



## **Explicit instruction and implicit use of L2 learning strategies in higher secondary EFL course books**

M. CAMINO BUENO-ALASTUEY & GLORIA LUQUE AGULLÓ\*  
*Universidad Pública de Navarra*  
*Universidad de Jaén*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Research has shown that teaching second language (L2) learning strategies explicitly promotes an increase in strategy use and in oral proficiency. Consequently, a checklist based on the six types of strategies from Oxford's taxonomy (1990) was created to analyze strategic instruction in the most common textbooks used in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain. The study considered whether there was explicit strategy instruction and its location (within the units [Internal] or in other sections [External]) in course books, and what specific strategies were explicitly taught for the two oral skills, listening and speaking. Results showed, first, that there was explicit internal and external instruction of L2 learning strategies both for listening and speaking, but not in all the books; second, that there was significantly more implicit use than explicit instruction, and less explicit instruction in the units of the textbooks than in specific extra sections in the textbook or in support material; and finally, that internal explicit instruction of strategies remains very limited; and thus, L2 learning strategy instruction, competence and use may not be sufficiently encouraged in those textbooks.

**KEYWORDS:** strategy, explicit versus implicit teaching, oral skill, textbook analysis, last year Secondary Education.

### **RESUMEN**

Hay evidencias de que la enseñanza explícita de estrategias de aprendizaje de L2 favorece el uso de estrategias y el dominio de la expresión oral. Para este estudio se diseñó una lista de verificación de uso de estrategias basada en la taxonomía de Oxford (1990). La lista se aplicó al análisis de la enseñanza de estrategias en los libros de texto más utilizados en el último curso de la enseñanza secundaria en España. El estudio estaba encaminado a determinar si los libros analizados incluyen enseñanza de estrategias, a localizar la ubicación de estas (en el interior de las unidades o en otras secciones del libro) y a identificar qué estrategias se orientan de forma explícita a las dos destrezas orales, expresión y comprensión oral. Una de las conclusiones es que, en general, los libros analizados no promueven suficientemente la enseñanza y el uso de estrategias de aprendizaje de L2.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Estrategia, enseñanza explícita e implícita, destreza oral, análisis de libro de texto, último curso de Educación Secundaria.

*\*Address for correspondence:* M. Camino Bueno-Alastuey. Dpto. Filología y Didáctica de la Lengua, Universidad Pública de Navarra. Campus de Arrosadía s/n, 31006, Pamplona, Navarra, Spain; e-mail: camino.bueno@unavarra.es

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of explicitly teaching strategies has been subject to controversy in the field of SLA for quite a long time. Proponents of implicit learning have defended there is no need to teach explicitly second language (L2) learning strategies since students are able to consciously apply them for their own learning (Griffiths, 2004). However, recent research has shown that the explicit teaching of L2 learning strategies can be beneficial for language acquisition (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Graham *et al.*, 2011; Lyster & Saito, 2010), and, specifically, that “some types of strategies do appear to be more related to success in language learning than others” (Griffiths, 2013: 92).

Course book analysis and evaluation have also been common in SLA research and authors have analyzed textbooks to facilitate the choice of the book most suited to particular needs and contexts. However, the analysis has generally focused on all skills (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011; Roldán *et al.*, 2009), on the communicative nature of the textbook (Criado & Sánchez, 2009; Gómez-Rodríguez, 2010), or on how some parts of language are dealt with in those textbooks (Mukundan *et al.*, 2011; Zapata, 2011). Our work, which is part of a wider project<sup>1</sup> whose objective is to offer proposals for testing oral competence at the end of Higher Secondary Education, aims to analyze how receptive and productive oral skills are dealt with in some of the most used course books, according to publishing houses sales data<sup>2</sup>, in the last year of this educational stage in Spain. Since some recent research (Cross, 2009; Lam, 2010; Lam & Wong, 2000; Plonski, 2011) has shown that teaching L2 learning strategies explicitly seems to contribute to an increase in strategy use and in oral proficiency, it seems worth exploring whether there is any focus on explicit strategy instruction within the units of the students' textbook to help L2 learners cope with communication problems more effectively. Additionally, this study will consider whether the type of skill, listening or speaking, or the kind of instruction, explicit or implicit, affects strategy choice.

## 2. Acquisition and use of L2 learning strategies

In the process of learning a second/foreign language, learners use L2 learning strategies, which have been defined as “thoughts and actions, consciously selected by learners, to assist them in learning and using language in general, and in the completion of specific language tasks” (Cohen, 2011a: 682). Although language learner strategies are alive and well both theoretically and practically (Cohen & Macaro, 2007) and the notion of strategy is being operationalized in the different research fields, “more research is still needed to refine concepts of strategy type” (Griffiths, 2013:93).

L2 learning strategies have been classified in different ways, for example, “strategies for learning and use, strategies according to skill area, and strategies according to function” (Cohen, 2011a: 682). Despite the lack of consensus on any particular classification scheme

(Chaudron, 2006; Plonski, 2011), Oxford's six factor taxonomy was chosen in our study for three main reasons. First, even though recently, the author has reformulated part of the classification (Oxford, 2011) and some authors have noted "definitional complications" (Rose, 2012a: 139), and the inaccuracy and unreliability of its data collection instruments (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Dörnyei, 2006; Rose, 2012b), it remains as the "most widely used strategy inventory" (Cohen, 2011a: 693), and "applied classification system of strategic learning research" (Rose, 2012b: 93) and is still utilized by many authors (see, for instance, Griffiths, 2013). Secondly, it was found to account the best for the variety of strategies reported by learners when compared to two other classification schemes (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002), and thirdly, it includes most of the strategies also considered in other schemes.

The six factor taxonomy includes memory strategies<sup>3</sup>, which help learners link one L2 item or concept with another; cognitive strategies, which involve mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information "to aid the acquisition, storage and use of information" (Oxford, 1990:8); compensation strategies, which are "techniques used by learners to compensate for missing knowledge" (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002: 371), metacognitive strategies, used to self-direct or regulate language learning; affective strategies, which "help to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes" (Deneme, 2010: 81); and social strategies, which are related to learning through the interaction with other people. It also includes some specific strategies within each of those categories.

Interest in enhancing the learning and use of an L2 through strategy instruction has been on the rise at the elementary and secondary school and university levels, at adult centers, as well as in self-access centers (Cohen, 2011a: 683). The importance of L2 learning strategies instruction has been supported by research findings about efficient language learners, which have stated that good language learners are competent users of learning strategies (Morales & Smith, 2008; Cohen, 2011b), and that efficient use of strategies correlates strongly with language learning success and proficiency (Manchón, 2008). Furthermore, recent research has shown that it is the efficient use of strategies, their degree of use and appropriateness more than the quantity of strategies employed what seems to make the difference between successful and unsuccessful language learners (Cohen, 2011b; Griffiths, 2013). Good language learners have also appeared as more skilled at "matching strategies to the task" (Chamot, 2005:116), through metacognitive knowledge about task requirements. As Rubin *et al.* (2007:142) argued, "unless learners select strategies in the service of some task, skill, and goal, they will not easily find the most appropriate strategies and be successful." Consequently, to help students become more effective language learners, it seems worth exploring whether, where and how regular textbooks used in mainstream secondary classrooms deal with L2 learning strategy instruction.

### **3. L2 learning strategies instruction**

Although some researchers have questioned the effectiveness of the explicit teaching of strategies (Skehan, 1998), others (see, for example, Manchón, 2000, 2008) argue in favor of their inclusion for teaching because, even though an overuse is associated to low proficiency levels, most strategies are effective, promote learning and can result in improved oral competence. Furthermore, “research consistently shows that one of the most important purposes of instruction should be to raise learners’ awareness of strategies and then allow each to select appropriate strategies” (Anderson, 2005:763), as strategy awareness is the best predictor of strategy use (Lee & Oxford, 2008). Thus, making learners aware of the array of L2 learning strategies at their disposal explicitly can aid less successful language learners (Grenfell & Harris, 1999) so that they are able to develop more effective strategic behavior (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

In fact, although proponents of implicit L2 learning strategies have argued that those strategies are transferred from the L1 and do not need to be overtly taught (Kellerman, 1991), research has shown that transference is not automatic. This implies that less successful language learners often use the same strategies over and over again without making significant progress in their tasks (Anderson, 2005) because they ignore alternative and more effective strategies. Chamot (1999) indicated that learning strategies are teachable and furthermore, research has supported the effectiveness of explicit interventions reporting that students in programs including explicit instruction followed by practice outperformed those only practicing the corresponding skill (Graham & Macaro, 2008). In this vein, Chamot (2005) postulated that in order to learn strategy use, explicit or intentional learning - teacher, textbook or learner directed- works better than implicit or incidental learning, which does not involve conscious reflection. Other authors support these conclusions, and stress that the most effective strategy instruction occurs when it is explicit and integrated in the regular language classroom (Cohen, 1998, 2011b; Plonsky, 2011). Furthermore, the use of strategies gives learners a sense of security for real life and classroom communication (Manchón, 2000) “[and thus] effective strategy instruction should be part of instructed language learning” (Manchón, 2008:225).

Despite a growing interest in incorporating an explicit focus on learning strategies and learning-how-to-learn into language curricula (Wong & Nunan, 2011), the way L2 learning strategy instruction for listening and speaking is incorporated in textbooks commonly used in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain has not been explored in course book analysis. This area is particularly important to test whether Manchón’s statement about strategy instruction remaining “at the level of isolated initiatives rather than being part of mainstream pedagogical recommendations and practices” (2008:223) still applies today as teachers will tend to choose books which match their language learning beliefs and will tend to do in class what there is in the textbook chosen. Consequently, the type of strategy

instruction, explicit or implicit, present within the units of the most common textbooks used in that educational stage in Spain nowadays will be a good indicator of the type of strategy instruction taking place in real mainstream classrooms.

Thus, in order to study how L2 learning strategic teaching is carried out when dealing with oral receptive and productive skills, our research questions were formulated as follows:

1. Are L2 learning strategies explicitly explained or only implicitly considered in the listening and speaking sections, activities or tasks within the units of second year *Bachillerato* books?
2. Are L2 learning strategies explicitly taught in other sections of the textbook and/or in support material devoted to oral language development in second year *Bachillerato*<sup>4</sup> textbook packs?
3. What type of L2 learning strategies are explicitly instructed for oral skills development in those textbooks?

## 4. METHOD

### 4.1. Instruments

The instrument used to carry out this research was part of a longer checklist (Bueno-Alastuey & Luque-Gulló, 2015) created to analyze how receptive and productive oral competence was developed in five of the most common textbooks, according to sales data<sup>5</sup>, used in the last year of Secondary Higher Education in Spain. 8 items in each of two of the sections – listening and speaking– of the questionnaire were related to strategy instruction and use (see Appendix I).

The eight items comprised two categorical exclusive<sup>6</sup> elements and 6 categorical but not exclusive items. The two categorical exclusive elements sought to examine, first, whether there was any explicit L2 learning strategy instruction in the listening and speaking sections of the units analyzed (Internal), and, secondly, whether there was any explicit instruction in any other specific listening or speaking sections in the textbook or in support material of the textbook pack –teacher’s book, extra material, resource book, web pages referenced, etc.– but not within the units themselves (External). Given the time pressure felt by teachers to cover the curriculum, everything not included in the unit was considered as optional material and thus, external in our analysis.

Explicit instruction was operationalized as any explicit explanation given about a strategy and how to use it, while implicit use of a strategy was defined as any question or part of an activity in which learners were supposed to employ a specific learner strategy without any reference to its name, how that strategy should be used, or its benefits (see Appendix II for specific examples in the selected textbooks).

The following six categorical and not exclusive statements inspected the strategy categories (using Oxford's (1990) six major categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social), and the specific subcategories within each category (using the further subdivisions proposed by Oxford for each of her six major categories) that were instructed explicitly in the listening or speaking tasks within the unit. We also analysed which specific categories and subcategories were instructed explicitly outside the units. And finally, the last two explored which categories and subcategories were supposed to be used implicitly, according to the wording of the questions proposed in the book, in the listening and speaking sections of the units analyzed in each book without any explicit instruction on the strategy or strategies involved. Thus, these last questions enquired about any implicit focus on strategy instruction within the units and in other specific parts of the textbook pack.

#### **4.2. Procedure**

After the checklist was created, the five course books most used in the previous academic year in five provinces which had different Baccalaureate exams<sup>7</sup> were selected to be evaluated. From each of those books, two units were selected at random and they were analysed by the authors of this paper using the checklist. Apart from the units, all parts related to the randomly selected units such as the workbook corresponding units, extra activities or explanations in the teachers manual, listening or speaking exam practice exercises for those units, and general listening and speaking exam preparation sections in the textbook pack were also analyzed for explicit strategy instruction and implicit required use. Only the data regarding strategy instruction have been used for this paper.

#### **4.3. Design and analysis of data**

First, all the data related to strategy instruction were organized in tables indicating the presence of explicit instruction, its location and the type of strategies explicitly instructed and implicitly required. The major categories (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social) were called first-level strategies and the subcategories (for example, for memory strategies: mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action) second-level for coding purposes.

Secondly, the data were coded according to the type of 1<sup>st</sup> level strategy used (Mem-Cog-Com-Met-Aff-Soc), Teaching Focus (Explicit vs Implicit), section where the explicit instruction or implicit use took place (within unit [Internal henceforth] vs other parts of the textbook pack [External henceforth]) and skill being taught (speaking vs. listening). Examples of Implicit use and Explicit teaching of strategies, in both Internal and External positions are given in Appendix II.

In order to carry out the statistical analysis<sup>8</sup>, the data were grouped into three categorical variables: Strategy (A), Teaching Focus (B) and Skill (C) and analyzed using the

R program of statistical analysis. The first variable (Strategy) was coded into memory (mem), cognitive (cog), compensation (com), metacognitive (met), affective (aff) and social (soc) categories, following Oxford's classification (1990). The second variable (Teaching Focus) consisted of explicit and implicit instruction, and the third (Skill) included listening and speaking.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Internal L2 strategies instruction

As a first step in our research, a non-inferential descriptive analysis was carried out to identify whether there was explicit L2 learning strategy instruction within the units of the textbooks analyzed (Explicit Internal). The aim was to examine whether strategies were explicitly taught by using techniques such as naming the strategy or raising awareness of the need to use a strategy when a task required the use of particular strategies, or, alternatively, whether their use was only implicitly required by the task, in answer to research question 1. As can be seen in Table 1, only two of the books analyzed (Book 1 and 4) had explicit strategy instruction both in listening and speaking, another book (Book 3) dealt with strategy instruction explicitly but only for listening, and another one (Book 2) for speaking exclusively. Thus, the majority of the books did not have explicit strategy instruction for both skills. By contrast, all books had implicit required use of L2 learning strategies for both skills.

	Listening		Speaking	
	Explicit	Implicit	Explicit	Implicit
Book 1	✓	✓	✓	✓
Book 2		✓	✓	✓
Book 3	✓	✓		✓
Book 4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Book 5		✓		✓

**Table 1.** Type of L2 learning strategies instruction in the textbooks

The second step in our study intended to find out the type of first-level strategies being explicitly and implicitly taught depending on skill. As can be seen in Table 2, explicit strategy instruction is rare within the units of textbooks both for listening and speaking and some types of first-level learning strategies are not explicitly taught. In the case of listening, memory and social strategies are not explicitly instructed, and, in the case of speaking, metacognitive and affective strategies are ignored. Furthermore, the number of instances of explicit strategy instruction is very low compared to the number of instances of implicit required use for all first-level learning strategies.

A=Strategy

C=Skill	B=Teach.Focus	Mem	Cog	Com	Met	Aff	Soc
Lis	Explicit	0	1	4	8	3	0
	Impl	9	15	10	14	1	0
Spe	Explicit	3	7	1	0	0	6
	Impl	9	21	8	15	1	14

**Table 2.** Type of strategies explicitly taught and implicitly used within the units of the textbooks

## 5.2. External L2 learning strategy instruction

Considering the shortage of explicit strategy instruction in the units of the textbooks selected, we analyzed the rest of the textbook and additional support material to explore whether there was any explicit L2 learning strategy instruction in other sections of the textbook or in support material of the textbook pack (Explicit External) (research question 2).

As can be seen in Table 3, only two of the books analyzed (Books 1 and 4) had explicit strategy instruction in both skills and both in internal and external positions. Book 2 had only external explicit instruction for listening, and both internal and external explicit instruction for speaking. Book 3 solely had internal explicit instruction for listening, and, finally, Book 5 had no explicit instruction in any part and for any of the skills.

Book	Listening				Speaking			
	Explicit		Implicit		Explicit		Implicit	
	Within unit Internal	Specific section External	Within unit	Specific section	Within unit Internal	Specific section External	Within unit	Specific section
Book 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Book 2		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Book 3	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Book 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Book 5			✓	✓			✓	✓

**Table 3.** L2 learning strategies instruction: Type and location

Regarding implicit use, all books had tasks in which L2 learning strategies were required implicitly both internally and externally.

This difference between implicit use and explicit instruction was statistically significant. As can be seen in the statistical analysis (see Table 4), there was significantly more implicit required use (Impl.) than explicit instruction both internally (Expl. I), and externally (Expl. E). Furthermore, there was significantly more external explicit instruction (Expl. E) than internal (Expl.I) for both skills.



(Strategy*Skill)+Teach.Focus		Param	SE	Z	p(z)
Expl.E vs	Expl.I	-0.887	0.259	-3.422	0.001*
	Impl	0.359	0.183	1.965	0.049*
Expl.I	Impl	1.246	0.248	5.032	0.000*

**Table 4.** Statistical analysis of teaching focus, explicit vs. implicit, and location.

These data confirm that explicit instruction is not a priority in the most used textbooks in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain. Consequently students are not provided with enough explicit instruction to be aware of the range of strategies available, and thus, they are not equipped with enough knowledge to be able to select the most effective strategies (Graham & Macaro, 2008; Plonski, 2011). Particularly, explicit instruction seems poor within the students' textbook units and, consequently, if learners are not taught how to select among different strategies, poor language learners will probably continue using the same strategies over and over again without making significant progress (Anderson, 2005).

### 5.3. Type of L2 learning strategies instruction in textbooks

After finding out that textbooks provided low explicit L2 learning strategy instruction, we identified the specific subtypes (second-level) of strategies explicitly instructed (research question 3). As shown in Tables 5 and 6, there was a sharp contrast among the types of strategies included for explicit instruction and implicit use for the two skills analyzed.

Table 5 shows the first and second-level strategies explicitly taught or implicitly used for listening in each of the five course books analyzed. Four books had explicit L2 learning strategy instruction focused on listening. Explicit instruction was more scarce internally (within the units) than externally (in other sections or support material), and only two books (Book 1 and 4) had both internal and external explicit instruction. Book 3 only had internal explicit instruction and Book 2 exclusively external.

Results showed internal explicit instruction on metacognitive, compensation and affective strategies, and only one instance of internal explicit instruction on cognitive strategies. External explicit instruction appeared as more abundant and included more types of first-level strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and affective strategies). The four textbooks which had explicit instruction ignored social strategies. Data also indicated more implicit required use of strategies than explicit instruction in all books, except Book 4, and in all types of strategies except affective ones.

1 <sup>st</sup> level	2 <sup>nd</sup> level	Explicit Unit					Explicit Outside Unit					Implicit				
		B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
Memory	Mental linkages						✓						✓			✓
	Applying images and sounds															
	Reviewing well												✓		✓	✓
	Employing action															
Cognitive	Practicing									✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
	Receiving & sending messages							✓				✓				✓
	Analyzing & reasoning	✓					✓					✓				✓
	Creating structure for input & output						✓	✓					✓			✓
Compensation	Guessing			✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Overcoming limitations			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓				✓		
Meta-cognitive	Centering	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Arranging & planning	✓			✓			✓				✓	✓	✓		
	Evaluating your learning			✓										✓		
Affective	Lowering anxiety			✓	✓		✓			✓				✓		
	Encouraging yourself				✓					✓						
	Taking emotional temperature															
Social	Asking															
	Cooperating															
	Empathising															

**Table 5.** Sub-group (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level) of language learner strategies type of instruction for listening

Regarding the type of first-level strategies explicitly taught, Book 1 provided explicit instruction on five types of strategies, all except social strategies, and thus, covered the most strategies explicitly. Nevertheless, Book 4 gave explicit instruction on four types of strategies and the most internal explicit instruction (three of the first level strategies vs. two in Book 1), which could be considered as more pedagogically appropriate as teachers will tend to cover what there is in the units first (McGrath, 2006).

Considering explicit instruction of second-level L2 learning strategies, internal explicit instruction in Book 4 covered the majority of second-level strategies explicitly taught in the book (six out of seven). Book 1 also had internal and external explicit instruction, and more types of second-level L2 learning strategies being taught (eight types). However, fewer strategies (three types) were explicitly instructed internally. Book 3 only had internal explicit instruction and Book 2 only external. Consequently, they both dealt with fewer second-level learning strategies (six types in Book 2 and five in Book 3).

Regarding implicit required use of strategies, all books, except Book 1, dealt implicitly with at least four different groups of first-level strategies. All five books with cognitive, compensation and metacognitive strategies, while only Book 3 dealt with affective strategies.

From these data, we must point out first, that books included slightly more implicit use of strategies for listening than explicit training. Secondly, books placed more emphasis on metacognitive and compensation strategies explicit training, less emphasis on cognitive and affective strategies explicit instruction, dealt very scarcely with memory strategies and completely ignored social strategies. From all the books analysed, book 4 offered the most explicit instruction and both internally and externally. Finally, many of the second-level strategies were completely ignored both explicitly and implicitly and, thus, strategy instruction should be considered as quite restricted.

1 <sup>st</sup> level	2 <sup>nd</sup> level	Explicit Unit					Explicit Outside Unit					Implicit				
		B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
Memory	Mental linkages		✓		✓								✓	✓	✓	✓
	Applying images and sounds												✓			
	Reviewing well							✓							✓	✓
	Employing action															
Cognitive	Practicing				✓					✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
	Receiving & sending messages				✓			✓		✓			✓		✓	✓
	Analyzing & reasoning						✓			✓			✓			
	Creating structure for input & output		✓				✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓
Compensation	Guessing							✓						✓		✓
	Overcoming limitations		✓				✓	✓					✓	✓		✓
Meta-cognitive	Centering						✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
	Arranging & planning						✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Evaluating your learning						✓									
Affective	Lowering anxiety						✓	✓		✓			✓			
	Encouraging yourself									✓						
	Taking emotional temperature							✓								
Social	Asking	✓	✓							✓			✓	✓	✓	
	Cooperating		✓					✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Empathising		✓									✓				

**Table 6.** Sub-group (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level) of language learner strategies type of instruction for speaking

Table 6 shows the first and second-level L2 learning strategies explicitly taught or implicitly used in each of the five course books analyzed in the case of production–speaking.

Results indicated that only three books (Book 1, 2 and 4) provided explicit instruction both internally and externally. Books 3 and 5 provided no explicit instruction of L2 learning strategies for speaking. Thus, fewer books had explicit instruction for speaking than for listening.

Regarding first-level learning strategies, there was a focus on cognitive and social strategies and a wider use of strategies explicitly taught and used for the speaking skill, especially in the case of memory and social strategies. Whereas the emphasis in the listening sections lied in compensation and metacognitive processes, the speaking sections included a more balanced inclusion of all the types of strategies considered by Oxford (1990), including social strategies. This fact suggests that the interaction side of speaking was taken into consideration in most of the textbooks analyzed (see subdivision of speaking into production & interaction, CEFR, 2001).

In the case of speaking, Book 2 covered the most explicit instruction both internally (four types of first-level strategies vs. one in Book 1 and two in Book 4) and externally (all types of first-level strategies vs. four in Book 1 and three in Book 4).

Regarding second-level type of strategies explicit training, Book 2 offered explicit instruction on most second-level types of learning strategies (13 types), but on very few internally (6 types). Book 4 provided explicit instruction on nine strategies (only three internally), but ignored completely compensation and affective explicit training. Finally, Book 1 included the least explicit instruction (eight types of second-level strategies).

Regarding implicit use, Book 2 provided the most implicit required use of strategies (all six types of first-level strategies), Books 3, 4 and 5 included implicit use of five types of strategies, and finally, Book 1 showed the least amount of first type learning strategies, only three.

Even though the frequency of strategies developed for speaking was higher than for listening both explicitly and implicitly, and particularly regarding the use of social strategies, cognitive and memory ones, internal explicit instruction (four types of first-level and eight types of second-level learning strategies) was lower than for listening and can be considered worryingly limited, as it was in the case of listening.

If the most effective strategy instruction should be explicit and integrated in the regular language classroom (Manchón, 2008), the course books used in this educational stage do not fulfill this objective and limit strategy instruction to specific sections outside the units and particular strategies depending on skill. Even though the lack of explicit instruction considered in the textbooks analyzed might not reflect what teachers do in the classroom, a general tendency to focus on the textbook and material provided given the time pressure to cover the official curriculum has been observed (Menkabu & Harwood, 2013).

## **6. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study has a number of limitations. The first limitation, as it has already been mentioned, is due to the classification of strategies chosen because “taxonomies of language learning strategies are prone to definitional complications” (Rose, 2012a: 139). Oxford’s taxonomy (1990) is no exception, and it has been criticized for categorical problems as some of the categories are not clear-cut or are included in more than one classification. However, new categorizations, including the notion of self-regulation (Cohen, 2011b; Dörnyei, 2009) or that of motivational strategies (Gilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008), also present categorization problems and, thus, do not solve the problem (Rose, 2012a, 2012b), and there is still a need to check whether any type of learning strategy is being considered in classroom practice. A second limitation deals with the textbooks chosen, since, even if they were the most widely used, they may not represent what other textbooks include as regards strategies. Finally, this study has categorized as implicit use the lack of explanation of the strategies employed in the textbooks. However, classroom practices do not always follow the textbook to the line and students may use other strategies or may use the book differently and, thus, there might be more explicit instruction than indicated in our study.

Regarding further research, the lack of explicit strategy instruction within textbook units, their reduced quantity and their limited range is likely to be extensive to most textbooks used in other educational stages and in other EFL contexts. Nevertheless, further analysis of the type of strategies used in different textbooks, whether they are explicitly considered, and which types of strategies are associated to each of the two oral skills is needed to generalize our conclusions and to extend them to other international contexts. Further research should also explore whether implicit required use or opportunities to use strategies can be regarded as a deliberate policy on the part of course book authors.

Finally, the study of oral strategies should form part of wider studies which contemplate how oral competence is dealt with in EFL textbooks. If the goal of instructed language learning is to foster language proficiency, one of the most important purposes of instruction should be to raise learners’ awareness of strategies and then allow each to select appropriate strategies to become successful language learners (Anderson, 2005) through explicit instruction and metalinguistic reflection and according to type of task/skill. Although textbooks devote some space to strategic development, and they select strategic behavior in terms of type of skill, the majority of them include that as support material, which might or might not be used by teachers, or they might just consider their use for different tasks without the inclusion of any explicit reference to strategic instruction.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing five of the most common textbooks used in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain, our results showed that there were more strategies implicitly asked for than explicitly taught (regardless of their type) and more explicit and more varied strategy instruction for speaking than for listening in external but not in internal positions. All types of the first-level learning strategies of the six factor dichotomy defined by Oxford (1990) were implicitly used in the textbooks analyzed, but not all of them were instructed explicitly. Furthermore, not all the types of strategies within each of the six groups were dealt with either implicitly or explicitly and, thus, some of the second-level strategies were completely ignored both for explicit instruction and for implicit use. Our findings also showed that there was more explicit strategy instruction in support material outside the textbook units than inside them.

Consequently, it can be claimed that although language learning strategies are implicitly considered in the course books most commonly used in this educational stage, explicit instruction is mainly considered as optional and not sufficiently present within the units. Bearing in mind the fact that some types of strategies do appear to be more related to success in language learning than others (Griffiths, 2013), and that explicit teaching of some of these strategies contributes to an increase in strategy use and in oral proficiency (Cohen, 2011a; Cohen *et al.*, 1995; Griffiths, 2013), then the textbooks selected may not provide sufficient explicit practice in terms of frequency. Moreover, as research has shown (Cross, 2009; Lam, 2010; Lam & Wong, 2000; Plonski, 2011), learning strategies are in fact teachable (Griffiths, 2013), and “effective strategy instruction should be part of instructed language learning” (Manchón, 2008: 225). However, the lack of explicit instruction within the units points to a lack of awareness of the importance of L2 learning strategies for successful oral language performance on the part of publishing houses, who do not seem conscious of the effectiveness of explicit interventions followed by practice proposed by some authors (Graham & Macaro, 2008). They also point to the more than likely lack of strategy instruction students experience as teachers will tend to do in class what there is within the units of the book chosen rather than complementary material in other sections, usually ignored because of lack of time (Menkabu & Harwood, 2013).

However, it must also be considered that efficient use of learning strategies (Morales & Smith, 2008) has to do more with degree and appropriateness than with quantity (Peters, 1999), as Griffiths confirms (2013) when she reviews studies about the use of learning strategies of higher level learners. Nevertheless, in the textbooks analyzed only some types of strategies are offered for some skills, and strategy instruction depends on the skill being taught. Therefore, the choice of strategy to be taught or used depends on skill and textbooks tend to favor certain strategies over others in the tasks or explicit instruction they provide. This points to a more than likely lack of sufficient knowledge of all types of strategies which

can be used for oral production and reception. If efficient users are better at using appropriate language learning strategies, and this involves matching the type of strategies to the type of task, then, explicit instruction is needed and should be the aim within the units of a textbook. Furthermore, textbooks units should offer a wider array of strategies to provide an adequate range of them to decide which one matches the task better depending on the skill developed.

## NOTES

1. Research Project FFI2021-22442 “Orientación, propuestas y enseñanza para la sección de inglés en la prueba de acceso a la universidad,” financed by the Ministry of Education, Spain.
2. The five books analysed sold 134,654 copies in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain in the year 2012, according to data provided by publishing companies.
3. Dörnyei (2005: 168) states mnemonic strategies constitute a “subclass of cognitive strategies.” However, even if they are a subclass, they exist, and thus, we have used them as in the original classification.
4. Last year of Secondary Education in Spain.
5. The five books chosen represent sales of 134,654 units in the year 2012, ranging from the 46.073 copies sold of the most popular to the 4.000 copies sold of the least used textbook.
6. Categorical questions/variables are single-choice or multiple-choice questions such as yes-no questions or questions with several possible answers. They are exclusive if the choice is restricted to one option and inclusive if more than one option can be selected.
7. As the initial aim of the analysis was to check whether the Baccalaureate exam had any washback effect on the textbook chosen in the year when students were preparing for the exam, five provinces which had different elements in that exam such as a listening part or a phonetic part were identified, and data about the books most used in those provinces were collected from publishing houses. From the sales data provided, we selected the five books most used.
8. All statistical analyses were performed using the free-GNU R software, R version 3.0.0 (R Foundation for Statistical Computing, <http://www.r-project.org/>) with {MASS}, {vcd}, {vcdExtra}, {gmodels}, and {contrast} libraries. Statistical significance was set at probability of .05

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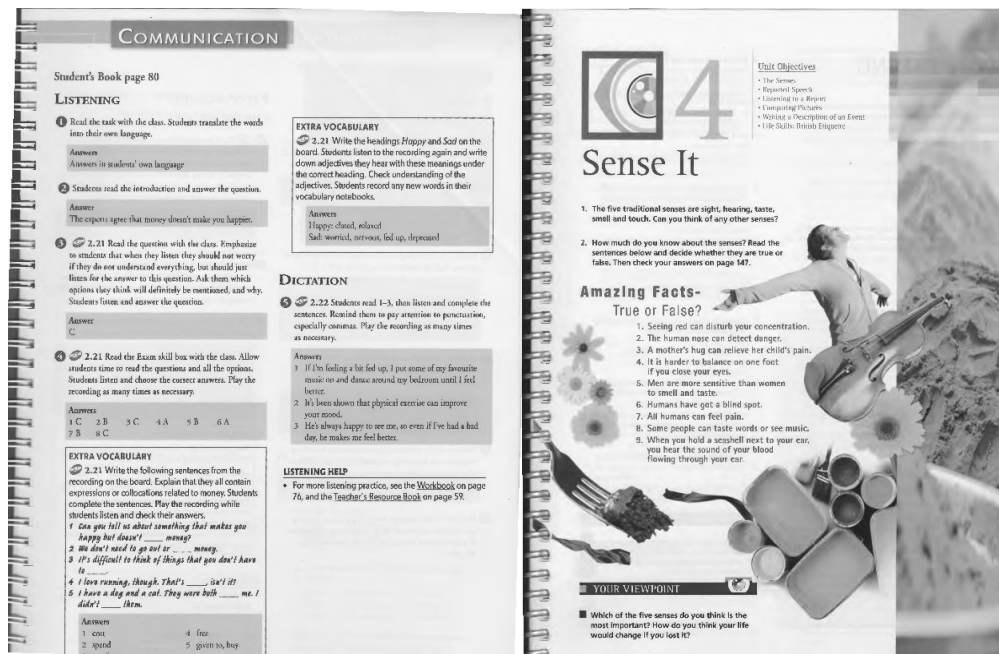
**APPENDIX I: Course Book Analysis Template for listening (idem for speaking)**

E is the development of specific L2 learning instruction strategies dealt with in the listening in the unit? <i>(only if there are specific exercises for the development of receptive strategies)</i>	1 Yes	0 No
F is the development of specific L2 learning instruction listening strategies dealt with in the book? <i>(only if there are specific exercises for the development of receptive strategies)</i>	1 Yes	0 No
G which specific 1 <sup>st</sup> level strategies are dealt with explicitly in the listening tasks of the unit (Explicitly telling students which strategies they have to use, for example being calm, not trying to understand everything?) (write down a number at the 1 <sup>st</sup> level [Memory, Cognitive etc.])	Tick below	
H which specific 2 <sup>nd</sup> level strategies are dealt with explicitly in the listening tasks in the unit (Write down a number from the specific strategies at the 2 <sup>nd</sup> level of specificity [mental linkages, practicing etc.])	Tick below	
1 Memory		
1.1 Mental linkages		
1.2 Applying images and sounds		
1.3 Reviewing well		
1.4 Employing action		
2 Cognitive		
2.1 practicing		
2.2. receiving & sending messages		
2.3 analyzing & reasoning		
2.4 creating structure for input & output		
3 Compensation		
3.1 guessing		
3.2 overcoming limitations		
4 Metacognitive		
4.1 centering		
4.2 arranging & planning		
4.3 evaluating your learning		
5 Affective		
5.1 lowering anxiety		
5.2 encouraging yourself		
5.3 taking emotional temperature		
6 Social		
6.1 asking		
6.2 cooperating		
6.3 empathizing		
I which specific 1 <sup>st</sup> level strategies are dealt with explicitly in another section of the book (Explicitly telling students which strategies they have to use, for example being calm, not trying to understand everything?) (write down a number at the 1 <sup>st</sup> level [Memory, Cognitive etc.])	Tick below	
J which 2 <sup>nd</sup> level strategies are dealt with explicitly in another section of the book (Write down a number from the specific strategies at the 2 <sup>nd</sup> level of specificity [mental linkages, practicing etc.])	Tick below	
1 Memory		
1.1 Mental linkages		
1.2 Applying images and sounds		
1.3 Reviewing well		
1.4 Employing action		
2 Cognitive		
2.1 practicing		
2.2. receiving & sending messages		
2.3 analyzing & reasoning		
2.4 creating structure for input & output		
3 Compensation		
3.1 guessing		
3.2 overcoming limitations		
4 Metacognitive		

4.1 centering	
4.2 arranging & planning	
4.3 evaluating your learning	
5 Affective	
5.1 lowering anxiety	
5.2 encouraging yourself	
5.3 taking emotional temperature	
6 Social	
6.1 asking	
6.2 cooperating	
6.3 empathizing	
K which specific 1 <sup>st</sup> level strategies are used in the listening tasks in the unit (which strategies have to be used for completing the tasks (as it is here) independently of whether they are explicitly considered or not, whether they have to be used.) <span style="float: right;">Tick below</span>	
L which 2 <sup>nd</sup> level strategies are used in the listening tasks in the unit (Write down a number from the specific strategies at the 2 <sup>nd</sup> level of specificity [mental linkages, practicing etc.]) <span style="float: right;">Tick below</span>	
1 Memory	
1.1 Mental linkages	
1.2 Applying images and sounds	
1.3 Reviewing well	
1.4 Employing action	
2 Cognitive	
2.1 practicing	
2.2. receiving & sending messages	
2.3 analyzing & reasoning	
2.4 creating structure for input & output	
3 Compensation	
3.1 guessing	
3.2 overcoming limitations	
4 Metacognitive	
4.1 centering	
4.2 arranging & planning	
4.3 evaluating your learning	
5 Affective	
5.1 lowering anxiety	
5.2 encouraging yourself	
5.3 taking emotional temperature	
6 Social	
6.1 asking	
6.2 cooperating	
6.3 empathizing	

**APPENDIX II: Examples of strategies found in the units of textbooks (Internal) and in support material (External)**

(When a specific written explanation on the use of the strategy was given, it was considered Explicit. If no explanation was given, then strategies were considered implicitly used.)



<p>External (Teacher's book) Implicit listening strategy: In exercise 4, students are allowed time to read all the options and thus to use a cognitive strategy (2.3 <i>analyze</i>) and a compensation strategy (3.1. <i>guessing</i>) and so there should be implicit use of strategies.</p>	<p>Internal implicit speaking: No explicit strategy instruction but students have to use a compensation strategy (3.1. <i>guessing</i>) so there is implicit use of strategies.</p>
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**SPEAKING**

**GIVING ADVICE**

7 2.5 Complete the dialogue with the phrases in the list. Then listen and check your answers.

you'd better not ... you ought to ... don't forget ... What are you going to ... Do you mean ...

Tom Hi! Jon! What's wrong?  
Jon Hello, Tom. I've got a job interview. I'm really nervous.  
Tom What time is the interview?  
Jon Nine o'clock.  
Tom I think (1) ... get there at least fifteen minutes early (2) ... wear?  
Jon I don't know.  
Tom Well, (3) ... wear these jeans. You need to wear smart clothes.  
Jon What do you mean by 'smart'?  
Tom Trousers, a shirt and clean shoes, definitely no trainers.  
Jon (4) ... I can't wear these running shoes!  
Tom Each, And (5) ... to turn off your mobile before you go in.  
Jon Good point. Thanks.

8 Practise the dialogue.

**SPEAKING SKILL**

**ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION**

When we are not sure if we have understood what someone has said, we ask for clarification. I'm not sure what you mean. Could you explain that, please? Do you mean ...?

9 Read the skill box. Then find another example of asking for clarification in the dialogue in exercise 7.

10 Complete the dialogues using phrases from the skill box.

1 A You need to improve your performance.  
B I'm not sure ...  
A Well, you shouldn't spend so much time surfing the internet.  
2 A The woman over there is my boss.  
B ... the woman with the blue shirt?  
A No, the one with brown hair.

11 In pairs, prepare a new dialogue. Use the notes below and the Useful Language box to help you.

**Student A**

Tell your friend about your job interview.

Answer the question.

Explain what you are going to wear.

**Student B**

Ask what time the interview is.

Advise Student A not to be late. Then ask what Student A is going to wear.

Choose one of the following topics and remind Student A about it: turning off a mobile phone, asking questions, smiling.

**USEFUL LANGUAGE**

**Giving advice**

Make sure that you ...  
You should/shouldn't ...  
You'd better (not) ...  
If I were you, I'd ...

**PRONUNCIATION**

**WEAK FORMS: MODAL PERFECTS**

13 2.6 Listen and repeat the sentences. Pay attention to the weak pronunciation of *have* and the linking between the two auxiliary verbs.

1 Diane could have done a different job.  
2 He might have become a famous writer.  
3 They must have worked late.  
4 She should have gone home.

14 2.7 Listen to these sentences. Which of the bold alternatives can you hear?

1 My father could have been / could be a doctor.  
2 He should have found / should find a new job.  
3 My sister must pass / must have passed her exams.  
4 He might become / might have become a lawyer.

**SPEAKING REFERENCE: WB pages 104-105**

**Speaking Reference**

**PAUTAS DE EXPRESIÓN ORAL**

Si quieres mejorar tu expresión oral, sigue estas pautas:

**A. PREPARACIÓN**

- Para mejorar tu pronunciación, escucha los textos y practica su lectura en voz alta.
- Para familiarizarte con los sonidos y el ritmo de la lengua inglesa, escucha programas de radio y grabaciones en inglés, e intenta ver películas en versión original.
- Gana seguridad aprendiendo expresiones útiles en inglés.
- Prepara lo que vas a decir y toma notas sobre el tema.

**B. PRÁCTICA**

- Intenta hablar en inglés siempre que puedas.
- No tengas la calma. Si cometes un error, no te preocupes. Corrígelo y sigue adelante.
- Intenta hacer escuchas para comparar tus ideas.
- Habla despacio y con claridad.
- Si estás hablando con una o más personas, escucha atentamente lo que dicen. No tengas miedo de pedirles que repitan lo que han dicho, o que expliquen cualquier cosa que no hayas entendido.

**Pedir aclaraciones**

Could you repeat that, please? ¿Puedes repetir, por favor?  
Could you say that again, please? ¿Puedes volver a decirlo, por favor?  
Do you mean ...? ¿Quieres decir que ...?  
I'm not sure what you mean. No estoy seguro de lo que quieres decir.  
Pardon? / Sorry? / Pardon?  
Sorry, I didn't hear you. Perdón, no te he oído.

**Explicar algo cuando no conocemos el término exacto en inglés**

It looks like ... Parece ...  
It's a kind of ... Es una especie de ...  
It's made of ... Está hecho de ...  
It's a thing (that) you use to ... Es una cosa que se utiliza para ...

**Ganar tiempo para pensar**

Let me see ... Vámonos a ver ...  
Let me think ... Déjame pensar ...  
Hmm ... Pues ...  
Well ... Bueno ...  
That's an interesting idea / question. ¿Qué tal /

**DESCRIBIR UNA FOTO**

**PAUTAS DE DESCRIPCIÓN**

- Empieza describiendo los elementos centrales de la foto. Por ejemplo, ¿la foto muestra un edificio o a una persona? ¿Qué impresión te han causado ese edificio o esa persona?
- A continuación, describe los detalles, por ejemplo: ¿Quién o qué aparece en la foto? ¿Dónde está / están? ¿Qué están haciendo los personajes? ¿Qué está ocurriendo?

**Describir los elementos centrales de una foto**

This is a photo of a / someone ... Esta es la foto de un / una ...  
This photo shows ... Esta foto muestra ...  
In this photo, I can see ... En esta foto se ve ...  
There's / There are ... Hay un / unos ...

**Describir detalles**

In the foreground / background ... En primer plano / Al fondo ...  
There seems to be (a) ... Parece que hay (un) ...  
In the top left / bottom right of the photo ... En la parte superior izquierda / inferior derecha de la foto ...  
There's a person / building / thing that looks like ... Hay una persona / un edificio / un objeto que parece ...

**Describir la primera impresión**

It makes me feel ... Me hace sentir ...  
It seems ... Parece ...  
There is a lot going on in this photo. En esta foto se ve muchas cosas.  
It is a very interesting / lively / colourful scene. Es una escena muy interesante / alegre / bonita de color.

**Describir a la gente**

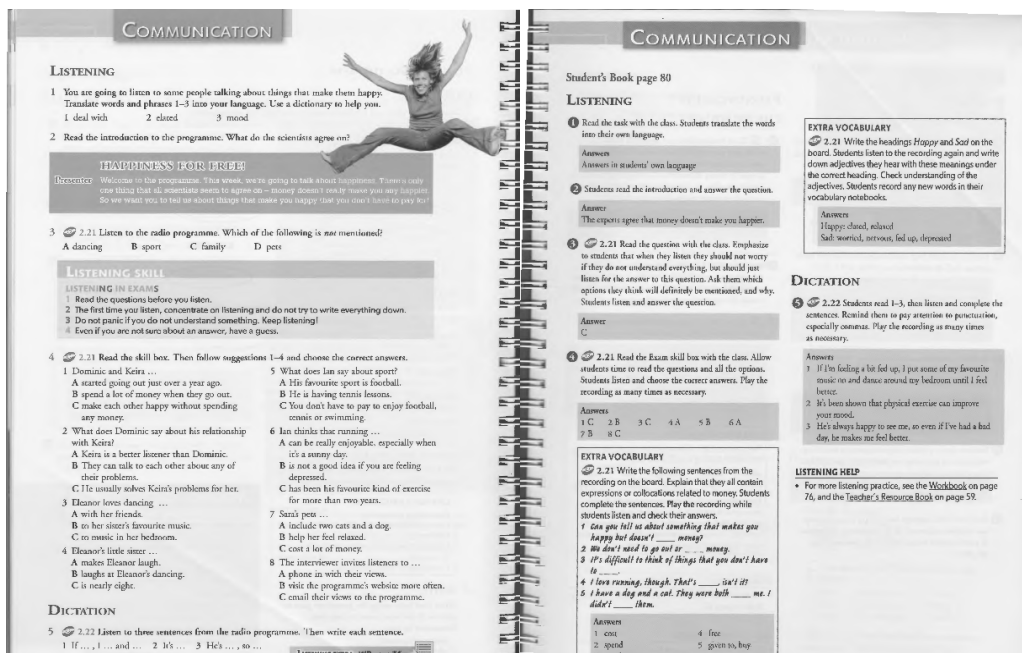
He / She looks / seems ... Parece que él / ella ...  
He's / She's looking at the people in the photo ... La / ella mira a las personas de la foto ...  
It is difficult to describe him / her, because ... Le / ella describe / describe, porque ...

**Describir lugares y hechos**

It looks as though ... Parece como si ...  
They might / would be ... Puede que estén / sean ...  
It's probably ... Probablemente es ...  
Maybe / Perhaps ... Quizás / A lo mejor ...

Internal explicit speaking strategy: the students' book explains in exercise 8 the use of a social strategy, *asking for clarification*.

External (in the final reference section of the workbook) explicit speaking strategy: there is a revision of speaking strategies using the native language of students. Some of the strategies considered here include social strategies, *asking for clarification*, affective ones, *lowering anxiety*, and cognitive ones such as *creating structure for input and output* and practicing.



Internal explicit listening strategy: Exercise 3 in the students' book explains the use of two strategies, an affective one, *lowering anxiety*, and a compensation strategy, *guessing*.

External (teacher's book) explicit listening strategy: exercise 3 suggests the usage of an affective strategy, *lowering anxiety*, to be used by students. However, this strategy is not mentioned in the students' book, and thus, it was considered External Explicit