CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the analysis of data as described in the methodology chapter. They are organized in response to the research questions. These consist of the result of language learning strategies that most frequently used by the participants, and the result of factors effecting their language learning strategies selections. The results are presented in the form of tables, and charts. The participants' responses are interpreted and discussions on the findings of the current study were presented.

The Most Frequently Used Language Learning Strategies

In order to obtain this result first, the results of each individual participant used of *SILL* were calculated. Second, the total and average scores of the responses of the participants for each of the six categories of learning strategies from *SILL* instrument were calculated to identify any significant variation in the means of the frequency of use of the six categories. Third, the overall results of the

learning strategies of the participants from *SILL* were

calculated.

After collecting the data from the questionnaire, the

results of each participant's report usage of learning

strategies from *SILL were* keyed into the computer; the mean

scores of each and all participants were calculated by using

the SPSS program. As it was mentioned in the methodology

chapter, there are six categories of language learning

strategies: memory strategies, cognitive strategies,

compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective

strategies and, social strategies.

Questions in the *SILL* questionnaire are divided into the

above six categories. Questions 1 to 9 covered memory

strategies; questions 10 to 23 covered cognitive strategies;

questions 24 to 29 covered compensation strategies; questions

30 to 38 covered metacognitive strategies; questions 39 to 44

covered affective strategies; and questions 45 to 50 covered

social strategies.

Table 5 presents the results of the mean score of each

individual participant use of each categories of *SILL*. The

overall usage of each category of strategies were as followed.

The means core of all participants' use of memory strategies

as shown in column 2 was 2.8; the mean score of all

participants' use of cognitive strategies was 3.5 (column 3);

the means score of all participants' use of compensation strategies as shown in column 4 was 3.6; the mean score of the participants' use of metacognitive strategies as shown in column 5 was 3.5; the mean score of the usage of affective strategies was 3.0 (column 6); and the mean score of all participants' use of social strategies as shown in the last column was 3.5.

Based on the mean scores of the six categories of learning strategies discussed above, compensation strategies had the highest mean score of usage (M = 3.6), followed by cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social strategies with the same mean at (M = 3.5), affective strategies (M = 3.0), and memory strategies (M = 2.8). The frequencies for all strategies used were in the medium range of 2.5 to 3.5 except for compensation strategies which were slightly above the range.

Table 5

Mean Scores of Language Learning Strategies Used

Participants	Mean Score of Memory Strategies (Q. 1-9)	Mean Score of Cognitive Strategies (Q. 10-23)	Mean Score of Compensation Strategies (Q. 24-29)	Mean Score of Metacognitive Strategies (Q. 30-38)	Mean Score of Affective Strategies (Q. 39-44)	Mean Score of Social Strategies (Q. 45-50)
P 1	2.7	4	3.5	4.1	3	4.5
P 2	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.9	3.5	3.2
P 3	2.9	3.2	4	3.3	3	2.8
P 4	3.1	3.7	4	3.7	2.3	4
P 5	3.1	4.1	3.5	4.2	4	4
P 6	3.2	3.6	3	3.2	2.2	3.2
P 7	3.2	3.5	3.2	4.1	4	3.8
P 8	3.3	4.2	4.3	4.8	4.2	4.1
P 9	3.4	3.6	3	3.3	2.5	3.7
P 10	2.9	3.4	4.7	2.55	2.7	3.3
P 11	3	2.9	3	3	3	3
P 12	2.5	3.6	4.3	3.2	3.5	2.8
P 13	3.3	3.8	3.5	3	3.2	4.3
P 14	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.55	1.8	1.2
P 15	2.6	3.5	4	4.1	3.1	3.7
P 16	2.9	3.4	3.3	2.8	3.7	2.8
P 17	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.8
P 18	2.3	3.3	2.8	3.7	3	4.7
P 19	3.1	3.7	4.3	3.9	3	4.3
P 20	2.5	3.3	4.2	3.3	3.5	4.1
P 21	2.8	3.2	3.7	3.55	2.5	3
P 22	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.2	3.1
P 23	1.7	3.6	4	2.9	1.3	3.8
P 24	3	3.7	3	3.9	3.2	3.8
P 25	2.9	3.4	3.3	3.4	2.5	2.8
P 26	2.5	3.8	3.8	4	3	4
P 27	2.8	2.4	3.3	3.4	2.3	4
P 28	3	3.2	4.3	4	3.3	4.5
P 29	2.9	3.3	4.3	3.8	3.3	4
P 30	2.1	3.8	4	3.55	3	3.7
P 31	2.1	4.1	4.5	3.7	4.3	2.1
P 32	1.5	3.4	3.7	3	1.2	2.5
P 33	2.7	3.9	4.3	2.8	2.7	3.8
P 34	1.9	2.5	2.5	2.55	1.3	2.2
P 35	2.5	3.6	3.8	3.7	2.7	3.3

Partici pants	Mean Score of Memory Strategies (Q. 1-9)	Mean Score of Cognitive Strategies (Q. 10-23)	Mean Score of Compensati on Strategies (Q. 24-29)	Mean Score of Metacogniti ve Strategies (Q. 30-38)	Mean Score of Affective Strategie s (Q. 39-44)	Mean Score of Social Strategie s (Q. 45-50)
P 36	2.2	3.9	4.5	4.2	3.3	5
P 37	3.5	3.5	3.8	4	3	3.2
P 36	2.2	3.9	4.5	4.2	3.3	5
P 37	3.5	3.5	3.8	4	3	3.2
P 38	3.2	4	3.5	3.8	4.2	4.2
P 39	2.9	3.5	3.8	3.3	3.3	4.3
P 40	2.9	3.6	3.7	3.9	2.8	3.5
P 41	3.1	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.2	4
P 42	3.1	3.4	4.2	3.1	3	3.7
P 43	3.2	3	3	3.7	2.3	3.3
P 44	2.5	3	2.2	2.9	2.7	2.8
P 45	3	3.9	3.2	3.1	3	3.1
P 46	3.4	3.3	2.7	3.2	4.2	3
P 47	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.5	3.8
P 48	3	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.7	3.7
P 49	2.9	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.2	3.3
P 50	1.8	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.8	2.5
Total	142	175	181	174	150	175.3
Mean (N=50)	2.8	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.0	3.5

As can be seen from Figure 7, the participants from this study were reported using compensation strategies, which include guessing and using gestures, more frequently than other types of strategies. The result also showed that memory strategies were the least frequently used. No strategies groups are reported as "always or almost always used", and no strategies groups are reported as "never or almost never used" or "generally not used".
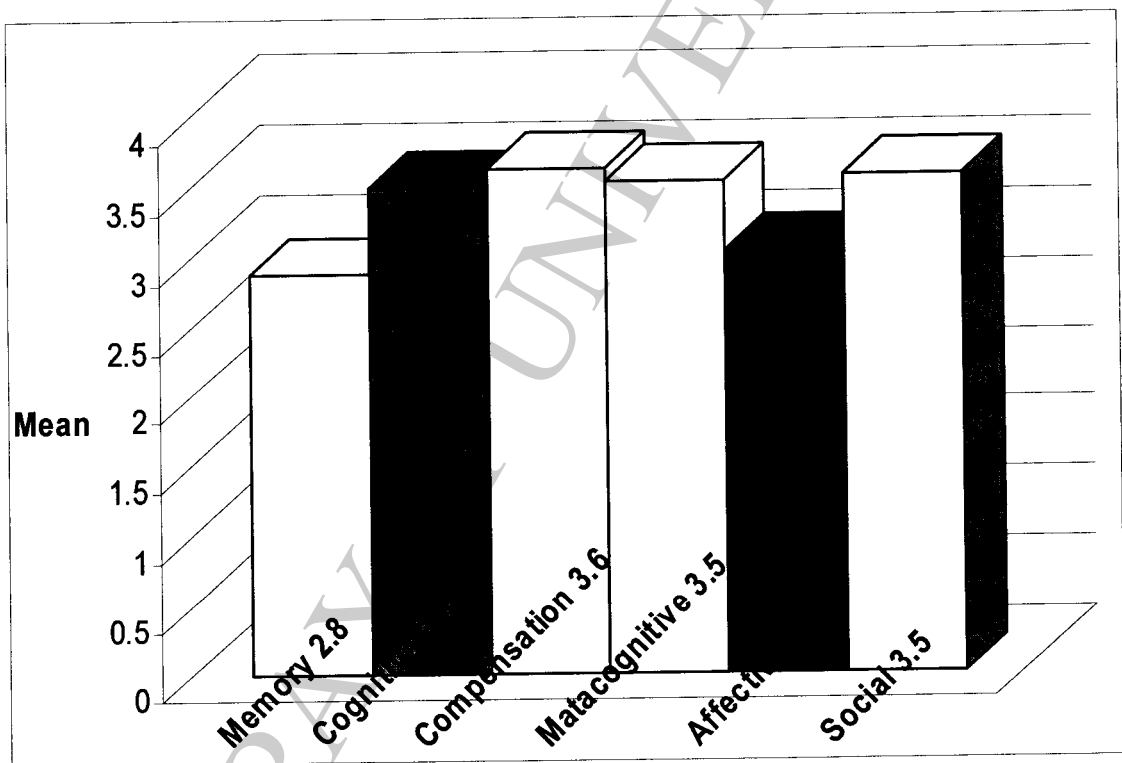

Figure 7. The Means of Learning Strategies Usage

Factor Affecting Learning Strategy Selections

The results retrieved from the interview data revealed the factors affecting learning strategy selections. After filling out the questionnaire, 10 participants were randomly selected for individual interview, which was recorded for later analysis. The interview data were transcribed. Coding was made to classify and assign meaning to pieces of information from the interview. Initially, numerous codes were generated according to the responses. After the initial coding, reviews of codes were made and eliminate less useful ones and organizing those codes into themes. The main words used for coding were, motivation, gender, cultural background, attitudes and beliefs, type of task, age and L2 stage, learning styles, and tolerance of ambiguity which were words known to be the factors affecting learning strategy selections (see Appendix D).

The analysis of the transcription indicated that there were four factors affecting the participants' learning strategies selections (see Figure 8). Motivation was the first factor followed by types of task, attitudes and beliefs, and cultural background.
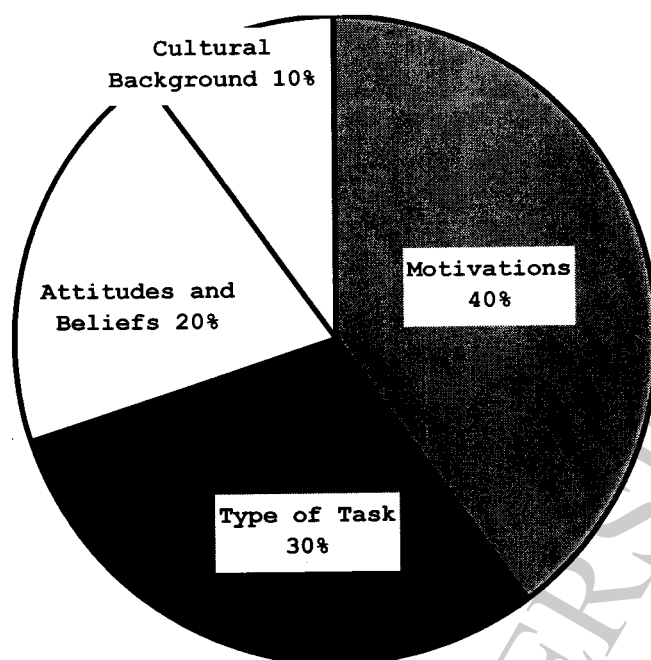
Figure 8. The Factors Affecting Learning Strategies Selection

of Thai EFL Students

Discussion

The first research question addressed in the current

study concerned the language learning strategies that were

most frequently used by the participants. Learning strategy

use of the students from the research is moderate overall (M

=3.4) out of a possible 5. The overall analysis of the *SILL*

revealed that the participants were moderate users of language

learning strategies. This result is consistent with other

studies by Han and Lin (2000), Nisbet (2002), and Yu (2003).

This means that even though the participants used all six

types of language learning strategies the frequencies were just at a moderate level. This might be due to the fact that the participants were not fully aware of the different learning strategies that can be used for language learning.

Among the six learning strategies, compensation strategies, which are categorized as direct strategies by Oxford (1990), obtained the highest mean scores (M=3.6). This result is consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Chang (1990), Watanabe (1990), Yang (1993a), and Yang (2007), which showed that the compensation category was the highest ranking category.

Compensation strategies help learners to overcome their knowledge limitations in all four skills. In listening and reading, when learners do not know all the words in a text, they can use compensation strategies such as guessing intelligently by using linguistic clues or other clues in order to get the meaning instead of looking up every unknown word in a dictionary. Learners can overcome their limitations in speaking and writing skills by using compensation strategies such as coining words, a circumlocution or synonym, and mime and gestures.

Oxford (1990) states that compensation strategies is one of the most important strategies for beginner and intermediate learners. These strategies are also useful for language users

in the later stage when they occasionally do not know an expression, or who fail to hear something clearly, or faced with a situation where their knowledge of the target language is not enough to get the meaning. Compensation strategies allow language learners to communicate in the target language despite limitations in their knowledge (Baily, 1996).

For most EFL students, guessing meaning during the conversation, or guessing meaning while reading, is common. The high use of compensation strategies in the current study showed that the participants had developed skills to get their message across even at the risk of making errors.

In addition, the participants enjoyed face-to-face communication, and understood that it was more important to keep the flow of conversation going rather than to hesitate while looking for the right words. It was natural for students to make greater use of compensation strategies because the strategies allowed them to guess the meaning of what they heard or read, and allowed them to remain in the conversation, despite their limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge.

Among the six compensation strategies, the participants most frequently used the sub-strategy, "using a circumlocution or synonym" (M = 4), and they used the sub-strategy, "coining words", the least often (M = 2.9). Coining words means making

up new words to communicate a concept which learners do not know the right vocabulary. Instead of the word, "dentist", for example, learners may use a word, "tooth doctor".

The second most frequently employed category of strategies found in the present study were cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social strategies with the same mean at 3.5. This result is inconsistent with the results from studies by Chang (1990), Watanabe (1990), Yang (1993a), and Yang (2007), which showed that the compensation category was the highest ranking category and the other five learning strategies categories contained different means scores.

However, according to the result of the current study, three different learning strategies received the same mean scores. The three different strategies categories receiving the same frequency of use is unusual but, not impossible. A closer look at the definitions of these strategies showed that the three language learning strategies were equally important in helping learners learn the target language. Cognitive strategies are direct strategies. O'Malley and Chamot (1999) state that in cognitive strategies, learners interact with the material to be learned by manipulating it mentally, as in making mental images and grouping items to be learned in meaningful categories.

Among the 14 cognitive sub-strategies, the participants used "watching English language TV shows or getting to movies spoken in English" the most often (M = 4), and they used "summarizing" the least often (M = 3). Summarizing help learners sort and organize the target language information that comes their way.

On the other hand, metacognitive strategies, which are indirect strategies, are executive processes that regulate and manage learning and include strategies for planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Metacognitive strategies help learners to notice their mistakes and use that information to help them improve their learning. Among nine metacognitive strategies of *SILL*, the participants used "paying attention" the most often (M = 4), and they used "planning" the least often (M = 2.9).

Paying attention while someone was speaking in the target language, finding out how to become better learners, and thinking about their progress are important strategies of metacognitive strategies. The high frequency use of metacognitive strategies in the current study also showed that metacognitive strategies were essential for successful language learning since these strategies provided ways for learners to coordinate their learning process through planning, monitoring, and evaluating. However despite these

fairly high scores on metacognitive strategies retrieved from the current study, it is revealed from the interview that students use these strategies only from time to time and without much sense of the real importance of those strategies.

Noguchin (1991), Politzer and McGroarty (1985), and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) suggested that social strategies were generally unpopular within Asians students. In the current study, social strategies were the second most-preferred strategies by the participants. Social strategies received the same frequency of use as cognitive, and metacognive strategies. This is one of the interesting results of the current study. Seeking correction, asking for clarification, working with peers, developing cultural understanding are the main characteristics of social strategies.

This result, however, contradicted to the common belief that Asian students generally resisted using participation in social interaction as a means to learn the target language. It did not agree with the results found in the studies by Noguchin (1991), Politzer and McGroarty (1985), and O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Their findings showed that social strategies were generally unpopular, and that Asian students preferred rote learning and language rules as opposed to more communicative strategies.

In the current study, among the social sub-strategies, the participants used "asking the other person to slow down or to say it again when they do not understand something in English" the most frequently (M = 4), while "practicing English with other students" received the lowest scores of usage (M = 3).

Cooperation implies the absence of competition and the presence of group spirit. In Asian setting of education, competition is sometimes strongly reinforced by the educational establishment this sometimes costing student in pitting students against each other in competition of approval, attention, and grades in all subjects including language learning. Although competition might sometimes result in a positive desire to improve and to do better than other people, more often it results in unbearable anxiety, withdrawal, fear of failure, and desire only to win.

The third most preferred strategies of the participants in the current study was affective strategies (M = 3). Affective strategies are techniques that help learners control their emotions and attitudes towards language learning. All affective categories deal with how to combat fear or anxiety. Affective strategies include lowering anxiety such as relaxation, using music or laugher, encouraging oneself such as making positive statements, taking risk, rewarding oneself,

and taking emotional temperature such as discussing the feeling with someone and writing language learning diary.

In this current study, "encouraging to speak English even when they are afraid of making a mistake" was used the most often (M = 3.5). This result is fairly good. Having self-confidence is known to have positive affect on learning. In addition, the current study found the sub-strategy "keeping language learning diary" the least often used (M = 2.6), by the participants. Language learning diary describes learners' feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about language learning process. In their learning diary, learners can also include specific information about strategies which they find effective or ineffective for each of the four language skills. Language learning diary helps them to keep track of their thoughts, attitudes, language learning strategies, and learning process. It helps students to inject more energy and variety into the learning situation which they think is needed for improvement. That the participants reported using very little language learning diary strategy may possibly be because they did not realize the benefits of such a strategy.

Affective strategies also include "dealing with emotions" which is one of the most important factors in learning new languages. Anxiety can lead to failure and emotional breakdown. Therefore, relaxation is quite important in

learning a new language. Similarly, rewarding strategy may sound a bit childish, but it is also one important strategy to helps learners feel good about themselves in learning a language. During the assessment of the questionnaire, the meaning and ideal of rewarding strategy was often asked by students to clarify. However, once they have a clear understanding of the strategy, the results of the participant indicated that most them, often reward themselves.

This fact of rewarding oneself, was confirmed by the interview which clarified that the participants sometimes rewarded themselves by going to the movie with friends, or buying something they wanted after studying hard or receiving an A in the exam. The participants explained to the researcher in the follow up interview that, these actions of rewarding themselves helped them feel good as language learners and encouraged them to continue to work hard in the future.

Another unexpected and interesting finding of the current study was that memory strategies were the least frequently used among the participants. Memory strategies included connecting the sounds of new words to images or pictures, making a mental picture of a situation in which a word might be used, using rhymes, physically acting out a word and

remembering new words or phrases by remembering their location on pages.

Although Asian students were known to learn languages by heart or memorizing, the results retrieved from the present study seemed to contradict this belief. This indicates that students spent significantly more time regulating and managing their learning than storing and recalling new information. The contradicting outcome may be due to the changes in teaching styles in our modern world. In addition, it is to be noted that the *SILL* memory strategies consists of some strategies that were not familiar to the participants. For example, memory strategies such as using rhymes, physically acting out a word, and remembering new words or phrases by remembering their location on the pages might be a bit confusing for the participants even though the researcher had explained the meaning to them during the data collection.

Among the memory sub-strategies the participants used "using new English words in a sentence in order to remember them" the most often (M = 3.5), and they used "flashcards to remember new English words" the least often (M = 2.3). The only possible reason for these result is that although learners knew that they needed to use new English words more often to remember them, but they may not be familiar with the also use flashcards to remember new words. To remember what

heard or read, mechanical techniques such as flashcard
technique. Flashcards, with the new word written on one side
and the definition written on the other, are useful. To
contextualize a new expression and get writing practice,
learners can wire the new expression in a full sentence on a
flashcard. Flashcards can be moved from one pile to another
depending on how well the learner knows them.

Discussion on Factors Affecting Language Learning
Strategies Selections

According to the interview data, factors affecting
language learning strategies selections of the participants
were motivation, types of task, attitudes and beliefs, and
cultural background. This finding is consistent with Dornyei
(2001), Oxford and Shearin (1994), and Ushioda (1996).

In many fields of studies, it is accepted that motivation
is essential to success. More motivated students tend to use
more strategies, and specific reasons for studying the
language were important in their selections of strategies.
The interview data of the participants revealed that they were
highly motivated to learn English for various reasons. When
it was asked for their reasons for studying English, their
answers revealed that they were learning English not only to

improve their employment potential but also to increase global

understanding and to be able to appreciate international

literature, music and film. Some of them were chosen to learn

English because they were interested in the language itself.

The current study found that not all of the participants

had positive reasons in learning English. Some responded that

they were learning English continuously despite the fact that

they disliked it and wanted to respond to the unfavorable

attitude of some English speaking foreigners who they came

across very often in their community. This result was

consistent with a statement on motivation and attitudes

towards the target language by Lightbrown and Spada (1999).

If learners need to speak in a wide range of social situations

or to fulfill professional ambitions, they will perceive the

communicative value of the second language and will,

therefore, be motivated to acquire proficiency. This finding

is also consistent with the study by Oxford (1990). She found

that attitudes and beliefs were reported to have a profound

effect on the learners' selections of strategies. However,

the present study's finding did not support Oxford's statement

regarding negative attitudes and beliefs, which often caused

poor strategy use or lack of orchestration of strategies.

When asked about their preferable ways of learning

English and the best way to learn English according to their

view, the participants' answers were varied. Some of them
said that the best way to learn English was when they felt
relaxed and when they did not need to be worried about what
other people might think of them or laughed at them if they
made mistakes. Obviously, learners preferred to learn in a
non-threatening and supportive environment.

The result of the current study showed that the types of
task highly affected EFL students' learning strategies
selections. The way they responded to learning or to complete
the lesson depended on the types of task assigned by their
teachers. The strategies they used to complete the task also
changed. This is consistent with the findings from Gopal's
study (1999) and Oxford's study (2002). They reported that
the nature of task helped determine the strategies naturally
employed to carry out the task.

When it was asked about their preferred task types, some
of the participants informed that they preferred the tasks
that allowed them to be actively involved, for example,
writing a report after interviewing people, visiting places,
or finding out how certain things worked. Some of them
informed that they did not care much about task types; they
felt that having the opportunity to do various tasks was good,
but they wanted the tasks to be manageable. They complained
that because they were fourth-years students, they usually had

too many assignments from all their subjects. In those cases the students revealed that they tried to complete all the tasks so that they would get grades for doing those assignments. However, they usually were not pleased with their work and did not learn anything. This means that students ended up being forced to do many tasks but learning very little as they were worried about completing all the tasks.

In addition, the result of the current study indicated that cultural background was also found to have link to the types of task participants preferred and their enthusiasm to complete the lesson. The participants pointed out that sometimes they felt that the activities from their textbook were not interesting and in those cases they did not perform the tasks actively. They also talked about the context in some textbooks which was usually western-oriented. Some of them felt that they lost their interest to complete the tasks when the contexts were too difficult for them to understand. This is consistent with the result from Oxford's study (1993), which found that Asian students used strategies that were different from those used by students from other cultural backgrounds.

The results from this study were quite similar to that from Lee and Oxford's study (2008), conducted in Korea using

SILL and interview as instruments. They found that students, who considered English as important, evaluated their own proficiency and were already aware of a variety of language learning strategies and employed them more frequently. While gender and major fields of study were expected to be helpful indicators of successful learning, Lee and Oxford found that they did not affect strategy use. The similarity between their study and the current study was that, as it was with Korean students, the participants in the current study also considered English as important and, therefore, were motivated to use a variety of language learning strategies in learning English. In addition, the current study also did not find gender as an important factor affecting strategy use.

In conclusion, language learning strategies that were most frequently used by the participants was compensation strategies. The factors affecting their language learning strategies selections were motivation, types of task, attitudes and beliefs, and cultural background. The implications of the results retrieved from the current study for classroom use and for future study will be discussed in the next chapter.