English Language Learning Strategies Employed by Yemeni Secondary School Learners in Ibb Governorate

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Master Degree in Applied Linguistics
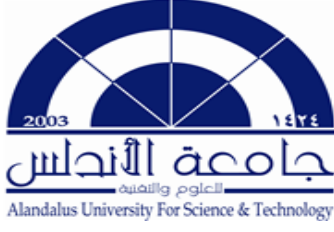
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November- 2018

الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية من قبل الطلاب اليمنيين للمرحلة الثانوية بمحافظة إب

رسالة مقدمة إلى قسم اللغة الإنجليزية والأدب لاستكمال متطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في اللغويات التطبيقية

الباحث

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نوفمبر - 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that the work entitled *English Language Learning Strategies Employed by Yemeni Secondary School Learners in Ibb Governorate* submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master, is the record of work carried out by me under the supervision and direction of Professor **Yehia Al-Sohbani** and has not formed the basis for award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, titles in this or any other university or institution.

I further declare that the material obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged in this work.

Signed: ....

Belal Abdullah Al-Hubaishi

Date: ..../......../...........

DEDICATION

To the soul of my mother in her grave for dedicating herself dearly over the years for the

sake of my education and intellectual development

for showing me the real meaning of love, for having instilled in me the value of

education and for being my guide and inspiration throughout my life,

To my father for showing me the real meaning of fatherhood

To my wife and my mother-in-law for their great support, encouragement, and sacrifices

during the various stages of my study

To my sister-in-law

To my aunt

To my beloved children

To my sisters and brothers

To my nephews

To them all with love and gratitude

I love you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people without whom this thesis might not have been written, and to whom I am greatly indebted.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Allah for giving me the ability to complete this thesis successfully in spite of all circumstances. My acknowledgement is for Dr. Mohammed Al-Shormani; the coordinator of MA programme, and Dr. Majed Shabalah; the Rector of Al-Qlam university, for their support and encouragement.

Particularly, I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude and sincere appreciation to my principal supervisor Professor Yehia Al-Sohbani for his constructive guidance and supervision, encouragement and forbearance throughout all the stages of my study. Thank you very much for your advice, suggestions, and expertise that supported my research and skills. I would also like to express my appreciation and sincere thanks to Marwan Al-Tayar, an associate Professor at Ibb university, for his great help in analyzing the statistical data of this study as well as for his constructive comments, editing, and suggestions. Actually, I highly appreciate the effort they exerted and the valuable time they spent in reading, editing, and commenting. Moreover, I would like to thank Professor Yehia Al-Sohbani for triggering the initial interest in this subject and for the opportunity of studying educational research with him. I would like to express my gratefulness to all my teachers in the Department of English namely Dr. Kamal Al-Gorani, Dr. Ahmed Galb, and Dr. Anis Al-Nagar for their great efforts, contributions, and comments while teaching as well as their encouragement from the initial stage until the completion of this study. Special thanks are extended to the head of my school of Dar Al-Hubaishi for Orphans Care Mr. Arafat Sharif for his assistance and encouragement, and for giving me all the facilities that let me study with ease and comfort.

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate language learning strategies (LLSs) employed by Yemeni secondary school learners in Ibb governorate. It also explored the significant differences in the use of LLSs based on gender variable. Three hundred seventy-seven learners (males =185 and females =192) enrolled in grade (10) were the participants in the present study who responded to Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) of EFL version of 50 statements which was adopted for the data collection. The data collected were statistically analyzed by using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) programme to find the most and the least frequently used LLSs by Yemeni secondary school learners as well as their overall strategy use. Towards achieving such aims, descriptive analysis (means, standard deviations, frequency accounts, and percentages), and an independent T-test were employed to identify the difference between secondary school male and female learners in the means of using LLSs. The results showed that the overall use of LLSs by Yemeni secondary school learners was at a medium level ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.68$). The findings also revealed that metacognitive and social strategies were the most frequently used by the respondents, followed by affective and cognitive strategies while memory and compensation strategies were the least frequently used strategies. With regard to the differences in LLSs use of gender variable, the results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between secondary school males and females in the overall means of using LLSs and in the means of using memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and affective strategies in favor of females. In addition, the findings showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the means of using social strategies between males and females. Besides, the results have significant implications for classroom instruction, materials design, and teacher preparation. The study concludes by recommending that more training should be given in using all LLSs by embedding them into regular classroom activities.

ملخص الدراسة

تهدف الدراسة الحالية في البحث عن استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية المستخدمة لدى الطلاب اليمنيين الذكور والإناث للمرحلة الثانوية في محافظة إب. كما تهدف هذه الدراسة الى معرفة ما إذا كان هناك فروق في استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة بالنسبة لمتغير الجنس أم لا. ثلاثمائة وسبعة وسبعون طالباً وطالبة (185 ذكور، 192 إناث) من الصف العاشر (الأول الثانوي) هم المشاركون في الدراسة الحالية، والذين أجابوا على استبيان اكسفورد (Oxford's SILL, 1990) الذي تبنته الدراسة كوسيلة لجمع البيانات من عينة الدراسة المتعلقة باستخدام تلك الاستراتيجيات. وقد تم تحليل البيانات الكمّية الي تم الحصول عليها من خلال برنامج SPSS وذلك لإيجاد الاستراتيجيات الأكثر والأقل استخداماً من قبل الطلاب الذكور والإناث للمرحلة الثانوية وفقاً للاستخدام العام لتلك الاستراتيجيات. ومن أجل تحقيق تلك الأهداف، تم استخدام التحليل الوصفي (المتوسطات والنسب المئوية والانحرافات المعيارية) والاختبار التائي لمعرفة الفرق بين الطلاب الذكور والإناث في استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الاستخدام العام لاستراتيجيات تعلم اللغة المستخدمة من قبل الطلاب اليمنيين للمرحلة الثانوية كان متوسطاً وبمعدل (3.11) وانحراف معياري (0,68). كما أظهرت النتائج أن الاستراتيجيات الأكثر استخداماً من قبل الطلاب (الذكور والإناث) كانت الما-وراء معرفية والاستراتيجيات الاجتماعية يليها الاستراتيجيات الوجدانية والاستراتيجيات الإدراكية، بينما الاستراتيجيات الأقل استخداماً كانت استراتيجيات الحفظ واستراتيجيات التعويض.

وفيما يتعلق بالاختلاف بالنسبة لمتغير الجنس، أظهرت النتائج أن هناك فرقاً كبيراً ذات دلالة احصائية بالنسبة لمتغير الجنس في الاستخدام العام لاستراتيجيات تعلم اللغة وفي استخدام استراتيجيات الحفظ، والاستراتيجيات الادراكية، واستراتيجيات التعويض، واستراتيجية الما-وراء معرفية والاستراتيجيات الوجدانية لصالح الطلاب (الاناث). كما أظهرت النتائج أنه لا يوجد فرق ذات دلالة احصائية بين الطلاب الذكور والاناث في استخدام الاستراتيجيات الاجتماعية.

من خلال هذه الدراسة تم التعرف على الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة لدى الطلاب اليمنيين للمرحلة الثانوية في محافظة إب. إن لنتائج هذه الدراسة أثراً إيجابياً على الباحثين في مجال استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة وتدريسها واعداد المناهج من قبل أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية. اضافة الى ذلك، فقد اختتمت الدراسة بالتوصية بالاهتمام الأكثر بالتدريب على استخدام جميع الاستراتيجيات عن طريق دمجها بالنشاطات الصفية المعتادة.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CECFY	Crescent English Course for Yemen
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LLSs	Language Learning Strategies
No.	Number
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, an important emphasis has taken place in the field of education that has resulted in more focus on learners and learning and less concern on teachers and teaching (Abu Shmais, 2003; Aljuaid, 2010) with increasing investigation into how language learners process, store, retrieve, and use target language materials (White, 1993, 2008). Research on language learning strategies (LLSs) begins in 1970s focusing on how the characteristics of good language learners connect to their language performance. This focus has resulted in increasing studies conducted to identify LLSs that good language learners use in acquiring a target language successfully. LLSs play a crucial role in a successful language learning process. It is widely agreed that LLSs are significant components in a language learning process and are considered as important factors for a successful language learning process (Abdul-Ghafour, 2013).

O'Malley, Russo, Chamot, and Stwener-Manzanares (1988) argue that learning strategies may be effective for learning foreign language (FL) or for learning English as a second language (ESL). Learning strategies are operations or steps used by the learners to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information (Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Kupper, 1985a). Oxford (1990) also sees LLSs as "steps taken by students to enhance their own learning" (p. 1). According to Oxford (2008), learning strategies are generally signs of learner autonomy. They are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the language learning process (Hawel, 2015).

For decades, researchers have said that effective learners are typically aware of their strategies for learning, can judge the effectiveness of these strategies, and can choose

strategies well (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 2008). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) believe that "more effective students used learning strategies more often and had a wider repertoire of learning strategies than did less effective students" (p. 128). In addition, O'Malley et al. (1985a) argue that:

> The learning strategies of good language learners, once identified and successfully taught to less competent learners, could have considerable potential for enhancing the development of second language skills. Second language teachers can play an active and valuable role by teaching students on how to apply learning strategies to varied language activities and how to extend the strategies to new tasks both in the language class and in content areas requiring language skills. (pp. 557-558)

Investigating the learning strategies of effective and ineffective learners, Chamot and Küpper (1989) also find that "more successful students used learning strategies more often, more appropriately, with greater variety, and in ways that helped them complete the task successfully" (p. 17). Ineffective students used fewer strategies and often used strategies "that were inappropriate to the task" (Chamot & Küpper, 1989, p. 17). Through an extensive literature review, it has been suggested that the choice of language learning strategy use has been influenced considerably by many various factors (e.g., Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Peacock & Ho, 2003). Oxford (1990) claims that factors such as gender, learning styles, motivation, personality, etc. are strongly affecting learners' choice of learning strategy use.

Research indicates that language learners at all levels use strategies (Chamot & Kupper, 1989), but that some or most learners are not fully aware of the strategies they use or the strategies that might be most beneficial to employ (Oxford, 1989). Based on the experience of the researcher as an English language teacher and supervisor, it is noticed that Yemeni secondary school learners may not be always aware of the power of consciously

using LLSs for making learning quicker and more effective. In other words, they do not use appropriate learning strategies needed to learn the target language and remain unable to achieve the desired goal of effective English language teaching (ELT). As mentioned above, the focus on LLSs has been globally emphasized and increased, however, this field has not been studied adequately in the Arab countries in general (Al-Sohbani, 2018) and there have been few, if not any studies conducted on the LLSs use namely in Yemeni secondary schools. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill such a gap. It mainly aims to explore the types of English LLSs employed by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners in Ibb governorate, based on the six categories of strategies presented in Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), and to investigate if there are any significant differences between male and female learners regarding the use of LLSs.

1.2. Rationale of the Study

One of the main concerns of English as a foreign language (EFL) research is to identify what types of strategies students use to comprehend, learn, or retain new information and how they retrieve and use of such information. Particular emphasis is placed on the need for effective teaching of learning strategies (Graham, 1997). This is the point at which teachers can demonstrate some of the learning strategies that students might want to learn how to use appropriate strategies (Chamot, 1998). It is clear that students can be taught to use better strategies as research suggests that "better strategies improve language performance" (Oxford, 1989, p. 4).

Learning strategies assist learners to evaluate and improve their own language learning process. They aid learners to find out their own deficiencies and abilities towards learning and, therefore, try to fill in their gaps and ask for help. Besides, they guide learners to learn and pass their exams successfully. Furthermore, they involve learners in thinking

about themselves as learners as well as help them to make the greatest progress in their own learning (Oxford, 2008).

Chamot (2004) confirms that the preponderance of research on LLSs has been descriptive, as researchers have sought to discover what learning strategies are reported by learners of different languages. Though, there is an obvious dearth of this type of research within the Arabic EFL context (see e.g., Abumelha, 2008; Abu Shmais, 2003; Al-Buainain, 2010; Aljuaid, 2010; El-Dib, 2004; Khalil, 2005; Radwan, 2011) that investigates the use of LLSs by EFL students in Arab countries. In fact, there is an apparent paucity of this kind of research within the Yemeni EFL context investigating the general patterns of LLSs use, with only two studies of Al-Sohbani (2013a) and Abdul-Ghafour (2013) in Yemen respectively. Al-Sohbani investigated the metacognitive reading strategies used by Yemeni EFL undergraduate university students while Abdul-Ghafour investigated the relationship between LLSs and achievement among EFL university students.

Yemen is a monolingual country and Arabic is the formal language and the medium of instruction in all educational institutions. In Yemen, English is taught as a FL and Yemeni secondary school learners have studied English for six years. Nonetheless, the students' communicative competence is still very weak and unsatisfying, so they cannot use even simple statements, orally or in writing, to interact with others (Al-Sohbani, 2016). Macaro (2001) claims that by learning to maintain communication through various strategies we keep the conversation going and therefore end up talking more than if we just clammed up.

As an English language teacher and inspector in Ibb education office for many years, the researcher has wondered why some learners are successful in language learning while others are unsuccessful, however, no matter how hard the teacher works to make the language class interesting and enjoyable. Such issue seems worthy to explore. Chamot (1998) argues

that one of the main reasons behind the weakness of learners' communicative competence is related to the strategies EFL learners employ to accomplish their needs or the tasks assigned.

To help learners become more effective language learners, it seems worthy to be investigated. Due to the shortage of research on the patterns of LLSs employed by Yemeni secondary school learners, further research is needed in this concern. This study presents a step in this direction. It will investigate LLSs use by such learners and explore the difference between males and females' strategy use. This study thus aims to extend the available body of literature concerning Yemeni students in their learning context and on the employment of LLSs by secondary school male and female learners in Ibb governorate.

1.3. The Status of English in Yemen

Today, English language is used most widely in the world. Bose (2002) reports that one of the main reasons that English is taught universally, either as a first language (L1), a second language (L2), or a FL, is due to its global status it enjoys. Benson and Lor (1999, as cited in Al-Sohbani, 2016) argue that since English is considered the first language in the world, it is, therefore, very important to be learned. It is widely agreed that English becomes the international language to be used all over the world for communicative purposes more than any other language (Liou, 2010, as cited in Al-Hammadi, 2017). With the progress in business, science, and technology, English has become very important and the number of foreign visitors, teachers, and workers in Yemen has kept increasing steadily (Bose, 2002).

Therefore, Yemen desperately needs English for its developments in all aspects of daily life and the demand for English language has been growing rapidly. Because of the increasing importance of the English language, there is a growing focus on teaching it throughout the world (Al-Hammadi & Sidek, 2014). In recent years, there has been a significant awareness of the importance of English by the Yemeni community. For many Yemenis, knowledge of English is a way to gain prestige and a key of success. It ensures a

better job, an opportunity for higher education, and access to contemporary information and communication with the outside world (Hassen, 2009). Due to the importance of English language for Yemeni society, the Yemeni policy of teaching and learning English acknowledges that English is an important global language comes from the realization of its important growth in the world (Bose, 2002). Although the realization of its importance in the public Yemeni schools' curriculum is growing greatly, it is seen as merely a subject among many in the school syllabus (Al-Sohbani, 2016).

In the present time, English enjoys a significant and a privileged status in Yemen. In general Yemeni people are now more aware of the fact that English has a crucial role in Yemeni education, political affairs, oil companies, international banking, exports, imports, and various industrial development (Al-Sohbani, 2015, 2016). It is used enormously in education and communication as it is the language of science and technology (Bose, 2002). As English is required for job opportunities, the interest for learning English language in Yemen is increasing rapidly. This is apparent from the standards of jobs opportunities that require knowledge of English as an essential qualification. For instance, many foreign organizations and companies need employees who are qualified and proficient in English to meet their practical requirements.

Thus, Yemenis, inside or outside Yemen, need to access these English sources of knowledge to peruse their self-development.

1.4. Teaching of English Language in Yemeni Schools

Teaching of English in Yemeni secondary schools is considered as one of the main concerns of the Ministry of Education due to the status of English locally and globally (Al-Sohbani, 2013b). In Yemeni schools, English language is formally taught from grade (7) of Basic Education Stage. The objectives of ELT in Yemeni schools are stated by Bose (2002, p. 17) as follows:

1. Enabling EFL Yemeni students to develop their proficiency in basic English language skills such as listening and speaking.

2. Encouraging them to communicate in English with people who do not speak Arabic in daily life situations.

3. Helping them to develop English writing skills for academic purposes.

4. Encouraging them to read English books and newspapers for acquiring information or vocabulary to use outside of the class.

In addition, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is based on the premise that the primary aims of teaching English language is to provide learners with information, practice, and experience to meet their communication needs (Canale, 1983, as cited in Bataineh, Bataineh, & Thabet, 2011). There is, therefore, a real need for teaching and learning English in Yemen for many reasons. Some of these reasons are stated by Bose (2002, pp. 15-16) as follows:

1. Yemen with its rich, ancient culture is becoming a major attraction for tourists from all over the world and hence, English will help boost the country's tourism industry.

2. Higher Education in Yemen is expanding and there is a need for offering advanced courses in the field of science and technology which entails the increasing use of English in higher education.

3. The number of Yemeni students going to countries like UK, USA, and India for higher studies is increasing and they need proficiency in English.

4. There is an increasingly need for English in international trade because the relationships of Yemen with other countries are growing greatly.

With regard to the status of teaching English in Yemeni context, English language is introduced as a compulsory subject and taught as a FL for five to six periods a week at all

grades (7-12) and the duration of the class session is approximately 45 minutes. According to Bose (2002), the teaching of English at the Yemeni public schools is based on the CLT. Although CLT is supposed to be followed, traditional teaching is still practiced (Al-Sohbani, 2013b, 2016). Similarly, Bataineh et al. (2011) claim that "Yemeni teachers are more inclined towards structure-based principles than those of CLT" (P. 865).

O'Neill, Snow, and Peacock (1999) affirm that the materials and methodology are essentially pupil-centered, aiming to promote learning through meaningful individual and interactive tasks. Nevertheless, it can be stated that teaching English in Yemeni schools is mainly teacher-centered (Al-Sohbani, 2013b) where teacher has a role of complete authority and controller in the classroom.

In fact, English education of Yemeni school students can be positively or negatively influenced by many different factors such as teaching process, starting age for learning, learning styles, learning strategies, classroom environment, and motivation. The current section has discussed briefly teaching English in Yemeni schools with a focus on the objectives and reasons of ELT in Yemeni schools. The next section will be devoted to the secondary school curriculum in Yemen.

1.5. The English Curriculum in Yemeni Secondary School

Different materials are used for teaching English in Yemeni schools. Yemen has witnessed some changes curricula changes in the 1990s which have emphasized the need of communication inside classrooms and enhancing Yemeni students with English abilities (Al-Shamiry, 1991; Bataineh, Thabet, & Bataineh, 2008; Thabet, 2002). These changes have affected the current situation in Yemen, regarding teaching English as a FL in terms of introducing textbooks based on communicative approach. In 1990, the Ministry of Education adopted a new curriculum called the *Crescent English Course for Yemen* (CECFY) which

was published in cooperation with Oxford Press and is still taught today (Al-Hammadi & Sidek, 2014).

The CECFY was introduced in schools in 1995/1996 and the last editions, namely the third grade, of the secondary class was introduced in 1999/2000 as a final step of the new teaching textbook (Bose, 2002). The CECFY has a variety of activities for English language use in daily communication replaced the Yemeni structural syllabus (i.e., English for Yemen) (Bose, 2002; Mahfoodh, 2011). It was written by two British authors in consultation with some local Yemeni experts in the field of Education in Yemen (Bose, 2002; Mahfoodh, 2011). This course was published after conducting research, conferences, and seminar discussions over a number of years (O'Neill et al., 1999). It is "pioneered the communicative approach to language learning and teaching" whereas the syllabus is "a combined functional structural" one and the recommended methodology is "drawn from a variety of old and new sources" (O'Neill et al., 1999, p. 4; Bose, 2002, pp. 53-54). In the CLT approach, students are engaged in activities that give them the opportunity to think critically and use the target language in meaningful contexts and in new ways (Al-Hammadi & Sidek, 2014).

This new edition of the course is firmly based on the same theoretical and pedagogical principles as the original (O'Neill et al., 1999). Definitely, the present material has many positive features of text types such as an attractive design with colourful illustrations for language presentation and good practice exercises for all language elements and skill development.

This textbook is introduced to be taught in Yemeni schools in order to improve the quality of ELT and learning processes throughout the country. The new material (i.e., the CECFY) provides a collection of reading passages for the students in order to expand their knowledge in the field of their choice. In addition, it includes a variety of communicative

activities based on real-life situations that mainly assist the students to develop their own communicative ability (Bose, 2002).

The Crescent English Course for secondary levels prescribed by Ministry of Education in Yemen includes: Pupil's book and workbook four, five, and six match 10, 11, and 12 standards, respectively. They are the first, second, and third grades of the secondary school stage. Both books are presented in two separated books. The pupil's book contains the input material whereas the workbook contains language tasks and practice exercises. The workbooks provide carefully graded and systematic practice and consolidation exercises as well as communicative language learning tasks. The core material is intended to be used by all students for developing language skills (O'Neill et al., 1999).

Bose (2002) states that the workbooks pay more attention to reading and writing skills in addition to vocabulary and grammar exercises. The current textbook designed for the secondary school level, respectively grade 10, is book 4 which is organised into eight units. This course creates a negative attitude among the teachers as they find it hard to implement in real situation in schools because the content is not related to the Yemeni context.

Therefore, it can be said that the English curriculum is uniform throughout the country and it is mainly based on communicative approach (Al-Sohbani, 2013b, 2015, 2016). The current section has discussed briefly the English curriculum used in Yemeni secondary school with a focus on the major positive features and its role in developing students' communicative ability.

1.6. Statement of the Problem

Research consistently shows that less successful language learners often use the same strategies over and over again and do not make significant progress in their tasks. They do not recognize that the strategies they use do not help them to accomplish their goal. The less successful learners seem to be unaware of the strategies available to them to successfully

accomplish a language task (Anderson, 2005), and they often use strategies in a desperate way, not knowing how to identify the needed strategies (Oxford, 2008).

Learners are affected by their teachers during learning and by the settings in which the language is learned. Therefore, opportunity to learn English through authentic communication with native speakers is very seldom for Yemeni students who live in small towns or in rural areas. Al-Sohbani (2015) argues that "the only way to learn English in Yemen is through formal instruction where the English language teachers are also Yemeni" (p. 36). As mentioned earlier, English textbooks in Yemeni public schools are, to a large extent, communicatively oriented and learners in these schools study English for six years, although most of them are unable to use the language for communicative purposes even after graduating from secondary schools. According to the expertise of the researcher in the field of ELT, this low level of the learners could be attributed to the traditional approaches teachers followed in teaching English which focus on grammar structures, practicing vocabulary, and using Arabic.

Graham (1997) states that teachers are the main obstacle for the development of effective learning strategies in students as he states that there are some reasons behind this such as "lack of time, insufficient training in teaching strategies and low motivation to implement them" (p. 145). In this respect, Oxford (1990) claims that learners' performance of English language learning can be influenced by many factors such as LLSs.

As Oxford (1990) argues that "Once you know how students are currently learning, you can help them to learn more effectively" (p. 200). However, applied research on LLSs investigates the feasibility of helping learners become more effective language learners by teaching them some of the learning strategies (Chamot, 1998), and hence, it has become increasingly necessary for Yemeni learners to develop the language skills required to learn English, and to evolve strategies to assist this development.

Based on the experience of the researcher, it is noticed that a large number of Yemeni secondary school learners may not be always aware of using appropriate LLSs to learn the target language and remain unable to achieve the desired goal of effective ELT. In this regard, exploring what LLSs are employed by Yemeni male and female secondary school learners in Ibb governorate seems necessary to be investigated, which may lead to a better understanding of the way Yemeni EFL learners acquire the target language.

Thus, such an issue indeed needs to be explored empirically so that the revealed findings may enlighten and provoke the Ministry of Education represented by supervisors and trainers in order to rethink of this problem.

1.7. Objectives of the Study

The present study mainly aims at:

1. Identifying the types and frequency of LLSs employed by Yemeni secondary school learners in Ibb governorate based on the six categories of strategies presented in Oxford's SILL.

2. Investigating if there are any significant differences between male and female learners regarding their use of LLSs.

1.8. Questions of the Study

Given the shortage of research on patterns of language learning strategy use among Yemeni learners at the secondary school in Ibb governorate, the current study tries to fill such a dearth. The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types and the most/least frequently LLSs do Yemeni secondary school learners employ?

2. Are there any significant differences between males and females' LLSs use?

1.9. Significance of the Study

Research in other contexts has shown that female learners' use of LLSs is more than males. However, it is neither known about the LLSs' awareness of English language learners in Yemeni secondary school nor about the differences between male and female learners regarding their use of such strategies.

Therefore, the present study focuses on English LLSs which, as indicated earlier, have not been thoroughly investigated in the Arab world in general and in Yemen in particular. The present study is one of the few studies, if not the first one in Yemen that investigates the use of LLSs by Yemeni secondary school learners in Ibb governorate. This study particularly aims at finding the level of strategy use in general and in terms of strategy category. The present study also tries to identify if there are any significant differences in strategy use per gender.

In a nutshell, the significance of the study lies in the following points:

1. Giving more insight into exploring the Yemeni secondary school male and female learners' strategy use, in Ibb governorate, in particular.

2. Raising learners' awareness of the strategies that are already present in their textbooks to allow them to fully utilize them.

3. Encouraging English language teachers to incorporate LLSs during teaching tasks in the courses.

4. Invoking/inspiring researchers to conduct more studies on LLSs in general which, according to Oxford (1990), "is necessarily in its infancy" (p. 16), hoping positive effect on language learning and teaching.

Furthermore, the findings of the study may help educators mainly teachers and supervisors to focus, during teaching, on learning strategies which have not been used by the

participants and at the same time encourage and enhance the strategies already appropriately used. Moreover, this study might also provide usefulness to the curriculum developers and material producers, as knowing learners' general preference tendencies might enable material developers along with decision makers to integrate LLSs into the syllabus that would help learners to manipulate beneficial strategies.

1.10. Limitation of the Study

This study has some limitations in terms of the topic, participants, time, and instruments as follows:

1. This study is limited to investigate English LLSs employed by Yemeni secondary school learners in Ibb governorate.

2. This study is limited to urban public secondary school learners in Ibb governorate grade (10). That is, results will be obtained from this study should be cautiously considered and not be generalized. Nevertheless, certain indications will be gained can be worth taking into account in similar schools in Ibb governorate and in similar governorates.

3. This study is conducted in the academic year of 2017-2018.

4. The instrument used in this study for data collection is Oxford's (1990) SILL questionnaire.

1.11. Organization of the Study

The present study consists of five chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic, the aims, and the significance of the study. It also includes the research questions to be answered and the rationale of the study. Besides, it presents the status of English in Yemen, teaching of English language in Yemeni schools, and the English curriculum in Yemeni secondary school. Moreover, it justifies the research problem and the limitation of the present study. Chapter two presents an overview of the literature review of this study. Chapter three

presents the methodology that has been used to collect the required data. Chapter four deals with the presentation and discussion of results. Chapter five contains the summary of findings, implications of the study, and recommendations for further research.

1.12. Definitions of Key Terms

− *Crescent English Course for Yemen (CECFY)*: The crescent English course for Yemen is written by two British authors in consultation with local experts which is based on "communicative approach to language learning and teaching" (O'Neill et al., 1999, p. 4; Bose, 2002, p. 53). It is prescribed by Ministry of Education in Yemen and published by Oxford University Press for Arab World.

− *English as a Foreign Language* (*EFL*): A language that is studied in a non-native English speaking country. By this definition, English is taught in Yemen as a FL. Oxford (1990), states that a FL does not have immediate social and communicative functions within the community where it is learned; it is employed mostly to communicate elsewhere.

− *English as a Second Language (ESL)*: A language that is studied in a native English speaking country. Oxford (1990) explained that a L2 has social and communicative functions within the community where it is learned (p. 6). For example, in multilingual countries, like Canada, people need more than one language for social, economic, and professional reasons (Oxford, 1990).

− *Language Learning Strategies (LLSs)*: are defined differently by several authors and researchers. Oxford (1990) defined them as "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information" (p. 8).

− *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (*SILL*), version 7.0: a 50 item questionnaire designed by (Oxford, 1990) to assess the frequency of language

learning strategies use by EFL/ESL learners. It is divided into six categories as follows:

— *Memory strategies* (9 items): help learners to store and retrieve new information by using function such as grouping, using imagery, rhyming, and structured reviewing.

— *Cognitive strategies* (14 items): enable learners to understand and produce new language by different means such as reasoning deductively or summarizing.

— *Compensation strategies* (6 items): are the strategies that allow learners to use the language despite their large gaps in knowledge by using function such as guessing meanings from the context in reading and listening, using synonyms, or gestures to convey the meaning of unknown expression.

— *Metacognitive strategies* (9 items): are actions that go beyond cognitive devices which allow learners to coordinate their learning process by using functions such as centering, arranging, paying attention, planning, and evaluating

— *Affective strategies* (6 items): help learners to regulate their own emotions, motivations, and attitudes through using function such as anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward.

— *Social strategies* (6 items): help learners to learn through interaction with others through asking questions, cooperating with native speakers of the language, and becoming culturally aware (Oxford, 1990, 1996).

1.13. Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the topic of this study which aims to explore and investigate the general English LLSs employed by Yemeni male and female secondary school learners learning English as a FL. The chapter introduced the study through exploring existing literature with the aim of identifying LLSs employed by such learners. In addition, it introduced the rationale for this study to justify its importance, presented the statement of the

problem and the objectives of the study. Moreover, the chapter addressed the posted questions as well as the significance and the limitation of the study. The status of English in Yemen, teaching of English language in Yemeni schools, and the English curriculum in Yemeni secondary school were provided as well. Finally, the chapter provided the organization of the study and the definitions of key terms.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of LLSs. It summarizes the background and definition of LLSs. This chapter also provides an overview of the problem related to the classification systems of LLSs and presents Oxford's classification system of LLSs. It also lists the features of LLSs and takes into account the role of learning strategies in learning and teaching. In addition, it takes into consideration the previous studies of LLSs involving "good language learner" and other studies of LLSs conducted in Arab countries and non-Arab ESL/EFL settings followed by the factors that influence the choice of LLSs. Therefore, it takes into account the relationship between LLSs and gender.

2.2. Language Learning Strategies

2.2.1. Background of LLSs

The history of the language learning strategy concept goes back quite a long way (Griffiths & Oxford, 2014). Oxford (1990) explains the root of the strategy term by stating that the word comes from the ancient Greek term *strategia* meaning general relationship or the art of war. Oxford points out specifically that strategy involves the optimal management of troops, ships, or aircraft in a planned campaign. Therefore, the strategy concept has become influential in education, where it has taken on a new meaning and has been transformed into learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). Furthermore, Oxford (1990) suggests that the strategy concept implies consciousness and intentionality as she claims that "the strategy concept has been applied to…situations, where it has come to mean a plan, step, or conscious action toward achievement of an objective" (p. 8). Griffiths and Oxford (2014) affirm that the strategy concept is first brought to wide attention in the 1970s, continued engendered interest into the 1980s and 1990s by different researchers (e.g., Rubin, 1975;

O'Malley et al., 1985; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). Nevertheless, over the years the strategy concept has been far from uncontroversial. Therefore, it can be stated that learning strategies, as the term applies to language learning, have been hotly debated since 1970s and they remain controversial (Griffiths, 2004). It is observed that studies on LLSs started by the seminal article of Rubin (1975) which was particularly influenced by developments in cognitive psychology. In most of the studies on LLSs, the main focus has been on investigating what good language learners do to acquire knowledge and learn a second or foreign language. Early researchers tended to make lists of strategies and other features presumed to be essential for all good language learners (Oxford, 1994).

Lessard-Clouston (1997) states that from the educational literature, the early definition of Mayer (1988) reflects "the roots of LS in cognitive science, with its essential assumptions that human beings process information and that learning involves such information processing" (p. 2). However, learning strategies are used increasingly in learning and teaching different subjects such as math, science, history, and languages, both in classroom settings and more informal learning environments (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). The next section is devoted to the definition of LLSs.

2.2.2. Definition of LLSs

In the field of LLSs, one of the main problems that has been and may still be of much concern for many researchers is the problem of defining LLSs. In fact, the definition of LLSs is really difficult to confirm as it is so ambiguous and "elusive" (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, as cited in Griffiths, 2004, p. 2). Therefore, this problematic nature of the term and the lack of accord of what a strategy really is makes the concept "fuzzy" as described by Ellis (1994, as cited in Griffiths, 2004, p. 2) and, hence, the literature in defining and classifying LLSs remains no easy task. There is no consensus on what constitutes a learning strategy in language acquisition or how these differ from other types of learner activities (Bialystok,

1983; O'Malley et al., 1983, as cited in O'Malley, Russo, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, & Kupper, 1985b). O'Malley et al. (1985b) further support this argument of the crucial problem about the definition of LLSs as follows:

> Learning, teaching, and communication strategies are often interlaced in discussions of language acquisition and are often applied to the same behavior. Further, even within the group of activities most often referred to as learning strategies, there is considerable confusion about definitions of specific strategies and about the hierarchic relationship among strategies. (p. 3)

There have been numerous attempts to define strategies and the following excerpts of definitions provided by different experts reflect the problematic nature of LLSs. The earliest definition is provided by Rubin (1975) as "techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (p. 43). In the same line, other researchers define LLSs as techniques, methods, or procedures, for example, Chamot (2008) considers learning strategies as "techniques for understanding, remembering, and using information and skills" (p. 1). Weinstein and Mayer (1986, as cited in Chamot & El-Dinary, 2000) define learning strategies as "methods or techniques that individuals use to improve their comprehension, learning, and retention of information."

In a similar vein, Chamot and Kupper (1989) also acknowledge that LLSs are "techniques which students use to comprehend, store, and remember new information and skills" (p. 13). According to Chamot (2005), learning strategies are "procedures that facilitate a learning task" (p. 112). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) view learning strategies as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p. 1). Other scholars have provided identical definitions of LLSs as behaviors and thought processes, for example, Weinstein and Mayer (1983) consider learning

strategies as "behaviors and thoughts in which a learner engages and which are intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (p. 3). More specifically, according to Anderson (1985), and Weinstein and Mayer (1985, as cited in Weinstein, 1988), these thoughts and behaviors constitute organized plans of action designed to achieve a goal. These definitions capture the features and the purposes of LLSs. Mayer (1988) defines LLSs as "behaviors of a learner that are intended to influence how the learner processes information" (p. 11).

The optimal definition of LLSs is developed by Oxford (1990) as "steps taken by students to enhance their own learning" (p. 1). Although researchers have dealt with the concept of learning strategies from different perspectives, Oxford (1990) has developed a more comprehensive definition of LLSs as she claims that they are "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). Oxford states that learners make conscious efforts to manage their learning and these are reflected in the learning strategies used. Oxford (2003) also argues that when the learner consciously chooses strategies that fit his or her learning style and the L2 task at hand, these strategies become "a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful self- regulation of learning" (p. 2). Moreover, Stern (1992, as cited in Griffiths, 2004; Enciso, 2010; Abumelha, 2008; Chuin & Kaur, 2015; Hawel, 2015) believes that the concept of language strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies that can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions.

Oxford (1994, p. 1, 2008, p. 41), in addition, claims that L2 learning strategies are "the goal-oriented actions or steps (e.g., plan, evaluate, analyse) that learners take, with some degree of consciousness, to enhance their L2 learning." Similarly, Chamot (2004) suggests that learning strategies are "the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal" (p. 14). Nevertheless, it is rather difficult to generalise all the

definitions provided by different scholars. As one can see, the concept of a learning strategy plays a central place in educational research in second and foreign language acquisition research in particular. LLSs language learners use during the act of processing the new information, knowledge, and performing tasks have been described by many researchers and linguists. The following section is devoted to present the features related to LLSs.

2.2.3. Main Features of LLSs

There are acceptable number of basic characteristics in the view of LLSs. Oxford (1990) summarizes her view of LLSs by listing twelve key features as follows:

1. All appropriate LLSs are oriented toward the main goal of communicative competence. In order to develop communicative competence, learners should interact in real life situations with language using meaningful, contextualized language. Learning strategies encourage the learners to participate in such authentic communication.

2. Learning strategies encourage learners for greater overall self-direction. Since it is impossible for teachers to teach learners everything they need to know and cannot be with them constantly, it is very important for learners to become more responsible, confident, and independent. Self-direction is essential for the active development of ability in a new language.

3. Learning Strategies set new roles for teachers. Teachers dispose of their traditional roles as the authority figures and controllers in the classroom and have new roles such as identifying students' learning strategies, conducting training on learning strategies, and helping learners become more independent. These changes strengthen teachers' roles making them more varied and more creative.

4. Learning strategies are problem-oriented. They are tools used because there is a problem to solve, a task to accomplish, an objective to meet, or a goal to achieve.

5. Learning strategies have an action basis. They are specific actions or behaviors accomplished by the students to enhance their learning.

6. Learning strategies are not restricted to cognitive functions, such as those dealing with mental processing and manipulation of the new language. They also include metacognitive functions like planning, evaluating, and arranging one's own learning; and emotional, social, and other functions as well.

7. Learning strategies provide direct and indirect support of learning. Direct strategies involve direct learning and use of the subject matter. Indirect strategies, include metacognitive, affective, and social strategies, contribute indirectly but powerfully to learning.

8. Learning strategies have some degree of observability. They are not always readily observable because some strategies are mental processes. For example, the act of making mental associations, which is an important memory strategy, cannot be observed. However, cooperating, a strategy in which the learner works with someone else to achieve a learning goal, can be observed.

9. Learning strategies have some levels of consciousness. They are always conscious actions and they reflect conscious efforts by the learners to take control of their learning. However, after amount of practice and use, learning strategies can become automatic. In fact, making appropriate learning strategies automatic is a desirable thing for language learning.

10. Learning strategies are teachable and learnable. They are easier to teach and modify. This can be done through strategy training, which is an essential part of language education. Strategy training helps learners to become more conscious of strategy use and more skilled at employing appropriate strategies.

11. Learning strategies are flexible; that is, they are not always found in predictable sequences or in certain patterns. There is a great deal of individuality in the way that learners choose, combine, and use strategies.

12. Learning strategies choice can be influenced by a variety of factors like age, sex, motivation, etc. For example, more highly motivated learners use a significantly greater range of appropriate strategies than do less motivated learners.

2.3. Problem in Classification Systems of LLSs

In the field of LLSs, it is widely apparent that not only the definition of LLSs remains challengeable, but also the classification is evidently of great regard and contention. Oxford (1990) clarifies this crucial point about the classification of LLSs, who puts that:

There is no complete agreement on exactly what strategies are; how many strategies exist; how they should be defined, demarcated, and categorized; and whether it is— or ever will be—possible to create a real, scientifically validated hierarchy of strategies…Classification conflicts are inevitable. (P. 17)

Therefore, the contentious issue of defining LLSs and using various systems in describing them causes classification problem, contradictions, and disconformity across agreed-upon taxonomies. Griffiths (2004) explains this crucial issue by stating that:

In the face of the lack of consensus which is a feature of the language learning strategy field, whatever term may be used, and however it may be defined or classified, it is inevitably going to come into conflict with one or other of the competing terms, definitions and classification systems. (p. 4)

According to Ellis (1994, as cited in Prakongchati, 2007), the underscores that LLSs have been classified variously according to researchers' own experiences. That is to say, classification systems of LLSs have been resulted from the scholars' particular concerns, the surroundings, or the targeted sample that the researchers worked with.

For better understanding the classification of strategies, some main strategy taxonomies are compared below. O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) strategy system, which has received considerable attention since its appearance, distinguishes three broad types of strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective.

Rubin (1981, as cited in Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, Carbonaro, & Robbins, 1993) suggests a classification scheme consisting of strategies that directly affect learning (e.g., monitoring, memorizing, deductive reasoning, and practice) and processes that contribute indirectly to learning (creating opportunities for practice and production tricks). Oxford (1990) classifies LLSs into two major classes: direct strategies (memory, cognitive, and compensation) and indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social).

More recently, others have analyzed the types of strategies used with different second language tasks based on interviews, observations, and questionnaires. For example, Oxford (1990) uses the SILL questionnaire to analyze the types of LLSs used by learners.

To conclude, as there have been problems in classifying LLSs, a various number of strategy classification systems have been resulted and classified into different groups by different researchers (e.g., O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; etc.). Reporting on several studies, Oxford (1994) indicates that almost all L2 strategy classifications have been classified into the following groups: 1) systems related to successful language learners (Rubin, 1975); 2) systems based on psychological functions (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990); 3) linguistically based systems dealing with guessing, language monitoring, formal and functional practice (Bialystok, 1981); 4) systems related to separate language skills (Cohen, 1990); and 5) systems based on different styles or types of learners (Sutter, 1989). The existence of these distinct strategy taxonomies is a major problem in research on L2 learning strategies as there is "lack of a coherent, well accepted system for describing these strategies" (Oxford, 1994, p. 4). Nonetheless, most of the strategy classification systems have been

relatively come to the same classifications without any major changes (Zare, 2012). Despite of the problems in classification of LLSs, research constantly proves that learning strategies help learners to control their own learning and become more proficient (Oxford, 1990). However, the classification of LLSs in the present study is based on Oxford's (1990) classification system and further details about Oxford's (1990) taxonomy will be illustrated in the next section titled Oxford's (1990) taxonomy and classification of LLSs.

2.4. Oxford's (1990) Taxonomy and Classification of LLSs

Similar to Rubin (1981, as cited in Prakongchati, 2007), Oxford (1990) also classifies LLSs on the basis of strategy functions. Oxford (1990) assumes that the main aim of LLSs is oriented towards the "development of communicative competence" (p. 8). Oxford (1990) presents the classification of LLSs through questionnaire data. According to Ellis (1994, as cited in Prakongchati (2007) and Griffiths (2004), Oxford's taxonomy is "perhaps the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies to date".

Oxford (1990) argues that her classification system differs in several ways from earlier attempts to classify strategies because "it is more comprehensive and detailed; it is more systematic in linking individual strategies, as well as strategy groups, with each of the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing); and it uses less technical terminology" (p. 14). She claims that this classification system is a very useful way to examine such strategies. Furthermore, she describes the system and puts it this way:

This system provides...a comprehensive structure for understanding strategies. It includes a wide variety of affective and social strategies which are not often enough considered by strategy researchers, teachers, or students. It unites the whole range of compensation strategies, so confusingly separated in other strategy classification schemes. Finally, it organizes well-known metacognitive, cognitive, and memory strategies so that you can access them easily. (p. 22)

Oxford's taxonomy is basically simple and distinguished from other strategy taxonomies in which it contains only two main categories of strategies. It covers the whole range of LLSs within the two-part classification and clearly defines the strategies contained in each category. It also applies every strategy to each relevant language skill. Besides, it provides some clarifying examples of strategy use. It is based on an extensive review of empirical research and is designed for practical use (Oxford, 1986b).

In addition, this taxonomy helps students to develop each of the four language skills as well as it is useful to the development of a particular skill (Oxford, 1990). On the other hand, the strategies included in it are descriptive and applicable to all types of learners. Therefore, it can be said that Oxford's classification system is the most complete system currently now available for classifying L2 learning strategies (Oxford, 1968a).

Oxford (1990) also admits that there is a large overlap exists among the strategy categories, and gives as an example the metacognitive strategy of self-assessment and planning which often require reasoning, might also be considered a cognitive strategy. Likewise, Oxford deals with the difficulty of whether the compensation strategy of guessing, which also requires reasoning as well as involves sociocultural sensitivity, is a cognitive strategy or a social strategy.

In addition, Oxford acknowledges the possibility that some strategy researchers disagree on the basic definitions of such terms, like direct and indirect, as she provides an example of whether a particular strategy such as self-monitoring should be called direct or indirect. Oxford (1990) justifies the inclusion of learning strategies for production that help learners to keep on using the language and gain more practice. Oxford argues that they "help learners become more fluent in what they already know....may lead learners to gain new information about what is appropriate or permissible in the target language" (p. 49). Oxford (1990) classifies LLSs into two major classes: Direct strategies and indirect strategies.

These two classes are sub-divided into a total of six groups. These six categories are used by different researchers for a large number of research in the field of learning strategy. Memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies are under the direct strategies while metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies are under the indirect strategies. Table 2.1 shows Oxford's classification system of LLSs and their categories and sub-categories.

Table 2.1

Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Direct Strategies	Indirect Strategies
1. Memory A. Creating mental linkages B. Applying images and sounds C. Reviewing well D. Employing action	1. Metacognitive A. Centering your learning B. Arranging and planning your learning C. Evaluating your learning
2. Cognitive A. Practicing B. Receiving and sending messages strategies C. Analyzing and reasoning D. Creating structure for input and output	2. Affective A. Lowering your anxiety B. Encouraging yourself C. Taking your emotional temperature
3. Compensation A. Guessing intelligently B. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	3. Social A. Asking questions B. Cooperating with others C. Empathizing with others

Source: Oxford (1990, p. 17)

As Oxford (1990) states, though existing different groups, all these strategies are related to each other. Direct and indirect strategies support each other and that each strategy group is capable of connecting with and help every other strategy group. In other words, all the sub-groups listed in six categories interact with and help one another. The first major class, direct strategies (working with the language itself in a variety of specific task and situation) composed of memory strategies for remembering and retrieving new information, cognitive strategies for understanding and producing the language, and compensation strategies for using the language despite knowledge gap. The other major class, indirect strategies (dealing with the general management of learning) made up of metacognitive

strategies for coordinating the learning process, affective strategies for regulating emotions, and social strategies for learning through interaction with others (Oxford, 1990).

2.4.1. Direct Strategies

For Oxford (1990), direct strategies are specific LLSs which directly involve the target language. The main feature of all direct strategies is that they require mental processing of the language while each of the three subgroups of direct strategies does this process in its own way. Direct strategies are further classified into three groups: Memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies.

2.4.1.1. Memory Strategies

Oxford (2003) defines memory strategies as actions that are used for entering information into memory and retrieving it later. Oxford (1990) acknowledges that they are "powerful mental tools" (p. 38). Oxford states that the highly specific function of memory strategies is that they help learners store and retrieve new information. In other words, they enable learners to store verbal material and then retrieve it when needed for communication. Memory-related strategies help learners to link one L2 item or concept with another, but do not necessarily involve deep understanding (Oxford, 2003).

Oxford also affirms that memory strategies are often used for memorizing vocabulary and structures in initial stages of language learning. Memory strategies can contribute powerfully to language learning, nonetheless, some research shows that language learners rarely report using these strategies (Oxford, 1990). Oxford (1990) classifies memory strategies in another set of four: creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing actions. Figure 2.1 is the diagram that shows the clusters of the memory strategies.

A. Creating Mental Linkages
    1. Grouping
    2. Associating/elaborating
    3. Placing new words into a context

B. Applying Images and Sounds
    1. Using imagery
    2. Semantic mapping
    3. Using keywords
    4. Representing sounds in memory

Memory Strategies

C. Reviewing Well
    1. Structured reviewing

D. Employing Action
    1. Using physical response or sensation
    2. Using mechanical techniques
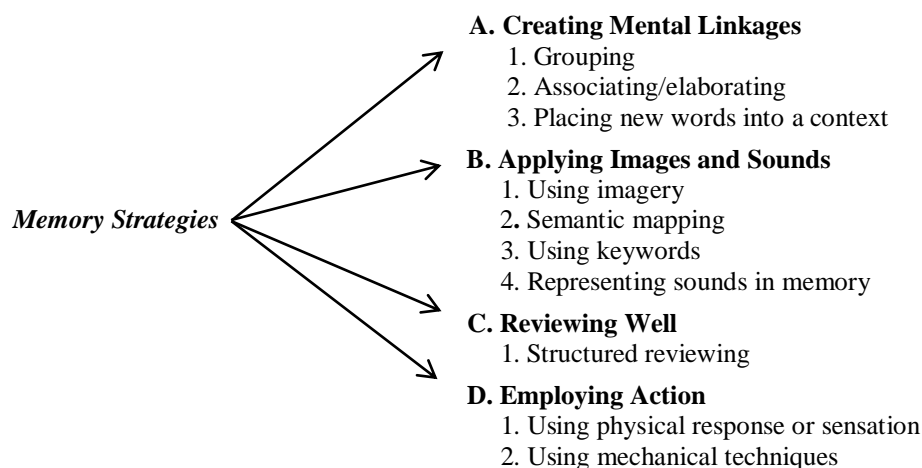
Figure 2.1: Diagram of the Memory Strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 39)

Table 2.2 shows the memory strategies definitions, as clustered into appropriate strategy sets.

Table 2.2

Memory Strategies Definitions

Strategy	Definition
A. Creating Mental Linkages	
1. Grouping	Classifying or reclassifying language material into meaningful units, either mentally or in writing, to make the material easier to remember by reducing the number of unrelated elements. This can be done, for example, by categorizing groups grammatically, then labeling them for more specific grouping.
2. Associating/Elaborating	Relating one piece of information to another in order to create associations in memory between two things (e.g., bread-butter) or in the form of a multipart.
3. Placing new words into a context	Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful sentence, conversation, or story in order to remember it by linking with a context.
B. Applying Images and Sounds	
1. Using imagery	Relating new language information to concepts that are already in memory by using meaningful visual imagery either in the mind or in actual drawing.
2. Semantic mapping	Making an arrangement of words into a picture which has a key concept at the center and the related words linked with the key concept by lines or arrows.
3. Using keywords	Remembering a new word by (a) identifying a familiar L1 word that sounds like the new word (auditory link) and (b) generating a visual image of the new word "interacting" with the familiar one in some way (visual link).
4. Representing sounds in memory	Remembering new language information according to its sounds by linking new language word with any other word in the first language that sounds like the new word. Using accent marks, phonetic spelling, or rhymes to memorize the word.
C. Reviewing Well	
1. Structured Reviewing	Reviewing the new language material carefully at different intervals. At first, reviewing close together, and then more widely spaced apart (i.e., Practice can begin immediately, then after 15 minutes, two days later, four days later, etc.
D. Employing Action	
1. Using physical response or sensation	Physically acting out a new expression (e.g., going to the door) or meaningfully relating a new expression to a physical feeling or sensation (e.g., warmth).
2. Using mechanical techniques	Using creative techniques, especially by moving or changing something which is concrete to remember new target language information. A good example is using flashcards with new words on one side and the definition on the other.

Source: Oxford (1990, pp. 40-43)

2.4.1.2. Cognitive Strategies

For Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies, such as summarizing or reasoning deductively, enable learners to understand and produce new language through many different means. The common function they all have is that they enable the learner to manipulate or transform the target language. For this reason, cognitive strategies are seen as essential for learning a new language.

Oxford (1990) claims that cognitive strategies are the most popular strategies among language learners and they are practical for language learning. Cognitive strategies are grouped by Oxford (1990) into four categories: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output. Figure 2.2 is the diagram that shows the clusters of these strategies.

A. Practicing
  1. Repeating
  2. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems
  3. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns
  4. Recombining
  5. Practicing naturalistically

B. Receiving and Sending Messages
  1. Getting the idea quickly
  2. Using resources for receiving and sending messages

Cognitive Strategies

C. Analyzing and Reasoning
  1. Reasoning deductively
  2. Analyzing expressions
  3. Analyzing contrastively (across languages)
  4. Translating
  5. Transferring

D. Creating Structure for Input and Output
  1. Taking notes
  2. Summarizing
  3. Highlighting

Figure 2.2: Diagram of the Cognitive Strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 44)

Table 2.3 shows the definitions of each cognitive strategy, as clustered into appropriate strategy sets.

Table 2.3

Cognitive Strategies Definitions

Strategy	Definition
A. Practicing	
1. Repeating	Saying or doing something repeatedly, listening to something several times, rehearsing, and imitating a native speaker.
2. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems	Practicing sounds (pronunciation, intonation, and register), however, this is not a naturalistic communicative practice; it involves practicing the new written systems of the target language in a variety of ways.
3. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns	Being aware of and using routine formulas (single, unanalyzed units), such as "Hello, how are you", etc. and unanalyzed patterns, such as "It's time to ...".
4. Recombining	Constructing a meaningful sentence or longer language sequence by combining known elements in new ways, as linking one phrase with another in a whole sentence.
5. Practicing naturalistically	Practicing the new language (L2) in natural realistic settings by conducting a conversation, listening to lecture, or reading a book in the target language.
B. Receiving and Sending Messages	
1. Getting the idea quickly	Using skimming to determine the main ideas the speaker wants to get across or scanning to find specific details of interest of the learner.
2. Using resources for receiving and sending messages	Using a variety of resources for understanding or producing meaning. It includes using print or non-print resources to understand incoming messages or produce outgoing messages.
C. Analyzing and Reasoning	
1. Reasoning deductively	Using general rules and apply them to new target language situations. It is a top-down strategy leading from general to specific.
2. Analyzing expression	Determine the meaning of a new expression by breaking it down into parts and using the meanings of the parts to understand the meaning of the whole.
3. Analyzing contrastively	Compare elements (e.g., sounds and vocabulary) of the target language with elements of one's own language to determine similarities and differences.
4. Translating	Translating word-for-word (verbatim) from one language to another and using one's own language as the basis for understanding or producing the new language in speech or writing.
5. Transferring	Directly applying previous knowledge of words, concepts, or structures from one language to another in order to understand or produce an expression in the target language.
D. Creating Structure for Input and Output	
1. Taking Notes	Writing down the main idea or specific points during instructions as small pieces of disorganized notes or in more systematic form of the shopping list format, the T-formation, the semantic map, or the standard outline form.
2. Summarizing	Making a summary of information presented or abstract of longer passage.
3. Highlighting	Using a variety of emphasis techniques, such as underlining or color-coding, to focus on important information in a passage.

Source: Oxford (1990, pp. 45-47)

2.4.1.3. Compensation Strategies

Oxford (1990) states that compensation strategies are the strategies that enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production in spite of limitations in knowledge. Oxford (1990) argues that compensation strategies are employed by learners when facing a temporary breakdown in speaking or writing.

Oxford (1990) points out that compensation strategies are intended to make up for an inadequate repertoire of grammar and vocabulary, they serve as auto fillers in learning a language where information gaps occur.

Learners use compensation both in comprehension and in production, these strategies let such learners produce spoken and written expressions in the target language though they lack of the complete knowledge.

Compensation strategies for production are used to compensate and make up for a lack of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical knowledge (Oxford, 1990). Besides, some of these strategies help learners become more fluent in their prior knowledge. Oxford (1990) states that learners who reported to use more compensation strategies sometimes communicate better than learners who are not.

There are ten compensation strategies listed by Oxford (1990) under two categories, the first is guessing intelligently and the latter is overcoming limitations in speaking and writing. Figure 2.3 is the diagram that shows the clusters of the compensation strategies.

A. Guessing Intelligently
   1. Using linguistic clues
   2. Using other clues

Compensation Strategies ⟶ **B. Overcoming Limitations in Speaking and Writing**
   1. Switching to the mother tongue
   2. Getting help
   3. Using mime or gesture
   4. Avoiding communication partially or totally
   5. Selecting the topic
   6. Adjusting or approximating the message
   7. Coining words
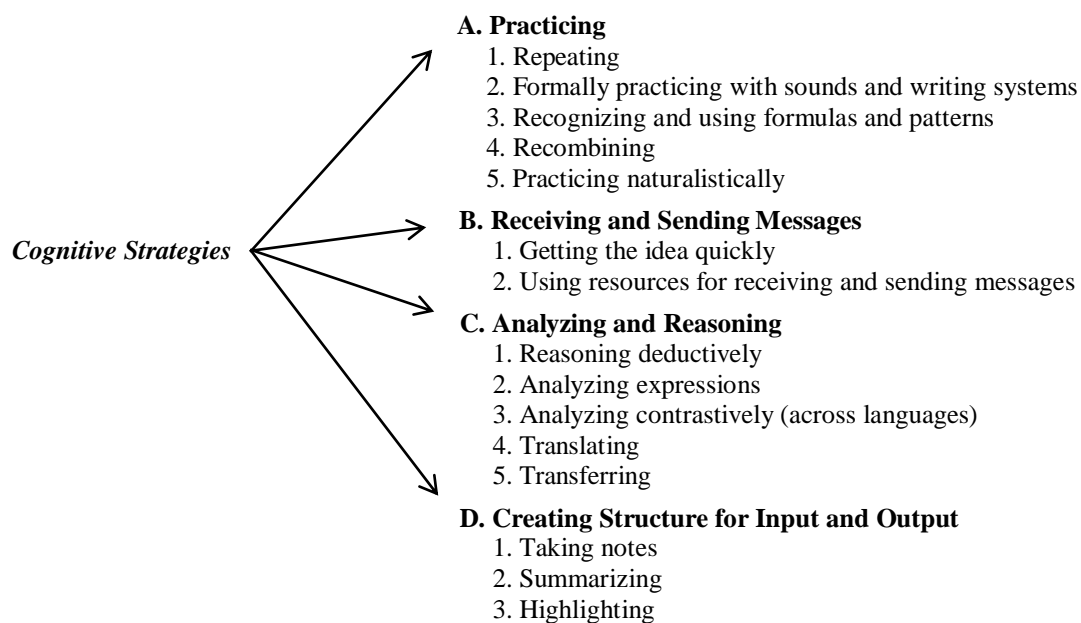   8. Using a circumlocution or synonym

Figure 2.3: Diagram of the Compensation Strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 48)

Table 2.4 shows the definitions of each compensation strategy, as clustered into appropriate strategy sets.

Table 2.4

Compensation Strategies Definitions

Strategy	Definition
A. Guessing Intelligently in Listening and Reading	
1. Using linguistic clues and other clues	Seeking and using language based and non-language based clues in order to guess the meaning of what is read or heard in the target language, in the absence of the complete knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and other target language elements. The nature of other words in the sentence, type of the word, parts of speech, or previous knowledge of certain words can be used as linguistic clues, and context, situation, text structure, topic, or personal relationships are among the non-linguistic clues.
B. Overcoming Limitations in Speaking and Writing	
1. Switching to the mother tongue	Using mother tongue for an expression without translating it. It may include adding word endings from the target language onto words from the mother tongue.
2. Getting help	Asking explicitly someone for help to provide the missing expression in the target language.
3. Using mime or gesture	Using physical motion, such as mime and gesture, in place of an expression to indicate the meaning.
4. Avoiding communication partially or totally	Partially or totally avoiding conversation when difficulties are anticipated or avoidance of certain topics in which the learner does not feel confident.
5. Selecting the topic	Choosing the topic of conversation in which the learner has sufficient vocabulary and grammar in order to direct communication.
6. Adjusting or approximating the message	Altering the message by omitting some items of information to make the ideas simpler or saying something slightly different which almost means the same thing.
7. Coining words	Making up new words to communicate the desired idea, such as paper-holder for notebook.
8. Using a circumlocution or synonym	Getting the meaning across by describing the concept (circumlocution) or using a word that means the same thing (synonyms).

Source: Oxford (1990, pp. 49-51)

2.4.2. Indirect Strategies

The second major class of LLSs is called indirect strategies because they support and manage language learning, in many instances, without directly involving the target language (Oxford, 1990). However, they are combined with the direct strategies and they are useful in practically all language learning situations and are applicable to the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) (Oxford, 1990). Oxford (1990) suggests that these strategies provide indirect support for language learning by employing different strategies, such as focusing, planning, arranging, evaluating, seeking opportunities, lowering anxiety, and increasing cooperation and empathy. Indirect strategies are further divided into three categories: Metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

2.4.2.1. Metacognitive Strategies

According to Oxford (1990), metacognitive strategies are actions that go beyond cognitive devices and enable learners to control their own cognition and to coordinate their own learning process by using functions such as centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating. Oxford (1990) believes that metacognitive strategies are very important for successful language learning.

learners who sometimes get overwhelmed by the novelty of the target language, such as unfamiliar vocabulary, confusing, and overlapping rules, need these strategies and consciously using them which can regain their focus through involving skills such as paying attention, overviewing, and linking with material already known (Oxford, 1990).

Eleven skills are listed under three sets of metacognitive strategies. They are: Centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning, and evaluating your learning. Figure 2.4 is the diagram that shows the clusters of the metacognitive strategies.

A. Centering your Learning
   1. Overviewing and linking with already known material
   2. Paying attention
   3. Delaying speech production to focus on listening

B. Arranging and Planning your Learning
   1. Finding out about language learning
   2. Organizing
   3. Setting goals and objectives
   4. Identifying the purpose of a language task
      (purposeful listening/reading/speaking/writing)
   5. Planning for a language task
   6. Seeking practice opportunities

C. Evaluating your Learning
   1. Self-monitoring
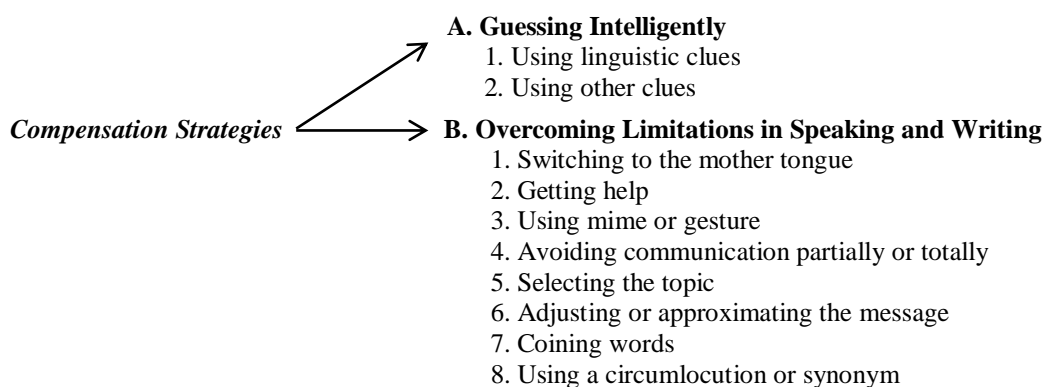   2. Self-evaluating

Metacognitive Strategies

Figure 2.4: Diagram of the Metacognitive Strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 137)

Table 2.5 shows the definitions of each metacognitive strategy, as clustered into appropriate strategy sets.

Table 2.5

Metacognitive Strategies Definitions

Strategy	Definition
A. Centering Your Learning	
1. Overviewing and linking with already known material	Overviewing comprehensively a key concept, principle, or set of materials in an upcoming activity and associating it with what is already known.
2. Paying attention	Deciding in advance to pay attention in general to an L2 learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors (direct attention), and deciding in advance to pay attention to specific aspects of L2 input or to situational details (selective attention).
3. Delaying speech production to focus on listening	Deciding in advance to delay speech production in the target language either partially or totally until listening comprehension skills are better developed.
B. Arranging and Planning your Learning	
1. Finding out about language learning	Making efforts to find out how language learning works with reading books and talking to other people to improve one's own language learning.
2. Organizing	Understanding and using conditions related to optimal learning of the new language; organizing one's own schedule, physical environment (e.g., noise, temperature, and amount of space), and language learning notebook.
3. Setting goals and objectives	Setting one's own aims for language learning, including long-term goals (e.g., being able to use the language for informal conversation by the end of the year) and short-term goals (e.g., finishing reading a story by Friday).
4. Identifying the purpose of a language task	Deciding the purpose of a particular language task involving any skill.
5. Planning for a language task	Planning for the language components and functions necessary for an upcoming language task or situation.
6. Seeking practice opportunities	Consciously seeking out or creating as many opportunities as possible to practice the L2 in naturalistic situation; for example, going to movies or joining an international social clubs.
C. Evaluating Your Learning	
1. Self-monitoring	Identifying one's own errors in both understanding and producing the new language and correcting one's own mistakes.
2. Self-evaluating	Evaluating one's own progress against short-term or long-term L2 goals in the target language by checking an internal or external measure of completeness, quality, or accuracy.

Source: Oxford (1990, pp. 138-140)

2.4.2.2. Affective Strategies

Oxford (1990) refers the term "affective" to emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values (p. 140). However, affective strategies help learners to regulate their own emotions, motivations, and attitudes. Affective factors are always deep into language learning, as they are in all kinds of learning. Positive feelings will result in better performance in language learning. Thus, while learning a new language, learners can gain control over factors related to emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values through the use of affective strategies (Oxford, 1990). There are ten skills listed under three sets of affective strategies. They are: lowering

your anxiety, encouraging yourself, and taking your emotional temperature. Figure 2.5 is the

diagram that shows the clusters of the affective strategies.

A. Lowering your Anxiety
    1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation
    2. Using music
    3. Using laughter

Affective Strategies

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

C. Taking your Emotional Temperature
    1. Listening to your body
    2. Using a checklist
    3. Writing a language learning diary
    4. Discussing your feelings with someone else

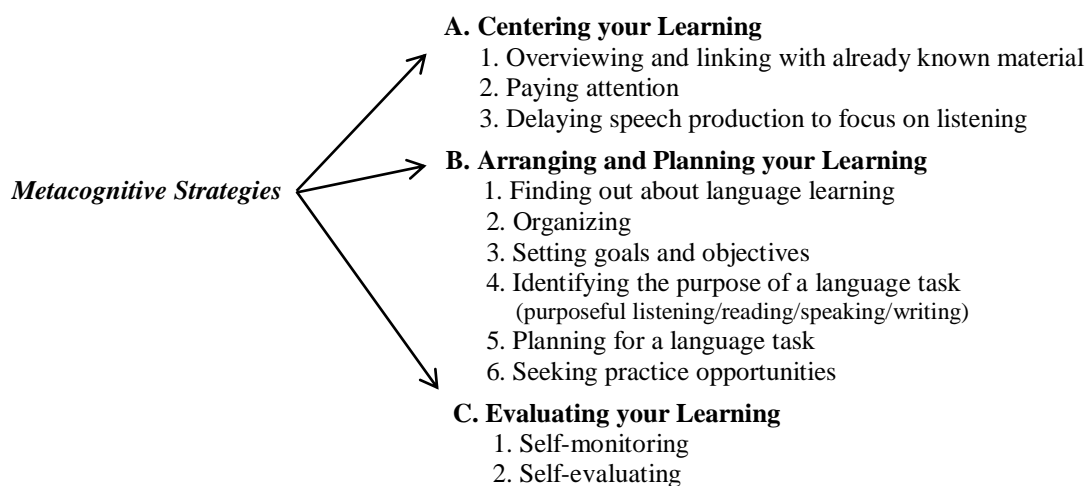*Figure 2.5:* Diagram of the Affective Strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 141)

Table 2.6 shows the definitions of each affective strategy, as clustered into

appropriate strategy sets.

Table 2.6

Affective Strategies Definitions

Strategy	Definition
A. Lowering Your Anxiety	
1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation	Using techniques of reciprocally tensing and relaxing the muscle groups in the body, such as breathing deeply from the diaphragm or meditating by focusing on a mental image or sound.
2. Using music	Listening to soothing music like a classical concert to relax.
3. Using laughter	Using laughter through watching funny films or reading funny books as means for relaxation while learning a new language.
B. Encouraging Yourself	
1. Making positive statements	Saying or writing positive statements to oneself in the L1 or the L2 in order to feel more confident or capable in learning the new language.
2. Taking risk wisely	Pushing oneself to take risk in language learning situation despite the possibility of making mistakes that must be tolerated with good judgment.
3. Rewarding yourself	Giving oneself a valuable reward for a particular good performance in the new language.
C. Taking Your Emotional Temperature	
1. Listening to your body	Paying attention to negative or positive signals reflection given by the body, such as stress, worry, fear, and anger or happiness, interest, and pleasure.
2. Using Checklist	Using checklist to discover feelings, attitudes, and motivations concerning language learning in general and specific language tasks in particular.
3. Writing a language learning Diary	Writing a diary or journal to keep track of events and feelings in the process of learning a new language.
4. Discussing your feelings with someone else	Talking with another person like a friend or a teacher to discover and express feelings about language learning.

Source: Oxford (1990, pp. 143-144)

2.4.2.3. Social Strategies

As Oxford (1990) states that "language is a form of social behavior" (p. 144), social strategies help learners to learn through interaction with others and understand the target language and the culture as well. It is, therefore, impossible to differentiate language from social interaction. Oxford (1990) affirms that social strategies are helpful and indeed essential to all four language skills. There are six strategies listed under three sets of social strategies. They are: asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others. Figure 2.6 is the diagram that shows the clusters of the social strategies.
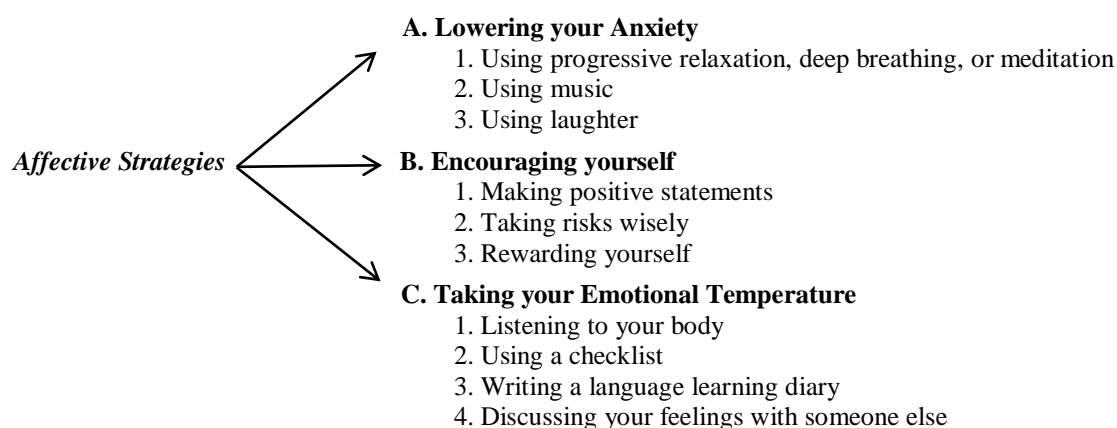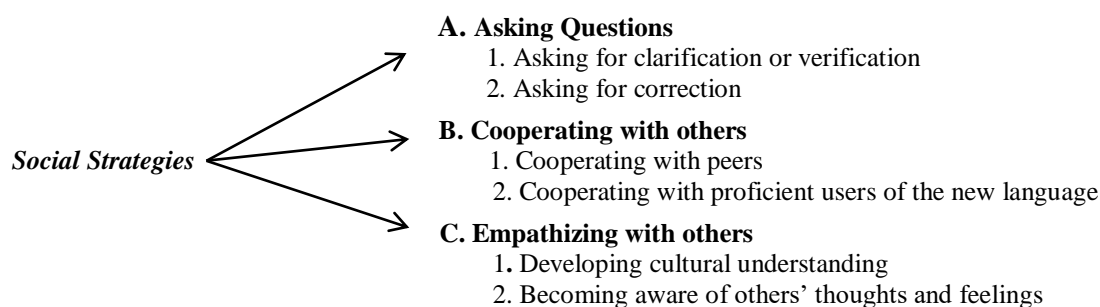

Figure 2.6: Diagram of the Social Strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 145)

Table 2.7 shows the definitions of each social strategy, as clustered into proper strategy sets.

Table 2.7

Social Strategies Definitions

Strategy	Definition
A. Asking questions	
1. Asking for clarification or verification	Asking a teacher or native speaker to repeat, clarify, paraphrase, explain, or give examples of a specific L2 item; asking if a specific utterance is correct or if a rule fits a particular case, paraphrasing or repeating a sentence to get feedback on whether something is correct.
2. Asking for correction	Asking someone for correction in a conversation.
B. Cooperating with others	
1. Cooperating with peers	Working with other language learners to improve language skills as it involves controlling motives toward competitiveness and rivalry.
2. Cooperating with proficient Users of the new language.	Working with teachers or native speakers of the language outside the class as it provides social interaction and chance of authentic communication.
C. Empathizing with others	
1. Developing cultural understanding	Trying to empathize with another person through learning about the culture and to understand the other person's relation to that culture.
2. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings	Observing the behaviors of others by asking about their thoughts and feelings.

Source: Oxford (1990, p. 147)

2.5. The Role of LLSs in Language Learning and Teaching

Since the role of LLSs has played a major shift in the educational process (i.e., learning and teaching process), in which the learner has become the center, has had an influence on learning strategies. One of the major and increasingly important role of LLSs is to help learners develop their own awareness of thinking processes (i.e., metacognition or metacognitive) and develop effective ways to retain the amount of information coming from the learning environment. Research has shown that LLSs are used by good language learners. This evidence is supported by Chamot (1998) who stated that "although good language learners are better users of strategies than less effective students in their approach to developing proficiency in a new language, less effective students can learn how to improve their performance by using appropriate learning strategies" (p. 2).

In Weinstein and Mayer (1983), it is stated that the goal of any particular learning strategy may be to affect the learner's motivational or affective state--or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge. Accordingly, effective use of LLSs helps learners to learn the new language more effectively and efficiently, remember a considerable body of material, think of ways to solve problem and increase their motivation to become better, and more successful language learners. Lessard-Clouston (1997) states that communicative competence is one of the main positive aspects of a good use of LLSs. In this respect, Oxford (1990) believes that LLSs contribute to the development of the communicative competence of the learners.

This means that learners who use LLSs appropriately and apply them to other subject area become proficient in the target language. It is widely agreed that research shows us that learners who receive strategy training generally learn better than those who do not (Oxford, 1990). This means that teachers who train learners to use LLSs can help them become successful language learners.

In this regard, Oxford (1990) states that the general goals of strategy training are "to help make language learning more meaningful, to encourage a collaborative spirit between learner and teacher, to learn about options for language learning, and to learn and practice strategies that facilitate self-reliance" (p. 200). Besides, Chamot et al. (1993) argue that one of a principal goal of teaching LLSs is to "develop the ability of students to control their own language learning" (p. 47). Furthermore, Chamot et al. (1993) suggest that "strategies are valuable learning tools" (p. 47). However, LLSs are particularly important for learners because they assist them to become more responsible, independent, and confident learners. In this regard, Oxford (1990) claims that LLSs are especially important for language learning because they are "tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence" (p. 1).

Moreover, Oxford (1986a) states that L2 learning strategies are important because they improve language performance, encourage learner autonomy, are teachable and expand the role of the teacher in significant ways. She also argues that if students and teachers know how learning strategies are most appropriately used, both groups can benefit greatly. On the other hand, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) claim that using learning strategies appropriately enables learners to take responsibility for their own learning through reinforcing learner autonomy, independence, and self-direction. Oxford (1994) adds the idea that LLSs improve proficiency, either in general or in specific skill areas. Chamot (1998) claims that when learners start to understand their own learning processes and exert some control over these processes, they become more responsible for their own learning.

Therefore, it is easy to see how LLSs activate the development of communicative competence. For instance, metacognitive strategies help learners to control their own cognition, coordinate the learning process through using function such as planning, arranging, centering, and evaluating their own learning process, social strategies help learning through

interacting with others and managing, and affective strategies help to regulate emotions, motivations, and attitudes related to learning. Memory strategies help learners to store and retrieve new information through grouping or using imagery, cognitive strategies enable learners to understand and produce new language by different means through summarizing or reasoning deductively, and compensation strategies allow learners to use language despite their gaps in knowledge of the language by guessing or using synonyms (Oxford, 1990).

Thus, LLSs are good signs of how learners process tasks or solve problems faced them during language learning process. A good language teacher characteristic is to help learners to understand better LLSs and train them to develop, and use such effective LLSs appropriately to learn the target language. Previous studies of LLSs will be the topic of the next section.

2.6. Previous Studies on LLSs

Griffiths (2004) claims that one of the challenges with examining LLSs is that they cannot usually be seen directly; they can only be derived from language learner conduct. Studies in the field of LLSs have emerged from a concern for identifying the characteristics of good language learners and the strategies they reported in learning the target language. Therefore, studies on learning strategies have evolved from simple lists of strategies to more highly sophisticated investigations using various forms of data gathering (Oxford, 1986a) about what good language learners do that makes them more successful than slower language learners (Griffiths, 2004). The researchers have demonstrated that students do apply learning strategies while learning a new language and that these strategies can be described and classified (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Therefore, this section provides information about the previous studies related to the topic and objectives being investigated in the current study. The existing literature is divided into three parts: Studies involving good language learner,

studies of LLSs conducted in Arab countries, and related studies of LLSs conducted in non-Arab ESL/EFL settings.

2.6.1. Studies Involving Good Language Learner

Early researchers tended to make lists of strategies and other characteristics supposed to be essential for all good language learners. The research in the field of LLSs started in the 1970s with the seminal article by Rubin (1975) 'What the good language learner can teach us'. She suggested that good language learner could be identified by looking at special strategies used by more successful students. Rubin describes the good language learner as follows:

1. He/She is a willing and accurate guesser, who is able to gather and store information and uses all the clues (both linguistic and social) efficiently.

2. He/She has a strong drive to communicate or learn from communication and is willing to do many things to get his/her message across.

3. He/She is often not inhibited and willing to appear foolish and make mistakes in order to learn or communicate.

4. He/She focuses on form by looking for language patterns and constantly classifying, analyzing, and synthesizing information in a particular way.

5. He/She practices pronunciation and seeks opportunities to use the language inside or outside the classroom.

6. He/She monitors his/her own speech as well as the speech of others and actively participates in the learning process whether or not he/she is called upon to perform and can learn from his/her own mistakes.

7. He/She pays attention to meaning and not just to the language grammar or surface form of speech (Rubin, 1975).

At the same time, Stern (1975, as cited in Oxford, 1986a) made a list of strategies used by good language learner, adding that he/she is identified by a number of characteristics and strategic techniques through an active approach to the learning task, a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and empathy with its speakers, technical know-how about how to tackle a language, and strategies of experimentation and planning with the aim of developing the new language into an ordered system.

A number of these characteristics have been validated by subsequent research of Naiman, Frohlich, and Todesco (1975, as cited in Oxford, 1994) who also made a list of strategies used by successful L2 learner, adding that he/she learns to think in the language and addresses the affective aspects of language acquisition. Research suggested that effective learners use a variety of learning strategies appropriate to the nature of the task, the learning material, and the person's goals and stage of learning (Oxford, 1992).

Research and theory in L2 learning strongly suggested that good language learners use a variety of strategies to assist them in gaining command over new language skills (O'Malley et al.,1985a). Therefore, these studies have produced some impressive visions about the strategies used by good language learners and the features they naturally displayed during their learning a new language.

2.6.2. Related Studies of LLSs Conducted in Arab EFL Countries

With regard to the studies related to LLSs used by Arabic speakers of EFL students, there are numerous studies conducted in this field. Some studies have been selected from different Arab countries such as Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Jordan, Palestinian, Morocco, and Kuwait. The selected studies include (e.g., Abdul-Ghafour, 2013; Abu-Shmais, 2003; Aljuaid, 2010, 2015; Al-Sohbani, 2013a; El-Aouri, 2013; El-Dib, 2004; Khalil, 2005; Javid, Al-thubaiti, & Uthman, 2013; Radwan, 2011).

Green and Oxford (1995, as cited in Kiram, Suliaman, Swanto, & Din, 2014) argue that most studies have tended to pay more attention to the overall strategy use rather than to the differences in the use of individual strategies. However, this review of the literature is limited to studies conducted in Arab countries which have involved EFL students regardless of the level or stage of the targeted sample because most of the studies are conducted within university students. These studies are in line with the current study in terms of using SILL to measure strategy use in general and explore the effect of gender variable on strategy use in particular.

Though, extensive studies have been conducted in LLSs till date, there is still inadequate research in this field, particularly in Yemen. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, only two studies in Yemeni context have been reported in the literature. The first one is a study conducted by Al-Sohbani (2013a) which aimed at exploring the metacognitive reading strategies used by (100) Yemeni university EFL students (females = 70; males = 30). The results of this study showed that: (a) the majority of both male and female students were active strategy users; they used all the three types of reading strategies, though, problem-solving strategies were more slightly used than global and support strategies, (b) there were no significant differences between females and males' use of reading strategies, and (c) the learners' use of problem-solving and global strategies significantly correlated with their marks in reading skills.

The second one is a study conducted by Abdul-Ghafour (2013) which aimed at investigating the relationship between LLSs and achievement among (70) Yemeni EFL university students. The results showed that metacognitive, compensation, and cognitive strategies were used most frequently by high and low achievers while memory and social strategies were the least frequently used by both the sample groups. The findings also revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between high and low achievers in

the overall use of LLSs in favor of high achievers. It was also found that the metacognitive and compensation strategies positively correlated with the students' academic achievement.

With regard to research in the Arab world context, specifically in Omani context, Radwan (2011) studied the LLSs use of (128) students majoring in English at the Sultan Qaboos university and examined the relationship between learning strategies, gender, and proficiency, using SILL. The results showed that the metacognitive strategies were used more significantly while memory strategies were the least used among students. Moreover, results revealed that more proficient students used more cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies than less proficient students. Radwan (2011) concluded that there was no significant difference on the use of LLSs between male and female students, although male students used significantly more social strategies than female students did.

Kahlil (2005) surveyed (194) Palestinian EFL learners at the secondary school grade (10), using Oxford's (1990) SILL, to assess the LLSs use and to investigate the effect of language proficiency and gender on frequency of strategy use. The findings revealed that the overall mean score of the six categories of strategies fell in the medium frequency of use. The findings also showed that metacognitive and social strategies were used most frequently by the participants, followed by affective and cognitive strategies while compensation and memory strategies were the least used strategies. With regard to the effect of gender on the use of the six categories of strategies, it was found that female students reported significantly higher frequency of strategy use than male students did.

Abu-Shmais (2003) conducted a similar study with (98) Palestinian students (18 males and 80 females) at An-Najah national university. The findings of this study showed that An-Najah university English major students used learning strategies with high to medium frequency, and metacognitive strategies were the highest rank ($M = 3.98$) and used most frequently while compensation strategies were the lowest rank ($M = 3.15$). In addition, the

results revealed that male students were more frequent users of learning strategies and they surpassed females in the use of almost all LLSs, except memory and metacognitive strategies where females marked higher mean.

El-Aouri (2013) conducted a study to examine the use of LLSs by (60) Moroccan university EFL science students (30 males and 30 females) in relation to gender and motivation, adopted Oxford's (1989) SILL. The findings of this study showed that Moroccan university EFL science students used LLSs at a medium level with a mean score of 3.09. The T-test results of the overall use of LLSs indicated that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used, followed by compensation, cognitive, and memory strategies while the least used strategies were social and affective strategies. Moreover, the results revealed that there were no significant differences between male and female students in both overall use of LLSs and in the means of the six categories of strategies.

El-Dib (2004) conducted a study aimed at investigating the relationship between both culture, gender, and language level and the underlying factors of the SILL by (750) college students in Kuwait. A relationship between gender and active naturalistic language use, cognitive–compensatory strategies, and repetition–revision strategies were revealed. In addition, it was found that there were no differences between males and females in their use of the six categories of strategies, yet there were differences at the level of individual strategies.

More descriptive studies were conducted to investigate LLSs in the Saudi context as the one by Aljuaid (2010) who investigated the frequency of strategy use among a group of (111) female Saudi Arabian English major university students, using Oxford's (1990) SILL. The results of this study showed that this group of students used learning strategies with high to medium frequency and that the highest rank was for metacognitive strategies while the lowest was for memory strategies.

Taking one step further, Aljuaid (2015) surveyed (437) Saudi Arabian EFL learners (301 males and 136 females), using Oxford's (1990) SILL, to investigate the general pattern of LLSs use in term of their overall strategy use and to examine the relationship between learning strategies, language proficiency, gender, and cultural background. The findings revealed that the students were, on average, medium strategy users with respect to the six categories of strategies. The results also showed that the most highly used strategies were metacognitive strategies, followed by social and cognitive strategies while the least used strategies were memory strategies. It was also found that Saudi female EFL students used LLSs more frequently than male students did.

Another similar study that used Oxford's (1990) SILL was conducted by Javid et al. (2013) who investigated LLSs used by (240) Saudi English-major undergraduates (low GPA, 106 and high GPA, 134). The results showed that the participants with high English language proficiency use LLSs more frequently. The participants ranked the metacognitive strategies the highest as compared to other LLSs, followed by social and cognitive strategies, respectively. It was also found that compensation and affective strategies showed mixed preferences, but memory strategies were the least used strategies by both sample groups.

2.6.3. Related Studies of LLSs Conducted in Non-Arab ESL/EFL Settings

There are numerous studies that have been focused on investigating LLSs employed by ESL/EFL secondary school learners, mainly in non-Arab settings. Among these studies a study conducted by Mohite (2014) aimed at investigating the English language writing strategies used by (102) Polish first and second year of secondary school students (females = 48 and males = 54). The results indicated that the participants used a wide range of the English writing strategies across all three strategy groups and revealed that the average usage for the cognitive strategies was the same as for the social strategies (390; 77%) whereas the usage of metacognitive strategies was only slightly lower (388; 76%). Interestingly, the

results also showed that there was highest usage of revision strategies among the students, followed by the execution strategies and the planning strategies.

Another study in the same context conducted by Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2008) aimed at exploring the use of grammar learning strategies by (160) Polish secondary school students (58 males and 102 females) at the lower intermediate level, using Oxford's (1990) SILL. The findings of this study showed that the strategy use was quite common among the participants. Moreover, the findings of the overall strategy use revealed that metacognitive strategies predominated and preferred to be used by the majority of the participants (70.62%), followed by compensation strategies (69%) and social strategies (67.2%), and relatively few preferred to use memory strategies (51.12%) and cognitive strategies (49.23%). The least frequently used category of strategies was affective strategies (40.6%) of all the types presented.

In Tse's (2011) study that investigated LLSs used by (628) Hong Kong secondary school students; namely, grades 12-13 (males = 356 and females = 272) and the background variables influencing their use of LLS. The findings revealed that grades 12-13 of secondary school students used LLSs at a low to medium use ($M = 2.43$), with no high use. The findings also showed that the first and the most frequently used LLSs by the participants were association strategies, followed by the constructive (i.e., affective) and the social strategies whereas the least used strategies were assistance (i.e., memory) strategies, and compensation and cognitive strategies were used less than the other strategies.

Another similar study in the same setting conducted by Leung and Hui (2011) investigated the general pattern of LLSs use by (501) Hong Kong Putonghua secondary school learners (282 males and 219 females). The findings showed that the overall use of LLSs by Hong Kong PTH learners fell in the medium range of use ($M = 2.79$). The results also revealed that the most frequently used strategies were compensation strategies, followed

by metacognitive and affective strategies while the least used strategies were cognitive strategies.

Kazi and Iqbal (2011) investigated the use of LLSs by (2409) Pakistani students at the higher secondary level (11 and 12 grade) in Lahore city. The selected participants were (438) boys and (1130) girls from the public sector colleges, and (312) boys and (529) girls from the private sector colleges. The results showed that the whole participants demonstrated high to medium strategy use, and none of the strategies fell in the low range. It was also found that metacognitive strategies were the most preferred, followed by cognitive strategies while social and affective strategies were not preferred much by the students.

In the Malaysian context, Razak and Babikkoi (2014) investigated the use of English LLSs among (180) ESL Malaysian secondary schools students in Johor with regards to inter-cultural communication, using Oxford's SILL questionnaire. The results revealed that there was high use of learning strategies at a minimum of 3.5398 mean score. Regarding overall strategy use, the findings so far revealed that the affective strategies were ranked the highest and the most popular strategies in use, followed by social and metacognitive strategies while compensation strategies were the least used strategies by secondary school students in Johor.

Sani (2016) conducted a study aimed at exploring the most often used LLSs among (375) Malaysian secondary school students of international Islamic school in Gombak from grades of (7 to 11), based on gender, age, and grades. The findings of this study revealed that the social strategies were the most frequently used learning strategies, followed by metacognitive and cognitive strategies.

Msuya (2016) conducted a study to explore the account of English as a foreign LLSs used by (70) EFL Tanzanian secondary school students, using Oxford's (1990) SILL. The findings of this study showed that social strategies were used most frequently, followed by

metacognitive and affective strategies whereas compensation strategies were the least used category of strategies.

In the Iranian context, Sepasdar and Soori (2014) investigated the impact of age on using LLSs by (94) Iranian EFL students from four educational levels and different age groups as, primary (10-12), guidance (13-15), high school (1618), and university students (19-23). The results revealed that high school students used compensation strategies most frequently, followed by metacognitive and social strategies whereas the least used strategies were affective strategies.

An overall picture of the related literature and research on LLSs carried out in Arab and non-Arab countries, as discussed above, appears to investigate LLSs use in general and indicate that gender variable has been found to be related to students' language learning strategy use, which the present study attempts to investigate, (i.e., gender).

Given the importance of English globally and in Yemen specifically, research on the use of LLSs in Yemen is not worthy of notice. However, in Yemeni context there is no empirical research in this field that has been carried out to investigate students' LLSs use in general or in relation to the gender variable. More specifically, the purpose of the present study is: (a) to investigate LLSs' use of the six categories of strategies by Yemeni secondary school learners and (b) to explore if there is any significant difference between males and females in LLSs' use.

2.7. Factors Influencing the Choice of LLSs

Learning strategies preference can be influenced by a variety of factors like degree of awareness, level of language learning, task requirements, teacher expectations, age, sex, nationality/ethnicity, general learning style, personality traits, motivation level, and purpose of learning the language (Oxford, 1990). Therefore, there is no explicit evidence of the main reasons about the difference between strategy uses and choices among different students.

Many researchers have studied various factors affected the choice of learning strategies, as shown in Oxford (1990). Such factors have been summarized in Oxford (1994) who synthesized existing research on how the following factors influence the choice of strategies used among students learning a second language. These factors are as follows:

1. Motivation: More motivated students tended to use more strategies than less motivated students, and the particular reason for studying the language (motivational orientation, especially as related to career field) was important in the choice of strategies.

2. Gender: Females reported greater overall use than males in many studies (although sometimes males surpassed females in the use of a particular strategy).

3. Cultural background: 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.

4. Attitudes and beliefs: These were reported to have a profound effect on the strategies learners choose, with negative attitudes and beliefs often causing poor strategy use or lack of orchestration of strategies.

5. Type of task: The nature of the task helped determine the strategies naturally employed to carry out the task.

6. Age and L2 stage: Students of different ages and stages of L2 learning used different strategies, with certain strategies often being employed by older or more advanced students.

7. Learning style: Learning style (general approach to language learning) often determined the choice of L2 learning strategies. For example, analytic-style students preferred strategies such as contrastive analysis, rule-learning, and

dissecting words and phrases, while global students used strategies to find meaning (guessing, scanning, predicting) and to converse without knowing all the words (paraphrasing, gesturing).

8. Tolerance of ambiguity: Students who were more tolerant of ambiguity used significantly different learning strategies in some instances than did students who were less tolerant of ambiguity.

Since this study intends to examine gender differences with respect to LLSs, the review of previous studies on individual differences and LLSs is limited to the gender variable. Thus, the following section is devoted to LLSs and gender.

2.7.1. LLSs and Gender

The results of research into gender differences in the strategy choice have a profoundly significant effects on the reported use of LLSs. Reporting on several ESL/EFL studies, Oxford (1996) indicates that the findings of these studies have shown that females are generally more frequent strategy users than males in a language learning situation (e.g., Dreyer, 1992; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green, 1991, 1992; Green & Oxford, 1993, 1995; Noguchi, 1991; Oxford, 1993a, 1993b; Oxford, Ehrman, & Nyikos, 1988; Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993a, 1993b; Yang, 1992b, 1993, as cited in Oxford, 1996).

Gender has been shown to be a significant variable in strategy use, both in the case of learning and in communication strategies (Brown, 2000). According to Graham (1997), the relationship between gender and strategy use has received the greatest attention in the work of Rebecca Oxford. Oxford (1994) claims that "females reported greater overall strategy use than males in many studies (although sometimes males surpassed females in the use of a particular strategy" (p. 2).

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) investigated the learning strategies of more than (1200) university students of French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Russian, discovered that sex had "a profound effect on strategy choice" (p. 294). They found that female students significantly reported using three out of five learning strategy factors more frequently than males who reported no more frequent strategy use on any factors. These three strategy factors were conversational input elicitation strategies, general study strategies, and formal rule-based practice strategies.

The study by Ehrman and Oxford (1990) revealed that there were no significant differences in language learning strategy use between females and males.

Al-Sohbani (2018) investigated the LLSs use by (78) Yemeni secondary school students studying at the Turkish international school in Sana'a, using Oxford's (1990) ESL/EFL SILL. The findings of this study revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students regarding their use of the six categories of LLSs.

Boggu and Sundarsingh (2014) found that age and gender had no significant effect on the frequency of strategy use. The results of the t-test indicated that there was no difference in the mean scores between males and females in strategy use, however, males seemed to have better strategies than females.

Zeynali (2012) examined whether or not differences exist between female and male (149) Iranian learners in the use of LLSs. The findings showed that there was a significant difference between males and females in the overall use of LLSs and in the use of social/ affective strategies with females used them more often than males. It was also found that there was no significant difference in the use of cognitive strategy between male and female Iranian learners.

Furthermore, Yabukoshi and Takeuchi (2009) examined variables affecting learners' strategy use of (315) Japanese lower secondary school learners of English in relation to

gender and proficiency. The results indicated that females reported more use of strategies than males and interestingly enough, that no positive relationship was found between English proficiency and strategy use.

The study by Peacock and Ho (2003) revealed that females reported significantly higher use of all six strategy categories than did males.

The purpose of the present study is to examine if there is any significant difference between Yemeni secondary school male and female learners' use of LLSs.

2.8. Chapter Summary

The main aim of the present chapter is to review the literature related to the concept of learning strategies. This chapter consists of seven main sections. The first section is the introduction which outlines the scope of the component sections related to the literature review of this chapter. The second section consists of three sub-sections. The first sub-section focuses on the background of LLSs, the second one presents the definition of the strategy term, and the third one provides an explanation and description of the features of LLSs. The third section deals with the problem in classification systems of LLSs whereas the fourth section presents Oxford's (1990) classification of LLSs. The fifth section examines the role of LLSs in learning and teaching processes. The sixth section consists of three sub-sections. The first one deals with the early studies on LLSs which put more emphasis on identifying strategic behaviors and characteristics of the good language learner. The second one outlines the findings of the numerous related studies conducted in Arab EFL context. The last sub-section of the sixth section concerns with the studies which investigate the LLSs in non-Arab ESL/EFL settings regarding secondary school students. The seventh section, consists of one sub-section, deals with factors affecting the choice of LLSs while its sub-section presents studies related to LLSs and their relationship with gender. The next chapter deals with the methodology of the present study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the procedures that the researcher followed to conduct the current study. It describes the research design suggested for the study and provides a detailed description of the participants who have taken part in the present study as well as an overview of the research instrument of the study. Administration of the questionnaire for the data collection and the data analysis are also given.

3.2. Research Design

This is a descriptive study conducted for the purpose of making descriptive information about Yemeni secondary school male and female learners. The purpose of this study is to find out the English LLSs employed by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners and to investigate the significant difference between males and females in the strategy use based on gender. The study basically depends on a quantitative data collection method. An Arabic translated version of Oxford's (1990) SILL was used as the data collection instrument. The data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) and interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics. The participants of this study were Yemeni secondary school male and female learners in Ibb governorate.

3.3. Instrument

As this study aimed to determine the English LLSs employed by Yemeni secondary school learners, a suitable exploration instrument for examining and exploring the strategies employed by the targeted sample was chosen. Two questionnaires were used for data collection. The first one was a background questionnaire which was used to document information about the participants (refer to Appendix A: Background Questionnaire).

The second one was the SILL version 7.0 developed by (Oxford, 1990) as an instrument for assessing the frequency of LLSs use by learners to find answers to the research questions, (refer to Appendix B: SILL Questionnaire). Detailed discussion of the above tools will be presented in the following sections.

3.3.1. Background Questionnaire

The first tool in the present study was a background questionnaire used to collect data from the participants (refer to Appendix A: Background questionnaire). According to Oxford (1990), background questionnaire provides additional information on students' characteristics which helps teachers and students to understand the SILL results in context better. It is included as an optional feature. For the purpose of the present study, participants' demographic background information need to be identified through a background questionnaire that may help in interpreting the study findings mainly in relation to overall strategy use and gender. Therefore, a background questionnaire was designed by the researcher to obtain information about the participants' age, sex, school, and grade.

3.3.2. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

The SILL (Oxford, 1986-1990) was among the most efficient and comprehensive instrument for assessing the frequency of LLSs use by ESL/EFL learners. Oxford (1990) designed a language learning system and strategy classification based on earlier research in the field of LLSs. The SILL (version 7.0) comprises of 50 items classified into two main categories which are further subdivided into six strategy groups. The categories are based on Oxford's (1990) classification of LLSs which has been discussed earlier in detail in chapter two. A summary of the two categories is presented previously in the second chapter (see Table 2.1). The SILL is a self-scoring survey in which students are asked to indicate the extent to which each statement reflects or describes what they themselves do.

Students respond on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 (*Never or almost never true of me*), 2 (*Usually not true of me*), 3 (*Somewhat true of me*), 4 (*Usually true of me*), and 5 (*Always or almost always true of me*).

There are many reasons behind using the SILL by the researcher for data collection. First, it is an important instrument in the field of language learning strategy for assessing the frequency of use of LLSs by students. Second, it is one of the most useful manuals of learner strategy assessment tools currently available. In addition, it is estimated that 40 to 50 major studies, including a dozen dissertations and theses, have been done using the SILL. These studies have, by late 1995, involved approximately 10,000 language learners. According to research reports and articles published in the English language within the last ten to fifteen years, the SILL appears to be the only language learning strategy questionnaire that has been extensively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford, 1996). The ESL/EFL SILL has been translated into different languages around the world (Oxford, 1996). Oxford (1990) has provided criteria for judging the degree of strategy use as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Guidelines for Understanding Average Scores on the SILL

High	Always or almost always used	4.5 to 5.0
	Usually used	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never or almost never used	1.0 to 1.4

Source: Oxford (1990, p. 300)

An Arabic translation of Oxford's (1990) SILL version 7.0 for ESL/EFL students was used in this study. The SILL is 50-item instrument covers six broad categories based on Oxford's (1990) taxonomy, each represented by a number of individual strategies (items).

The first three categories include memory strategies (items 1–9), cognitive strategies (items 10–23), and compensation strategies (items 24–29) that Oxford (1990) classified as direct strategies. The other three categories that are under indirect strategies include metacognitive strategies (items 30–38), affective strategies (items 39–44), and social strategies (items 45–50). However, the SILL becomes an effective instrument to assess ESL/EFL in language learning strategy use.

3.3.2.1. Advantages of SILL

The SILL is "the strategy questionnaire most often used around the world" (Oxford,1996, p. 28). It was the most efficient and comprehensive instrument to assess the frequency of language learning strategy use. One of the most prevalent ways to assess the use of LLSs is to use a summative rating scale, (otherwise known as a questionnaire, an inventory, or a survey) (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). In addition, it is well known in the use of self-report surveys.

There are many advantages linked with the SILL as presented in this research methodology. This tool is used for its simplicity (of comprehension) with respect to the subjects and also because it takes a very short time to answer. As a result, it provides a general assessment of each student's typical strategies across a variety of possible tasks (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995) and for the whole sample of the study. According to Oxford (1986a), self-report surveys are more statistically reliable and produce more comparable information across individuals, and have been successfully used in a number of studies. They are quick and easy to give and administer, may be the most cost-effective mode of strategy assessment, and are almost completely nonthreatening when administered using paper and pencil (or computer) under conditions of confidentiality (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). Moreover, many students discover a great deal about themselves from taking a strategy questionnaire, especially one like the SILL that is "self-scoring and that provides immediate

learner feedback" (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 2). Another advantage specifically accruing to the SILL is that this questionnaire is "free of social desirability response bias" (Oxford, 1996, pp. 39-40).

In addition, validity of the SILL "rests on its link with language performance (course grades, standardized test scores, ratings of proficiency), as well as its relationship to learning styles" (Oxford, 1996, p. 28). Furthermore, the reliability of the SILL questionnaire is "high across many cultural groups" (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 1).

3.3.2.2. Psychometric Qualities of the ESL/EFL SILL

This section describes the psychometric qualities of the 50-item ESL/EFL SILL. Normally, such quality is established and presented in terms of utility, reliability, and validity.

Utility

Utility is defined as "the usefulness of an instrument in real-world settings for making decisions relevant to people's lives" (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 6; Oxford, 1996, p. 38). Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) and Oxford (1996) believe that the SILL has utility. The most frequent place to apply the usefulness of an instrument is in the classroom, where the goal has been chiefly to reveal the relationship between strategy use and language performance. The reason for this goal is important to show the strong relationship between these two variables, whether language performance can be improved by enhancing strategy use (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

Other accompanying objectives include assessing strategy use at a given point. This determination enhances later comparison on grounds of differences in strategy use based on gender (male and female) and making the conceptual linkage between strategy use and learning styles; and individualizing classroom instruction based on the strategy use of different students (Oxford, 1996).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the "degree of precision or accuracy of scores on an instrument" (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 6; Oxford, 1996, p. 32). However, to warranty the reliability of the study, various reliability indexes can be used with strategy intervene for learning a language. In the case of the SILL, Cronbach alpha, a measure of internal consistency, is an example of reliability index. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is used on continuous data such as the Likert-type scale in the SILL (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford, 1996).

Validity

Validity refers to the "degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure" (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 7; Oxford, 1996, p. 32). There are several bases that have existed for justifying validity such as content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity. The first one is the content validity which, according to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995), is determined from a professional judgment. The SILL content validity is "very high" (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 7) because the SILL was based on the comprehensive and systematic taxonomy of L2 learning strategies developed by Oxford (1990).

The second one is criterion-related validity which is related to language performance and involves either predictive or concurrent relationships between the key variables; learning strategy use and language performance. Predictive validity is established with the use of a criterion and at least one predictive variable in a simple or multiple regression analysis whereas concurrent validity is demonstrated when data are collected for all variables at one time (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

Both concurrent and predictive SILL validity are shown in relationships between the SILL on one hand and language performance on the other (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). This evidence supports the assertion of the validity of the SILL by providing psychometric qualities of the research instrument.

Language performance is measured in different ways: through proficiency self-ratings and oral language proficiency tests (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) while others use grades related to language training course in occupation status (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). These characteristics make the SILL psychometrically distinguished and stronger than most other self-report learning strategy surveys (Oxford, 1986b).

3.4. The Participants

Taking the aims of the present study into consideration, the choice of the participants targeted Yemeni secondary school learners. The participants were male and female Yemeni public secondary school learners from Ibb city who were chosen randomly. All of them were enrolled in grade (10). The participants consisted of (377) students. Ratio of gender was: (185) male participants (49%), and (192) female participants (51%). The number of females was higher than males in the study because there were slightly more female learners in the public secondary schools in Ibb city and the questionnaire was distributed to the whole class with consideration of the male/female ratio. They were mostly young adults and their ages ranged between 16 and 19. The learners were informed that their responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential and are used only for a research purpose. Table 3.2 shows the distribution of the participants of the present study.

Table 3.2

Distribution of the Participants by Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	185	49 %
Female	192	51 %
Total	**377**	**100 %**

3.5. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire data were collected from male and female of secondary school learners in Ibb city in Yemen. Permission was readily granted to conduct the study. As a first step in the process of data collection, the researcher contacted the teachers of English language in the targeted schools, explaining the nature and the purpose of the study. He then made copies of the questionnaire to be given to these teachers in the targeted schools. The teachers then took the questionnaire to class and administered them immediately during the classroom time which took about 30 minutes. To increase the credibility of the responses before answering this questionnaire, the teachers reminded the learners to answer the questionnaire sincerely and that they should not hesitate or change their responses.

The questionnaire was administered to the participants by their English teachers with the researcher during a regular classroom period. Before administering the questionnaire, the teachers were given guidelines and instructions. All participants received the same instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire. The learners were informed and assured by the teachers that: (1) there were no right or wrong answers to any questions; (2) their responses did not affect their grades; (3) their anonymity were assured; and (4) their responses were used only for research purposes. The participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they were not under any obligation to consent to participate. The questionnaire was administered anonymously. The participants did not give their names; only their ages, gender, and level of learning were required.

The original version of the SILL was not used as the participants were not proficient enough in English to understand the statements and an attempt to use the SILL in English would have generated invalid data and, hence, jeopardized the results of the study. For this reason, the SILL was translated into Arabic because learners would feel more comfortable responding to the questionnaire in Arabic.

The questionnaire was given in English with Arabic translation of each statement to prevent the participants from misunderstanding some items because of their insufficiency in English. Then the questionnaire was explained to the learners by their teachers so as to ensure that the questionnaire will be answered accurately. Learners were encouraged to ask the researcher to explain sentences that they did not understand. The learners were asked to complete the SILL together with the background questionnaire. The questionnaire that was not answered properly (e.g., containing too many missing values) was discarded. The researcher received around (377) questionnaire and the responses were analyzed, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.6. Data Analysis

SPSS version 20.0 programme was used to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics that included (means, ranges, and standard deviations) was used to identify the overall frequency use of LLSs. The average of these strategies was also cumulated. Oxford's (1990) scales were followed to interpret the SILL mean scores, (Refer to Table 3.1). Inferential statistics (T-test) was used to determine if there was any significant difference between males and females regarding strategies use.

3.7. Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter was to describe the design and methodology adopted. This chapter consisted of six sections. The first section of the methodology chapter started by introducing the framework adopted in implementing the study. The second one introduced the research design and the method adopted for the whole study. The third section was divided into two sub-sections. The first one provided an overview about the purpose of the background questionnaire. In the second one, the SILL was discussed as the preferred survey instrument which was synthesized through the advantages and psychometric qualities of the strategy that was adopted for the study. The fourth section provided information about the

participants who had taken part in the current study. The fifth section dealt with the administration of the questionnaire. The last section described the data analysis used in the present study. Thus, having established the methodological framework, the next chapter presents and discusses the results of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

The aim of the current study is to explore the types and frequency of the LLSs employed by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners in Ibb city and to identify any statistically significant differences in LLSs use based on the variable of gender. The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the results of the present study. The researcher tries to answer the research questions set in the first chapter systematically by analyzing the quantitative data of the SILL questionnaire which are used to obtain information about the use of LLSs by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners. Results obtained from descriptive statistics are discussed in this chapter with the aid of tables and figures. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, degrees, and percentages provide measures of frequency of the learning strategies used (i.e., overall strategy use) and for both male and female learners. The Independent T-test is used to find out the statistical differences between male and female learners regarding their use of LLSs. The discussion is made to explain the nature of the learning strategies used accompanied with examples and quotations from the actual data. In brief, through such analysis, an attempt is made to answer the two research questions, mentioned in the first chapter.

4.2. Presentation and Discussion of Results

The presentation and discussion of results are reported in the light of the questions of the study. Further, it is worth noting that the highest and lowest frequency of each individual strategy use of the six categories of LLSs are discussed on the bases of the overall mean scores for male and female participants.

4.2.1. The First Question

What are the types and the most/least frequently LLSs do Yemeni secondary school male and female learners employ?

This question seeks to answer the general pattern of LLSs use among Yemeni secondary school male and female learners in terms of their overall strategy use as well as the most and the least frequently reported strategies as presented in Oxford's SILL questionnaire. To answer this question, it is worth pointing out that the researcher interprets the mean scores for each individual strategy as well as overall mean scores of the six sub-scales of LLSs in accordance with what Oxford (1990) suggested in her rating of the use of LLSs. Oxford suggested that means of 3.5–5.0 can be considered as high strategy use; 2.5–3.4 as medium strategy use; and 1.0–2.4 as low strategy use. In addition, the researcher calculated the means, the standard deviations, and the estimated degrees for each sub-strategy and the main category of the sub-strategies as a whole. Moreover, the reported use of the sub-strategies of each category of LLSs are displayed separately in order to show how male and female students have used each one.

4.2.1.1. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies, which enable learners to store verbal material and then retrieve it later when needed for communication (Oxford, 1990), are the first category of LLSs in the SILL questionnaire. However, this category of strategies was the fifth category that less frequently used by Yemeni male and female secondary school learners.

These strategies were differently used by the participants in the current study as shown in Table (4.1) which presents the means, overall mean, standard deviations, and the degrees of frequency for each individual strategy items employed of this category and for the category as a whole.

Table 4.1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Degrees of the Use of Memory Strategies

No	Items	Male			Female			Overall Mean		
		M	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	2.94	1.23	Medium	3.04	1.28	Medium	2.99	1.26	Medium
2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	2.96	1.23	Medium	2.90	1.43	Medium	2.93	1.33	Medium
3	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word.	2.97	1.25	Medium	3.26	1.32	Medium	3.11	1.29	Medium
4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	2.71	1.32	Medium	3.28	1.37	Medium	3.00	1.37	Medium
5	I use rhymes to remember new English words.	2.45	1.36	Low	2.95	1.49	Medium	2.71	1.45	Medium
6	I use flashcards to remember new English words.	2.30	1.28	Low	2.33	1.29	Low	2.31	1.29	Low
7	I physically act out new English words.	2.58	1.22	Medium	2.73	1.43	Medium	2.66	1.33	Medium
8	I review English lessons often.	3.26	1.28	Medium	3.34	1.31	Medium	3.30	1.29	Medium
9	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	3.26	1.31	Medium	3.64	1.32	High	3.45	1.33	Medium
	Total Average	**2.83**	**0.79**	**Medium**	**3.05**	**0.87**	**Medium**	**2.94**	**0.84**	**Medium**

It is clear from Table (4.1) that the overall averages of memory strategies ranged from (3.45) to (2.31) with corresponding standard deviations ranged from (1.33) to (1.29). The total average of the overall mean of this category was (2.94) out of (5.0) and its corresponding standard deviation was (0.84). However, the total average of the individual overall mean scores of males and females were (2.83) and (3.05) and their corresponding standard deviations were (0.79) and (0.87), respectively. However, the total average of

females for this category was higher than males. Table (4.1) shows that female learners assigned higher mean values to all of the strategy items than male learners except for strategy item number (No.) 2.

At the level of the overall mean of each individual strategy items of this category of strategies, Table (4.1) also reveals the following results:

➤ No strategy item of this category was reported to be used at a high mean value of (3.5) or above.

➤ The highest rating was given to strategy item No.9, *I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign,* which received medium mean value by males ($M = 3.26$) and high mean value by females ($M = 3.64$), with an overall mean of (3.45). In the second rank came strategy item No.8, *I review English lessons often,* ($M = 3.26$ for males and 3.34 for females, with an overall mean of 3.30). In the third rank came strategy item No.3, *I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word,* ($M = 2.97$ for males and 3.26 for females, with an overall mean of 3.11), followed by strategy item No.4, *I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used,* ($M = 2.71$ for males and 3.28 for females, with an overall mean of 3.00). These strategies reached the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage. They got moderate estimation level, and they represent (44.44%) of the total number of strategy items of this category.

➤ Four individual strategies (44.44% of the total number of strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female learners, but they did not reach the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy items No.1, 2, 5, and 7. The means of these strategies were 2.94, 2.96,

(2.45), and 2.58, for males and 3.04, 2.90, (2.95), and 2.73 for females, with an overall mean of 2.99, 2.93, (2.71), and 2.66, respectively. One of these strategies, namely strategy item No.5, *I use rhymes to remember new English words,* received low mean values by males and medium mean values by females. The corresponding means of this strategy item were shown in parentheses above.

➢ The lowest rating was given to strategy item No.6, *I use flashcards to remember new English words,* (M = 2.30 for males and 2.33 for females, with an overall mean of 2.31). This strategy item got the lowest estimation level, and it represents (11.11%) of the total number of strategies of this category.

In the light of the given results, it can be stated that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are medium strategy users of the memory strategies because of the medium ranking values. Yet, the results indicate that female learners use memory strategies more frequently than male learners. The results also reveal that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners appear to use mental linkage strategies such as placing new words into context so they can remember them. This indicates how important vocabulary learning is for them. They tend to prefer visual and locative strategies in which the word might be used to help them remember new words. In other words, they try to link what they already know to what they are learning in English, and this is something which really involves an imaginative component as well as memory. Oxford (1990) emphasized the effect of this strategy and argued that "linking the verbal with the visual is very useful to language learning" (p. 40). Moreover, the results indicate that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners use mechanical techniques strategy (i.e., flashcards) with a low degree. This low usage can be attributed to less popularity of this strategy among these learners and it may be preferred by learners at lower grade levels, and thus not used by the participants of the study as much or at all. In this, the current study is consistent with Al-Sohbani (2018).

In comparison with other strategy categories, memory strategies were among the least frequently used strategies by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners as the results suggest. Oxford (1990) argued that memory strategies enable students to retrieve information from memory when they need to use strategies for comprehension or production. In fact, the low use of memory strategies is initially surprising in which they are largely in keeping with instructional delivery systems typically employed in many Arab countries which are frequently didactic and emphasised rote memorisation. One explanation is that the development of the methodology might have influenced changes in student strategy preferences (Al-Buainain, 2010).

Another possible reason is that memory strategies are defined differently by different researchers. For example, Politzer and McGroarty (1985, as cited in Al-Buainain, 2010) defined memory strategies as the rote memorisation of words, phrases, and sentences. Needless to say, rote memorising is frequently used by students who learn the language as isolated fragments (Abu-Shmais, 2003; Al-Buainain, 2010). Strategies No. (4) and (9) are examples of such memorisation. They are reported as the most frequently used by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners. In brief, the results of this study related to memory strategies are, to some extent, in line with Abu Shmais (2003) who found that Palestinian students used memory strategies infrequently. They are also consistent with the findings of Al-Tunay (2014) and Msuya (2016) who revealed that memory strategies were less often used by their participants.

4.2.1.2. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies, which enable learners to understand, produce, and manipulate new language by different means (Oxford, 1990), are the second category of LLSs stated in the SILL. However, this category of strategies was the fourth category that most frequently used by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners. These strategies were differently

used by male and female learners in the present study as shown in Table (4.2) which displays the means, overall mean, standard deviations, and the degrees of frequency for each individual strategy items employed of this category and for the category as a whole.

Table 4.2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Degrees of the Use of Cognitive Strategies

No	Items	Male			Female			Overall Mean		
		M	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*
10	I say or write new English words several times.	3.74	1.17	High	4.07	1.19	High	3.91	1.20	High
11	I try to talk like native English speakers.	3.34	1.25	Medium	4.10	1.14	High	3.73	1.26	High
12	I practice the sounds of English.	3.11	1.25	Medium	3.44	1.27	Medium	3.28	1.27	Medium
13	I use the English words I know in different ways.	2.80	1.27	Medium	2.90	1.33	Medium	2.85	1.30	Medium
14	I start conversations in English.	2.66	1.27	Medium	3.05	1.35	Medium	2.86	1.32	Medium
15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	3.36	1.53	Medium	3.22	1.50	Medium	3.29	1.51	Medium
16	I read for pleasure in English.	3.03	1.29	Medium	3.43	1.46	Medium	3.23	1.39	Medium
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	1.92	1.05	Low	2.23	1.25	Low	2.08	1.17	Low
18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	2.77	1.30	Medium	3.14	1.40	Medium	2.96	1.37	Medium
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	2.96	1.27	Medium	3.57	1.28	High	3.27	1.31	Medium
20	I try to find patterns in English.	2.65	1.23	Medium	3.33	1.32	Medium	3.00	1.32	Medium
21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	2.86	1.39	Medium	3.43	1.43	Medium	3.15	1.45	Medium
22	I try not to translate word-for-word.	2.45	1.25	Low	2.90	1.28	Medium	2.68	1.28	Medium
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	2.46	0.97	Low	2.63	1.21	Medium	2.55	1.10	Medium
	Total Average	**2.87**	**0.71**	**Medium**	**3.25**	**0.77**	**Medium**	**3.06**	**0.76**	**Medium**

It is clear from Table (4.2) that the overall averages of cognitive strategies ranged from (3.91) to (2.08) with corresponding standard deviations ranged from (1.20) to (1.17). The total average of the overall mean of this category was (3.06) out of (5.0) and its corresponding standard deviation was (0.76). However, the total average of the individual overall mean scores of males and females were (2.87) and (3.25) and their corresponding standard deviations were (0.71) and (0.77), respectively.

However, the total average of females for this category was higher than males. This means that female learners frequently used cognitive strategies more than males. Table (4.2) also shows that the majority of the strategy items received mean values of medium range by both the sample groups.

At the level of the overall mean of each individual strategy items of this category of strategies, Table (4.2) also reveals the following results:

➢ The highest rating was given to strategy item No.10, *I say or write new English words several times,* (M = 3.74 for males and 4.07 for females, with an overall mean of 3.91), followed by strategy item No.11, *I try to talk like native English speakers,* (M = 3.34 for males and 4.10 for females, with an overall mean of 3.73). Both strategies got high estimation level, and they represent (14.29%) of the total number of strategy items of this category. In these strategies, female learners got the highest mean value of more than 3.5 whereas male learners obtained the highest mean value to only one cognitive strategy, namely strategy item No.10.

➢ Six individual strategies (42.86% of the total number of strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female learners, and they reached the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy items No.15, 12, 19, 16, 21, and 20. The means of these strategies

were 3.36, 3.11, (2.96), 3.03, 2.86, and 2.65 for males and 3.22, 3.44, (3.57), 3.43, 3.43, and 3.33 for females, with an overall mean of 3.29, 3.28, (3.27), 3.23, 3.15, and 3.00, respectively. One of these strategies, namely strategy item No.19, *I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English,* which got high mean value by females and medium mean value by males. The corresponding means of this strategy were shown in parentheses above.

➢ Five more individual strategies (35.71% of the total number of strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female learners, but they did not reach the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy items No.18, 14, 13, 22, and 23. The means of these strategies were 2.77, 2.66, 2.80, (2.45, and 2.46) for males and 3.14, 3.05, 2.90, (2.90, and 2.63) for females, with an overall mean of 2.96, 2.86, 2.85, (2.68, and 2.55), respectively. Two of these strategies, namely strategy item No.22, *I try not to translate word-for-word,* and strategy item No.23, *I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English,* got low mean values by males and medium mean values by females. The corresponding means of these strategies were shown in parentheses above.

➢ The lowest rating was given to strategy item No.17, *I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English,* ($M = 1.92$ for males and 2.23 for females, with an overall mean of 2.08). This strategy item got the lowest estimation level, and it represents (7.14%) of the total number of strategies of this category.

Given these results, it can be stated that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners, who participated in this study, are medium strategy users of the cognitive strategies because of the medium ranking values.

As the results indicated, it can be claimed that cognitive strategies are well-known strategies among Yemeni secondary school male and female learners as they used them frequently which, according to Oxford (1990), are typically found to be the most popular strategies with language learners and are essential in learning a new language because these strategies work directly on incoming information and transform the target language by the learner.

Besides, the results indicate that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are more active engaged in their language learning as they focus on using a lot of different activities. For example, they are more likely to seek out an English speaker to practice with and watch English television shows to constantly improve their language competency. It seems that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners use all their mental abilities like receiving and sending verbal messages to practice speaking the new language, practicing unfamiliar sounds, and dealing with new grammatical rules. In addition, they practice unfamiliar sounds, analyze, and reason about new language input. For instance, they use the strategy of 'analyzing expressions' which helps them to break down new long words into small parts to ease the reading and understanding processes. The high use of 'repeating' cognitive strategy can be attributed to the language teaching method that English language teachers follow in their way of teaching which asks learners to repeat words or expressions orally for several times. They also report that they try to imitate the native speakers that helps them to improve their pronunciation and their use of structure, vocabulary, intonation, etc.

Moreover, the results reveal that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners seem to have higher tendency towards using their mother tongue in translating word for word in order to understand or produce the new language. Based on the experience of the researcher, it is noticed that this habit can be attributed to the grammar translation method teachers follow in English teaching process which focus on rote memorisation and translation

of words in texts as ways to learn English in Yemeni context. According to Oxford (1990), this habit can slow learners down considerably and force them to go back constantly between languages.

In addition, in the light of the given results, it can be claimed that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners try to avoid the writing skill such as outlining or writing a summary of passages which is a challengeable skill and requires greater condensation of thought. This seems to suggest that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are not proficient in writing skills. These findings are in line with those of Abu-Shmais (2003), Khalil (2005), Aljuaid (2010), AlTunay (2014), and Alharbi (2017).

Furthermore, the results indicate that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are generally not taught to use the strategy of writing notes well, despite the importance of this strategy for both listening and reading skills as Oxford (1990) claimed. It seems that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are not proficient readers as this strategy is often used at high levels of proficiency as Oxford (1990) pointed out.

4.2.1.3. Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies, which enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in knowledge (Oxford, 1990), are the third category of LLSs in the SILL. However, this category of strategies was the sixth and the least category that frequently used by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners. These strategies were differently used by the male and female learners participated in this study as given in Table (4.3) which shows the means, overall mean, standard deviations, and the degrees of frequency for each individual strategy items employed of this category and for the category as a whole.

Table 4.3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Degrees of the Use of Compensation Strategies

No	Items	Male			Female			Overall Mean		
		M	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*
24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	2.77	1.21	Medium	3.44	1.32	Medium	3.11	1.31	Medium
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	2.59	1.24	Medium	3.17	1.51	Medium	2.89	1.41	Medium
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	2.54	1.39	Medium	2.70	1.38	Medium	2.62	1.39	Medium
27	I read English without looking up every new word.	2.59	1.48	Medium	2.56	1.36	Medium	2.58	1.42	Medium
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	2.93	1.31	Medium	3.00	1.31	Medium	2.97	1.31	Medium
29	If I can' t think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	2.97	1.33	Medium	3.15	1.34	Medium	3.06	1.34	Medium
	Total Average	**2.73**	**0.86**	**Medium**	**3.00**	**0.87**	**Medium**	**2.87**	**0.88**	**Medium**

It is clear from Table (4.3) that the overall averages of compensation strategies ranged from (3.11) to (2.58) with corresponding standard deviations ranged from (1.31) to (1.42). The total average of the overall mean of this category was (2.87) out of (5.0) and its corresponding standard deviation was (0.88). However, the total average of the individual overall mean scores of males and females were (2.73) and (3.00) and their corresponding standard deviations were (0.86) and (0.87), respectively.

Table (4.3) shows that the mean scores of all individual strategy items of the compensation strategies are generally got medium range values of more than (2.5) by both male and female learners.

At the level of the overall mean of each individual strategy items of this category of strategies, Table (4.3) also reveals the following results:

➢ No strategy item of this category was reported to be used at a high mean value of (3.5) or above.

➢ The highest rating was given to strategy item No.24, *To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses,* (M = 2.77 for males and 3.44 for females, with an overall mean of 3.11), followed by strategy item No.29, *If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing,* (M = 2.97 for males and 3.15 for females, with an overall mean of 3.06). Both strategies reached the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage. They got moderate estimation level, and they represent (33.33%) of the total number of strategy items of this category.

➢ Four more individual strategies (66.67% of the total number of strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female learners, but they did not reach the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy items No.28, 25, 26, and 27. The means of these strategies were 2.93, 2.59, 2.54, and 2.59 for males and 3.00, 3.17, 2.70, and 2.65 for females, with an overall mean of 2.97, 2.89, 2.62, and 2.58, respectively.

➢ None of the strategy items of this category obtained low mean value by either male or female learners.

Given these results, it can be stated that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are medium strategy users of the compensation strategies because of the medium ranking values. It can also be stated that the students could learn more efficiently when they guess the meaning of the words or sentences with the help of the linguistic or non-linguistic context. In addition, the findings indicate that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners try to learn by overcoming the gaps in their language knowledge. However, female learners find compensation strategies useful in overcoming their missing knowledge of English through the use of guessing or synonyms than male learners as the results indicated.

Besides, the results reveal that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners do not use the strategy of 'guessing intelligently' much while they read English. This can be attributed to the respondents' inadequate skill and awareness of using guessing and prediction for things. The low usage of compensation strategies by such learners can also be attributed to linguistic weaknesses, lack of complete knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and a low level of instructional achievement, which is often a hard truth to be acknowledged by the learners. According to Oxford (1990), these strategies help to overcome limitations and language deficiency in speaking and writing.

The findings reveal that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners employed compensation strategies the least frequently. This finding is not consistent with the findings of Hong-Nam and Leavell (2007), Lee and Oxford (2008), and Radwan (2011), which indicated that the compensation category was the highest ranking category.

Although the compensation strategies can provide students with opportunity to get the essential information to achieve a basic skill of mutual understanding with the English speakers, Yemeni secondary school male and female learners, who participated in this study, reported that they use compensation strategies the least frequently. According to Oxford (1990), compensation strategies occur not just in understanding the new language but also in producing it. Hence, it is necessary for language learners to learn how to use compensation strategies to be able to use the new language when needed.

To sum up, the researcher believes that the infrequent use of compensation strategies by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners can be attributed to the Yemeni learning environment, culture, and educational system in which students have very limited chances to use functional practice strategies especially in large classes.

4.2.1.4. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies, which are actions that go beyond cognitive device and they provide a way for learners to coordinate their own language learning process (Oxford, 1990), are the fourth category of LLSs presented in the SILL. However, this category was the first strategies that the most frequently used by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners who used it differently in the current study as shown in Table (4.4) which shows the means, overall mean, standard deviations, and the degrees of frequency for each individual strategy items employed of this category and for the category as a whole.

Table 4.4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Degrees of the Use of Metacognitive Strategies

No	Items	Male			Female			Overall Mean		
		M	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	3.13	1.36	Medium	3.37	1.35	Medium	3.25	1.36	Medium
31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	3.15	1.37	Medium	3.68	1.36	High	3.42	1.39	Medium
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	3.34	1.27	Medium	3.93	1.18	High	3.64	1.26	High
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	3.64	1.27	High	3.95	1.28	High	3.80	1.26	High
34	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	2.79	1.30	Medium	3.03	1.41	Medium	2.91	1.36	Medium
35	I look for people I can talk to in English.	2.74	1.36	Medium	3.09	1.36	Medium	2.92	1.37	Medium
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	3.08	1.23	Medium	3.38	1.30	Medium	3.23	1.27	Medium
37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	3.25	1.40	Medium	3.44	1.32	Medium	3.34	1.36	Medium
38	I think about my progress in learning English.	3.48	1.39	Medium	4.08	1.22	High	3.79	1.34	High
	Total Average	**3.18**	**0.91**	**Medium**	**3.55**	**0.91**	**High**	**3.37**	**0.92**	**Medium**

It is clear from Table (4.4) that the overall averages of metacognitive strategies ranged from (3.80) to (2.91) with corresponding standard deviations ranged from (1.26) to (1.36). The total average of the overall mean of this category was (3.37) out of (5.0) and its

corresponding standard deviation was (0.92). However, the total average of the individual overall mean scores of males and females were (3.18) and (3.55) and their corresponding standard deviations were (0.91) and (0.91), respectively. It is also clear from the table that female learners got high overall average whereas male learners obtained medium overall average for this category of strategies.

At the level of the overall mean values of each individual strategy items of this category of strategies, Table (4.4) also reveals the following results:

➢ The highest rating was given to strategy item No.33, *I try to find out how to be a better learner of Englis*h, (*M* = 3.64 for males and 3.95 for females, with an overall mean of 3.80), followed by strategy item No.38, *I think about my progress in learning English,* (*M* = 3.48 for males and 4.08 for females, with an overall mean of 3.79). In the third rank came strategy item No.32, *I pay attention when someone is speaking English,* (*M* = 3.34 for males and 3.93 for females, with an overall mean of 3.64). These strategies got high estimation level, and they represent (33.33%) of the total number of strategy items of this category. In these strategies, female learners got the highest mean value of more than 3.5 whereas male learners assigned the highest mean value to only one metacognitive strategy, namely strategy item No.33.

➢ Four individual strategies (44.44% of the total number of strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female students and they reached the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy items No.31, 37, 30, and 36. The means of these strategies were (3.15), 3.25, 3.13, and 3.08 for males and (3.68), 3.44, 3.37, and 3.38 for females, with an overall mean of (3.42), 3.34, 3.25, and 3.23, respectively. One of these strategies, namely strategy item No.31, *I notice*

my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better, received high mean value by females and medium mean value by males. The corresponding means of this strategy item were shown in parentheses above.

➢ Two more individual strategies (22.22% of the total number of the strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female learners, but they did not reach the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy items No.35 and 34. The means of these strategies were 2.74 and 2.79 for males, and 3.09 and 3.03 for females, with an overall mean of 2.92 and 2.91, respectively.

➢ None of the strategy items of this category obtained low mean value by both male and female learners.

Given these results, it can be stated that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are medium strategy users for the metacognitive strategies because of the medium ranking values of this category. Besides, it can be stated that the frequent usage of metacognitive strategies indicates that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners acknowledge the importance to coordinate, reflect on, and analyze their learning process.

Moreover, the results reveal that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners report efforts to think about their progress in learning English and try to seek out ways to use their English as possible as they can in order to improve their learning. They have clear goals for improving their English skills and learning from their mistakes. This indicates that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are seriously interested in learning a new language and have a strong instrumental motivation for learning English. They are responsible for themselves in seeking practice opportunity to practice their new language inside and outside of the classroom. That is, they look for people to speak with in English that can help them to become better language learners. The results also indicate that Yemeni

secondary school male and female learners are much less likely to organize, manage time, or plan their schedules to accommodate their study of English. The finding of the high-frequency use of metacognitive strategies by Yemeni secondary school learners is consistent with studies conducted in the Arab world, such as Abu Shmais (2003), Al-Buainain (2010), Alnujaidi (2017), El-Aouri (2013), Javid et al. (2013), Khalil (2005), and Radwan (2011).

4.2.1.5. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies, which help learners to regulate their emotions, motivations, and attitudes (Oxford, 1990), are the fifth category of LLSs in the questionnaire of SILL. However, this category was the third strategies that most frequently used by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners. These strategies were differently used by the male and female learners participated in the current study as shown in Table (4.5), which displays the means, overall mean, standard deviations, and the degrees of frequency for each individual strategy items employed of this category and for the category as a whole.

Table 4.5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Degrees of the Use of Affective Strategies

No	Items	Male			Female			Overall Mean		
		M	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	3.00	1.40	Medium	3.45	1.39	Medium	3.23	1.41	Medium
40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	3.66	1.30	High	3.58	1.30	High	3.62	1.30	High
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	3.09	1.51	Medium	3.10	1.57	Medium	3.10	1.54	Medium
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	2.82	1.19	Medium	3.47	1.28	Medium	3.15	1.28	Medium
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	2.32	1.08	Low	2.55	1.54	Medium	2.44	1.34	Low
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	2.75	1.24	Medium	3.23	1.41	Medium	2.99	1.35	Medium
	Total Average	**2.94**	**0.75**	**Medium**	**3.23**	**0.79**	**Medium**	**3.09**	**0.80**	**Medium**

It is clear from Table (4.5) that the overall averages of affective strategies ranged from (3.62) to (2.44) with corresponding standard deviations ranged from (1.30) to (1.34). The total average of the overall mean of this category was (3.09) out of (5.0) and its corresponding standard deviation was (0.80). However, the total average of the individual mean scores of males and females were (2.94) and (3.23) and their corresponding standard deviations were (0.75) and (0.79), respectively.

At the level of the overall mean values of each individual strategy items of this category of strategies, Table (4.5) also reveals the following results:

➢ The highest rating was given to strategy item No.40, *I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake,* ($M = 3.66$ for males and 3.58 for females, with an overall mean of 3.62). This strategy item got high estimation level, and it represents (16.67%) of the total number of strategy items of this category.

➢ Three individual strategies (50% of the total number of strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female learners, and they reached the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy items No.39, 42, and 41. The means of these strategies were 3.00, 2.82, and 3.09 for males and 3.45, 3.47, and 3.10 for females, with an overall mean of 3.23, 3.15, and 3.10, respectively.

➢ One more individual strategy (16.67% of the total number of strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female learners, but it did not reach the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy item No.44. The means of this strategy were 2.75 for males and 3.23 for females, with an overall mean of 2.99.

> ➢ The lowest rating was given to strategy item No.43, *I write down my feelings in a language learning diary,* which received low mean value by males ($M = 2.32$) and medium mean value by females ($M = 2.55$), with an overall mean of ($M = 2.44$), respectively. This strategy item got the lowest estimation level, and it represents (16.67%) of the total number of strategy items of this category.

Given these results, it can be claimed that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are medium users for the affective strategies because of the medium ranking values. The results show that male and female learners assigned, to some extent, similar mean values to the majority of the strategies of this category, as shown in Table (4.5).

In the light of the given results, it can be stated that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners take the initiative to learn even though they make mistakes. They acknowledge the importance of speaking English inside the classroom as it is the only way to improve their speaking skills in English.

It also can be stated that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are being aware of their tension or nervousness when using or studying English and try to relax whenever they feel afraid of using English. They are more likely to reward themselves for a good performance in order to be better language learners in using the new language successfully.

In addition, the results shown in Table (4.5) indicate that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners report that they share their feelings with others when they are studying or using English in order to regain their emotional balance so they can continue learning effectively. Therefore, the respondents' general relaxation level combined with the perception of knowing that mistakes are a natural part of language learning process, may let them have more control and less anxiety.

Moreover, the results reveal that the respondents report low range of using writing a language learning diary. This can be explained as that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are not aware of this strategy, although the use of this strategy is of great significance as it helps learners to keep track of events and feelings in the process of learning new language as Oxford (1990) indicated. Another possible explanation for the low usage of this strategy is that writing dairies is unexceptional well known practice in the Arab world in general and in Yemen in particular, i.e., students' disdain from this strategy seems justifiable (Radwan, 2011).

This finding is consistent with the findings of Msuya (2016) who found that affective strategies were the third most frequently used and showed medium use among 70 EFL learners in two ordinary level secondary schools in Tanzania which is similar to the finding of this study. On the contrary, this finding is not consistent with the findings of Alhaisoni (2012) and Alharbi (2017) which revealed that affective strategies were reported as the least used strategies among their Saudi university EFL students.

4.2.1.6. Social Strategies

Social strategies, which help learners to learn through interaction with others (Oxford, 1990), are the sixth category of LLSs in the SILL. However, this category was the second category that the most frequently used by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners.

These strategies were differently used by the male and female learners participated in the current study as seen in Table (4.6) that shows the means, overall mean, standard deviations, and the degrees of frequency for each individual strategy items employed of this category and for the category as a whole.

Table 4.6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Degrees of the Use of Social Strategies

No	Items	Male			Female			Overall Mean		
		M	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*	*M*	*SD*	*Degree*
45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	3.41	1.31	Medium	3.66	1.25	High	3.54	1.28	High
46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	3.34	1.36	Medium	3.47	1.33	Medium	3.41	1.35	Medium
47	I practice English with other students.	3.30	1.28	Medium	3.16	1.27	Medium	3.23	1.28	Medium
48	I ask for help from English speakers.	3.64	1.32	High	3.69	1.32	High	3.66	1.32	High
49	I ask questions in English.	3.04	1.30	Medium	3.07	1.29	Medium	3.06	1.29	Medium
50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	3.03	1.37	Medium	3.27	1.46	Medium	3.15	1.42	Medium
	Total Average	**3.29**	**0.98**	**Medium**	**3.39**	**0.84**	**Medium**	**3.34**	**0.91**	**Medium**

It is clear from Table (4.6) that the overall averages of social strategies ranged from (3.66) to (3.15) with corresponding standard deviations ranged from (1.32) to (1.42). The total average of the overall mean of this category was (3.34) out of (5.0) and its corresponding standard deviation was (0.91). However, the total average of the individual mean scores of males and females were (3.29) and (3.39) and their corresponding standard deviations were (0.98) and (0.84), respectively.

At the level of the overall mean values of each individual strategy items of this category of strategies, Table (4.6) also reveals the following results:

➢ The highest rating was given to strategy item No.48, *I ask for help from English speakers,* (*M* = 3.64 for males and 3.69 for females, with an overall mean of 3.66), followed by strategy item No.45, *If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again,* (*M* = 3.41 for males and 3.66 for females, with an overall mean of 3.54). Both

strategies got high estimation level, and they represent (33.33%) of the total number of strategy items of this category. In these strategies, female learners got the highest mean value of more than 3.5 whereas male learners got the highest mean value to only one social strategy; namely, strategy item No.48.

➢ Four individual strategies (66.67% of the total number of strategy items of this category) got moderate estimation level for both male and female learners, and they reached the minimum standard limit set for frequent usage, namely strategy items No.46, 47, 50, and 49. The means of these strategies were 3.34, 3.30, 3.03, and 3.04 for males and 3.47, 3.16, 3.27, and 3.07 for females, with an overall mean of 3.41, 3.23, 3.15, and 3.06, respectively.

➢ None of the strategy items of this category obtained low mean value by both male and female learners.

Given these results, it can be stated that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are medium strategy users for the social strategies because of the medium ranking values of this category. The results shown in Table (4.6) reveal that both male and female learners got, to some extent, similar mean values to all strategy items of this category.

It is clear from Table (4.6) that the findings seem to suggest that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are willing to ask for help when facing language difficulties. Therefore, they use social strategies, such as asking the other person to slow down, repeat, or clarify when they do not understand something in English, to compensate for the lack of meaningful language input. Such social strategies may be used to make up for learners' deficiencies in listening comprehension. In addition, the findings shown in Table (4.6) indicate that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners are much more likely to ask for help or ask English speakers to correct them when they are speaking the target language.

Besides, Yemeni learners in the EFL classroom tend to build social bonds with others and they like to participate and talk in class as a step towards learning practice. This shows their strong preference for learning with others by asking questions and cooperating with peers which means that teachers should exploit this in involving such learners in group works and any other co-operating activities of CLT.

Moreover, the results indicate that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners have a willingness to accept and explore English culture and learn social norms. Therefore, the use of 'developing cultural understanding' strategy is essential for all EFL learners, if used properly, not only inside but outside the classroom too. Besides, its proper use promotes the learners' communicative competence and autonomy in language learning, (Ungureanu & Georgescu, 2012, as cited in Naif & Saad, 2017). Therefore, the participants of the present study report social strategies as their second most frequently used strategies.

This finding is in line with the findings of Aljuaid (2015) and Khalil (2005) who revealed that social strategies were the second most frequently used and showed medium use among their participants. In contrast, the findings of the present study are not consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Lee and Oxford in 2008, in which they used the SILL with more than 1000 Korean learners from different education levels at high school and university, which showed extremely low usage of social strategies. In a similar vein, Hong-Nam and Leavell (2007) found that social strategies were reported as the second least used strategies by Korean bilingual and monolingual learners.

In Table (4.7), the researcher presents a full picture of the sample responses to the six categories of LLSs. In other words, Table (4.7) shows the overall mean scores of the six categories of LLSs reported to be used by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners in descending order according to the mean scores that they received and the standard deviation, the percentage, and the estimated degree of the six categories of LLSs.

Table 4.7

Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages of the Overall Use and Ranks of the Six Categories of LLSs

Rank	No	Type of Strategies	M	SD	%	Degree
1	4	Metacognitive	3.37	0.92	67.33	Medium
2	6	Social	3.34	0.91	66.82	Medium
3	5	Affective	3.09	0.80	61.77	Medium
4	2	Cognitive	3.06	0.76	61.20	Medium
5	1	Memory	2.94	0.84	58.82	Medium
6	3	Compensation	2.87	0.88	57.41	Medium
Total Average			3.11	0.68	62.16	Medium

The means of the six categories of LLSs listed in Table (4.7), given above, are graphically presented in Figure (4.1).

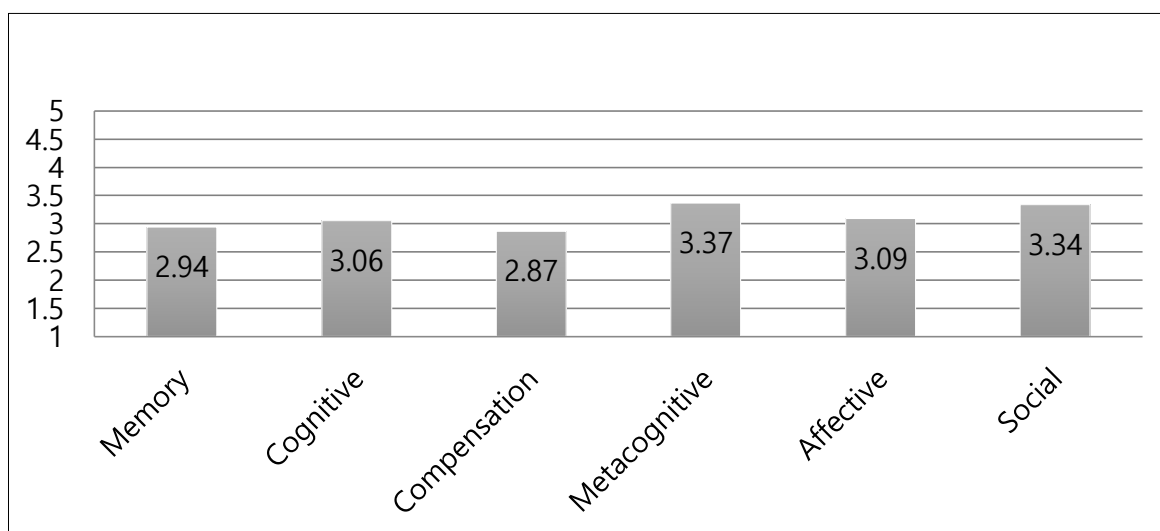*Figure* 4.1 Overall Means of the Six Categories of LLSs

It is clear from Table (4.7) and Figure (4.1) that no category of LLSs reported to be used by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners at a high or low level. It is also clear from the table and the figure that the mean scores of responses for the six categories of LLSs of the adopted version of the SILL of Oxford (1990) ranged from (2.87) to (3.37) on a

scale of 1 to 5, a range which Oxford (1990) regarded as a medium frequency use of strategies.

The total average of the overall use of the six categories of LLSs by both male and female secondary school learners, was at medium level ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.68$) as Table (4.7) shows. This finding indicates that both male and female learners are, on average, medium strategy users with respect to the six categories of LLSs suggested by Oxford (1990) and generally have a medium level of LLSs use which indicates that the LLSs are sometimes used by the Yemeni secondary school male and female learners.

The medium use of LLSs was also displayed in several other studies conducted in different countries, such as Alhaisoni (2012), Aljuaid (2015), AlTunay (2014), El-Aouri (2013), Hong-Nam and Leavell (2007), Khalil (2005), Lee and Oxford (2008), and Leung and Hui (2011). For example, El-Aouri (2013) reported that the mean of strategy use among 60 male and female Moroccan university EFL science students used LLSs at a medium level ($M = 3.09$).

It is also clear from Table (4.7) and Figure (4.1), that the first and the most frequently used LLSs by Yemeni secondary school male and female learners were *metacognitive* strategies ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.92$), followed by the *social* strategies ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.91$). In the third rank came the *affective* strategies ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.80$), followed by the *cognitive* strategies ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.76$). In the fifth rank came the *memory* strategies ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.84$), followed by the *compensation* strategies ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 0.88$) which were the least used strategies by the respondents of the study.

These findings are in line, to a large extent, with Khalil (2005) who reported that 194 EFL Palestinian high school learners used metacognitive and social strategies most frequently, followed by affective and cognitive strategies. Khalil's study also showed that the least frequently used LLSs were compensation and memory strategies. The same result was

revealed by Aljuaid (2015) who stated that the participants of her study showed their high preference for metacognitive and social strategies to all other LLSs. Similarly, the results of the current study support the findings of Abu Shmais (2003) and Msuya (2016) who reported that the less and the least frequently used LLSs, as perceived by the participants of their studies, were memory and compensation strategies respectively.

The findings of the high-frequency use of metacognitive and social strategies are also reported in several other Arab studies, such as Alharbi (2017), Aljuaid (2010), and Naif and Saad (2017). However, the findings of the present study indicate that Yemeni secondary school male and female learners use somehow a humble range of LLSs. Based on these findings, the respondents in the current study seem to be relatively somewhat sophisticated LLSs users of all six categories of strategies, using them at medium levels. One possible explanation can be offered for this finding is that, Yemeni secondary school male and female learners study English in an EFL setting and do not use it in their daily life situations and, thus, they are not familiar with most kinds of strategies.

Moreover, such a result can be taken as a sign of inappropriate, consciously, or unconsciously using of LLSs which can imply that these learners probably have not received good strategy instruction in English

4.2.2. The Second Question

Are there any significant differences between males' and females' LLSs use?

This question aims at identifying the effect of gender variable regarding the use of LLSs. In other words, to find whether there are statistically significant differences between male and female learners in the means of LLSs, as seen in the Table (4.8), the researcher used independent-samples T-test.

Table 4.8

Independent Sample T-test Showing Students Differences Regarding their LLSs Use According to Gender Variable

Strategies	Level	N	*M*	*SD*	*Df*	*t*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Memory	Male	185	2.83	0.79	375	2.634	0.009
	Female	192	3.05	0.87			
Cognitive	Male	185	2.87	0.71	375	5.017	0.000
	Female	192	3.25	0.77			
Compensation	Male	185	2.73	0.86	375	3.048	0.002
	Female	192	3.00	0.88			
Metacognitive	Male	185	3.18	0.91	375	3.972	0.000
	Female	192	3.55	0.91			
Affective	Male	185	2.94	0.78	375	3.561	0.000
	Female	192	3.23	0.79			
Social	Male	185	3.29	0.98	362.76	0.985	0.325
	Female	192	3.39	0.84			
Whole Instrument	**Male**	**185**	**2.96**	**0.66**	**375**	**4.255**	**0.000**
	Female	**192**	**3.25**	**0.67**			

It is clear from Table (4.8) that there is statistically significant difference in the overall means of using English learning strategies [t (375) = 4.255, p = 0.000] between secondary school *male* learners (*M* = 2.96, *SD* = 0.66) and *female* learners (*M* = 3.25, *SD* = 0.67) at the (0.05) level of significance in favor of females, which indicates that females report higher overall strategy use than males and they are significantly superior to male learners in using LLSs as they use a wider range of strategies.

Table (4.8) also shows that there are statistically significant differences between secondary school *male* learners and *female* learners in favor of females in the means of using:

➢ *Memory* strategies [t (375) = 2.634, p = 0.009], *male* learners (*M* = 2.83, *SD* = 0.79) and *female* learners (*M* = 3.05, *SD* = 0.87);

➢ *Cognitive* strategies [t (375) = 5.017, p = 0.000], *male* learners (*M* = 2.87, *SD* = 0.71) and *female* learners (*M* = 3.25, *SD* = 0.77);

➤ *Compensation* strategies [*t* (375) = 3.048, *p* = 0.002], *male* learners (*M* = 2.73, *SD* = 0.86) and *female* learners (*M* = 3.00, *SD* = 0.88);

➤ *Metacognitive* strategies [*t* (375) = 3.972, *p* = 0.000], *male* learners (*M* = 3.18, *SD* = 0.91) and *female* learners (*M* = 3.55, *SD* = 0.91); and

➤ *Affective* strategies [*t* (375) = 3.561, *p* = 0.000], *male* learners (*M* = 2.94, *SD* = 0.78) and *female* learners (*M* = 3.23, *SD* = 0.79).

These results really suggest that Yemeni secondary school female learners surpass males in the use of almost all LLSs, and that females are generally more efficient language learners and more frequent strategy users than males. One possible explanation for this result is that females in general are better at planning and managing their learning than males, which reflects a tendency towards more global learning (Khalil, 2005). Another possible reason is that this finding support the general belief that females are more effective and more successful language learners than males.

However, there is no statistically significant difference in the means of using *social strategies* [*t* (362.760) = 0.985, *p* = 0.325] between secondary school *male* learners (*M* = 3.29, *SD* = 0.98) and *female* learners (*M* = 3.39, *SD* = 0.84) at the (0.05) level of significance as shown in Table (4.8). This means that both Yemeni secondary school male and female learners use social strategies frequently as these strategies help them to communicate using the language more effectively when interacting with others. Generally, this equality can be due to the similar learning environments in which both male learners and female learners learn. That is, teachers may have consciously or unconsciously-during teaching- drawn learners' attention to the use of social strategies such as asking questions, either for clarification or correction, and working in pairs or groups. However, it can also be concluded that these equalities occur as a result of learners' awareness of adapting the suitable strategies to approach a task for effective language learning and having a formal learning in the

classroom. This result is consistent with the studies of Aljuaid (2015), Aslan (2009), Khalil (2005), and Oxford and Nyikos (1989) in which females reported more frequent strategy use than males did. On the contrary, this result does not coincide with the findings of other studies, such as Ehrman and Oxford (1990), El-Aouri (2013), and Radwan (2011) who found that there were no significant differences between male and female students in the use of LLSs. In contrast to the findings of this study and to the significant gender differences, Abu Shmais (2003) found that male students were more frequent users of strategies than female students, and males surpassed females in the use of almost all LLSs, except for memory and metacognitive strategies where females marked higher means.

Interestingly, Oxford (1996, p. 248, as cited in El-Dib, 2004), considered the possibility that differences found in some studies might be due to the fact that "males and females are different in how they report their strategies retrospectively but are not in reality all that different when they actually use strategies". Overall, females in this study reported greater overall strategy use than males and they are more frequent strategy users than males in the use of all six categories of LLSs. This trend fits in with previous theory and research that females are better, more efficient learners, and active users of language (native or other) than males (Oxford, 1994).

4.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of this study in detail. The first section of this chapter introduced the aims of the study and described the analysis of data. The second section included the results of the first question of the study. It presented and discussed the general pattern of each individual category of LLSs reported by the respondents of the current study in order as suggested by Oxford (1990). It also dealt with presenting and discussing the overall average of the sample responses to the six categories of LLSs. More, the second section of this chapter is related to the results of the second question. It presented

and discussed the differences between male and female secondary school learners in the means of LLSs use. The next chapter presents a brief summary of the findings of the study and its results. It also highlights the implications of the study, gives some suggestions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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5.1. Summary of the Findings

This study investigated the use of LLSs among Yemeni male and female secondary school learners and explored the significant differences in the use of LLSs based on gender. This study adopted Oxford's (1990) SILL questionnaire as a data collection instrument. The SILL was used to answer the two questions of the current study. The results are summarized as follows:

➢ Yemeni secondary school learners were medium users of LLSs. That is, the six categories of LLSs were used by all of the learners at medium levels.

➢ The most frequently used LLSs by Yemeni secondary school learners were metacognitive and social, followed by affective and cognitive. Furthermore, compensation strategies were the least used and memory strategies were used less often than the other four LLSs.

➢ Statistically significant difference between male and female secondary school learners, at the (0.05) level of significance, in the use of LLSs was found showing that female learners used LLSs more than male learners did.

➢ However, no statistical significant difference was found between males and females regarding the use of social strategies.

5.2. Implications of the study

The findings derived from the current study suggest some of pedagogical implications for teaching, material design, and teacher preparation. They are as follows:

1. The findings have implications for the design and development of instructional materials. The results about variation in strategy use by Yemeni male and female secondary school learners can guide materials developers in their selection and

incorporation of activities and tasks that target certain strategies. Explicit strategies-based instruction can be incorporated into the English curriculum, which can be achieved through inserting strategies into the language instructional materials. Since the Ministry of Education in Yemen has embarked on developing new English textbooks for government schools, the curriculum designers and developers can benefit from the findings of this assessment of LLSs used by secondary school learners (both males and females) in preparing instructional materials and activities that are skill and task-specific and that target learners' strategy needs.

2. The findings of the medium overall mean score in LLSs use in the present study reflects that Yemeni male and female secondary school learners were not familiar with the use of strategies in their learning, and hence were not using a wide range of appropriate strategies. Moreover, these findings suggest that strategy training is imperative because Yemeni secondary school learners are somehow aware of their learning strategies as they use them at a medium level. Therefore, training them in strategy practice can raise their awareness and lead to language proficiency. However, teachers still need to try help students cultivate and raise their awareness of LLSs and provide students with further opportunities to use LLSs more frequently, and to practice a wide range of appropriate strategies that are applicable to different tasks and classroom activities. Consequently, once students are aware of benefits of using strategies in their language learning process, they will be able to and appropriately employ these LLSs to facilitate their English learning, and, thus, can help them to become more self-confident and successful language learners.

3. An important finding of this study is that metacognitive and social strategies were reported as the most frequently used strategies by the participants of this study, followed by affective and cognitive strategies. Therefore, the pedagogical implication of this finding is that teachers should train and familiarize the learners with the effectiveness of using metacognitive strategies, such as planning, organizing, and evaluating their own learning as well as social strategies, such as asking for help or working with peers. More precisely, the medium mean of 3.06 and 3.09 for cognitive and affective strategies suggests that the participants may not perform perfectly in terms of their cognitive or affective skills in their English classroom. The secondary school learners need to be, therefore, provided with further opportunities to use such strategies. Activities related to LLSs in general and metacognitive, social, affective, and cognitive strategies in particular should be embedded in English classes as a fundamental tool in language learning in order to improve their learning English proficiency, and, thus, encouraging such learners to employ these strategies to a greater extent.

4. In addition, the results revealed that memory and compensation strategies were reported as the least frequently used strategies. Therefore, it is plausible to claim that the relatively low usage of these two strategies is due to students' inadequate knowledge about LLSs. The first consideration of any ESL/EFL teacher who wants to enhance student learning is the appropriate learning strategies (Oxford, 1996). Therefore, it is imperative for secondary school teachers to train their learners by familiarizing them with adequate information about each strategy and encourage them to use LLSs. Moreover, language teachers could assess the strategy use of their learners on regular classroom activities in order to gain a better understanding of students' language learning preferences so that they could

individualise the learning content. In addition, memory and compensation strategies can be emphasized more among such learners. Thus, teachers should encourage them to overcome their learning difficulties and compensate for the lack of language knowledge through the use of strategies such as guessing intelligently, using synonyms, and predicting responses. Furthermore, memory strategies imply that classroom strategy training can particularly emphasize more memory strategies. Teachers should enhance these strategies by using rhymes and flash cards to memorize new vocabulary.

5. The results of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between male and female secondary school learners in terms of the overall use of LLSs in general and in the means of using memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and affective strategies in favor of female learners in particular. Therefore, teachers should determine the range of factors affecting strategy use among their learners. For example, this study showed that females differ from males in their strategy choices and uses. The illustration of LLSs based on such factor can provide a useful guidance for learners in order to become closer to successful language learners. The most important pedagogical implication of this study is the need to provide students with further opportunities to use LLSs more frequently. It is a must for a language teacher today to familiarize the learners with the most common LLSs. The teacher's role in strategy training is an important one. The teacher should learn about the learners' interest, motivations, and learning styles. To do so, the teacher should also learn what LLSs his/her learners appear to be using by observing their behavior inside and outside the classroom. In addition to observing their behavior in class, the

teacher should have adequate knowledge about the learners' goals, motivations, LLSs, and their understanding of the course to be taught (Zeynali, 2012).

6. The findings of the present study highlight the importance of integrating strategy training into classroom instruction and into curriculum design. Teachers need to receive training in strategy instruction and assessment showing them how to use multiple data collection methods (e.g., interviews, self-reports, think-aloud, etc.) to find, describe, and classify the strategies currently used by their students. Besides, teachers need training in delivering explicit strategies-based instruction, which involves teaching students to apply appropriate strategies to their learning classroom activities.

7. Moreover, practical actions can be taken by teachers in language classrooms in terms of their materials they use when teaching. The language teacher should analyze his/her textbook to find out whether the textbook already includes LLSs or LLSs training. He/she should look for new texts or other teaching materials if LLSs are not already included within his/her materials. He/she should also study his/her own teaching method and design tasks to promote or develop strategies that would help learners to learn effectively. In addition to facilitate learning through the various strategies in the classroom teachers should also incorporate the use of strategies in the materials and the classroom activities. In addition, they should incorporate LLSs into their teaching methods and approaches, train the students to apply the appropriate strategy for a specific purpose or a specific skill area, and encourage them to use the strategies as frequently as possible (Zare, 2012) to enable them to learn the target language in an effective manner. Thus, the role of a teacher can be modified as a facilitator, which encourages and motivates learners' active participation in the teaching and learning process. To

conclude, the current study provided relevant information about Yemeni secondary school learners' use of LLSs and explored the significant difference between male and female learners' LLSs use. These LLSs profiles can guide the planning of strategy assessment and instruction training activities for EFL teachers based on the learners' strategy needs identified in the study.

5.3. Recommendations for Further Research

1. The literature review presented in the current study revealed that, in the area of Yemeni EFL context particularly, LLSs have not been investigated enough. Therefore, it is highly recommended that further researchers should conduct descriptive, experimental, and cross-sectional studies on Yemeni EFL learners in different instructional levels. These kinds of studies can be expected to provide a better understanding of Yemeni EFL learners' LLSs use.

2. Strategy instruction study is essential in heightening learners' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in language learning and the range of strategies from which they can choose to help them learn the target language most efficiently (Metacognitive knowledge); and developing learner autonomy (Cohen 2003, as cited in Abhakorn, 2008). The current study has shed light and provided a snapshot on LLSs use in Yemeni EFL settings. Therefore, there is a need for conducting research that pave the way for building the theory that appears essential for understanding of how and when the students use specific strategies through including both explicit and implicit integration of language learning and language use strategies into a foreign language teaching classroom. Actually, there is a need for an experimental type of research in the Yemeni EFL context to pin down exactly what types of LLSs are actually used.

3. More comprehensive research is also needed on a variety of factors influencing LLSs use, such as cultural background, motivation, age, proficiency, etc., to explore the real factors behind the learners' preferences of some LLSs.

4. Since there is a paucity of research in the field of LLSs in Yemeni context, more efforts should be devoted to the development of Strategies-Based Instruction (SBI) programs, which is learner-centered approach to teaching that extends strategies training, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. Therefore, investigating the effect of training on LLSs use, including the success of use, is a vital issue to take into consideration.

5. Since this study is related to secondary school learners' use of LLSs, other studies should investigate students' use of LLSs in university-level students.

6. Besides to the general patterns of LLSs use, LLSs used for specific language skills, such as reading strategies, speaking strategies, writing strategies, and listening strategies, should be a concern of future investigation.

7. This study used a quantitative approach. Therefore, it is recommended that future research should employ a qualitative approach through using multiple data collection procedures by combining the use of SILL questionnaires with the use of other research techniques, such as interviews, verbal report, think-aloud techniques, etc. which will be a useful way of gaining more insights into the strategy use.

8. This study can be replicated in other educational settings that combine students from the same background; or compare and contrast the LLSs use of learners of public and private schools with references to their language performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Background Questionnaire

استبيان الطلبة

Sex (الجنس)   Male (ذكر)   [ ]   Female (انثي)   [ ]

.... (الصف) Grade .... (المدرسة) School .... (العمر) Age

Appendix B

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

(English with an Arabic Translated Version)

عزيزي الطالب

هذا الاستبيان هو محاولة لاكتشاف استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية المستخدمة من الطلاب والطالبات اليمنيين للمرحلة الثانوية العامة (الصف الأول الثانوي) في محافظة إب. إن مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة وإجابتك الصادقة لفقرات الاستبيان لها أهمية وتقدير عالي. تأكد أن معلوماتك سوف تبقى سرية وسوف تستخدم فقط لغرض هذا البحث.

تعليمات:

سوف تجد جمل عن تعلم اللغة الانجليزية، الرجاء قراءة كل جملة واختيار الاجابة من (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) التي تعبر بدقة عن مدى انطباق الجملة عليك من الفراغ جانب كل جملة بوضع علامة (√)، الرجاء تحري الدقة في اختيار الاجابة التي تعبر بصدق عن ادائك وتصفك. لا تجيب حسب ما تعتقد أنها الاجابة الصحيحة أو حسب ما يفعله الاخرون، لا توجد اجابة صحيحة أو اجابة خاطئة لهذه الاسئلة. تحرّى الدقة مع السرعة، الوقت الذي تستغرقه الاجابة يتراوح بين 30 الى 40 دقيقة. هناك 50 فقرة في هذا الاستبيان وعندما تحتار لا تتردد بالسؤال (إذا كان لديك سؤال دع المدرس يعرف حالاً).

الباحث/ بلال عبد الله الحبيشي   شكراً على تعاونك

	Statements **Part A**	لا ينطبق علي ابداً 1	قليلا ينطبق علي 30% 2	أحيانا ينطبق علي 50% 3	غالبا ينطبق علي% 70 4	دائما ينطبق علي 95% 5
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English. أفكر في العلاقات التي تربط بين ما تعلمته وبين الأشياء الجديدة التي اتعلمها في اللغة الإنجليزية					
2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them. استخدم الكلمات الإنجليزية الجديدة في جملة كي أتذكرها.					
3	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word. أربط بين صوت اي كلمة إنجليزية جديدة وبين صورة او شكل الكلمة حتي اتمكن من تذكرها .					
4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used. أتذكر أي كلمة إنجليزية جديدة عن طريق رسم صورة ذهنية للموقف الذي سأستخدم فيه هذه الكلمة.					
5	I use rhymes to remember new English words. أستخدم إيقاعات صوتية لتذكر أي كلمة إنجليزية جديدة.					

	Statements	لا ينطبق علي ابداً	قليلا ينطبق علي 30%	أحيانا ينطبق علي 50%	غالبا ينطبق علي 70%	دائما ينطبق علي 95%
		1	2	3	4	5
6	I use flashcards to remember new English words. أستخدم بطاقات لأتذكر أي كلمة إنجليزية جديدة.					
7	I physically act out new English words أمثل حركيا الكلمات الإنجليزية الجديد					
8	I review English often. أراجع دائما دروس اللغة الإنجليزية					
9	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign. أتذكر الكلمات أو العبارات الإنجليزية الجديدة عن طريق تذكر مواقعها في الصفحة أو السبورة أو إشارات الشوارع					

Part B

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
10	I say or write new English words several times. اكرر نطق أو كتابة أي كلمة إنجليزية جديدة عدة مرات.					
11	I try to talk like native English speakers. أحاول أتكلم اللغة الإنجليزية مثل الناطقين بها.					
12	I practice the sounds of English. أتدرب على نطق أصوات اللغة الإنجليزية					
13	I use the English words I know in different ways. استخدم الكلمات الإنجليزية التي اعرفها بطرق مختلفة.					
14	I start conversations in English. أبادر بالحوار باللغة الإنجليزية					
15	I watch English language TV shows and movies spoken in English. أُشاهد برامج وافلام باللغة الإنجليزية.					
16	I read for pleasure in English. أقرا بالإنجليزية عن رغبة واستمتاع					
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports. أدون الملاحظات والرسائل والتقارير باللغة الإنجليزية.					
18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully. عندما أقرأ باللغة الإنجليزية، اولاً أتصفح الفقرة بسرعة لمعرفة الفكرة الرئيسية وبعد ذلك أقرأها بعناية.					
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English. ابحث عن الكلمات التي استخدمها باللغة العربية والتي تتشابه مع الكلمات الإنجليزية الجديدة					
20	I try to find patterns in English (e.g. I don't know how to ...) أحاول البحث عن أنماط في اللغة الإنجليزية.					
21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand. افهم معنى الكلمة الإنجليزية الجديدة عن طريق تقسيمها إلى أجزاء.					
22	I try not to translate word-for-word. أحاول أن لا أترجم كل كلمة. (أتجنب الترجمة الحرفية)					

	Statements	لا ينطبق علي ابداً	قليلا ينطبق علي 30%	أحيانا ينطبق علي 50%	غالبا ينطبق علي 70%	دائما ينطبق علي 95%
		1	2	3	4	5
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English. ألخص أي معلومة اسمعها أو اقرأها باللغة الإنجليزية					
Part C						
24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses. أخمن معنى أي كلمة إنجليزية جديدة غير مألوفة لفهمها.					
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures. عندما لا أستطيع التفكير في أي كلمة خلال حواري بالإنجليزية استخدم الإيماءات.					
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English. أقوم بتأليف أي كلمة إنجليزية جديدة إذا لم اعرف الكلمة الأصلية لها.					
27	I read English without looking up every new word. اقرأ الإنجليزية بدون استخراج معنى كل كلمة جديدة.					
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English. أحاول تخمين ما سيقوله المتحدث خلال حواري معه بالإنجليزية.					
29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing. إذا لم أستطع التفكير في أي كلمة إنجليزية استخدم كلمة أو عبارة تؤدي إلى نفس المعنى.					
Part D						
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English. أحاول إيجاد طرق عديدة استخدم فيها اللغة الإنجليزية.					
31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better. ألاحظ أخطائي في اللغة الإنجليزية واحاول استخدام القواعد الخاصة بها لتساعدني في تعديلها					
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English. انتبه للشخص أثناء حديثه باللغة الإنجليزية.					
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English. أحاول إيجاد الطرق التي تجعلني متعلم جيد للغة الإنجليزية.					
34	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English. أنظم جدول أوقاتي لكي أجد وقت كافي لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.					
35	I look for people I can talk to in English. ابحث عن الأشخاص الذين أستطيع التحدث إليهم بالإنجليزية.					
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English. ابحث عن فرص للقراءة باللغة الإنجليزية قدر المستطاع.					
37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills. لدي أهداف واضحة لتحسين مهاراتي في اللغة الإنجليزية.					
38	I think about my progress in learning English. أفكر في تنمية قدراتي في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.					

	Statements Part E	لا ينطبق علي ابداً	قليلا ينطبق علي 30%	أحيانا ينطبق علي 50%	غالبا ينطبق علي 70%	دائما ينطبق علي 95%
		1	2	3	4	5
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English. أحاول الاسترخاء عندما اشعر بالخوف و الارتباك في استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية					
40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake أشجع نفسي للتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية حتى لو كنت أخشى الوقوع في الأخطاء					
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. أكافئ نفسي عندما أحرز إنجازا جيدا في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.					
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English. ألاحظ عندما أكون متوترا او مرتبك عند تعلم أو استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية.					
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary. أدون تصوراتي وأحاسيسي المتعلقة بتعلم اللغة في مذكرات خاصة بها.					
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English. أخبر شخص آخر كيف أشعر وأنا أتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.					
Part F						
45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again. عندما لا افهم شيء أثناء حواري مع أي شخص باللغة الإنجليزية اطلب منه البطئ أو إعادة عبارته من جديد.					
46	I ask speakers to correct me when I talk. اطلب من المتحدثين للغة الإنجليزية بتصحيح أخطائي عندما أتحدث.					
47	I practice English with other students. أتدرب على اللغة الإنجليزية بمشاركة زملائي الآخرين.					
48	I ask for help from the proficient users of English. اطلب المساعدة من الذين يجيدون للغة الإنجليزية.					
49	I ask questions in English. أسأل أسئلة باللغة الإنجليزية.					
50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers. أحاول معرفة ثقافة المتحدثتين الأصليين للغة الإنجليزية.					