Preface

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The Focus, Purpose and Goals of the Book

This book presents the future of research into language learning strategies and focuses on (a) language learning strategies required for the mastery of specific skills and sub-systems of a second and/or foreign language learning, (b) diverse teaching/learning contexts and their role in successful language learning, and (c) ways of employing strategy-based instruction to promote learner autonomy. The book bears testimony to the dynamism and evolution of research in the field, as it highlights the need to bring together theory and research from language learning and language learning strategies with research on strategy instruction. We aspire to show that instructional approaches should be based on sound theory and research on strategic learning. Therefore, the book includes detailed exposition and discussion of empirical findings from relevant rigorous research, instruction interventions as well as theoretical reflections in the field.

The purpose of the book is to help teachers appreciate how language learning strategies contribute to and are linked with the language learning processes so that they will take an active role in empowering their learners to become strategic and to actively engage in the learning process. It also offers ideas on how learners can approach a learning situation by using all the available resources they have at their disposal, make decisions about how to solve learning problems, implement, monitor and evaluate the solutions chosen; in other words, become autonomous learners in or outside the classroom.

Our ultimate goal is to make new data and recent information on language learning strategies available to interested audiences in order to further the current thinking in the field, add new research threads, chart the future direction of work on language learning strategies and answer major questions such as:

- What are the current and future trends in language learning strategy research?
- What are the major gaps in language learning strategy research?
- What are the theoretical tools and research methods that researchers have at their disposal in order to address language learning strategies?
• How has research in language learning strategy use in diverse contexts promoted strategy instruction and learner autonomy?

Who Will Find this Book Useful

The intended readership for this book includes final-year undergraduates studying foreign or second language acquisition, graduate and postgraduate students involved in second language acquisition research, applied linguists, educational researchers, adult educators, teachers and policymakers in general. The book will be helpful to those whose interests include language learning strategies as a component of a second/foreign language acquisition process as well as anyone interested in language teaching and learning, bilingual education, or educational policies.

The book is a necessary reference volume for every university and college library in the world that serves a faculty or school of education or second/foreign language teaching and it may find use as a textbook in undergraduate or graduate programs or in pre-/in-service teacher training.

Why this Book is Different

This book builds upon previous research on language learning strategies and introduces other research issues that look into the future of second/foreign language education, such as language learning strategies for languages other than English, or the contribution of language learning strategies to the development of the four language learning skills and specific linguistic sub-systems.

It offers the newest developments, including research and scholarly content, essential to the field of language learning strategies. In the selection of topics and contributions, the book reflects the depth of disciplinary knowledge, breadth of interdisciplinary perspective and diversity of geographic experience in the field.

The contributing authors, leading experts in the field, promising young scholars, and up-and-coming researchers, who come from various contexts (a) discuss the need for a fine-tuned strategy categorization and conscious self-regulation, (b) explore language learning strategies in speaking, vocabulary and grammar learning, etc. (c) share research carried out in the US, Taiwan, the UK, Sweden, Croatia, Serbia, Russia and Greece, and (d) propose strategy instruction for the promotion of critical thinking and learner autonomy, e.g. through the use of IT in education.

The originality of the volume is that it extends beyond most strategy research and theory, and forms a collection of versatile studies in very specific contexts that range from primary to tertiary education and
include, among others, research on learning strategies for languages other than English or on their role in promoting critical thinking through video gaming. Thus, this volume offers an overview to new researchers interested in language learning strategies, as well as to experienced researchers who wish to deepen their knowledge of the field.

Hopefully, readers of this book will appreciate its wide content and global perspective.