CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

During the past few decades learning strategies has been widely researched. The research findings indicated that language learning strategies play an important role in the language classroom. This chapter describes the theoretical framework of the current study and a review of related studies.

Conceptual Framework

All language learning strategies are related to the features of control, goal-directness, autonomy and self-efficiency. Goals are the engine that fires language learning action and provides the direction for the action (Dornyei & Otto,1998). Oxford (1990) states that students rapidly but inaccurately reading many English-language journal articles can be addressed by reading and understanding one such article per week until good comprehension is matched by speed. Relevant learning strategies for accomplishing this weekly task include scheduling time to read articles, skimming for main

ideas, noting key vocabulary and guessing from the context, all of which might be called a strategy chain. Everyone has his own learning strategies in learning language, and the process he went through in learning would be different according to the different strategies. Increasingly, researchers and educators recognize that the process of learning is critically important, and understanding the way individuals learn is the key to educational success.

Learning strategiers are external skills often used consciously by students to improve their learning. Example include metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring and self-evaluation; cognitive strategies such as note taking and inferencing; and social/affective strategies such as clarification questions and cooperative work (Reid, 1998). In other words, learning strategies are the ways in which learners try to understand and remember new information, which vary according to their different learning strategies.

As learning strategies plays an important roles in language learning, researchers are trying to investigate what influences learning strategies, how different students use it in their language learning and what kind of learning strategies help most in learning new languages. Interests in learning strategies began with

the publication of papers collectively known as the "good language learner" studies (Cohen & Weaver, 1998). Since then, hundreds of studies have been generated that look at different aspects of learning strategies and their roles in language learning. In an effort to make sense of the huge database and numerous research findings in this area, Oxford (1990) differentiated learning strategies into the six main categories and developed the instrument to collect data on strategies, known as Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (*SILL*).

Common Features of Language Learning Strategies

Generally, language learning strategies can be divided into two groups, direct and indirect strategies. The three groups that belong to the direct strategies are memory, cognitive, and compensation. The three groups that belong to the indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Oxford, 1990).

Direct Language Learning Strategies

The strategies used directly in dealing with a new language are called direct strategies. The direct strategies are beneficial to the students because they

help store and recover information. These strategies help learners to produce language even when there is a gap in knowledge, and to understand and use the language. Memorey Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, and Compensaton Strategies are defineds as direct Language Learning Strategies.

Memory Strategies

Memory strategies are based on simple principles such as laying things out in order, making association, and reviewing. These principles are employed when a learner faces the challenge of vocabulary learning. The words and phrases can be associated with visual images that can be stored and retrieved for communication. Many learners make use of visual images, but some find it easy to connect words and phrases with sound, motion or touch. The use of memory strategies are most frequently applied in the beginning process of language learning. As the learners advance to higher level of proficiency, memory strategies are mentioned very little. It is not that the use ceases, but the awareness of its use becomes less.
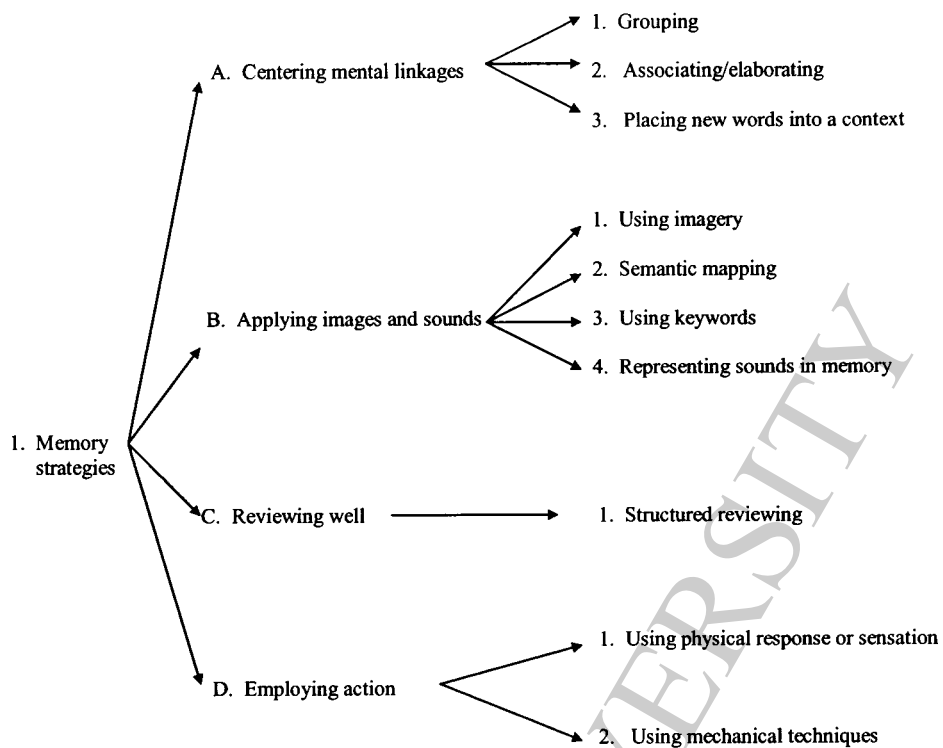
Figure 1. Diagram of the Memory Strategies to Be Applied
to the Four Language Skills (Oxford, 1990)

Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive Strategies are the most popular strategies with language learners. The target language is manipulated or transformed by repeating, analyzing, or summarizing. The four sets in this group are: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output. Practicing is the most important strategy in this group; it can be achieved by repeating, working with sounds and writing, and using patterns. Learners use the tools of receiving and sending messages when they try to find the main idea through skimming and scanning. It is not necessary to check every word. Adult learners commonly use analyzing and reasoning strategies to understand the meaning and expression of the target language and to make new expressions.
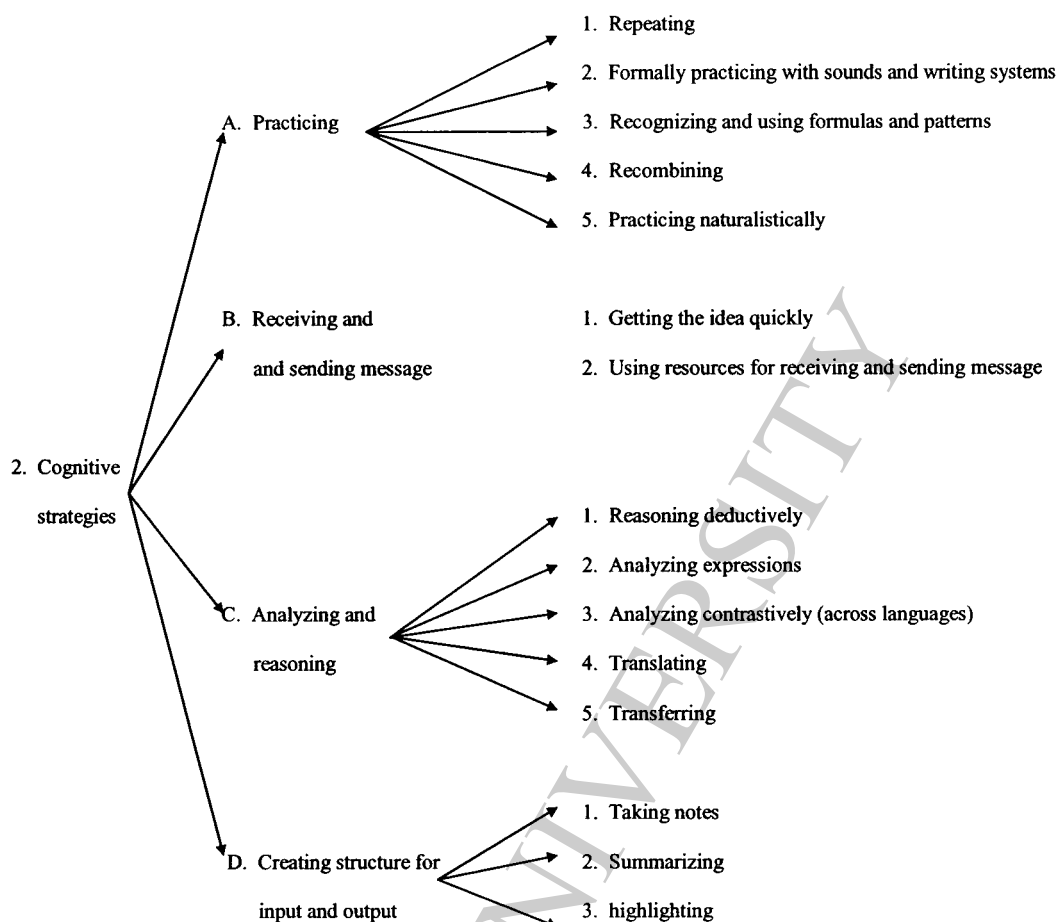
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                                                      1. Repeating

                                                      2. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems

                          A. Practicing                3. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns

                                                      4. Recombining

                                                      5. Practicing naturalistically


                          B. Receiving and            1. Getting the idea quickly

                             and sending message       2. Using resources for receiving and sending message


    2. Cognitive                                       1. Reasoning deductively
       strategies
                                                      2. Analyzing expressions

                          C. Analyzing and            3. Analyzing contrastively (across languages)
                             reasoning                4. Translating

                                                      5. Transferring


                                                      1. Taking notes

                          D. Creating structure for   2. Summarizing
                             input and output         3. highlighting
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Figure 2.   Diagram of the Cognitive Strategies to Be
            Applied to the Four Language Skills.(Oxford,
            1990)

Compensation Strategies

        Learners use compensation strategies to comprehend

the target language when they have insufficient knowledge

of it. These strategies make up for the deficiency in

grammar and vocabulary. For instance, when learners do

not know new words and expressions, they will guess the

meaning from context. Learners bring their own life experience to interpret information. Compensation strategies are also used in production when grammatical knowledge is incomplete. When learners do not know the subjunctive form of a verb, a different form may be used to convey the message. For example, when learners recognize the words hair, cut, style, and beauty salon in a conversation, they would be able to guess that the conversation is about getting a haircut.
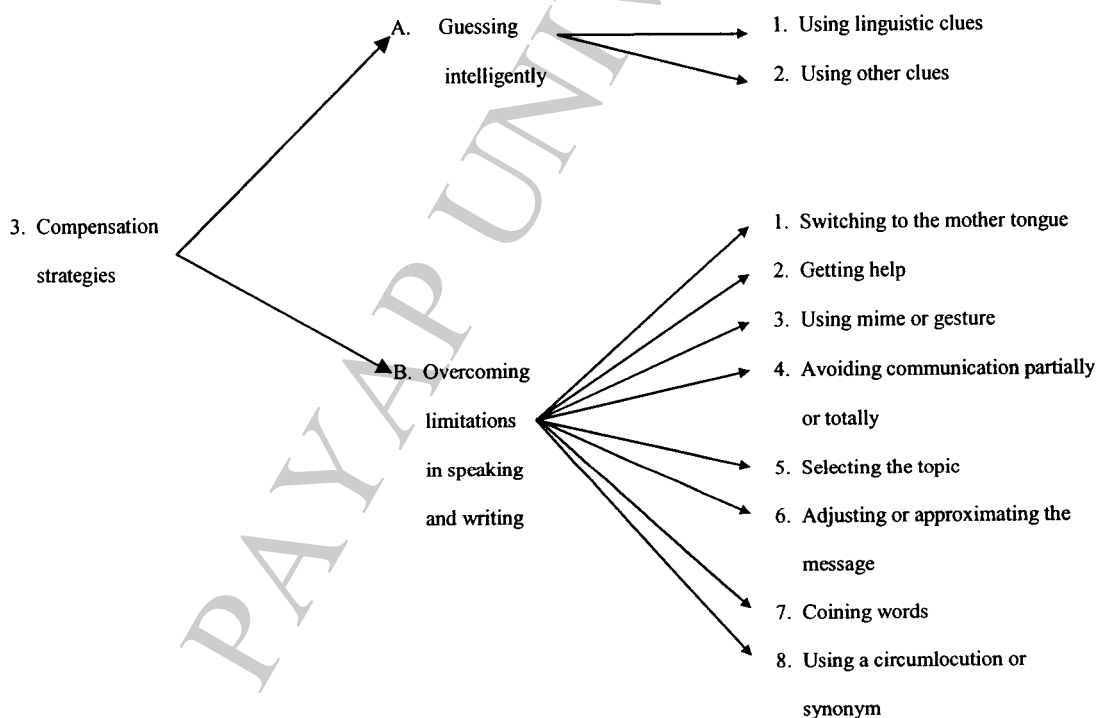

Figure 3. Diagram of the Compensation Strategies to Be Applied to the Four Language Skills (Oxford, 1990)

Indirect Language Learning Strategies

The indirect strategies are used for general management of learning. They work together with the direct strategies. They help learner organize the learning process. These strategies support and manage language leaning without direct engagement and are, therefore, called indirect strategies.

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies go beyond the cognitive mechanism and allow learners to coordinate their learning. This helps them to plan language learning in an efficient way. When new vocabulary, rules, and writing system confuse learners, these strategies become vital for successful language learning. Three sets of strategies belong to this group; they are centering the learning, arranging and planning your learning, and evaluation learning. The aim of centering learning is to give a focus to learners so that their attention could be directed toward certain language activities or skills. Arranging and planning learning help learners to organize so they may get maximum benefit from their energy and

effort. Evaluation learning helps the learner with

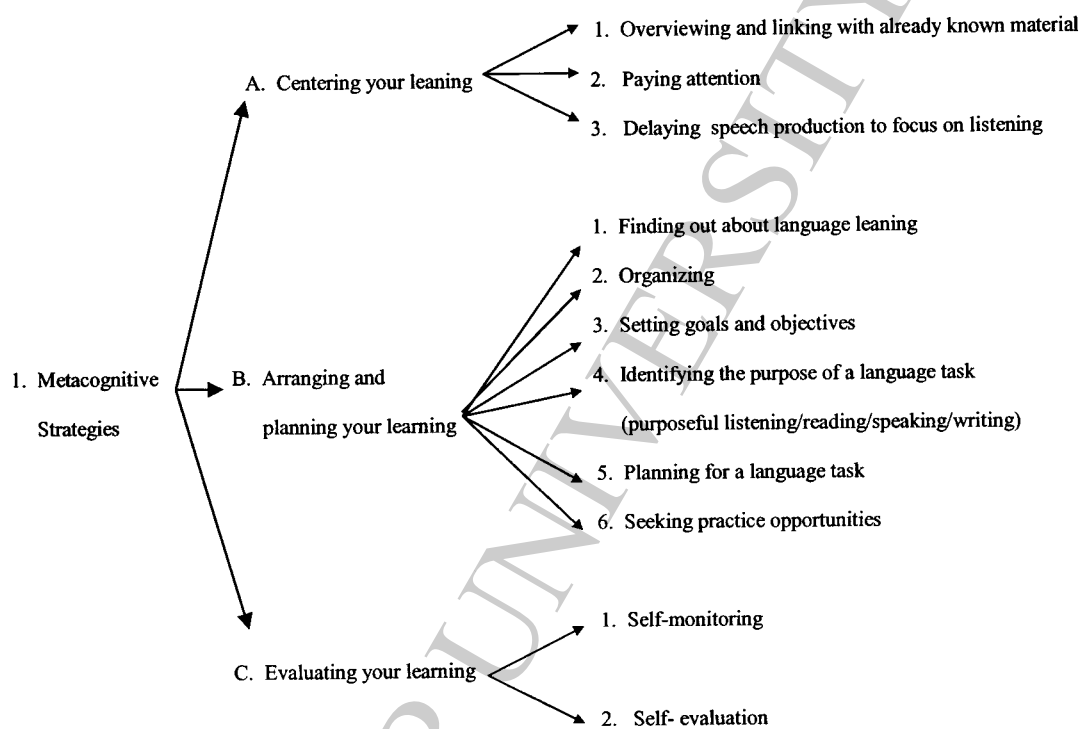problem such as monitoring errors and evaluating

progress.

Figure 4. Diagram of the metacognitive Strategies to Be
Applied to the Four Language Skills (Oxford,
1990)

Affective Strategies

The affective factors like emotion, attitude, motivation, and value influence learning in an important way. Three sets of strategies are included in this group: lowering anxiety, encouraging, and taking emotional temperature. Good language learners control their attitudes and emotions about learning and understand that negative feelings retard learning. Teachers can help generate positive feelings in class by giving students more responsibility, increasing the amount of natural communication, and teaching effective strategies. Anxiety could be both helpful and harmful.

A certain amount of anxiety is helpful for learners; it helps them obtain their optimum level of performance. Too much anxiety has the opposite effect where it hinders language learning. Anxiety often takes forms of worry, frustration, insecurity, fear, and self-doubt. A common high anxiety situation for learners is to perform before their peers and teacher when they are not prepared.
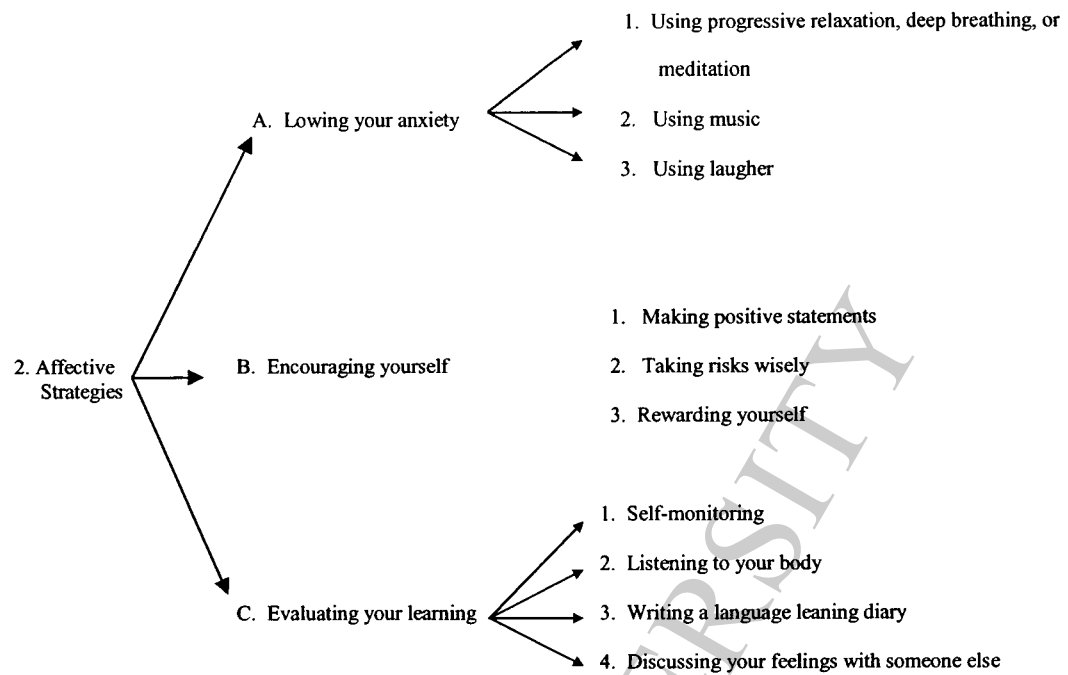
A. Lowing your anxiety
1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation
2. Using music
3. Using laugher

2. Affective Strategies

B. Encouraging yourself
1. Making positive statements
2. Taking risks wisely
3. Rewarding yourself

C. Evaluating your learning
1. Self-monitoring
2. Listening to your body
3. Writing a language leaning diary
4. Discussing your feelings with someone else

Figure 5. Affective Strategies to Be Applied to the Four Language Skills (Oxford 1990)

Social Strategies

Social strategies are very important in learning a language because language is used in communication between people. Three sets of strategies are included in this group: asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others. Among the three, asking question is the most helpful and comes closest to understanding the meaning. It also helpful in conversation when the partner shows interest and involvemet by responding.

Cooperation with others eliminates competition and in its place brings group spirit. Cooperative learning helps higher self-esteem, increases confidence, and rapid achievement. Learners do not naturally apply cooperative strategies as strong emphasis put on to competition by educational institutions. Sometimes competition brings a wish to perform better than others, but it results in anxiety and fear of failure. It is important to help learners change their attitudes from confrontation and competition to cooperation.

Empathy is very important in communication. Empathy means to put oneself in someone else's situation to understand that person's point of view. Learners can use social strategies to develop cultural understanding and become aware of thoughts and feelings of others.

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2. Social          A. Asking questions         1. Asking for clarlifaction or verification
   strategies                                   2. Asking for correction

                   B. Cooperating with others   1. Cooperating with peers
                                                2. Cooperating with proficient users of the new
                                                   language

                   C. Empathizing with others   1. Developing cultural understanding
                                                2. Becoming aware of other's thoughts and
                                                   feelings
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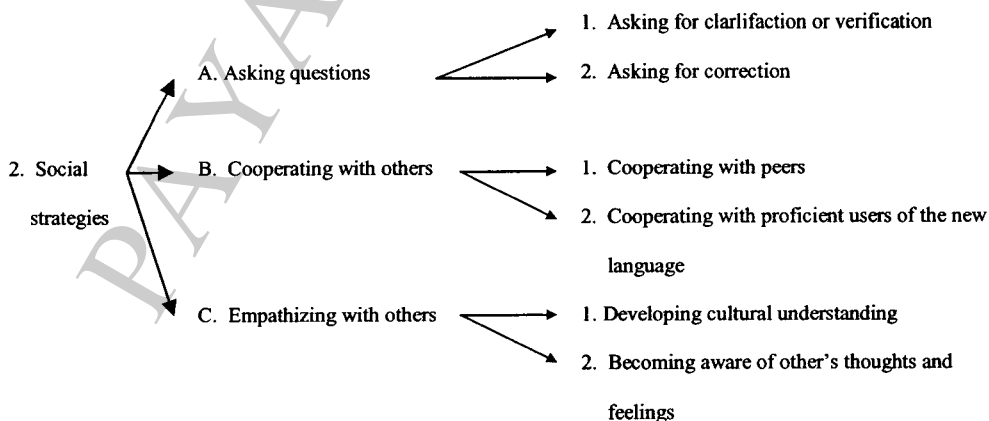
Figure 6.   Social Strategies to Be Applied to the Four Language Skills (Oxford,1990)

Learning Style and Language Learning Strategies

Research on general approach to language learning
has identified that students used different strategies in
learning and language learning style has been identified
as another key determiner of learning strategy choice.
When allowed to learn in their favorite way, unpressured
by learning environment or other factors, students often
use strategies that directly reflect their preferred
learning. However, according to the researchers (Cohen &
Weaver, 1998, Oxford, 2002), teachers can actively help
students stretch their learning style by trying some
strategies that are outside of their primary style
preferences.

In the article "Language Learning Strategies in a
Nutshell", Oxford (2002) gives the example from the
research that students with an analytic learning style
prefer strategies such as contrastive analysis, rule
learning and dissecting words and phrases, whereas
students with a global style use strategies that help
them find the big picture (i.e., paraphrasing,
gesturing). Visually oriented students use strategies
such as listening, word grouping. Those with style
include tolerance for ambiguity use significantly
different learning strategies in some instances from

those used by students who are intolerant of ambiguity. Research has also shown that students can stretch beyond their learning style to a variety of valuable L2 strategies that are initially uncomfortable (Oxford 2002).

Strategy training is particularly useful in helping students use new strategies beyond their normal stylistic boundaries. Teaching style and learning style in the language classroom should be matched. Strategy training that takes learning style into account helps students avoid "style wars" with teachers and fellow students. It also helps them see the cultural values and increase cross-cultural understanding (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992).

Factors Affecting Language Learning strategy Selections

The relationship between the use of language learning strategies and success in EFL learnig has been the focus of a growing body of research over the past decade. Research indicates that factors influencing EFL students' choice of learning strategies include motivation, gender, cultural background, attitudes and beliefs, type of task, age and L2 stage, learning style, and tolerance of ambiguity (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990;

Oxford, 2002).

Motivation

More motivated students tend to use more strategies
than less motivated students. The reason for studying
the language, the orientation of motivation which is
related to the career field is important in the choice of
strategies. Cookes and Schmidt (1991) identified
orientation of motivation as the goal of learning a
second language. According to Cookes and Schmidt,
integrative motivation is the learner's positive attitude
towards the target language group and the desire to
integrate into the target language community. Hudson
(2000) characterized instrumental motivation as the
desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the
study of a second language. It is the goal to gain some
social or economic reward through the target language
achievement.

Gender

According to several studies, students' gender makes
a significant difference in learning a second or foreign
language (Ehrman & Oxford 1989, Kim 1995, Lee 1994, Oh

1996, Oxford et al. 1988, Oxford & Nyikos 1989, Oxford et al. 1993, Oxford & Ehrman 1995, Politzer 1983). All studies, which examined gender as a variable in the use of language learning strategies reported that significant gender differences almost always occurred in a single direction, showing greater use of language learning strategies by females. Females reported greater overall strategy use than males in many studies.

Cultural Background

Numerous studies have shown that national origin or ethnicity has a strong influence on the kinds of strategies used by language learners. For example, Asian students seem to prefer strategies involving rote memorization and language rules (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Politzer & McGroarty 1985) as opposed to more communicative strategies. Rote memorization and other forms of memorization were more prevalent among some Asian students than among students from other cultural backgrounds. Certain other cultures also appeared to encourage this strategy among learners. Asian students tend to prefer strategies such as working independently and dislike social or cooperative learning, unlike students of other cultural backgrounds such as Hispanic

background.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Beliefs about language learning which is the general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners and about factors influencing language learning can affect their language learning. In addition, the attitudes and beliefs of students on the nature of language learning and teaching such as learner/teacher roles, feedback, self-perceptions as learners, or learning environment in general were reported to have a profound effect on the strategies learners choose. These beliefs can be with negative or positive attitudes.

Types of Task

The nature of task helps determine the strategies naturally employed to carry out the task. Different tasks may evoke the use of different strategies. Student's attitudes towards the types of task given to them were also found to have a measurable effect of the strategies use of L2 learner.

Age and L2 Stages

In language learning, it is commonly believed that children are better in learning than adults. However, research has failed to support this. The only aspect that shown the different attect of age in the outcome of learning language is accent. It is generaly accepted that those who begin learning a language after puberty are unable to acquire a native-like accent.

Nevertheless, in factors affecting language learning strategy use, several studies found that, language course level also influences how students learn foreign or second languages (Chamot et al., 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1992). Many research on students of different ages and stages of L2 learning used different strategies, with certain strategies often being employed by older or more advanced students (Chamot et al., 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1992).

Tolerant of Ambiguity

Students who were more tolerant of ambiguity used significantly different learning strategies in different sistuations than did students who were less tolerant of

ambiguity (Oxford, 1990). Persons with high tolerance for ambiguity would not insist on identifying and understanding every last detail of a sentence they hear in the new language before being willing to guess at the meaning of the whole sentence. They are more willing to open their mouths and try to communicate, even when the road to the end of the sentence is not clear.

Review of Related Studies

Language learners make use of different types of learning strategies. Often, these learning strategies are used automatically without even being aware of. In the last two decades, there have been numerous studies conducted to find out what strategies learners use as well as what factors affect these choices. This review describes a series of studies conducted with ESL students from different countries concerning these two factors.

Research on Strategies Used by L2 Learners

To have an understanding of the strategies used by students, Vandergrift (1996) conducted a research on listening comprehension strategies of core French high school students. The aim of the study was to understand

the types of listening comprehension strategies used by high school students learning French in the core program and to investigate whether choices varies according to the course level, or the gender of the students. The subjects were 36 students at four different course levels of core French.

Retrospective self-reports were elicited by means of a structured interview. The subjects were required to describe the specific techniques they used to understand what the teachers say, to facilitate understanding of classroom listening activities, and to understand any French they may hear outside class. Results indicated that the subjects employed a wide variety of strategies to listen, which indicated that language learners were unquestionably actively involved in listening.

Both strong and weak language learners had the ability to reflect on their language listening experiences and offer insight into their strategic knowledge. The higher the courses level, the greater the matacognitive strategies use. Moreover, female learners used matacognitive strategies to a greater extent. Drawing from these results, the research provided suggestions for teachers that would help them in developing "the strategies awareness" in their students.

The researcher suggested that the teachers should

(1) familiarize students with the idea of strategies, (2) teach students to become strategically smart, (3) teach planning strategies, (4) teach monitoring strategies, (5) teach evaluating strategies, (6) help students deal with anxiety, (7) talk to students in target language, and (8) expose students to relevant listening texts.

In another study, Reading Strategically: A study of the teaching of reading strategies to university students, by Calvo and Anglia (1992), from Polytechnic University of Cambridge, presents research work aimed at examining the effects of teaching reading strategies to first year undergraduate students starting a degree involving extensive reading in English (L2). It is the part of a larger project directed towards a reading program based on psycholinguistic theories of reading in L1 and L2 and attempts to help students improve their reading skills in English (L2) by teaching reading strategies that English native speakers use.

The experiment was undertaken with the purpose of examining the effect of teaching reading strategies to L2 learners, so that knowledge of effective reading strategies would permit these readers to use their cognitive resources more efficiently. The subjects were all first-year undergraduate Spanish students of English

Philology. The control group received direct teaching of effective reading strategies from October 1991 to February 1992.

All subjects were administered background information and reading strategies perception questionnaires (Barnett, 1989), and tested for L2 language proficiency level (SLEP by Educational Testing Service, and IELT test). They also took reading comprehension tests in L2 using the cloze technique designed to force the use of linguistic and world knowledge strategies before and after treatment. The analysis and results indicate that there were significant improvements when the L2 proficiency level was taken into consideration. The low level group improved significantly. The intermediate level group improved, but not significantly. The high level group improved significantly.

According to this study, the language level variable seems to have an effect on the results of the study in comprehension. Therefore, there is a need to define and measure L2 proficiency level. As deducted from questionnaires and interviews, it is possible that more time is needed to transform declarative into procedural knowledge, to integrate and automatize strategies. Some

introspective techniques could also be used to reinforce metacognition. The cloze technique may not be a good measure of reading comprehension.

In the paper, "Successful listening strategies: nature or nurture?" Kate Beeching,(1997), from the University of the West of England, explores the notion that the successful listening strategies adopted by some learners can be taught or learned by learners who do not intuitively adopt those strategies. The paper argued that learners at different levels adopt different strategies in listening comprehension which are appropriate to their aptitude and level of language performance. The paper attempts firstly to highlight key factors affecting understanding with insights gleaned from psycholinguistics and pragmatics as well as from educational and applied linguistics.

It reports the results of the two experiments, one quantitative and fairly large-scale in which listening skills were investigated with a cohort of 120 students divided into six teaching groups and subjected to different teaching methods. The other qualitative and small-scale with 10 students providing self-report data regarding their use of the visual element in a listening exercise, using video.

Both experiments provide important insights into the

way a learner's aptitude may affect results and how strategy selection may best be affected on the basis of level of knowledge, rather than on the basis of a generalized notion of effective listening. It indicates that students may be educated in the strategies which might be available to them but that each is responsible for the development of their own learning style. The conclusion is reached that, in preparing listening comprehension materials, it is wise for tutors to keep students' interests and experience firmly in mind.

Another research investigates the relationship between language learning strategies and language proficiency. This survey research was on the language learning strategies used by a group of Hong Kong learners. The aims of the study were to investigate levels of strategy use among the group, and to examine levels of association between strategy use and language proficiency. The subjects, 113 female and 36 male, were studying a language and communication skills course at the City University of Hong Kong.

The Strategies Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990) was used as and research instrument in this research. *SILL* consists of six categories of strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social. The results of the

study showed that compensation and metacognitive strategies were the most often used, while affective and memory strategies were the least often used.

Factors Affecting Language Learning Strategy Selections

In 1999, *Thai TESOL Bulletin* published a research article by Nambiar-Gopal. This study seeks to investigate the learning strategies of Malaysian ESL learners for a variety of language activities and to examine the relationship between learning strategies used and tasks type, namely, reading comprehension and vocabulary exercises in relation to the level of proficiency of the learners. Six ESL learners from various proficiency levels, two each from advanced, intermediate and elementary levels, were chosen for the study.

The primary instrument used to elicit learning strategies was a think-aloud protocol, which required learners to verbalize what they were doing and how they obtained answers to the questions. To help supplement data from the think-aloud protocol, interviews were conducted with the learners individually. Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of learning strategies was used to

analyze and classify the data. Learners were provided with reading comprehension and vocabulary exercises and they engaged in the think-aloud protocol in a private room.

Immediately after this they were interviewed to capture unreported information and also to verify strategy use. The entire session was tape-recorded and then the reports were transcribed verbatim. The data was then analyzed according to task type and the level of proficiency of the learner. It was found that learners preferred to use strategies from three main groups, which are the metacognitive, memory, and cognitive groups. The advanced learners used the cognitive strategy of analyzing and reasoning together with other strategies to provide some sort of check and balance to their choice of answers. It is apparent that task does influence the strategy employed.

In 2000, Shmais, an instructor at An-Najah National University in Nablus, conducted a research on the language learning strategy use in Palestine. This study explores the use of learning strategies as an important factor in the success of EFL learners. It also investigates the frequency of strategies use among these students according to gender and proficiency variables. The subjects of the study were 19 male and 80 female

students still studying for their B.A. degree. The

majority of the subjects (N=47) were seniors, 27 were

juniors and 25 were sophomores.

In order to measure strategy use, Oxford's (1990)

SILL was used. The questionnaires distributed by the

researcher were in Arabic. They were given out during

students' regular English classes in the first semester,

2000. The ANOVA test was used to determine significant

variation in mean strategy use by gender and proficiency.

The results showed that the students used learning

strategies with high to medium frequency, and that the

highest rank (79.6%) was metacognitive strategies while

the lowest (63%) was compensation strategies.

In general, it can be concluded that gender and

proficiency had no significant differences on the use of

strategies. Based on these findings, the researcher

recommends that more training should be given in using

cognitive, memory and compensation strategies by

embedding them into regular classroom activities.

Also in 2000, Glenn Wharton from Nanyang

Technological University in Singapore did a research on

language learning strategy use of bilingual foreign

language learners. The participants were 678

undergraduates learning Japanese or French as foreign

languages at a university. All students were taking FL

as an elective. Version 5.1 of Oxford's 80-item SILL, a self-report survey for English speakers learning a foreign language, was used to examine the frequency with which the participants used strategies for language learning.

The *SILL* was accompanied by a background questionnaire designed to elicit information student's major field of study, mother tongue, gender, degree of motivation, languages spoken, proficiency self-ratings, the FL and course level currently studied, length of time spent studying the FL, reasons for taking the FL, and language learning attitude. The results revealed that more strategies were used significantly more often by men and that more proficient L2 learners use many strategies more often than less proficient L2 learners, regardless of setting, culture, or previous language learning experience.

In 2003, *Asian-EFL-Journal* published a research article by Kyungok Kee on the use of learning strategies in learning English of Korean junior high school students. This study investigated the use of language learning strategies of 325 Korean secondary school EFL students. The subjects were 163 boys and 162 girls, with a consideration of variables such as sex, school year, and proficiency in grammar. The subjects were attending

a 'boys' or a girls' middle school in Pusan, Korea.
Strategy use was assessed through a Korean translation of
the *SILL* (Oxford, 1990) like most of the research
mentioned in this paper.

The proficiency was determined by a cloze test. The
major findings were that the reported frequency of
strategy use by the students was moderate overall, with
the students reporting most frequent use of compensation
strategies and least of affective strategies. Girls
showed more frequent use of all six strategy categories
than boys. Third school year students employed
compensation and memory strategies more often, whereas
first school year students employed metacognitive,
cognitive, affective and social strategies more often.
Cognitive strategies showed the highest correlation with
matacognitive and memory strategies. Students who scored
highly on the cloze test reported using strategies more
often than did the low proficiency students.

In conclusion, the review of the literature shows
that language learning strategies remains an active area
of research. The language learning strategies research
for ESL instruction shows that appropriate use of leaning
strategies can result in increased L2 proficiency.
Although the understanding of learning strategies is
still not complete, the research to date suggests that

students should be taught how to identify and analyze their preferred learning strategies in order to know their language learning strategies. In additon to this the teacher should conduct research in their own classroom to know the language learning strategies of their students and have better understanding of the numerous factors, which affecting their stragegies in their language learning.

The next chapter describes the methodology employed in this research, demographic information of the participants, questionnaire and interview design, data collection procedure, and data analysis.