



Integrating metacognitive strategies into foreign language education in technical colleges

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Abstract. The paper investigated metacognitive strategies as an effective tool in the process of learning a foreign language, in particular in technical colleges. The purpose of the study was to determine the mechanism of integration of metacognitive strategies into foreign language learning in technical colleges. A comparison of metacognitive and cognitive strategies for learning a foreign language was made. The main stages of applying such strategies were analysed: planning, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation of educational activities. It was noted that planning included defining educational goals, choosing methods and resources, and allocating time. Monitoring involved monitoring understanding of the material, analysing errors and using self-testing. Evaluation contributed to a critical analysis of personal progress, reflection and correction of teaching methods. Regulation of the educational process ensured optimal organisation of work, supported of motivation and development of independent learning skills. Special attention was paid to the specifics of using metacognitive strategies in technical colleges, where language learning had a professional focus. Practical approaches to integrating these strategies into the educational process were proposed: project activities, technical translations, creating presentations and using interactive tasks. The main advantages and disadvantages of using metacognitive strategies in the process of learning a foreign language by students of non-linguistic specialities have been identified. It has been determined that the use of metacognitive strategies contributes to the development of critical thinking, increasing the efficiency of learning the material and forming autonomous learning skills. The use of such approaches in technical colleges allowed students

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to effectively adapt the acquired language knowledge to the professional environment, increase the level of their preparation for working with technical documentation and international cooperation

Keywords: metacognition; self-discipline; reflection; metalinguistics; foreign language competence

Introduction

Contemporary foreign language education in technical colleges poses complex tasks for students, including the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language in various fields. Spontaneous foreign language communication requires both knowledge of language structures and the ability to apply them in real situations. In this context, metacognitive strategies play an important role, providing students with tools for more effective learning and development of communication skills in a foreign language. The relevance of this study is conditioned by the fact that contemporary global society requires graduates of technical educational institutions to have a higher level of foreign language proficiency than ever before. Effective spontaneous communication, including in a foreign language, not only contributes to the successful academic and professional activities of students, but also enriches their cultural experience and intercultural interaction. Research on metacognitive strategies in the education of technical college students is of great importance. More and more attention in contemporary psychological research is paid to the problem of meta-cognitive processes. Metacognition is considered as one of the conditions for the success of cognitive activity, namely educational activity.

E. Balashov (2019) analysed metacognitive monitoring as one of the key mechanisms of self-control in students' educational activities. The researcher noted that the effective use of metacognitive strategies contributes to improving educational results due to conscious management of personal educational process. However, the researcher did not highlight the difficulties that students encounter during their application.

O. Demydovych (2019) considered the issue of the development of metacognitive competence in students of non-linguistic specialities in the process of learning a foreign language. The researcher emphasised the importance of developing self-reflection and self-regulation skills, which are critical for successful language acquisition. This study lacks the identification of specific tools within the framework of metacognitive strategies that contribute to the growth of self-reflection.

I. Kovalchuk *et al.* (2022) investigated the relationship between students' motivation and the use of metacognitive strategies when learning a foreign language. They proved that students with high intrinsic motivation more often use metacognitive approaches, which has a positive effect on their academic success. However, the study lacks the study of the specifics of the use of metacognitive strategies when learning different languages and the adaptation of strategies according to the language context.

M. Dirkes (1985) explained the importance of metacognition as a mechanism that helps students to consciously control their own thinking and learning processes. N. Lenyuk (2021) experimentally proved the influence of metacognitive strategies on increasing students' ability to understand the content of English texts when reading. They noted that metacognitive strategies are aimed at helping students use their individual strengths, guess the meaning (using word analysis, etc.), and separate known information from new. However, these scientific studies are not exhaustive and need further development.

The purpose of the study was to identify pedagogical conditions and substantiate effective ways of integrating metacognitive

strategies into the process of teaching foreign languages in technical colleges to increase autonomy, learning motivation, and the effectiveness of mastering language material by students of technical specialities.

Materials and Methods

A comprehensive approach was used to investigate metacognitive strategies in foreign language learning, including theoretical and empirical methods. The methods used helped to obtain new scientific results aimed at improving the educational process through the use of metacognitive strategies. The first stage involved a theoretical analysis of scientific literature. Scientific publications devoted to metacognitive strategies and their application in education, teaching a foreign language in technical colleges were analysed. As part of the study, an analysis of scientific literature was conducted, which allowed investigating the theoretical foundations of metacognitive strategies and considering their impact on the learning process. The main criteria for selecting literature were: relevance of publications; affiliation to scientific sources practical orientation (description of effective models of teaching foreign languages using a metacognitive approach); regional coverage – experience in implementing metacognitive strategies in different regions. Literature analysis revealed the theoretical foundations of metacognitive strategies, their typology, and the impact on students' learning motivation and autonomy.

Classification and typology were used to systematise metacognitive strategies according to various criteria (for example, by stages of the educational process: planning, monitoring, evaluation; by types of activity: reading, writing, speaking, listening). Methods of analysis and synthesis were used to study scientific concepts related to metacognition, self-regulation strategies, autonomous learning, and the development of critical thinking in the process of learning a foreign language. These methods allowed identifying the essential characteristics of metacognitive strategies and their impact on students' learning

activities, clarifying the main problems and prospects for the development of the use of metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language.

The following approaches were also used: interpretative-analytical method of conceptual analysis of scientific literature; content analysis of materials to determine the main areas of application of metacognitive strategies; methods of theoretical generalisation to formulate generalised conclusions and substantiate practical recommendations. Content analysis helped to identify key areas of application of metacognitive strategies, typical tasks that contribute to their development, and the frequency of use of relevant elements in educational materials (Savrasov *et. al.*, 2024).

The method of the systems approach provided a comprehensive vision of the process of learning a foreign language as a system in which metacognitive strategies are an integral element of educational interaction between a teacher and a student. The method of conceptual analysis contributed to a deeper understanding of the key concepts of the study (metacognition, educational autonomy, self-reflection), and to the establishment of relationships between them. The use of these methods provided comprehensive information about the role of metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language and to determine the advantages and disadvantages of their implementation in the educational process of technical colleges. To summarise the results obtained, methods of theoretical generalisation were used – on their basis, conclusions and practical recommendations for foreign language teachers in technical colleges were formulated.

Results and Discussion

The study of learning strategies currently focuses on the identification, classification, and analysis of existing strategies. Early studies were conducted by researchers who observed students who were good at a foreign language. Researchers later classified learning strategies into three main types: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective. This classification is the most popular among

researchers. It divided strategies into two categories: direct strategies (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies) and indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social) (Pakholchuk & Balashov, 2024).

Strategies for mastering a foreign language are conventionally divided into two main levels: cognitive and metacognitive. The cognitive level concerns direct work with educational material, in particular, repetition, clarification of content, structuring information and its comprehension. The metacognitive level covers planning, organisation, monitoring and correction of personal educational activities. Metacognitive strategies are based on combining various cognitive techniques to achieve higher efficiency in learning a foreign language (Anderson, 2002).

Cognitive strategies ensure the execution of mental actions, while metacognitive ones are

responsible for their management, control and optimisation. The “cognitive system” of a person is responsible for the functioning and behaviour of individual learning and cognition. People absorb information from external stimuli, assimilate this information through attention and recognition, and store it in the “short-term memory system”. Some of the information goes through stages such as storage and reorganisation (including the selection and organisation of old and new information, and its review between them) to become the “long-term memory system” in the human brain. During this process, the brain has developed a “system of cognitive strategies” that helps a person to think and solve problems (Kovalchuk *et al.*, 2023). The comparative characteristics of the theories proposed by E. Deci & R. Ryan (2008), S. Larkin (2023), and T. Fitria (2024) are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of cognitive and metacognitive strategies

Attributes	Cognitive strategies	Metacognitive strategies
Directionality	External – objective reality. Aimed at the assimilation and processing of information for the purpose of learning	Internal – subjective world. Reflection of the most cognitive activity
Structure	Sensation, perception, representation, imagination, attention, memory, thinking	Setting goals, determining the means to achieve them, sequence of actions, monitoring results
Strategic goal (strategy)	Teaching skills that ensure the acquisition of educational content (information processing techniques)	Organisation and optimisation of personal cognitive activity; management of the process of learning content
Functions	Cognition of the surrounding world; assimilation, storage and retrieval of information from memory; rational cognition	Recognising the existence of a problem; selecting lower-level processes to solve the problem, choosing a strategy, allocating cognitive resources, monitoring the progress of the solution, and evaluating the correctness of the solution after its completion
Control functions	Control of practical activities	Control of consciousness, one's own cognitive activity
Content	Objects of the surrounding world and their images	Knowledge, abilities, information about cognitions

Source: developed by the authors

Thus, cognitive and metacognitive strategies differ in a number of features: directionality, structure, strategic goal, functions, control functions, and content. This approach has a certain didactic value, since it allows clearly outlining the difference between these two types of strategies, which are often confused in educational

discourse. However, there are several important aspects that require critical reflection. First of all, the division according to the principle of “external-internal”, “objective-subjective” can be misleading. In real educational activity, these strategies are not isolated, but rather interconnected. For example, cognitive activity is often

accompanied by metacognitive assessment, and vice versa – cognitive skills are needed for effective self-control.

S. Larkin (2023) and T. Fitria (2024) described the structure of cognitive strategies as “sensation, perception, imagination, memory, thinking”, which corresponds more to the psychophysiological level than to the strategies themselves. However, they did not consider specific learning actions – for example, grouping, generalisation, translation, which belong to cognitive strategies in the context of learning a foreign language. However, the metacognitive structure is described as more procedural, and this creates a somewhat unequal comparison. Formulations such as “problem awareness” or “mind control” need clarification. They are too general or even philosophical, while in an educational context it is necessary to discuss specific functions: planning, monitoring, self-correction, self-assessment.

Unlike cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies organise and manage learning activities. “Rising” above the hierarchy of cognitive strategies, metacognitions “go beyond” the framework of traditional cognitive processes, since they can be aimed at implementing basic regulatory functions both in relation to own cognition and in relation to the organisation of activity in general. Metacognitive strategies are personal knowledge related to the awareness of personal cognitive processes and the results of mental activity (Savrasov *et al.*, 2024). The concept of “metacognition” first emerged in the field of psychology, and later gained wide application in linguistics and teaching methods. In a psychological context, metacognition is interpreted as “thinking about thinking”. The term was introduced by J. Flavell (2000), who described metacognition as a special type of mental activity aimed at awareness and analysis of own cognitive activity. In other words, metacognitive skills are the ability to make sense of own thoughts, which plays a key role in solving various intellectual tasks (Zakharevich, 2018; Pilishek & Rudoman, 2024). J. Flavell (2000) identified four main components

of metacognition: knowledge about one’s own thinking; metacognitive experience; cognitive goals and tasks; corresponding strategies. The researcher emphasised the fundamental difference between cognitive and metacognitive strategies, primarily in terms of their functional purpose: while the former are aimed at performing specific cognitive actions, the latter are aimed at controlling and regulating these actions.

According to S. Volkov, the main difference between cognitive and metacognitive strategies is not so much in their content as in their functional orientation: cognitive strategies are used to perform cognitive tasks, while metacognitive ones are used to manage and control these tasks. In some cases, metacognitive strategies are also considered as effective or social, facilitating the interaction of students with each other or with native speakers (Volkov, 2024). Due to the close connection between cognitive and metacognitive strategies, considering only one of them without considering the other can reduce the effectiveness of the learning process.

J. Flavell (2000) rightly emphasised the key difference between cognitive and metacognitive strategies: the former concern the direct implementation of learning tasks, while the latter concern the regulation, planning and control of these processes. This division has indeed proven to be extremely productive both in psychology and in pedagogy, especially in the field of foreign language learning. In particular, metacognitive strategies expand students’ capabilities for self-awareness, purposeful learning, and critical reflection.

However, it is worth noting that the boundary between cognitive and metacognitive is sometimes conditional: many strategies can have a dual nature. For example, repetition can be both mechanical (cognitive) and conscious for the purpose of monitoring memorisation (metacognitive). This requires caution when classifying. In addition, although the possibility of classifying metacognitive strategies as social or effective is mentioned, this idea needs clarification. The inclusion of social interaction in the metacognitive

sphere is justified only when the student consciously chooses social tools (for example, dialogue with a native speaker or feedback from classmates) to achieve their own learning goals – that is, precisely as a means of self-regulation.

In the contemporary educational process, metacognitive strategies are not just a useful tool – they are critically important for the development of an autonomous student capable of self-education. This is especially true for technical colleges, where students are often focused on applied skills. Learning a foreign language in such a context requires a strategic approach, where metacognitive skills can compensate for the lack of a linguistic base through self-regulation and adaptation of the educational process to individual needs. Therefore, the development of metacognitive strategies should become a purposeful pedagogical task, integrated into foreign language courses, considering the level of training and professional orientation of students.

Metacognition involves a deep understanding of the mechanisms of thinking and the ability to consciously direct and regulate the course of mental processes using various tools – symbols, signs, instructions. Thus, the student can achieve educational goals both independently and with the support of the teacher. Initially, it is the teacher who is responsible for organising the learning process: formulating goals, planning, control, focusing attention. However, over time, these functions are gradually transferred to the student himself, which reflects the dynamics of metacognitive development. When it comes to the introduction of new methods in the training of students, the integration of metacognitive strategies into the foreign language learning process is the primary focus. Such strategies contribute to the student's awareness of their own role in the learning process, help to better regulate mental activity, and ensure more effective assimilation of new material. They cover a wide range of actions, including emotional ones, that contribute to a deeper understanding and use of new knowledge in various learning situations (Carson, 2021).

Metacognitive strategies, as emphasised by V. Pakholchuk & E. Balashov (2024), are a key component of metacognition, since they enable learners to self-organise, monitor, and reflect on their learning process. In the context of foreign language acquisition, the use of such strategies, according to these researchers, significantly enhances learning effectiveness and leads to improved outcomes. Furthermore, E. Deci & R. Ryan (2008) argued that by applying metacognitive strategies, students become more capable of adapting to diverse instructional approaches, methods, and learning environments – an essential skill in contemporary, dynamic educational settings with varying teaching styles.

Therefore, metacognitive skills are of decisive importance in the process of learning a foreign language. They provide a universal approach to mastering both the native and foreign languages and are based on common principles of the functioning of the language system. Among the factors that influence the choice of learning strategies by students, the focus of independent work on searching for new information, which determines the problematic nature of its content, is highlighted. Students of non-linguistic specialties can solve various types of tasks, namely, tasks related to the selection and accumulation of language resources, interpretation of language resources, compiling a glossary by professional orientation, etc. (Berbaum & Barth, 2001; Melnyk, 2024). Optimal conditions for the development of a student's personal qualities and the real independence and creativity are created by project and problem-search technology. Project and problem-search activities of students should be considered as a model of their future professional activity. According to H. González-Valencia *et al.* (2020), contemporary foreign science distinguishes several effective programmes of metacognitive training designed for both students and professionals already in the workforce. First of all, this is the programme of targeted development of metacognitive strategies of M. Dirkes (1985), a student of J. Flavell (2000), which provides for 6 main stages aimed at the development of skills (Fig. 1).

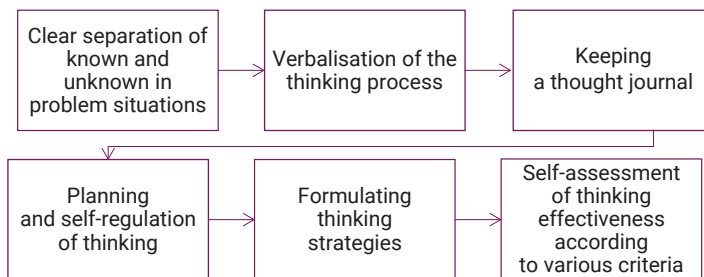


Figure 1. Programme for the targeted development of metacognitive strategies by M. Dirkes
Source: developed by the authors based on M. Dirkes (1985)

Thus, the approach considered by the author does not simply offer mechanical completion of tasks, but involves the student in reflection, analysis, and strategic planning, which are key elements of metacognition. Instead of focusing only on the result, the approach pays attention to the entire process: from awareness of the problem to evaluation of own actions. This contributes to the development of autonomous and critical thinking. Such a position is well consistent with the paradigm of competency-based learning, where the goal is not the transfer of knowledge, but the development of the ability to act and learn independently.

However, the approach focuses mainly on the intellectual aspect of metacognition, leaving aside the emotional-volitional and motivational component. Namely, motivation and affective involvement often determine the success of self-regulation. It assumes a high level of reflection, which is not within the power of all students, especially those who do not have self-observation skills. This requires pedagogical support, which is not visible in the scheme. Based on a review of the scientific literature, three metacognitive strategies were identified (Table 2).

Table 2. Main metacognitive strategies in foreign language learning

Name	Essence	Examples
Planning	Defining learning goals and developing strategies to achieve them.	Creation of a language lesson schedule. Identification of key topics to be covered. Choice of learning methods (e.g., reading books, watching movies in the original language, communicating with native speakers).
Monitoring	Control over own learning process, track progress and adjust methods.	Keeping a learning diary (recording new words, difficulties, achievements). Analysis of errors in speech or writing. Use of self-testing applications (Duolingo, Anki, Quizlet).
Evaluation	Analysis of learning results and strategy adjustment.	Assessment of own level of knowledge through tests or language certificates (IELTS, TOEFL, DELF). Feedback from teachers or native speakers. Self-assessment: identifying strengths and weaknesses in language knowledge.
Regulation of educational activities	Development of a training programme.	Concentration: Using attention-boosting techniques, such as the Pomodoro technique (25 minutes of study – 5 minutes of rest). Motivation: Creating practical projects (writing technical reports, translating instructions, making presentations in English). Changing the type of activity: Combining writing, reading, speaking and listening for deeper assimilation of the material.

Source: developed by the authors based on H. González-Valencia et al. (2020), T. Fitria (2024)

The approach based on the division of metacognitive strategies into planning, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation is a reliable and theoretically sound basis (Izhko, 2021). It is convenient for systematising knowledge and has practical value, but needs to be supplemented with modern tools, considering individual characteristics and deeper detailing to be as effective as possible in the contemporary educational process. The metacognitive approach to learning a foreign language should be supplemented with advanced digital tools, such as learning applications, online progress trackers, and interactive resources that facilitate flexible planning and control of the educational process. It is also important to use

time management methods, individualised curricula, and platforms for collaborative learning to increase motivation and adapt strategies to the needs of each student.

As noted by V. Plyushch *et al.* (2018), in technical colleges, learning a foreign language is often focused on the professional sphere; therefore, the use of metacognitive strategies enables students to effectively learn the material and adapt it to their future profession. These strategies allow learners to study in a more effective, conscious, and purposeful manner. In the process of research, the advantages of metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language were highlighted (Fig. 2).

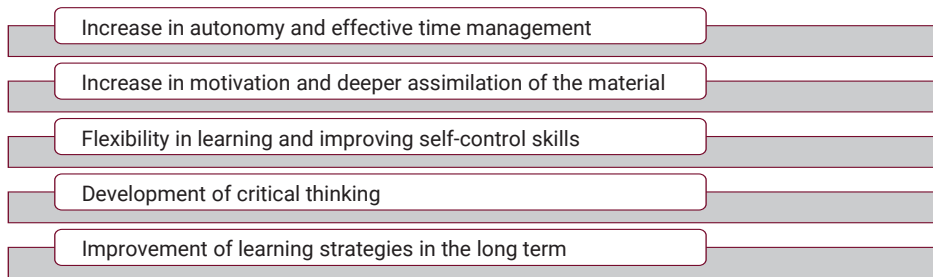


Figure 2. Advantages of metacognitive strategies in foreign language learning

Source: developed by the authors

Thus, using metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language, students learn to independently manage their learning, identify strengths and weaknesses, which leads to increased independence in the language being learned. Students also make a learning plan and manage it more effectively, dividing topics and tasks. Due to the fact that students can see their progress, their motivation to learn a language increases. There is an opportunity to adapt teaching methods to a foreign language. Students evaluate their own achievements and determine the necessary strategies.

However, despite the advantages, the use of metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language also has disadvantages, namely: the use of these strategies requires self-discipline, which can be a problem for students with a low level of

motivation; high cognitive load can cause fatigue and reduce learning productivity; can be difficult for beginners; it is difficult to measure effectiveness; can cause stress; the possibility of excessive analysis; lack of immediate results.

Despite the shortcomings, the use of metacognitive strategies in foreign language learning is quite widespread, including in technical colleges. Students use metacognitive strategies to improve understanding and translation of professional texts. These strategies are often used in project activities. For example, preparing technical presentations in a foreign language with subsequent self-analysis. The use of simulations, professional dialogues and video lessons to form practical skills is widespread. Due to metacognitive strategies, students of

technical colleges can study more effectively, consciously, and purposefully.

Conclusions

Metacognitive strategies play a key role in the process of learning a foreign language, especially in technical colleges, where language training has a professional focus. The use of such strategies as planning, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation of educational activities contributes to increasing the effectiveness of learning, developing student autonomy and forming critical thinking. Studying the problem of language training of specialists, we came to the conclusion that the purpose of the educational process is to increase the effectiveness of educational activities in a foreign language of future specialists based on the development of cognitive activity strategies. The desire to find ways to increase the effectiveness of foreign language training identified a problem, the essence of which is to search for theoretical foundations, identify conditions and methodological approaches aimed at the development of cognitive strategies of students.

The use of metacognitive approaches in technical education allows students not only to

master general language skills, but also to work effectively with professional terminology, technical documentation, and specialised texts. The integration of these strategies into the educational process through project activities, technical translations, presentations, and interactive tasks helps students to better adapt the knowledge gained to future professional activities. Therefore, the introduction of metacognitive strategies into foreign language teaching in technical colleges is necessary for the fostering of competent specialists capable of independent learning, critical analysis of information, and effective application of language skills in a professional environment. Future research can deepen understanding of which specific metacognitive strategies contribute to the development of foreign language competence of technical college students.

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Conflict of Interest

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Інтеграція метакогнітивних стратегій в іншомовну освіту в технічних коледжах

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Анотація. У статті досліджено метакогнітивні стратегії як ефективний інструмент у процесі вивчення іноземної мови, зокрема в умовах технічних коледжів. Метою дослідження стало визначення механізму інтеграції метакогнітивних стратегій у вивчення іноземної мови у технічних коледжах. Здійснено порівняння метакогнітивних та когнітивних стратегій вивчення іноземної мови. Проведено аналіз основних етапів застосування таких стратегій: планування, моніторинг, оцінювання та регуляція навчальної діяльності. Зазначено, що планування включає визначення навчальних цілей, вибір методів і ресурсів, а також розподіл часу. Моніторинг передбачає контроль розуміння матеріалу, аналіз помилок і застосування самотестування. Оцінювання сприяло критичному аналізу власного прогресу, рефлексії та корекції методики навчання. Регуляція навчального процесу забезпечує оптимальну організацію роботи, підтримку мотивації та розвиток навичок самостійного навчання. Окрему увагу приділено специфіці використання метакогнітивних стратегій у технічних коледжах, де вивчення мови має професійне спрямування. Запропоновано практичні підходи до інтеграції цих стратегій у навчальний процес: проєктна діяльність, технічні переклади, створення презентацій та використання інтерактивних завдань. Визначено основні переваги та недоліки використання метакогнітивних стратегій у процесі вивчення іноземної мови студентами немовних спеціальностей. Визначено, що застосування метакогнітивних стратегій сприяє розвитку критичного мислення, підвищенню ефективності засвоєння матеріалу та формуванню навичок автономного навчання. Використання таких підходів у технічних коледжах дозволяє студентам ефективно адаптувати отримані мовні знання до професійного середовища, підвищує рівень їхньої підготовки до роботи з технічною документацією та міжнародного співробітництва

Ключові слова: метакогніція; самодисципліна; рефлексія; метапізнання; іншомовна компетентність