

DIRECT STRATEGIES: SPEAKING

STRATEGY GROUP: Cognitive

STRATEGY SET: Analysing and Reasoning

STRATEGY: Translating

Translating can be a helpful strategy early in language learning, as long as it is used with care. It allows learners to use their own language as the basis for understanding what they are saying. However, word-for-word translation can become a crutch or provide the wrong interpretation of the target language material. Furthermore, translating can sometimes slow learners down considerably, forcing them to go back and forth constantly between languages.

For example: in a conversation when the Russian speaker says, "Ya chitayu zhurnal", Billie mentally translates this to mean "I'm reading the newspaper", the English equivalent. In this case a straight translation is correct but when the sentence is not understood, the sentence cannot be translated directly into English.

Beginning speakers often rely on the strategy of translating to produce messages in the target language.

For instance, in Spanish it is correct for Armando to say "No comprendo", but translating this directly into English produces "No understand", a rather primitive expression in English. Every time that we want to use translating strategy, we have to pay too much attention to all the risks that translation from one language to another one brings out.