20

This section investigates the conceptualization of LLS in LK20, focusing on LLS in the English curriculum for instruction at the lower-secondary level and including explicit references to LLS in the Core Curriculum. The analysis of LLS focuses mainly on their relevance for the instructional domain; that is, for teachers' practices, decisions, and planning processes (cf. Goodlad, 1979, p. 348). Goodlad (1979, p. 348) explains that the implementation of curricula also involves other stakeholders, including learners in the experiential domain, educational institutions in the institutional domain, and local or governmental agencies in the political or societal domain. However, the instructional domain is especially important in this analysis of LLS because teachers play a crucial role in training students to use LLS.

### The Core Curriculum

In the Core Curriculum, LLS are conceptualized both explicitly and implicitly. They seem to have a central place in the sub-section on learning to learn under principles for education and all-round development. The first reference is to *learning strategies*, which are presented as a component of teaching along with fostering students' motivation and promoting good attitudes (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). In this sense, LLS – as a specific type of learning strategies – are constructed as one of the foundational elements for promoting lifelong learning. The second reference is more general, where the mastery of “a variety of strategies to acquire, share and use knowledge critically” is presented as a way of achieving in-depth learning. In this phrasing, the broader use of the term *strategies* as relevant for ELT instruction may involve both LLS and strategies for language use. It should be noted that LLS theorists do not distinguish between these two categories as they argue that strategies employed for language use will lead to language learning and vice versa.

Essentially, one of the main goals of using LLS in learning to learn is that learners ultimately develop the ability to acquire knowledge independently. Interestingly, while no concrete examples of relevant LLS are presented directly, it is implied that reflecting on learning involves

the use of metacognitive LLS to enable learners to effectively monitor their own learning process and achievements. It is also implied that LLS instruction may be implemented to help learners “formulate questions, seek answers and express their understanding in various ways” and thus “assume an active role in their own learning and development” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). Formulating questions, seeking answers, and expressing understanding are activities which may prompt LLS teaching if implemented in a systematic and purposeful manner, where learners take an active role. In this case, teachers would be responsible for providing a wide range of LLS in the classroom.

## The English subject curriculum

LLS are referred to both explicitly and implicitly in the main areas of the English curriculum, namely the core elements, interdisciplinary topics, basic skills, and competence aims and assessment. Interestingly, LLS are mentioned consistently in similar, if not identical, phrases in the sections on formative assessment for Years 2, 7, and 10. Therefore, an analysis focusing on LLS for the lower-secondary level will also be relevant for understanding the LLS presented for the elementary level.

LK20 contains 15 explicit references to LLS in total; notably, the concept is always referred to in plural form. To illustrate, there are two occurrences of LLS in the core elements that are represented by two slightly different phrasings: the word *strategies* and the phrase *language learning strategies*. The first occurrence, in the description of the first core element, “communication”, posits that “pupils shall employ suitable strategies to communicate, both orally and in writing, in different situations and by using different types of media and sources” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). This phrasing essentially echoes the theoretical view on LLS as conscious choices (see section II) made by learners to facilitate their oral and written communication in a variety of situations and media. The more general term *strategies* here suggests that they are to facilitate primarily language use rather than language learning. By contrast, LLS scholars seem to conceptualize LLS as simultaneously relevant for both language learning and language use.

Further, LLS are referred to explicitly under the headline “language learning”, the second core element of the curriculum, as follows:

Language learning refers to developing language awareness and knowledge of English as a system, and the ability to use language learning strategies. Learning the pronunciation of phonemes, and learning vocabulary, word structure, syntax and text composition gives the pupils choices and possibilities in their communication and interaction. Language learning refers to identifying connections between English and other languages the pupils know, and to understanding how English is structured. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

The first constitutive element of language learning is language awareness and knowledge of English as a system, which includes knowledge of language structures. The second constitutive element of language learning is represented by LLS, where the term *language learning strategies* is used to indicate that it refers to language learning rather than language use. Based on this excerpt, learners are to gain insight into both linguistic features of English and LLS to promote their own learning. Interestingly, the following sentence indirectly provides an example of cognitive LLS, namely “identifying connections between English and other languages the pupils know”. In other words, multilingual cognitive strategies based on comparisons between various languages may be successfully employed for working with language structures in ELT. The implication is that students develop their LLS as they use their knowledge of other languages to understand the structures of English. At the same time, learners equipped with appropriate LLS may subsequently use their knowledge of English to strategically acquire other languages as part of their life-long learning process.

In the section dedicated to basic skills, LLS are explicitly mentioned three times: under oral skills, reading, and writing, respectively. In these instances, LLS typically collocate with the verb “to choose” or “to use”, which emphasizes the importance of learner consciousness and responsibility. The document presents two components of successful oral performance: selecting “suitable strategies” and presenting information in an appropriate manner based on the communication setting (Norwegian

Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Interestingly, the use of the broad term *strategies* without the premodifier *language learning* may indicate that strategies for oral skills are understood here to be strategies for language use rather than language learning. In other words, strategies for oral communication seem to be indirectly presented as conceptually different from strategies for language learning. For example, the use of body language or miming may be considered a useful communication strategy without necessarily being considered a language learning strategy. To support both learning and language use, Munden (2018) provides several examples of speaking and listening LLS (2018, p. 204, 243), such as imitating a proficient speaker of English. In fact, this is a successful LLS for oral production, which has been proved to increase English learners' grammatical accuracy (LaScotte & Tarone, 2019). Further, the development of both speaking and listening skills generally benefits from a wide array of LLS, such as cognitive, affective, and social LLS (cf. Munden, 2018).

For developing writing skills, learners are to select "appropriate writing strategies" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Munden (2018, p. 277) defines writing strategies as conscious ways of thinking about aspects of the writing process. This definition may seem somewhat lacking, as writing also involves several other actions, for instance finding a suitable topic or materials to use, gaining inspiration, and committing words to paper (or any other type of support) in a coherent manner. Writing LLS may thus range from brief steps like checking the spelling of an unknown word (Munden, 2018, p. 277) to cognitive LLS such as making rough notes and mind maps, and social LLS such as discussing model texts with teachers or peers. While Lund and Villanueva (2020, p. 132) also mention discussing model texts as an example of LLS, their use of the term *strategies* in this chapter does not allow for distinctions between teaching strategies and LLS. It may be noted that Munden (2018), for instance, provides extensive examples of strategies for oral communication, while writing strategies are relatively scarce by comparison.

In terms of reading skills development, the curriculum indicates that learners are to use "reading strategies to understand explicit and implicit

information” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). It may be noted that this phrasing is slightly more specific than the ones referring to strategies for oral skills and writing. Tishakov (2020, pp. 185–189, based on Grabe 2009) presents eight reading LLS which may be useful for understanding explicit information. These are: 1) summarizing, 2) forming and answering questions, 3) elaborative interrogation, 4) activating prior knowledge, 5) using text-structure awareness, 6) using visual graphics and graphic organizers, 7) inferencing, and 8) monitoring comprehension. While 1) to 6) may be classified as cognitive strategies, 7) represents a compensation strategy and 8) represents a metacognitive strategy. Munden (2018: 265) also mentions a reading strategy which seems to be a combination of 4) and 7), namely to use what is already known together with clues from the context in order to understand what is unknown.

The phrase ‘implicit information’ is crucial here because it places text comprehension beyond the factual understanding of a text. In other words, this implies that LLS based on critical literacy might be useful for the identification of various implicit positions that texts create for their readers, as texts are never neutral (cf. Janks, 2010). Such considerations seem to be missing from both Munden (2014) and Tishakov (2020). A detailed exposition of how critical literacy may be used for developing reading LLS is beyond the scope of this paper. However, in more general terms, critical literacy frameworks (cf. Janks, 2010) may be employed to promote reading LLS by training learners to discuss the functions of various linguistic forms and structures. For example, learners might be encouraged to discuss how the use of different grammatical moods (cf. Halliday, 2014, pp. 698–707) in texts might create different positions for them as readers (cf. Janks, 2010, p. 78).

LLS are referred to explicitly in the first competence aim after Year 10, which states that learners are expected to “use a variety of strategies for language learning, text creation and communication” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Firstly, the positioning of LLS in the first aim reveals that they have a foundational role for competence development in English. Secondly, this phrasing indicates that language use, represented here by text creation and communication, is

perceived to require different strategies than those employed for language learning. Thirdly, it may be argued that listing *text creation* as a separate element of language use, although it represents a form of communication, implies that developing proficient literacy and visual literacy skills in English is assigned special importance in the curriculum. Consequently, theoretical frameworks of LLS might be further developed and refined to account for *literacy*, as well as *visual* and *critical literacy* LLS for text production.

Interestingly, strategies appear to be essentially presented as teachers' responsibility in the section on formative assessment for Year 10.<sup>2</sup> To be more specific, teachers are expected to facilitate learner participation and foster the desire to learn "by using a variety of strategies and learning resources to develop the pupils' reading skills and oral and writing skills" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). It is somewhat unclear whether this phrasing refers to LLS or teaching strategies. On the one hand, it may be inferred that it calls for teachers to explicitly teach and model LLS for learners. On the other hand, this could be understood as a requirement for teachers to implement teaching strategies (see section II), which would not involve an equally high level of consciousness on the learners' part. This interpretation might be more likely than the former, given that the context here seems to refer to teaching practices where the teacher has the most central role. Although LLS and teaching strategies may conceptually overlap in terms of content, the main practical distinction is that, while learners use conscious decisions in their implementation of LLS inside or outside the classroom, they need not do so when teachers use teaching strategies (see section II) in the classroom.

The same paragraph in the section on formative assessment also includes an implicit reference to LLS. The curriculum states that:

The teacher and pupils shall engage in dialogue on the pupils' development in English. With the competence the pupils have demonstrated as the starting point, they shall have the opportunity to express what they believe they

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2 Importantly, the second paragraph in the section for formative assessment is the same throughout the entire curriculum document, namely for years 2, 4, and 7.

have achieved and reflect on their own development in the subject. The teacher shall provide guidance on further learning and adapt the teaching to enable the pupils to use the guidance provided to develop their reading skills, writing skills and oral and digital skills in the subject. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

Despite the absence of the term *strategies* here, there is an indirect reference to the use of LLS. To be more specific, learners are to become aware of their learning achievements through reflections and discussions with their teachers and peers. This would inherently involve evaluating their own learning development, which is a metacognitive strategy (cf. Oxford, 1990). Based on this idea, the implementation of metacognitive LLS plays a crucial part in formative assessment processes where learners have a central position. Consequently, the teacher's role is that of a facilitator, so they would have to be aware of types of LLS which facilitate formative assessment and guide learners by explicitly working with LLS.

Another implicit reference to LLS is found in the seventh competence aim after Year 10, which states that students are to “explore and describe some linguistic similarities and differences between English and other languages he or she is familiar with and use this in his or her language learning” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). It may be argued that this aim represents a cognitive LLS very similar to – but more specific than – the cognitive LLS referred to implicitly under language learning analysed above. To be more specific, the ability to draw comparisons and identify similarities and distinctions between English and other languages in students' repertoires is a useful LLS because it enables them to activate their schemata and make connections between their knowledge and the new information they encounter (cf. Burner & Carlsen, 2019). At the same time, this aim may be understood as a compensation LLS, since linguistic comparisons between several languages may be used to overcome challenges in both language learning and language use (cf. Burner & Carlsen, 2019).

Interestingly, the sub-section on health and life skills under interdisciplinary topics presents “the ability to handle situations that require linguistic and cultural competence” as a means for developing “a positive self-image and a secure identity” (Norwegian Directorate for Education

and Training, 2019). In a way, this may be considered an indirect reference to the effects of using cognitive and compensation LLS, since they might help students to manage situations where linguistic competence is central. In a similar vein, Burner and Carlsen (2019) claim that knowing and using several languages might have affective and health benefits for students because it supports the development of a sense of belonging and personal identity. Furthermore, affective and social LLS may also contribute to developing learners' confidence and linguistic identity as users of English (cf. Hammershaug, 2021).

Generally, it may be argued that the LLS conceptualizations in LK20 call for the implementation of a variety of LLS from classifications such as Oxford's (1990), as well as skills-based strategies such as those mentioned by Munden (2018) and Tishakov (2020). However, there are two types of LLS which do not seem to be extensively discussed in theoretical frameworks of LLS so far and which are related to comparisons between multiple languages (cf. Burner & Carlsen, 2019) and literacy skills involving specifically visual and critical literacy skills (see section III). In addition, the implicit references to LLS in LK20 provide concrete examples of LLS; however, the fact that they are implicit might make them difficult to identify as such, especially without the use of guiding theoretical frameworks. Consequently, teachers might need professional guidance and support when engaging with LLS in LK20.

## Conclusions

The English curriculum seems to have a dual approach to LLS, a situation which might make it challenging to navigate for instructional purposes. Firstly, LLS are referred to both explicitly and implicitly in sections dedicated to language learning, basic skills, competence aims, and formative assessment. It may be argued that the relatively significant number of explicit references throughout the document echoes scholarly positions that advocate the explicit teaching of LLS. At the same time, the explicit references seem to imply that the curriculum supports a terminological distinction between strategies for language use and strategies for language learning. This view does not seem to be supported in current research on

LLS, where LLS are considered useful for both language learning and use at the same time, since learning often occurs as the language is used both in and outside formal educational settings.

The five implicit references to LLS discussed here contain concrete examples and effects of LLS use related mainly to cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and affective LLS. In the section dedicated to language learning, the implicit reference follows the explicit one directly, which may indirectly help teachers to understand them as conceptually related. However, in the competence aims, the indirect presentation of the multilingual LLS in the seventh competence aim is not in direct proximity with the explicit reference to LLS in the first competence aim, so it might be difficult for teachers to establish connections between them. In other words, the implicit references to LLS become visible when they are seen through the solid lenses of definitions, classifications, and discussions of LLS from various scholarly sources. Conversely, the lack of such supporting material may render these implicit references invisible for curriculum users.

LK20 generally assigns learners an active central role in the implementation of LLS, while teachers are assigned the role of facilitators. More specifically, students are expected to become self-regulated learners who can monitor their learning process and alternate their LLS use based on their needs. Consequently, teachers are to adopt an explicit approach to LLS to support self-regulated learning. This corresponds with research in the LLS field, where learners are responsible for the conscious implementation of LLS to promote language learning and use. The only exception to this in LK20 is an instance in the section on formative assessment, where it may be argued that the document refers to teaching strategies rather than LLS. While the content of teaching strategies and LLS may in some cases overlap, work with LLS places special emphasis on learners' consciousness, which is not necessarily needed for applying teaching strategies.

In terms of theoretical definitions and classifications of LLS, the investigation of LK20 reveals three main aspects. Firstly, LK20 supports the use of a variety of LLS found in theoretical classifications and didactic literature. Secondly, LK20 also indirectly presents the importance of critical

literacy and multilingual competence as the basis for LLS conceptualization and design, which have apparently not been explored in the LLS field so far. On a more general note, the ELT field in Norway may benefit from more systematic and comprehensive investigations of intersections between established LLS taxonomies (see Oxford, 1990) and skills-based LLS (cf. Munden, 2018; Tishakov, 2020). Research projects such as doctoral studies may, for example, focus on investigating LLS within larger theoretical frameworks and include an investigation of classroom practices and learner experiences.

This approach to LLS in LK20 may constitute a challenge for teachers as facilitators of LLS implementation as they are faced with important decisions and interpretations concerning the role and value of LLS use in the classroom. Consequently, various initiatives may be designed to support teachers at different levels. For instance, in-service teachers might benefit from internal seminars organized by their school leaders with the purpose of discussing and interpreting LLS in LK20 not only in subject-based groups but also across disciplines. In-service teachers might also benefit from collaborations between their schools, together with universities and governmental agencies whereby they receive in-school training. Pre-service teachers would benefit from maintaining a clear focus on LLS in their teacher education programmes. Finally, to provide easily accessible and tailored support for teachers, governmental agencies should consider funding projects organized by universities and educational agencies whereby scholars would offer informal and personalized mentorship and support to teachers through social media, podcasts, and individual or group meetings either in person or on online video conferencing platforms.

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