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A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF EFL UNIVERSITY  
INSTRUCTORS AND LEARNERS REGARDING THE  
IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

MASTER THESIS

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We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Pola Mohammed titled "A Study on the Perceptions of EFL University Instructors and Learners Regarding the Importance of Language Learning Strategies" and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present research studied the male and female Kurdish EFL university learners' views on the importance of language learning strategies (LLSs) in the Erbil Province of Iraq. It also investigated the male and female university instructors' views on the importance of LLSs. For this purpose, 559 male and female university students and 32 male and female university instructors were selected from five universities as the subjects of this study. Through the administration of Griffiths' (2007) English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI), the current research collected data on the importance of language learning strategies (LLSs). The participants in the study were university students and instructors in the province of Erbil, Northern Iraq. The perceptions of instructors and learners on the importance of LLSs were studied in relation to learners' gender and university grade as well as instructors' gender and years of teaching experience. The study indicated insignificant differences between the female and male students' use of LLSs and also between male and female instructors' awareness of LLSs. In terms of university grade, the findings showed that there were significant differences between students from different university grades. In the same way, the university instructors' year of teaching experience indicator was not statistically different between instructors from various universities. Finally, the results revealed that there was a good correlation between instructors' and learners' views on the importance of LLSs.

**Keywords:** Language Learning Strategies, Kurdish EFL Instructors, Importance of Strategies Use, Kurdish EFL Learners.

## ÖZ

Bu çalışmada, Irak-Erbil’de yaşayan kadın-erkek üniversite öğrencilerinin dil öğrenimi stratejilerinin edinimi hakkında çalışılmıştır. Ayrıca, kadın-erkek üniversite öğretim üyelerinin bu konudaki farkındalığına bakılmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, altı farklı üniversiteden 606 kadın-erkek öğrenci ve 39 kadın-erkek öğretim üyesi katılımcı olarak seçilmiştir. Griffiths’e (2007) ait ‘İngiliz Dili Öğrenimi Stratejileri Envanteri (English Language Learning Strategy Inventory/(ELLSI)) veri toplamak için kullanılmıştır. Dil öğrenim stratejilerinin kullanımı ve bu stratejilerin farkındalık derecesi, katılımcı öğrencilerin cinsiyeti ve yeterlilik seviyesi, öğretim üyelerinin de cinsiyeti, tecrübe süresi ve ana dilinin İngilizce olup olmadığı dikkate alınmıştır. Bu çalışmada, hem öğrenciler hem de öğretim üyeleri arasında farkındalık ve cinsiyet açısından önemli bir farklılık bulunmamıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, yeterlilik seviyesi açısından da öğrenciler arasında bir farklılık gözlemlenmedi. Farklı üniversitelerden katılan öğretim üyelerinin de tecrübe süresinin dil öğrenimi stratejileri üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olmadığı sağlandı. Buna ek olarak, ana dili İngilizce olan ve olmayan öğretim üyeleri arasında da ciddi bir fark bulunmadı. Kısacası, ortaya koyulan sonuçlar, öğrencilerin dil öğrenimi stratejilerinin edinimi farkındalığı ve öğretim üyelerinin dil öğrenimi stratejileri birbirinden bağımsız iki değişken olduğunu gösteriyor.

## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my lovely parents for their continuous  
sacrifices, support, and encouragement

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## **Abbreviations**

**ELLSI:** English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (Griffiths, 2007).

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**TG:** Target Language

**SLA:** Second language acquisition

**SILL:** Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

**SUEF:** Salahaddin University- Education Faculty.

**SULF:** Salahaddin University- Languages Faculty.

**IU:** Ishik University.

**JU:** Jihan University.

**KU:** Koya University.

**KUEPD:** Kurdistan University- English Preparatory Department.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Presentation**

This chapter includes the background of the research, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and the definitions of the terms.

### **Background of the study**

Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) have been the main subject of a large number of researches which have attempted to explore the strategies that language learners and in particular second language learners employ during the process of language learning. The significant point to consider refers to the fact that most of the studies have been done in second language learning contexts and have studied the role of students in LLS employment. A small number of these studies to date have examined the role of teachers' awareness in LLS employment and a few studies have been done in foreign language context. It is crucial to understand the status of LLSs for foreign language learners and identify the role of teachers' awareness in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context. Language teachers are not always aware of the importance of LLSs for their learners (O'Malley et al., 1985), although language teachers' awareness is important for enhancing and developing their learners' language learning.

The importance of learners' gender, university grades, teachers' gender, and years of experience are the issues which have been studied in relation to second language

learning. A number of studies have been done by second language learning linguists and psychologists and they have emphasized the significant role of the LLSs in the process of second language acquisition (Ellis, 1994). Many related studies proposed different definitions of strategies such as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (Rubin 1975, p. 43); Tarone (1980) defined LLSs as "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language" (p. 419); "techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information" (Chamot, 1987, p. 71); "specific action taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Recently, Griffiths (2007) proposed LLSs as "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning" (p. 91).

The initial researches on the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful language learners helped the field in terms of the employment of strategies by various learners in various settings (Naiman et al., 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975), as well as "unsuccessful language learners" (Porte, 1988; Vann & Abraham, 1990). As regards classification of strategies, LLSs were distinguished as follows: skill learning strategies, language learning strategies, and strategies for language use (Tarone, 1988). According to Chamot (1987) LLSs were divided into three distinct groups as follows: meta-cognitive, cognitive and social/affective categories. Moreover, Oxford (1990) categorized LLS as memory, cognitive, compensation direct language learning strategies, and metacognitive, affective and social indirect strategies. With respect to the influence of different factors on the strategies of

second language learning, the early studies indicated that the learner variables are influential in the employment of strategy by language learners (Naiman, 1978; Rubin, 1975). The learner differences are in close relation to LLSs (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Importantly, Wenden (1991) argued that “successful learners have learned how to learn. They have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher. Therefore, they are autonomous.”(p. 15). In addition, Oxford (1991) claimed that the learner differences including their gender, language proficiency and the context of language learning might have a great impact on language learners’ use of LLSs. Recently, Griffiths and Parr (2001) stated that language teachers’ awareness of the use of LLSs will surely contribute them to improve helpful resources in accordance with the LLSs needs of language learners.

Referring to pedagogical implications, many studies on LLSs to date, underline that because of the contradiction between the unfavorable results (O’Malley et al., 1985b; Wenden, 1987) and promising findings (Chamot & Rubin, 1994; Cohen, 1998; Wenden, 1991) “teachability” of LLS (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) has been regarded as a controversial issue. Furthermore, (Cohen, 1984) stated that learners could use effective strategies in order to foster their language learning process in the target language. Moreover, they can develop their performance as a result of learner training (O’Malley et al., 1985). Some other studies investigated instructional materials for learner training (Dickinson, 1992; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989) as well as benefits of learner training (Esch, 1997) and strategy training (O’Malley, 1987; Oxford, 1990; Politzer & McGroarty 1985; Vann & Abraham, 1990; Wenden, 1991) respectively. To sum up, the studies to date have proposed that the influential LLSs employment will



improve language learners' learning process and strategy training will develop their production in the second or foreign language. (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989).

### **Statement of the problem**

The studies considering the importance of LLSs have mostly examined the application of strategies in second language environment rather than foreign language setting and have not largely considered the importance of teachers' awareness of LLSs. Thus, this study attempts to examine the employment of LLSs in foreign language environment and the use and awareness of strategies by students and instructors respectively.

### **Purpose of the study**

The current study investigated the students and instructors' perspective of LLSs in the context of foreign language learning. It is important to consider this fact that both students and instructors come across several problems in the process of foreign language learning. Thus, the present study aims at investigating the perceptions of Kurdish EFL instructors and learners regarding the importance of LLSs. It also studies the degree of difference or similarity of students' and teachers' views of LLSs in relation to students' gender and university grade and instructors' gender and years of experience.

There are three research questions:

1. How important do the Kurdish English language instructors believe it is for their students to use the LLSs, and are there any significant differences in terms of instructors' responses on the importance of LLSs in relation to their gender and years of experience?

2. How important do the Kurdish English language learners consider LLSs, and are there any significant differences in terms of learners' responses on the frequency use of LLSs in relation to their gender and university levels?
3. Are there any significant correlations between Kurdish EFL instructors' and learners' views?

### **Significance of the study**

The current study is significant due to several reasons. Firstly, it is carried out in a foreign language environment. As the researcher mentioned before, the number of studies related to the application of LLSs is limited in foreign language environments. Secondly, it examines both students and instructors' view on LLSs. Most of the studies in this field have mostly considered the employment of LLSs by students whereas the present study examines the students' responses on the importance of the use of strategy and teachers' awareness of that strategy. Lastly, as far as I know, the importance of LLSs in second language learning has not been investigated in the Erbil province of Kurdistan; hence the results will be beneficial to the educational system of the Erbil province.

### **Limitation**

This study can be considered as a small scale research. It is limited to a small group of instructors who participated in this study, and it is conducted only in the Erbil province. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other instructors in different universities in the other provinces of Northern Iraq. In addition, this study is

limited to students of English Language and Literature department and ELT department.

## **Conclusion**

Chapter one described the reason for investigating the importance and frequent use of LLSs by Kurdish EFL university students as well as instructors' awareness of these strategies. The focus of the study was learners' frequent use of LLSs in terms of independent variables, on the one hand, gender and proficiency levels for university learners, and on the other hand, instructors' gender and years of experience. Moreover, this chapter also presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the limitations of the study. In the following chapters, literature review, the methodology, the analysis of research questions, the discussion of the results, and conclusions and recommendations will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Presentation**

This chapter shows several sections overviewing definitions of LLSs as well as their taxonomies. The subsequent part deals with LLSs in relation to some individual differences. The next part related with the use of strategies in learning language, and finally, the studies on LLSs use by teachers and learners.

#### **Definitions of Language Learning Strategies**

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the role of language learning strategies (LLSs) in the area of second language acquisition. Obviously, LLSs have been studied extensively by the researchers of the field of second and foreign language learning. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have defined learning strategies as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help learners comprehend, learn, or retain new information” (p. 1). Consequently, LLSs could be surveyed in two forms either behaviors (visible) or thoughts (invisible). Furthermore, many scholars have studied LLSs from different viewpoints. On the other hand, within the structure of the cognitive psychological view, Rubin (1987) explained learning strategies as “any set of operations, plans, or routines, used by learners to facilitate the obtaining, retrieval, storage and use of information” (p. 19). Although a number of scholars have considered learning strategies from different perspectives within the

framework of the SLA, Ellis (1994) pointed out LLSs as “an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language” (p. 530).

As one of the earliest definitions of LLSs, Rubin (1975) defined it as “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge” (p. 43). Later on, from the perspective of cognitive psychology, Rigney (1978) described LLSs as a process to assist learners to acquire, store, and retrieve information. In the 1980s, identifying the importance of linguistic issues, researchers considered linguistic aspects in their definition of LLSs. Moreover, Tarone (1983) stressed the key role in the development of linguistic competence of language learners being LLSs.

Regarding this, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) defined LLS as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p. 1). It is believed that one of the most comprehensive definitions of learning strategies was introduced by Oxford (1990). She defined LLSs as “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques students use – often consciously – to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2” (p. 1). However, Cohen (1998) discussed the issues of conscious versus unconscious in the definition of LLSs. He stated that strategies are “learning processes which are consciously selected by the learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language” (p. 4).

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in LLS. Macaro (2001) suggested that “an interesting practice-related avenue to pursue is whether what we mean by effort when doing a language task simply means the effective development of a range of strategies in a task” (p. 264). Moreover, Chamot (2004), in the same track with Cohen (1998), focused on the consciousness features of learning strategies

which are “the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal” (2004, p. 14). One of the recent studies was carried out by Griffiths (2007). He presented learning strategies as “activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning” (p. 91).

According to Oxford (1990) LLSs include various features. These features are as follows: 1) Contributing to the main goal, communicative competence, 2) Allowing learners to become more self-directed, 3) Expanding the role of teachers, 4) Being problem-oriented, 5) Having specific actions taken by the learners, 6) Involving many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive, 7) Supporting learning both directly and indirectly, 8) Are not always observable, 9) Often being conscious, 10) Being able to be taught, 11) Being flexible, and 12) Being influenced by a variety of factors. (Oxford, 1990, p.45)

Although a large number of studies have been carried out in the domain of LLSs, they have not reached an agreement in relation to the conscious aspect of LLSs. Oxford et al., (2004) argued that most of the studies to date have introduced somehow unclear definitions of LLSs since the process of cognitive learning has not been illustrated clearly. In addition, Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) stressed the fact that it is not theoretically explained whether LLSs are cognitive-oriented processes, behavioral-based actions, or psychological responses. To cut it short, even if diverse and multiple definitions of LLSs have been suggested by several scholars to date, they are complementary in their origin and give valuable insights to people who are engaged in the language teaching and learning area.

## **Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies**

**Old classifications:** In the last few decades, different taxonomies of LLSs have been proposed by many researches engaged in the realm of language learning development. Stern (1975) studying how to differentiate good learners' strategies from unsuccessful ones, considered different strategies and abilities that learners may apply in the process of language learning. The strategies that good learners typically implement are classified as follows: a) planning strategy, b) active strategy, c) empathic strategy, d) formal strategy, e) experiential strategy, f) semantic strategy, g) practice strategy, h) communication strategy, i) monitoring strategy, and j) internalization strategy. But, later on, Stern (1992) , taking into account the new findings, changed the strategies and re-introduced them as five categorizations namely: 1) management and planning strategies, 2) strategies related to learners' intentions to manage their own learning, 3) cognitive strategies including the steps or operations used in learning or problem solving which need direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials, 4) communicative-experience strategies referring to gesturing, paraphrasing or asking for repetition, and explanation in order to help learners to better express themselves 5) interpersonal strategies including the techniques that learners use to monitor their own development and evaluate their own performance; affective strategies used to create positive affect towards the TG and its speakers. Bialystok (1978) introduced a new taxonomy in which the classification included four categories: (a) functional practicing, (b) formal practicing (c) monitoring and (d) inferencing. In his viewpoint, language classroom practice includes both formal and functional practice strategies, in other words, in Bialystok's framework the focus was on the cognitive and meta-

cognitive aspects of language learning. It appeared that the affective components as well as the social considerations were not taken into account in his proposed framework. In later studies, the affective and social aspects were considered. For instance, Naiman et al (1978) focused on the process of language learning of good language learners. They considered the process from two different perspectives: 1) Cognitive perspective including: perceiving, classifying, relating, analyzing, storing, receiving, and constructing a language output; 2) Meta-cognitive perspective including: active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring of L2 performance.

In the early years of 1970s, Wong-Fillmore (1979) divided the strategies of language learning into two parts. She categorized LLSs under the concepts of social and cognitive perspectives. In her viewpoint, social strategies were more important than cognitive ones since they help language learners have a high communicative competence. In her later research, she found that in addition to the previous social and cognitive strategies, several meta-cognitive strategies such as associative skills, memory, social knowledge, inferential skills, analytical skills, pattern recognition, induction, categorization, generalization, inference play an outstanding role in displaying good language learners' linguistic and communicative competence.

Rubin (1981) studied the main cognitive LLSs which both directly and indirectly made the language learning process as facilitated as possible. With reference to his categorization, the direct LLSs are: (1) classification/verification, 2) monitoring, 3) memorization, 4) guessing/inductive inferencing, 5) deductive reasoning, and 6) practice. These strategies have direct influence in the language learning process, whereas indirect ones 1) creating opportunities for practice and 2) using production



tricks. These strategies have an indirect contribution. In other words, Rubin's classification (1981) entailed three major LLSs which are as follows: cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, social strategies, and communication strategies. Rubin's (1981) binary categorization of LLSs opened a new era in the process of LLSs, his model was considered as a framework by other scholars such as Oxford (1990) who developed her model based on the binary of direct-indirect language learning strategy framework. Her direct LLSs included memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies; the indirect ones encompassed meta-cognitive, affective and social strategies. The thorough explanation of six sub-definitions was her next attempt to draw a framework for LLSs. The six sub-definitions are as follows: 1) Memory strategies, which mean learning a language by using a) mental associations e.g., filling new words in a context b) images and sounds e.g., memorizing new words with sounds c) reviewing e.g., reviewing new information from time to time, and d) action e.g., performing word or phrase a new in a context; 2) Cognitive strategies which include learning language by a) practicing e.g., repeating, b) receiving and sending messages e.g., quickly getting a new idea, c) analyzing and reasoning e.g., analyzing contrastively, and d) creating structure for input and output e.g., taking notes; 3) Compensation strategies which mean learning language by a) guessing intelligently e.g., using clues and b) overcoming speaking and writing limitations e.g., getting help; 4) Meta-cognitive strategies which include learning language by a) centering learning e.g., paying attention only to listening, b) arranging and planning learning e.g., setting goals, and c) evaluating learning e.g., self-monitoring; 5) Affective strategies which entail learning language by a) lowering anxiety e.g., using music, b) encouraging the learner self e.g., rewarding self, and c) taking self's emotional temperature e.g., using a checklist; 6) Social strategies which mean

learning language by a) asking questions e.g., asking for correction, b) cooperating with others e.g., working with peers, and c) empathizing with others e.g., developing cultural understanding.

A significant point to consider refers to the dissimilarity existing in some aspects of the dichotomies of Rubin (1981) and Oxford (1980). In Rubin's definition, classification/verification and monitoring strategies were considered as direct strategies, in Oxford's model (1990), they were defined as indirect social strategies. Moreover Oxford (1990) emphasized the fact that there is a mutual interaction and support between the direct and indirect strategies as well the six sub categories. Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2001) criticized the dichotomy of direct vs. indirect LLSs arguing that, "The reality is that the distinction [direct/indirect classification system] can become blurred and may not be that useful" (p. 9). Oxford (as cited in Hsiao & Oxford, 2002) did not include the direct/indirect categorization into strategy inventory for language learning (SILL), because she stated that the classification was not appropriate for the analysis of the data.

**Subsequent Classifications:** O'Malley and Chamot (1990), giving importance to the cognitive psychological perspective, introduced a new categorization for LLSs which were divided into three general classifications as follows: 1) Meta-cognitive strategies including a) planning (advance organization, organizational planning, selective attention, self-management), b) monitoring (monitoring comprehension and production), and c) evaluating (self-assessment); 2) Cognitive strategies including a) resourcing (finding and using appropriate resources), b) grouping, note-taking, elaboration of prior knowledge, summarizing, deduction/induction, imagery, auditory

representation and making inferences; and 3) Social/affective strategies including questioning for clarification, cooperation and self-talk.

Hsiao and Oxford (2002) compared the LLSs of dichotomies of O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) and Oxford's (1990). Their detailed study showed several distinctions which are as follows: 1) Oxford's memory and cognitive strategies were, by and large, similar to O'Malley and Chamot's cognitive strategies. They commented that Oxford's memory strategies do not correspond to cognitive strategies because memory strategies, being different from other cognitive strategies, do not include thorough language information processing. 2) In Oxford's model (1990) compensation strategies – techniques which were implemented by the learner to compensate the missing information – were categorized as a group of strategies, whereas, in O'Malley and Chamot's taxonomy (1990), compensation strategies do not have a clear status. 3) In Oxford's classification (1990) affective strategies were different from social strategies, while O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) categories were combined the two categories of strategies as one strategy under the domain of the category of social-affective strategies.

With respect to the learner's mastery of the different parts of the Target language (TG), Ellis (1994) specified two sorts of learning strategies as follows: 1) LLSs which mean giving importance to the learner's mastery of the linguistic and sociolinguistic information about the target language, 2) as skill learning strategies which means giving importance to the learner's efforts to change into a proficient speaker, listener, reader, and writer of the new language.

According to Cohen (1998) LLSs are the ones used for "identifying the material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other material, grouping it for easier learning, having repeated contact with the material, and formally committing the

material to memory when it does not seem to be acquired naturally” (p. 5). Retrieval strategies, rehearsal strategies, cover strategies, and communication strategies were the language learning strategies taken into account in his classification, the detailed definition of each of these categories are as following: 1) Retrieval strategies help language learners activate the saved language material with the help of memory searching strategies such as mental linkages or sound association; 2) Rehearsal strategies help language learners practice the structure of the new language and encompass the strategies of language learning and language use; 3) Cover strategies help language learners control the material when they are unable to handle. These strategies are used to solve the difficulties in the TG. Strategies such as simplification and complexification help language learners eliminate knowledge gaps in the TG; 4) Communication strategies help language learners convey meaningful and informative messages to the recipients. Over-generalizing a structural pattern or vocabulary rule from one context to another and negative transfer that is the interference of the patterns of a first language in the TG, are two examples of intra-lingual strategies commonly used by language learners.

**New Classifications:** In recent years, different classifications have been proposed by other scholars among them Dörnyei’s (2005) classification is noteworthy of mentioning. According to Dörnyei’s model (2005), LLSs are divided into four main strategies which are labeled as: a) Cognitive strategies applied for the transformation of language information (e.g., repetition, summarizing, and using images); b) Meta-cognitive strategies applied for learning processing (e.g., analyzing, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and organizing); c) Social strategies applied for interpersonal behaviors which increase the quantity of practice and communication (e.g.,

cooperation and interaction with native speakers); and d) Affective strategies applied for controlling of the affection in language learning process.

Thus, a universally accepted taxonomy is not yet drawn for the phenomenon of LLSs. A rather sufficient number of interrelated studies have been done complementing each other (Oxford, 1990). Ellis (1994) noted that some “strategies may be referred to one category or another dependent on what aspect of learning each researcher focused on”. According to Ellis (1994) personal learning and learning process are two broad strategies which can entail various LLSs. The personal learning strategies are cognitive-oriented strategies which help the language learners control or transform learning materials directly. The learning process strategies are metacognitive-oriented strategies in which the plan of learning, the process of learning, monitoring, and self-evaluation following completion of learning tasks are considered. Even if, the classifications and taxonomies proposed by different scholars, by and large, do not end in one widely accepted model, they provide highly invaluable insights into the complicated phenomenon of the TG learning process.

## **Language Learning Strategies in Relation to Individual Differences**

**Learners Factors:** Regarding LLSs, learners’ factors and differences have been widely studied. The results of the studies vary from one factor to another. Some other findings do not highly indicate the significance of relationship between LLSs and individual differences. In this part a summary of the studies referring to LLSs in relation to learners’ factors such as gender, age, motivation, cultural backgrounds and years spent studying in TG community will be taken into account.

## ***Gender***

A number of studies have shown the importance of the role of gender differences in the application of LLSs in second and foreign language settings. Although a number of studies in this area shows that there are not any significant differences between male and female gender in application of second LLSs (Griffiths (2003) and Nisbet (2003), most of the studies in this area indicate that the frequency of the second LLSs applied by females is higher than the males (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Politzer, 1983). Politzer (1983), studying the LLSs employed by students in the United States, showed that female learners, due to having more social interaction inside and outside of educational setting with others, used more social learning strategies than the male learners.

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) did a research on the use of LLSs by university students in American universities and found similar results. They demonstrated that the frequency of the use of social strategies for female students in comparison with male students was high. The female students' high frequency was mostly because of their high motivation to participate in social interaction and the need for high social approval which represented their high desire to get good grades at university.

Through the administration of SILL, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) examined the application of LLSs. Their study entailed a combination of a sample of the Foreign Service Institute, particularly foreign language learners, foreign language teachers and professional language trainers. Their findings were in the same track with the previous studies and particularly the results showed that female participants employed more general strategies, real-life language use, a strong desire for

searching and communicating meaning and self-management strategies in comparison with their male counterparts.

Moreover, Bacon and Finneman (1990) studied the impacts of the variable of gender on university Spanish language learning students using questionnaires. So, they showed that female learners in comparison with the male learners had a higher level of motivation and also used a higher number of LLSs. In the female group, the outstanding finding was referring to the fact that among LLSs, they used a high number of compensation strategies. Whereas, male learners mostly employed analytic and decoding strategies, the female learners had high motivation to participate in social interactions in the second language. Subsequently, Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) studied the implementation of LLSs in ESL setting in which participants were coming from different social, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Employing more affective and social strategies as well as females' more interests to take part and initiate social interactions with others were their significant findings which were consistent with the findings of the former studies. In contrast to the findings of the previous studies in which the superiority of female language learners was emphasized, there are some studies which do not stand in the same track.

Griffiths (2003) studied the private language school students in New Zealand; he found that there was not any significant difference between female and male learners in employing LLSs. The results of another study done by Nisbet (2003) in China also indicated that the implementation of LLSs between male and female counterpart was not too much different from each other. (Rahimi, 2004) examined in his study the use of LLSs by secondary level students in Persian context. He found that there is not any significant difference between male and female students in terms of using LLSs. In his study, he explained that the absence of gender effect might be due to the fact

that the participants of his study were English major, so that, the participants' awareness of using LLSs minimized the role of gender in his research. Kim (1995) investigated in his research the use of LLSs by Korean EFL learners. The finding showed no significant differences between male and female. Oh (1996) examined the strategy use of sixty EFL university level students and found that the types of LLSs did not have correlation with gender. As the findings of various studies in different educational and socio-cultural settings show there is not harmonious evidence representing the influence of gender variable in application of LLSs.

### ***Age***

With respect to LLSs, the variable of age and its effect on the language learning process has been widely taken into account by various scholars. For instance, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) studied second language learners from different age and stage groups. They found that adult learners were able to use more learning strategies. Ellis's study (1994) showed similar findings, indicating that adult learners' strategies were highly intricate, wise and flexible whereas the strategies employed by young language learners were mostly simplified and inflexible. Considering both age and level effects, Macaro (2001) found that the advanced and adult learners were using more strategies than young and elementary language learners. The study also indicated that students of advanced proficiency level had a higher contextual knowledge since they could flexibly apply more strategies.

In order to find any significant relationship between language learners' age factor and their use of LLSs, Griffiths (2003) employed Oxford's (1990) SILL to ESL students. Private language school learners from some different age groups in New Zealand participated in his research. The results indicated that adult language learners used different sorts of LLSs with higher frequency in comparison to



elementary language learners. Furthermore, doing a cross-sectional study and focusing on the use of LLSs employed by learners of different age and level groups, Magogwe and Oliver (2007) found that particular LLSs were developed in transitional stages. They stated that “particular strategies may be developmentally acquired. For example, both the secondary and tertiary level students preferred meta-cognitive strategies, whereas the primary school students preferred social strategies” (p.236). This finding demonstrates that learners with high level of proficiency are independent learners and the high implication of meta-cognitive strategies is a crucial part of their language learning process.

In contrast, Saricoban and Saricaoglu (2008) study the effect of the students' gender and age on their strategy preference. The result of their study illustrated that there is no significant relationship between age, gender, and department and the other LLSs. The effect of the age factor in the use of LLSs in the language learning process, even if studied by and large, needs more considerations.

### ***Motivation***

In addition to the gender and age factors, it is believed that the motivation variable plays a significant role in language learners' use of LLSs. Several studies indicated the effect of motivation in the language learning process. They have shown that learners with high motivation have a strong tendency to use a large number of LLSs than the less motivated learners (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). Studying American university students' use of LLSs, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) stated that the amount of motivation was one of the main factors in leading students to what strategy to choose. They demonstrated that self-perceptions of motivation had a substantial effect on implication of formal and functional practice strategies, general study strategies, and interaction-oriented

strategies. Furthermore, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) indicated that learners' motivation had a crucial effect on LLSs employed by learners in the language learning process in the TG. Subsequently, Oxford et al., (1993) doing a research in a EFL context and studying Japanese learners of EFL showed that both instrumental and integrative (associative) motivation had a great effect on the frequent use of LLSs by high school students. In their research, focusing on the application of strategy by tertiary level language learners in the United States, Nyikos and Oxford (1993) investigated the relationship between students' grades and their motivation. They found that the students who were trying to get good grades were following academic-based and formal rule-governed LLSs rather than favoring communication based strategies. In contrast to the previous research findings, Okada, Oxford and Abo (1996) questioned the one-sided relationship between motivation and the use of LLSs. They declared that it is not obviously known whether the direction is one-sided or two-sided or the vice-versa, whether it is the motivation which makes learners use a great number of LLSs or it is the LLSs which promotes the learners' better language strategy use, which subsequently improves motivation and then provides an increase in LLSs application.

Other scholars like Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) studied the relationship between motivation, the use of LLSs and pedagogical preferences of learners coming from different linguistic background. They demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between general motivation and general LLSs. Subsequently, scholars Yin and Oxford (2004) investigating the application of LLSs by Chinese university students, demonstrated that motivations like having high interest in TG and its culture significantly influence the application of strategies and particularly the implementation of cognitive, meta-cognitive, and affective strategies. In addition to

this finding, they indicated that the overall use of strategy not only had a great influence on the relationship between motivational orientation and academic major, but also on the application of memory, social and affective strategies. Therefore, the results of the previous studies show that there is a significant relationship between the degree of motivation and the selection and application of LLSs. According to Oxford (1989) “learners might be learning foreign or second languages for different purposes and this could impact their choice of strategies” (p.237).

## **Culture and Language Learning Strategy Use**

It is believed that language learners’ cultural background plays a significant role in the selection and operation of language strategies (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Grainger, 1997; Oxford, 1990, 1994; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Politzer, 1983; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; Rees- Miller, 1993; Reid, 1987, 1995; Wharton, 2000). According to Bedell and Oxford (1996), culture is “How and why one thinks, learns, worships, fights, and relaxes. It provides all human life from the cradle to the grave. Language interacts closely with culture; one’s native language is both a reflection of and an influence on one’s culture” (p. 47). Because cultural differences and backgrounds make learners behave differently, LLSs employed by language learners will be different too. Boone, Safrit, and Jones (2002) studied the effect of cultural background in learning and application of LLSs. They believed that culture is a set of conventions, beliefs and behaviors that one society creates and transfers from one generation to the next generation. It entails the rules and principles of social groups living together. According to Boone, Safrit, and Jones (2002), “culture includes language, beliefs, and attitudes, modern or primitive methods of production, the educational system, and all belongings. Culture not only

consists of artifacts and material types of possessions, it also includes sets of patterns of behaviors and attitudes that are taught by one generation and are modified by life experiences of each succeeding generation. (p. 120)

Thus, cultural conventions have a substantial effect on language learners' preferences. Learners' cultural backgrounds and the conventions in which behaviors, beliefs, values and skills are defined make learners construct their language learning habits and LLSs. In recent years a number of studies have shown that the cultural background has a substantial impact on the learners' application of LLSs (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Grainger, 1997; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Politzer, 1983; Politzer & McGroartry, 1985; Reid, 1987; Wharton, 2000). Oxford and Ehrman (1995) stated that the cultural background had a crucial role in the study of second or foreign LLSs and the application of LLSs by second or foreign language learners. Cultural conventions are able to form learner's beliefs, behaviors, values, and motivations in the language learning process. The EFL and ESL settings were also the matter of discussion in the impact of cultural background that affects the language learning process, since in ESL situation learners are typically from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Thus, some studies have considered the differences of LLSs and styles between Asian EFL learners and North American ESL learners (Grainger, 1997; Griffiths, 2003; Gu, 1996; LoCastro, 1994; Phillips, 1991). Studying the ethnic groups about their use of LLSs, Politzer (1983) has demonstrated that Asian language learners had a high tendency to use memorization strategies while Hispanic language learners were frequently using social strategies. McGroartry's research (1987) showed that speaking and listening proficiency were important for Hispanic language learners, whereas Asian language learners had a great tendency to improve their linguistic and communicative competence by memorizing words, phrases, and

sentences. The results indicated that the learners' cultural backgrounds had a key role in determining the LLSs that students employ.

## **Years Spent Studying in Target Language Community**

In addition to the learners' differences studied by scholars in relation to LLSs surveyed previously, the years that language learners have spend in TG speaking countries influences the process of choosing LLSs. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) stated that language learners who had lived for four or five years in a TG community could better employ LLSs in comparison with those who did not have the experience of living in those communities. Moreover Oxford (1989) suggested that this phenomenon might be because of at least three reasons. Firstly, as language learners stay longer in a TG community, they get a high level of proficiency which consequently provides them an appropriate situation to have a good command of LLSs. Secondly, in order to participate in higher level courses, learners have to learn how to use LLSs. Thirdly, learners who cannot make a good progress in their learning process will not be able to meet the requirements of the programs and ultimately they might lose the program. Although the years spent in a TG community represent an important factor in leading students to use LLSs, this area needs more consideration to show scientific findings.

## **Social and situational factors**

**ESL/EFL Setting:** Social and situational factors have a great influence on learners' choice of LLSs. Setting as one kind of situational factor is a substantial element leading learners to have a good command of LLSs. The importance of setting has been widely studied by a number of scholars during the recent decades time and again. The acquisition of English in different settings such as TG

community, second language environment and foreign language learning situation are the learning contexts being determinant in the language learning process. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) did a research emphasizing the difference between the ESL learning and the EFL learning having an effect on the employment of LLSs. Consequently, Ellis (2004) argued that learners (in Chamot et al.,'s 1987) of EFL use different sorts of LLSs in comparison with learners (in O'Malley's et al., 1987) of ESL. The second language learners in the process of learning ESL had a great tendency to apply strategies like repetition, translation from first language into the second language and vice-versa, substitution tasks and contextualization. Ellis (2004) stated that learners of EFL, in particular, were highly eager to use cognitive-based strategies as compared to learners of ESL. The results indicate that the phenomenon of having a direct exposure to real-life data in the TG community is an essential factor in determining the learners of ESL to implement different as well as frequent sorts of LLSs in comparison to learners of EFL who have limited access to autonomous and real-life input. As a result, learners in ESL setting use cognitive, socio-cultural as well as affective strategies in the process of learning a TG whereas the learners in EFL settings mostly develop and employ cognitive strategies.

With respect to the difference between ESL and EFL contexts and implementation of LLSs in those contexts, Kojic-Sabo and Lightbown (1999) also observed that because of the natural and authentic nature of ESL context in comparison to EFL context, it appears that some learning strategies frequently occur for second language learners of English than for foreign language learners. Subsequently, considering primary learners of English in both ESL in Canada and EFL in Taiwan, Gunning (1997) studied the employment of LLSs by learners of the same level in different educational environments and he concluded that learners in

EFL situation had a high tendency to use LLSs in comparison with learners of ESL environment. His findings were in contrast to the results of the previous studies in a way that in EFL contexts learners employed a high number of LLSs. The fact that the context has an effect on learners' choosing and using LLSs is taken for granted, but in which context the learners employ a higher number of LLSs is an issue of controversy needing more studies.

**Target Language:** In addition to the effect of language learning contexts, learners' TG appears to be a controversial issue in learners' selection and implementation of LLSs. Studies done to date have shown that the learners' TG and their linguistic backgrounds play an outstanding role in students' use of strategies, some of these studies are presented further on. Politzer (1983) argued that learners coming from various language backgrounds use different degrees of LLSs. He studied French, German and Spanish undergraduate learners of English in the United States of America and concluded that French and German university students employed a more frequent number of LLSs in comparison to Spanish learners. Moreover, Chamot et al. (1987) investigated the high school learners of Spanish classes and university learners of Russian classes both in the United States of America. His study indicated that learners of Russian used a more frequent number of LLSs compared to Spanish learners. The findings were in the same track with the idea that Russian learners typically use more LLSs in the process of learning their first language. It is believed that the findings cannot be generalized since the studies have mostly focused on privileged students who have tried to learn less common languages in the United States. As Oxford (1989) states "the results might be due to the fact that more successful students choose to study less commonly taught foreign languages in the US school system".

**Task Type:** Another factor which might have a crucial role in language learners' selection and implementation of LLSs is the type of task that learners are supposed to do. The study done by O'Malley et al., (1985a) indicates that considering different tasks such as vocabulary learning, oral production, listening comprehension and making inferences; second language learners were frequently employing LLSs in doing vocabulary and oral production tasks rather than listening comprehension and dealing with inference tasks. Moreover, Chamot et al. (1987) argued that performing various task types has a considerable effect on learners' use of LLSs, particularly on the employment of cognitive and meta-cognitive LLSs. He argued that in doing listening comprehension tasks, second language learners had a great tendency to use both cognitive-oriented strategies such as taking notes, elaboration, making inference, and summarizing and meta-cognitive strategies such as attention focusing, self-monitoring, and problem-noticing. He also reported that in doing vocabulary drill tasks, second language learners implemented the cognitive LLSs such as making elaboration and resourcing as well as meta-cognitive LLSs such as self-assessment and self-monitoring.

Chamot and Kupper (1989) tried to find out whether there is a relationship between a set of particular LLSs and any specific language learning skills. They argued that in writing related tasks, second language learners frequently employed LLSs like replacements, self-assessment, deductive and planning techniques; while doing speaking related tasks, they used LLSs like paraphrasing, self-monitoring and circumlocution. They also explained that LLSs such as making elaboration, making inferences, attention selection, and self-monitoring were mostly used in doing second language listening comprehension oriented tasks; while in doing reading



comprehension tasks, second language learners highly benefited from reading aloud, guessing, deduction, and summarizing strategies. The significant finding of this study refers to the fact that the integrated approach of task instruction makes learners implement different sorts of LLSs. Regarding the improvement of interpersonal communication skills, Cummins (2000) discussed that the strategies of affective and compensatory learning would play a crucial role in students' ultimate language learning process. He concluded that in vocabulary and grammar exams, the implementation of affective strategies help second language learners reduce their amount of anxiety and the strategy of memorizing helps them to respond the questions in a proper way.

### **Language Learning Strategy in Instruction**

**LLSs and Proficiency Levels:** The second language learners' level of proficiency is one of the determining and significant factors in the selection and implementation of the LLSs in the language learning process. The studies done in this area indicate that learners with high level of second language proficiency usually are more capable in employment of LLSs. (Bialystok, 1981b; Chamot et al., 1988; Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford & Nyikos 1989; Wharton, 2000). In an attempt to investigate the relationship between second language level of proficiency and the implementation of LLSs Bialystok (1981b) studied two different groups (grade 10 and grade 12 learners) of learners of Canadian French. He (1981b) indicated that the learners of grade 10 only used the functional practice strategy, while the learners of grade 12 used functional practice strategy as well as the strategies of formal practice and monitoring. Learners in grade 12, having higher level of proficiency, employed more complex LLSs.

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) argued that there is a significant relationship between second language learners' various kinds of proficiencies and the application of LLSs. They explained that learners with higher level of proficiency in speaking production, listening comprehension and reading skills were frequently using LLSs in the language learning process. Subsequently, examining second language university students with different levels of proficiencies in Puerto Rico, Green and Oxford (1995) showed that successful learners in comparison to less successful learners implemented frequent number of LLSs.

Moreover, investigating the strategy use of grade five Francophone learners of English in Canada, Gunnings (1997) selected three groups of learners namely, advanced, intermediate and elementary proficiency through administering a test. The implementation of a new version of SILL (for young learners) across different levels of proficiency indicated remarkable differences in frequency of LLSs applied by learners with different levels of proficiency. More proficient learners applied more frequent and more diverse sorts of LLSs in comparison to less proficient ones.

Regarding the application of LLSs by elementary level learners of French, Spanish and Japanese in the United States of America; Chamot and El-Dinary (1999) reported a highly significant relationship between the application of LLSs and learners' level of proficiency. They argued that more proficient learners could use more LLSs. They stated that referring to the type of LLSs in doing reading tasks, learners with high level of proficiency used complex strategies such as making inferences and using their background knowledge, while learners with low proficiency only used simple strategies such as phonetic decoding strategy. Examining international students from elementary to advanced proficiency levels in ESL setting in New Zealand, Griffiths (2003) studied the employment of LLSs using

Oxford's (1990) 50-item version of SILL. Her findings indicated that there is a significant relationship between the learners' level of proficiency and the selection and implementation of LLSs; in other words, learners with high level of proficiency used higher number of LLSs. In contrast, Matsumoto (2009) investigated the influence of motivation and proficiency level on the use of strategies. He examined Japanese EFL university level students in Tokyo. The result showed that the effect of proficiency level on the use of strategies could not be found. He claimed that the participants of his study were freshmen, therefore, the students in his study might not have acquired many strategies yet.

**Learner Training:** The relationship between learner training and the selection and employment of LLSs in the language learning process has been continuously studied by several scholars (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Cohen & Weaver, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). The studies to date indicate that learner training has a remarkable impact on language learners' noticing and selection as well as the implementation of LLSs. The purpose of strategy training is to make learners notice their language learning abilities and develop their autonomy so that they will be able to control their language learning process with the help of using LLSs. By developing learners' autonomy, learners become aware of their important role in the language learning process (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989).

Oxford (1990) stated that the obvious purpose of learner training is to show language learners that language learning is done in a meaningful process. It also attempts to provide a mutual collaboration between language learners and teachers and make learners deeply become aware of the various options that they have

through the language learning process. Besides, an important contribution of learner training refers to the self-confidence and self monitoring factors which facilitate the learning process. Oxford (1990) believes that “Strategy training should not be abstract and theoretical but should be highly practical and useful for students” (p.201). He also comments that if learners notice LLSs, their motivation and satisfaction will improve helping them succeed in the language learning process.

Furthermore, in an attempt to recognize the importance of learner training, Richards et al., (2002) introduced a new definition of learner training. They stated that learner training is the training which helps learners learn how to implement LLSs in order to develop an effective language learning process. Regarding this they proposed three main approaches: 1) explicit or direct training in which learners become aware of the importance, implementation and self-monitoring of specific strategies, 2) embedded strategy training in which the strategies are implicitly taught thorough learning a subject matter such as reading comprehension, 3) Combining strategy trainings in which the explicit training of any particular strategy is combined with an embedded training.

**Teachability of Learning Strategies:** Although the teachability of LLSs has been studied by several scholars, it is still a controversial issue whether they are teachable or not. On the one hand, it is stated that in the language learning process, teachers have the responsibility of teaching the language not the strategies, since LLSs are inborn and explicit and will develop during the learning process, in other words they automatically emerge in the transitional stages of language learning process, so there is not any need to teach them. On the other hand, it is argued that LLSs are teachable, and their development through teaching and training will give an

advantage to learners to effectively enhance their language learning process. In addition to this fact, several language learning and teaching methods and approaches have LLSs included in their theme and content. According to Griffiths & Parr, (2001) the communicative language teaching approach emphasizes the implementation of compensation and social strategies; while the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods focus on the importance of memory-oriented and cognitive-based strategies. Moreover, the theory of inter-language requires the use of meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies, whereas the suggestopedia method necessitates the application of affective strategies.

Some scholars believe that LLSs are teachable. In this regard, Chamot & O'Malley (1987) state that "students who are taught to use strategies and are provided with sufficient practice in using them will learn more effectively than students who have had no experience with learning strategies. Learning strategies transfer to new tasks." (p. 240) Moreover, Cohen and Aphek (1980) did a survey in order to investigate the teachability of LLSs. They examined 26 adult learners of Hebrew as a second language. Learners were taught how to use memorizing strategy in doing vocabulary tasks. The results indicated that learners were able to effectively remember the tasks and learned vocabulary through the instruction of the LLSs. A big shortcoming of this research was that, there was not a control group to compare the results of the experiential group with it. Investigating 32 intermediate level foreign language learners in the University of Minnesota, Cohen et al., (1996) tried to find the results of teaching the speaking skill based on LLSs. Students assigned as an experimental group accomplished routine speaking tasks and activities, while explicit and implicit strategy instruction was integrated to those tasks and activities. The findings revealed that learners were highly successful in doing speaking

activities such as the description of a city, telling stories and self-description. The results show the success of strategy-oriented teaching since the experimental group was more successful than the control group, particularly in the last activity.

**Explicit versus Implicit Strategies Training:** Regarding the effectiveness of explicit or implicit LLS instruction, there is not a thorough agreement among researchers on which strategy training is more effective. Some scholars believe that explicit strategy training is more effective (Cohen, 1996, Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; O'Malley & Chamot 1990), while others scholars are in favor of the effectiveness of implicit training. (Wenden, 1987). Oxford (1994) stated that explicit language learning strategy is more beneficial than implicit training. He proposed that strategy training is more effective when it is integrated to the usual classroom activities. Investigating three groups of second language learners, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) studied learners' skill improvements. He concluded that their success in doing the tasks and performance was related to explicit instruction of meta-cognitive, cognitive, social and affective strategies. Furthermore, Chamot (2004) stating that teachers should integrate explicit LLS training into their routine class tasks and activities favoring the effectiveness of explicit strategy training over implicit one.

**Models for Strategy Training:** Several scholars have already proposed different models for strategy instruction as an essential part of the teaching curriculum. Learners' awareness of LLSs and their understanding of the importance of meta-cognitive LLSs are important issues usually considered in instructional models of strategy training.

As a pioneer in drawing a strategy training model, Oxford (1990) introduced eight features that teachers are supposed to follow during the strategy training process. The eight features are as follows: 1) Specifying the needs of the learners, 2) Choosing the strategies appropriately, 3) Integrating strategy training into the routine tasks, 4) Emphasizing learners' motivation, 5) Preparing materials and tasks, 6) Performing an informed training, 7) Evaluating the strategy training, and 8) Revising the strategy training.

Moreover, taking their Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) into account, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) listed five micro and macro features for strategy training namely, preparation (recognizing goals, extracting learners' background knowledge, identifying motivation and developing lexicon), presentation (presenting new data in different approaches, processing information in an explicit way, describing the strategies of learning process and considering learners' background knowledge), practice (using inquiry-oriented tasks, providing various structures of cooperative learning, implementing real tasks and requiring learners to employ the strategies of learning), evaluation (learners' reflection on their own learning and evaluating their own application of strategies) and expansion (learners transfer information to contexts outside of learning environments, relate

language to the content of tasks and activities and make connections between the information and their mother tongue).

Considering the significant role of teacher education in training language teachers, Cohen (1998) introduced five special roles to apply in the process of teaching based on strategies and styles. He explained that teachers might have the roles of: a diagnostician (teachers are supposed to help learners recognize learning styles and strategies), a language learner (teachers share their teaching and learning experiences with each other), a learner trainer (teachers teach learners to recognize the appropriate ways of using strategies), a coordinator (teachers identify learners' difficulties in the language learning process) and a coach (teachers give continuous guidance to learners in their various developmental stages).

Taking nine interconnected steps into account, Macaro (2001) has recently suggested the model of "Learner Strategies Training Cycle" by which second language teachers will be easily able to instruct the training strategy. The nine steps are: raising awareness of the learners, prospecting available strategies, following teachers or modeling other students, mixing different strategies for particular tasks or activities, implementing strategies with the help of colleagues, students' initial evaluation, the step by step eradication of scaffolding, evaluating by students and controlling the implementation of strategies and encouraging learners to do their best attempt.

Subsequently, McDonough (1999) expressed that the idea of strategy training cannot be generalized to all instructional environments, in other words it is not universally verified; but it may be fruitful in specific teaching situations as well as ordinary classroom activities. He agreed that "Teaching strategies is not universally successful, but the largest research is showing that, in certain circumstances,



particularly when incorporated into the teacher's normal classroom behavior, and thus, involving teacher training as well as learners training, success is demonstrable" p. 13.

### **Studies on LLS Use Involving Language Teachers and Learners**

An important point in relation to LLSs is the fact that a great number of studies have only included language learners and neglected the importance of language teachers' role in the implementation of strategies by learners (Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Griffiths, 2007). However, teachers as one of the crucial aspects of the language learning phenomenon in any language teaching and learning environments have a substantial role in learners' final attainment and learning process as well as the way learners approach the instructional activities. Therefore, teachers' opinions alongside with students' are significant for the outcomes of instructional events.

More recently, Griffiths (2007) examined thirty four ESOL teachers and one hundred thirty one students in ESL context. The students were coming from different linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds. He conducted a new research tool named English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI) which was developed on an individual strategy-related item basis. The results of administering both teachers' version and students' version of the new tool indicated that the implementation of LLSs in the ESL context helped learners more effectively. Moreover, the teachers' and learners' viewpoints about the significance and frequency of LLSs were compatible.

Subsequently, through the administration of the ELLSI, Ağazade and Vefalı (2011) studied the employment of LLSs by examining twelve teachers and two hundred fifty seven undergraduate students in the ELT department at Eastern

Mediterranean University (EMU) in North Cyprus. The research investigated the learners' survey reports on frequency of the application of LLSs in relation to variables like their age, gender, and period of English language learning. Moreover, it also examined the survey reports of teachers of the ELT department on the significance of the implementation of LLSs in relation to gender and teaching experience. The results indicated that female learners used more frequently a number of LLSs in comparison with male learners and the frequency of LLSs was higher for more experienced learners than less experienced ones. Regarding age variable, young learners were more successful in the application of LLSs. In instructors' case, the male teachers and less experienced teachers paid more attention to LLSs in comparison with the female teachers and more experienced ones.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter reviews old and contemporary literature works and studies on LLSs in terms of definitions of LLSs, taxonomies of LLSs, as well as the research on LLSs in relations to learner differences such as gender, level of proficiency, and years of studying English. Furthermore, this chapter reviews some studies on the use of LLSs involving teachers and learners.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Presentation**

This chapter provides a thorough description of the research methodology used in this thesis. For the sake of establishing a relationship between the various subparts of this section, the researcher will first describe the educational context in which the research was done is described and then the idea behind the employed research method will be explained in detail. Secondly, the research questions will be discussed. At last the researcher will elaborate on the methodology details including participants, instruments, and data collection as well as data analysis procedures.

### **Educational Context**

The study was done in the Erbil province. Its population is nearly 2 million and it is the fourth largest city in Iraq after Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. It is located in the Northern part of Iraq and is eighty kilometers East of Mosul. It is the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The Kurdish language is the formal language of the Kurdistan region. In the educational setting of the Kurdistan region, the Kurdish language is the language used in schools and universities and English is taught as a foreign language. In the last two decades, several local and international universities have been established in the Erbil province. The data was collected from five different universities, all located in the Erbil province. They are as follows:

1. Salahaddin University – Faculty of Education (SUEF)
2. Salahaddin University – Faculty of Languages (SULF)

3. Koya University – English Language and Literature Department (KU)
4. Jihan University – English Language and Literature Department (JU)
5. Ishik University – English Language Teaching Department (IU)

The first four universities offer ‘English Language and Literature’ programs and Ishik University offers an EFL program. As a result, the participants in this study were all English Language and Literature as well as ELT programs students and teachers who teach a particular level in the program. During the primary and high school, English as a subject in the educational system in Iraq has been taught according to two systems. Before 2006 (old educational system), students studied English for two years in primary school and for six years in high school, whereas in the new educational system English learning lasts for twelve years from the first year of primary school to the last year of high school. In other words, in the old educational system students studied for eight years while in the new one they study for 12 years. Considering the university students’ birth dates ranging from 1983 to 1995, it appears that they all have begun their learning English based on the old educational system. Furthermore, an important point to take into account about the instructors who participated in this study refers to the fact that the university instructors of the universities are all non-native speakers of English.

## **Research Questions**

The current thesis investigated on the perceptions of Kurdish EFL university instructors and learners regarding the importance of LLS including cognitive, affective and meta-cognitive strategies. Moreover, independent variables including

on the one hand the students' gender and the university grades, and on the other hand university instructors' gender and the number of years of English teaching experience, are issues that the research will deal with in order to answer the research questions of this study involving instructors' and learners' beliefs on the importance of LLSs.

## **Participants**

The participants of the current study are divided into two groups. The first group refers to English Language and Literature program students. The university students are different from each other in terms of age, gender and number of years of studying English at university level. As a whole there are 559 students. The only criterion on the basis of which participants were chosen was their being students of English language departments in the province of Erbil. Since students' gender was one of the variables of this study, the participants are both male and female. The university students' years of studying English is another independent variable that this research attempts to identify the effect on the use of LLSs. As a result, the participants were selected from first, second, third and fourth grade of the program. The Table 3.1 below indicates the number of male and female students in all university. Table 3.2 shows the number of students and their grade for all universities.

**Table 3.1**

**The number of male and female students**

Participants	Male participants	Female participants	Total
	221	338	559

**Table 3.2**

**The number of students in the five universities in different grades of their programs**

First grade participants	Second grade participants	Third grade participants	Fourth grade participants	Total
179	176	148	140	559

The second group of participants in this study refers to the university instructors. There are thirty two instructors who are teaching English language and literature in these universities. The instructors of the five universities are non-native speakers of English. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 below indicate the number of instructors, their gender, and years of teaching experience in all universities respectively.

**Table 3.3**

**The number of male and female instructors**

Participants	Male instructors	Female instructors	Total
	22	10	32

**Table 3.4**

**University instructors' years of teaching experience**

Years of experience	Instructors' number
1-5	13
6-10	8
11-15	5
16-20	2
21 to up	4

**Research Design**

The purpose of this research is to survey the perceptions of the Kurdish EFL university instructors and learners regarding the importance of LLSs. The research design of this study is based on a survey research since the data are collected with questionnaires for both university students and instructors. In a survey research the researchers typically select a number of particular respondents from a population and then employ an identified standard questionnaire to get data on research which is the matter of examination (Dornyei, 2007). In other words, a survey research includes a list of predetermined questions which is drawn from a sample. With respect to the representative sample, researchers explain the viewpoints of the population from which the sample was elicited. As a result, researchers are able to compare the viewpoints of other populations. This way a good sample is important since the results are easily generalized to the population with a significant degree of validity. The questionnaire survey research has several strong points which make researchers to use it in different research phenomena. It provides situations in which researchers

typically obtain the highest amount of data in the least period of time and the process of designing, revising and administrating is not a challenging job. It is flexible enough to be implemented in the procedure of data collection for different research phenomena and the results are typically quantitative.

## **Instruments**

To collect data on university students' report of the use of LLSs and university instructors' awareness and instruction of those strategies, the Griffith's (2007) "English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI)" was used after getting a permission letter from Griffith (see Appendix E). The ELLSI has a high degree of validity and it also includes thirty two items representing cognitive, affective and meta-cognitive LLSs. The questionnaires (see Appendix C) English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI) consists of 32 strategies related items on a 5-point Likert scale. The learners' version has been designed to elicit language learners' reports on importance of LLSs for their learning process, while the instructors' version has been developed to obtain language teachers' reports on the importance of LLS use for their learners.

## **Reliability and Validity**

The pilot study was conducted on 25 Kurdish EFL university learners of English Language and Literature department of Salahaddin University/ Faculty of Education. The data of the questionnaire were analyzed to figure out if the related items were internally consistent. The analyzed results of reliability of both versions of the questionnaire demonstrated the reliability coefficient of .841 for the Learners' Version and .813 for the Instructors' Version, respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha



values were regarded as acceptable reliability coefficients. However, they were lower than the reported reliability coefficient in Griffiths (2007) (.89 and .87, respectively).

## **Data Collection Procedure**

The process of data collection lasted for one month. It started on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April and ended on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2013. The researcher sent a formal letter (see Appendix D) to university administrators to ask for permission to collect data. In the permission letter, the researcher described the reason for data collection and he also mentioned the subsequent benefits that the study might have to the educational system of the Kurdistan Region. They accepted the researcher's request. They asked the researcher to send them copies of the questionnaires. During the data collection process, in all universities, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to students and explained the significance and process of responding to the statements. The researcher explained the instructions in both English and Kurdish. Since the researcher knew that all students were native speakers of Kurdish, he explained the instructions in Kurdish to ascertain that all students understand the process of responding to the statements. The data collection from university instructors was somewhat challenging. Having excuses like not having enough time, some instructors were unwilling to cooperate. Those instructors who participated in this study, asked the researcher to give them the questionnaires in advance and they returned them back one or two days later.

## **Data Analysis Procedure**

The data gathered by using the ELLSI questionnaires for both university students and instructors were analyzed by the means of the recent version of Statistical

Package of Social Science (SPSS.21). With the help of SPSS, the descriptive statistics including the Mean, the Percentage, the Frequency and the Standard Deviation of the collected data were analyzed. In relation to the research questions and the significance of the relationship between the LLSs and other independent variables, including gender and university grades and years of experience, the data was analyzed by T-test, One-Way ANOVA and Post-Hoc test. On the one hand, the One-Way ANOVA test was used to indicate the significant of independent variables such as gender, university grades and the years of experience on the dependent variable including the university students' report of the use of LLSs and university instructors' awareness of students' use of LLSs on the other hand.

## **Conclusion**

Chapter three introduced the methodology of this study. It presented the overall the design of this study, and investigated the research questions. Next, this chapter described the educational context as well as the participants of the study. Furthermore, this chapter showed the data collection instruments as well as data collection and analysis procedures. The following chapter presents the statistical results obtained from the collected data and their relation to research questions.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS and DISCUSSION**

#### **Presentation**

This chapter presents the results of the current study. It displays the survey data of the Kurdish EFL instructors' responses on the importance of the language learning strategies (LLSs) used by their learners, as well as their relation to the instructors' gender and years of teaching experience. Further, this chapter also displays the survey results of the Kurdish EFL learners on the importance of the LLS use, as well as their relation to the learners' gender and university grades. Finally, the chapter presents the comparative statistics in order to reveal congruence between the language instructors and learners survey results.

#### **Kurdish English language instructors' views regarding the importance of LLS**

The survey data analysis was conducted in terms of established means categorization (Griffiths, 2007; Oxford, 1990). According to Griffiths' (2007) and Oxford' (1990) classifications, the mean score of 3.5-5 is regarded as high, the mean score which is between 2.5 and 3.4 is regarded as a medium strategy user, and the mean score under 2.4 is considered low user of strategies. The analysis of data collected from the instructors showed that they considered LLS use very important ( $M=3.79$ ). Interestingly, the instructors rated 26 items as very important (averaging 3.50 or more), and 6 items as not important. Appendix D shows instructors' responses on the importance of the LLSs used by their learners. The strategies which are chosen as the most important strategies by more than 50% of instructors could be seen on the table 4.1 below. Item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English) has been chosen by 20 Kurdish EFL instructors (62.5%) as the most important strategy with a

mean of 4.53. Furthermore, 21 instructors (65.5%) have chosen item 3 (Learning in an environment where the language is spoken) as the second most important strategy with the average mean of 4.4. Moreover, item 25 (Listening to native speakers of English) was the third most important strategy according to 16 instructors (50.5%) with a mean of 4.31. Finally, 17 instructors (53.1%) believe that the item 4 (Reading books in English) was the fourth most important strategy for their learners (M=4.3).

**Table 4.1**

**The Most Important Strategies Chosen by Instructors**

Item		Scale	Findings				
			F	%	N	Mean	St.dv
18	Talking to native speakers of English	Not Important	0	0	32	4.53	.67
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat I	3	9.4			
		Important	9	28.1			
		Most Important	20	62.5			
3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken	Not Important	0	0	32	4.4	1.07
		Least Important	2	6.3			
		Somewhat I	2	6.3			
		Important	7	21.9			
		Most Important	21	65.6			
25	Listening to native speakers of English	Not Important	1	3.1	32	4.31	.82
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat I	4	12			
		Important	11	34.4			
		Most Important	16	50.5			
4	Reading books in English	Not Important	1	3.1	32	4.3	.96
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat I	2	6.3			
		Important	11	34.4			
		Most Important	17	53.1			

Table 4.2 shows some strategies that are chosen by Kurdish EFL instructors as not important strategies such as item 11 (Listening to music while studying) which is selected by 13 instructors (40.6%) with a mean of 2.5. Item 10 (Writing letters in English) is responded by 7 instructors as the second not important strategy (21.9%) with a mean of 3.3. Further, 6 instructors (18.8%) have chosen item 9 (Using

language learning games) as the third not important strategy for their learners with the average mean 3.3, while 12 instructors (37.7%) believe that item 28 (Making friends with native speakers) is not important strategy for their learners (M= 3.3). These findings suggest that the Kurdish EFL instructors regard the traditional as well as skills-language component strategies as more important than the resource-related strategies.

**Table 4.2**

**Not Important Strategies Chosen by Instructors**

Item		Scale	Findings				
			F	%	N	M	St.d v
11	Listening to music while studying	Not Important	13	40.6	32	2.5	1.2
		Least Important	6	18.8			
		Somewhat	6	18.8			
		Important	3	9.4			
		Most Important	4	12.5			
10	Writing letters in English	Not Important	7	21.9	32	3.3	.86
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	8	25			
		Important	16	50			
		Most Important	1	3.1			
9	Using language learning games	Not Important	6	18.8	32	3.3	.93
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat	8	25			
		Important	16	50			
		Most Important	1	3.1			
28	Making friends with native speakers	Not Important	12	37.5	32	3.9	1.09
		Least Important	12	37.5			
		Somewhat	4	12.5			
		Important	3	9.4			
		Most Important	1	3.1			

### **Kurdish EFL instructors' gender and the importance of LLS**

T- test statistics was used to determine whether the mean differences between male and female instructors was statistically significant.

Regarding the mean differences between male and female instructors, table 4.3 shows that there is a statistically significance in item 3 (Learning in an environment where the language is spoken) between male and female instructors with the significance value of 0.025. This may be because males in Kurdish culture believe that living in a country where the English language is spoken could make language learners be more aware of the culture and lifestyle of the target language.

**Table 4.3**

#### **The Results across Kurdish EFL Instructors' Gender**

Item	Mean		F-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differences
3 (Learning in an environment where the language is spoken)	Male	4.27	2.27	.025	.672
	Female	3.6			

In terms of the LLS use in relation to the instructors' gender, the male EFL instructors ascribed more importance (M=3.82) to the LLSs use than the female instructors (M=3.76). Although the result of this study showed no statistically significant difference between these two groups, their responses with regard to which strategies were more important than the other ones were different.

Furthermore, table 4.4 shows that both male and female Kurdish EFL instructors chose some similar items as the most important strategies such as, the item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English, M=4. 4 and M=4.7, respectively) and 3 (Learning in an environment where the language is spoken, M= 4.4 and M=4.5, respectively). On the other hand, male instructors differ from female instructors in

their respondents to some other strategies, such as, the male EFL instructors chose the items 29 (Watching movies in English,  $M=4.2$ ) and 16 (Consciously learning new vocabulary,  $M= 4.2$ ) as the most important strategies, whereas the female instructors chose the item 4 (Reading books in English,  $M=4.6$ ), and 25 (Listening to native speakers of English,  $M=4.6$ ) as the most important strategies for their learners. These results may be due to the fact that males in the Kurdish culture are more interested in having information and knowledge about the norms and customs of other cultures, whereas the female instructors regard the traditional, as well as cognitive and metacognitive language learning strategies as the most important.

**Table 4.4**

**Most Important Strategies for the Male and Female EFL Instructors**

Gender	ELLS	Item	Mean	SD
<b>Male</b>				
	18	Talking to native speakers of English	4.5	.67
	3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken	4.4	1.09
	29	Watching movies in English	4.2	.75
	16	Consciously learning new vocabulary	4.2	.63
<b>Female</b>				
	18	Talking to native speakers of English	4.7	.67
	4	Reading books in English	4.6	.51
	25	Listening to native speakers of English	4.6	.69
	3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken	4.5	.70

In terms of not important strategies, table 4.5 shows that both male and female EFL instructors rated item 11 (Listening to music while studying,  $M= 2.5$ ) as the not important strategy for their learners. On the other hand, the male Kurdish EFL

instructors' responses to some strategies are different from female Kurdish EFL instructors' responses in terms of not important strategies. Male instructors chose item 11 (Listening to music while studying, M=2.5), 21 (Pre-planning language-learning activities, M=3.2), 23 (Using library, M=3.2) and 10 (Writing letter in English, M= 3.3) as not important strategies, whereas the female instructors indicated item 11 (Listening to music while studying, M=2.5), 9 (Using language learning games, M=3.2), 20 (Controlling schedules so that English study is done, M= 3.2) and 8 (Listening to songs in English, M= 3.3), as not important strategies for their learners.

**Table 4.5**

**Not Important Strategies for the Male and Female EFL Instructors**

Gender	ELLS	Item	Mean	SD
<b>Male</b>				
	11	Listening to music while studying	2.5	1.3
	21	Pre-planning language-learning Activities	3.2	1.0
	23	Using a library	3.2	1.1
	10	Writing letters in English	3.3	.83
<b>Female</b>				
	11	Listening to music while studying	2.5	1.1
	9	Using language learning games	3.2	.91
	20	Controlling schedules so that English study is done	3.2	.66
	8	Listening to songs in English	3.3	1.0

**The Importance of LLSs in Relation to Teaching Experience**

Regarding the Kurdish EFL instructors' survey responses in relation to the length of their professional experience, the analysis of the survey data revealed the following. The participant instructors of this study were classified into five groups as



follow: 13 instructors with 1-5 years of teaching experience, 8 instructors with 6-10 years of experience, 5 instructors with 11-15 years of experience, 2 instructors with 16-20 years of experience, and 4 instructors with 20 or more years of experience. This classification of instructors' experience is based on teaching particular level of university learners. That is the most experienced instructors teach high university levels, whereas less experienced instructors teach lower university levels.

**Table 4.6**

**One Way ANOVA Results for the EFL Instructors in Terms of Teaching Experience**

Item No.	(I) Grade	(J) Grade	Mean Difference	Sig – value
2	1-5	6-10	.932	.006
19	1-5	11-15	.372	.041
	1-5	16-20	.538	.010
24	1-5	6-10	.403	.037
27	1-5	6-10	.338	.010
	1-5	16-20	.572	.004

The results of Post-hoc Test revealed that there are significant differences between instructors' perception on the importance of LLSs in relation to their teaching experience. In the item 2 (Learning from the teacher), instructors within 1-5 years of teaching experience have a high mean difference from the instructors with 6-10 years of teaching experience with a significance value of 0.006. The reason would be that the less experienced instructors consider the role of the teachers important for learners to improve their language proficiency. Less experienced instructors (1-5

years of experience) differ from the second group of instructors (6-10 years of experience) in terms of their attitude towards the importance of item 19 (Taking note of language used in the environment) with the mean difference of 0.372 and a significance value of 0.041. The reason may be that less experienced instructors believe that taking notes of language used in the environment would be helpful for learners to improve their vocabulary capacity and it can be a useful record of important value for future use. Also, a high mean difference value (0.403) could be noticed in item 24 (Trying to think in English) between the first group of instructors (1-5 years of experience) and the second group of instructors (6-10 years of experience) with the significance of 0.037. The result could be because of the different thoughts and ideas between generations in the Kurdish culture so that less experienced instructors assume that thinking in English would help learners to converse in English much easier. By practising this strategy, learners can improve their communication proficiency. This finding is similar with related results by Ağazade and Vefalı (2011). They asserted that less experienced instructors ascribed more importance to LLSs.

### **Kurdish English language learners' views regarding the importance of LLSs**

The analysis of Kurdish EFL university students' self-report of their uses of LLSs showed that they placed high importance on the use of LLSs (Appendix E). Interestingly, the Kurdish EFL learners reported 24 strategies as strategies that they highly important, whereas they rated eight strategies as not important. These findings are in line with the findings of the previous research studies where students reported high frequency of the use of LLSs in their learning English process (Green &

Oxford, 1995; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Phillips, 1991; Politzer, 1983).

Table 4.7 demonstrated students' responses on the importance of the LLS. The first most important strategy chosen by learners is item 25 (Listening to native speakers of English). It has been chosen by 336 Kurdish EFL students (60.1) with a mean of 4.35. Furthermore, 296 learners (53%) have chosen item 12 (Talking to other students in English) as the second most important strategy with the average mean of 4.22. Moreover, item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English) was the third most important strategy according to 296 learners (53 %) with a mean of 4.14. The choice for these two strategies (listening to native speakers of English and talking to native speakers of English) may be reflective of the current situation in the Erbil province in Iraq where the study was carried out. Currently, Erbil is a growing business centre and the area is attracting a large number of foreign investors, who also prefer to employ native speakers of English to facilitate their businesses. Hence, students have a relatively larger amount of exposure to the speech of the native speakers in their everyday lives.

**Table 4.7****Most Important Strategies Chosen by Learners**

Item		Scale	Findings				
			F	%	N	M	St.d v
25	Listening to native speakers of English	Not Important	19	3.4	559	4.35	0.79
		Least Important	15	2.7			
		Somewhat	54	9.7			
		Important	135	24.2			
		Most Important	336	60.1			
12	Talking to other students in English	Not important	37	6.6	559	4.22	1.00
		Least important	12	2.1			
		Somewhat	66	11.8			
		Important	148	26.5			
		Most important	296	53			
18	Talking to native speakers of English	Not important	31	5.5	559	4.14	1.11
		Least important	24	4.3			
		Somewhat	84	15			
		Important	124	22.2			
		Most important	296	53			

Table 4.8 shows some strategies that are chosen by Kurdish EFL students as not important strategies such as item 11 (Listening to music while studying) which is selected by 149 students (26.7%) with a mean of 2.71. Item 9 (Using language learning games) was considered by 109 students as the second not important strategy (19.5%) with a mean of 3.15. Further, 82 students (14.7%) have chosen item 7 (Revising regularly) as the third not important strategy with the average mean 3.38, while 83 students (14.8%) believe that item 10 (Writing letters in English) is not helping them to learn English language (M= 3.45). The students chose listening to music while studying and using language learning games as the not important strategies. This may be related to their learning styles, so that they may not like to listen to something else while studying. It does not mean that they do not like listening to music in English. An interesting point is that listening to music while studying was the not important strategy both for students and instructors and most of

the strategies that students employ and instructors are aware of were common for both students and instructors. The result might be because of that instructors think that playing music while study would lose learners' concentration on their studying.

**Table 4.8**

**Not Important Strategies Chosen by Learners**

Item		Scale	Findings				
			F	%	N	M	St.d v
11	Listening to music while studying	Not important	149	26.7	559	2.71	1.45
		Least important	149	26.7			
		Somewhat	87	15.6			
		Important	69	12.3			
		Most important	104	18.6			
9	Using language learning games	Not important	109	19.5	559	3.15	1.17
		Least important	57	10.2			
		Somewhat	168	30.1			
		Important	150	26.8			
		Most important	75	13.4			
7	Revising regularly	Not important	82	14.7	559	3.38	1.13
		Least important	42	7.5			
		Somewhat	163	29.2			
		Important	173	30.9			
		Most important	99	17.7			
10	Writing letters in English	Not important	83	14.8	559	3.45	1.29
		Least important	62	11.1			
		Somewhat	100	17.9			
		Important	176	31.5			
		Most important	138	24.7			

**Kurdish EFL learners' gender and the importance of LLSs**

T- test statistics was used to determine whether the mean differences between male and female Kurdish EFL students were statistically significant. The comparison of male (n= 221) and female (n=338) learners survey respondents indicate that male and female participants have different perceptions on the importance of LLSs (M= 3.75).

## Test 4.9

### T-test Results between Genders for Kurdish EFL Learners

Item N.	Item	Mean		F-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Doing homework	Male	3.82	2.34	0.017
		female	4.03		
4	Reading books in English	Male	3.9	.732	0.037
		Female	4.09		
8	Listening to songs in English	Male	3.32	.839	0.020
		Female	3.57		
9	Using language learning games	Male	2.92	.629	0.022
		Female	3.16		
10	Writing letters in English	Male	3.36	.983	0.012
		Female	3.62		
14	Reading newspapers in English	Male	3.92	3.62	0.015
		Female	3.66		

Male and female learners scored different mean values according to their perception on the importance of some items. Table 4.9 shows that in the first five items female learners ascribe strategies more than male learners. This finding seems to be supported by the scholarship in the field of second language learning, where it is generally argued that in most of the cases female learners reportedly employed L2 strategies remarkably more frequently than males (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Politzer, 198). However, some contradicting results were also reported in Griffiths' (2003) and Nisbet's (2003) studies where they did not find significant gender differences in LLS use.

Consequently, the results of this study disagree with Griffiths (2003) and Nisbet (2003). Interestingly, item 4 (Reading books in English) indicates that the mean value of female learners (4.09) is higher than male learners (3.9), whereas male learners' mean score (3.92) was higher than female' mean score (3.66) in item 14 (Reading newspaper in English). This finding might be because local newspapers are mostly dealing with political issues and Kurdish female learners are not interested in such kind of reading.

Moreover, both male and female Kurdish EFL learners chose some similar items as the most important strategies such as, item 25 (Listening to native speakers of English M=4.3, M=4.3), item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English, M=4.1, M=4.1 respectively). However, in item 13 (Using a dictionary, M= 4.2) and item 12 (Talking to other students in English, M=4.2) male and female participants reported the use of different strategies (see Table 4.10).

**Table 4.10**

**Most Important Strategies Used by the Male and Female EFL Students**

Gender	Rank	Item	Mean	SD
<b>Male</b>				
	25 <sup>th</sup>	Listening to native speakers of English	4.3	.92
	13 <sup>th</sup>	Using a dictionary	4.2	2.99
	18 <sup>th</sup>	Talking to native speakers of English	4.1	1.1
<b>Female</b>				
	25 <sup>th</sup>	Listening to native speakers of English	4.3	.92
	12 <sup>th</sup>	Talking to other students in English	4.2	1.0
	18 <sup>th</sup>	Talking to native speakers of English	4.1	1.1

The strategies that Kurdish male and female learners considered not important, both genders think that item 11 (Listening to music while studying, M=1.4, M=1.4 respectively), is not important strategy for their learning process. On the other hand, male learners are different from female learners in their belief about some other

strategies as not important. Item 7 (Revising regularly, M= 3.2) and 8 (Listening to songs in English, M= 3.2) are chosen by male learners as not important strategies. Whereas, female learners rated item 20 (Controlling schedules so that English study is done, M= 3.2) and 9 (Using language learning games, M= 3.2) as not important strategies.

**Table 4.11**

**Not Important Strategies Used by Learners' Gender**

Gender	Ranks	Items	Mean	SD
<b>Male</b>				
	11 <sup>th</sup>	Listening to music while studying	2.6	1.4
	7 <sup>th</sup>	Revising regularly	3.2	1.0
	8 <sup>th</sup>	listening to songs in English	3.2	1.2
<b>Female</b>				
	11 <sup>th</sup>	Listening to music while studying	2.7	1.4
	20 <sup>th</sup>	Controlling schedules so that English study is done	3.2	1.1
	9 <sup>th</sup>	Using language learning games	3.2	1.1

**Use of LLSs across Different University Grades of the Kurdish EFL Learners**

As regards the Kurdish EFL University learners' opinion on the use of LLSs in relation to the university grades, the analysis of the survey study demonstrated the following. As it has been mentioned in chapter 3 the learners, participants in this research, were placed into their university grades as follows: first grade (n= 132), second grade (n= 138), third grade (n= 164), and fourth grade (n= 125). In order to figure out a statistically significant difference, if any, in the survey data across different proficiency levels, ANOVA test was applied to the survey data and the related results are presented in Table 4.12.



**Table 4.12****One-way ANOVA Test Results across University Grades**

Items	Df	F	Sig
item1	3	2.533	.056
item2	3	1.604	.187
item3	3	6.617	.000
item4	3	.761	.516
item5	3	.222	.881
item6	3	2.105	.099
item7	3	.228	.877
item8	3	1.112	.344
item9	3	1.191	.312
item10	3	2.135	.095
item11	3	.317	.813
item12	3	2.507	.058
item13	3	2.314	.075
item14	3	4.710	.003
item15	3	.515	.672
item16	3	.858	.463
item17	3	1.926	.124
item18	3	5.733	.001
item19	3	4.604	.003
item20	3	2.440	.064
item21	3	3.802	.010
item22	3	1.384	.247
item23	3	2.973	.031
item24	3	2.241	.083
item25	3	9.470	.000
item26	3	2.827	.038
item27	3	1.682	.170
item28	3	7.923	.000
item29	3	3.681	.012
item30	3	3.525	.015
item31	3	7.031	.000
item32	3	2.519	.057

Learners of different university grade had different perceptions on the importance of LLSs. Items 3 (Learning in an environment where the language is spoken) has a

high value of significance (0.000). There is a significant difference between learners in terms of reading newspapers in English that is some learners from particular university grades are more interested in reading English newspaper than others. In addition, there is a significant difference in item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English) between learners with the significant value of 0.001. The reason might be because some groups of learners believe that interacting with native speakers would lead them to learn real English as well as improve their communication proficiency. Moreover, learners differ in their attitude towards the importance of item 28 (Making friends with native speakers) with the significance value of 0.000. The reason could be related with some learners' negative attitude towards the target culture. They may believe that making friends with native speakers would be considered as a shortcoming for their life. Finally, item 30 (Learning about the culture of native speaker) has a high significant value of 0.000.

The results of the Post-hoc Test revealed that there are significant differences between university grades in terms of their responses of using LLSs. As table 4.14 demonstrates there are some items with a high value of significant differences between university grades. Fourth grade university learners use item 6 (Watching TV in English) more than second grade with the mean differences of (.437) and significant level of (.001). Moreover, there are mean differences between fourth grade learners and third grade learners in item 11 (Listening to music while studying) with the value of .630 and significant value of .000. Furthermore, in item 17 (Keeping a language learning notebook) fourth grade learners have the mean difference value of .438 and at the significant level of (.001). Also, a high mean difference value (.447) could be noticed in item 19 (Taking note of language used in

the environment) between third and first grade university levels with the significance of .000. In addition, in item 25 (Listening to native speakers of English) third grade students have mean differences with first grade students at the value of .418 and significance of .000. Moreover, third grade learners differ from first grade learners in terms of the use of item 30 (Learning about the culture of English speakers) with the mean differences value of .519 and significant value of .000. Finally, third grade learners have a high mean value (.512) with the first grade learners in item 31 (writing a diary in English) with a significance value of .000.

The analysis revealed that fourth grade students regarded LLSs as more important than their counterparts from the other grades. This finding is in line with results of the previous studies that reported that learners with more language proficiency not only use a greater variety of LLSs but also most frequently use language strategies in combination (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1990). Obviously, the analysis of the Kurdish EFL learners' responses showed a gradual increase from the first grade, second grade, third grade, to the highest, fourth grade of university. This result is also supported by the result of previous studies reporting the use of LLSs in relation to proficiency levels (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Bialystok, 1981b; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985).

**Table 4.13****Post-hoc Scheffe Test Results across University Grades**


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Item No.	(I) Grade	(J) Grade	Mean Difference	Sig – value
Item3	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	-.328	.018
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	.323	.013
Item 6	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.309	.013
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	-.437	.001
Item 11	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	.440	.015
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	.562	.002
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	.630	.000
Item 14	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	-.328	.022
	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.387	.005
Item 17	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	.323	.018
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	.438	.001
Item 19	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.447	.000
	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	-.288	.034
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.308	.014
Item 20	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.311	.019
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.354	.007
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	.351	.009
Item21	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.267	.043
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.363	.005
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	.269	.044
Item 25	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.418	.000
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.228	.041
Item 28	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.394	.001
	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	-.267	.041
Item29	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.130	.020
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.340	.009

Item 30	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.519	.000
Item 31	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.512	.000
	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	-.338	.022
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-.445	.001

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Concerning the most important LLSs across different university level, the analysis of the survey reports demonstrated the following common strategies (see Table 4.14). Both first grade and second grade learners chose item 25 (Listening to native speakers of English, M=4.1 and M=4.2, respectfully) as their most important strategies. Also, second grade, third grade and fourth grade stated only one common strategy as the most important strategy which is item 26 (Learning from mistakes, M= 4.3, M=4.5, and M= 4.3, respectively). On the other hand, first grade indicated item 1 (Doing homework, M=4.1) and item 12 (Talking to other students in English, M=4.1) as most important strategies for their learning process. Further, second grade students believe that item 13 (Using a dictionary, M=4.3) and item 14 (Reading newspapers in English, M= 4.5) are most important strategies. Furthermore, third grade consider item 29 (Watching movies in English, M= 4.3) as a most important strategy. Finally, grade four stated the most important strategies used as: item 7 (Revising regularly, M= 4.2) and item 27 (Spending a lot of time studying English, M= 4.2). Stern (1975) mentioned that there might be some successful language learners having diverse skills from those of less successful language learners. In this study, the result across different university grade revealed that the advanced students not only reported higher frequency of strategy use but also they applied different strategies than their peers. Advanced Kurdish EFL learners stated that learning from mistakes as most important. This finding also suggests more autonomy of the

advanced EFL students. Naiman et al., (1978) stated that “good language learners were not only dynamically engaged in their learning practice but were also aware of language as knowledge and means of communication, and, importantly, managed their language learning” (p.14). Furthermore, some strategies regarded as outdated strategies according to Kurdish EFL learners, such as, writing letters in English. This may lead students to rated it as not important strategy.

**Table 4.14**

**Most Important LLSs across Different Universities Grades**

Grades	Rank	Item	Mean	SD
<b>First Grade</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Doing homework	4.1	1.00
	12 <sup>th</sup>	Talking to other students in English	4.1	1.12
	25 <sup>th</sup>	Listening to native speakers of English	4.1	1.08
<b>Second Grade</b>	14 <sup>th</sup>	Reading newspapers in English	4.5	3.60
	13 <sup>th</sup>	Using a dictionary	4.3	.95
	26 <sup>th</sup>	Learning from mistakes	4.3	.99
<b>Third Grade</b>	26 <sup>th</sup>	Learning from mistakes	4.5	.76
	29 <sup>th</sup>	Watching movies in English	4.3	.88
	25 <sup>th</sup>	Listening to native speakers of English	4.2	.99
<b>Fourth Grade</b>	26 <sup>th</sup>	Learning from mistakes	4.3	1.02
	7 <sup>th</sup>	Revising regularly	4.2	1.05
	27 <sup>th</sup>	Spending a lot of time studying English	4.2	.98

Regarding the less frequency strategies by these four grades, the table below shows that the second grade and third grade have only a common item: item 1 (Doing homework, M= 3.0 and M= 2.0, respectively). Also, second grade, third

grade, and fourth grade rated item 12 (Talking to other students in English, M=2.9 M= 2.8, and M= 2.2, respectively) as not helpful strategies for their learning process. Item 10 (Writing letters in English, M= 3.2, M= 2.9) has been chosen by third and fourth grade respectively as a not important strategy. According to each grade, first grade learners consider item 19 (Taking note of language used in the environment, M= 3.1), 20 (Controlling schedules so that English study is done, M= 3.1), and 11 (Listening to music while studying, M= 2.7) as strategies that are not important. Moreover, second grade stated item 21 (Pre-planning language-learning activities, M= 3.1) as a not important strategy. Also, third grade stated item 12 (Talking to other students in English M=2.9) as a not important strategy. Finally, fourth grade believe that item 8 (Listening to songs in English, M= 3.1) is not an important strategy.

**Table 4.15**

**Not Important LLSs across Different Universities Grades**

Grades	Rank	Item	Mean	SD
<b>First Grade</b>				
	19 <sup>th</sup>	Taking note of language used in the environment	3.1	1.23
	20 <sup>th</sup>	Controlling schedules so that English study is done	3.1	1.31
	11 <sup>th</sup>	Listening to music while studying	2.7	1.54
<b>Second Grade</b>				
	21 <sup>st</sup>	Pre-planning language-learning activities	3.1	1.16
	12 <sup>th</sup>	Talking to other students in English	2.8	1.45
	1 <sup>st</sup>	Doing homework	2.0	1.1
<b>Third Grade</b>				
	10 <sup>th</sup>	Writing letters in English	3.2	1.09
	1 <sup>st</sup>	Doing homework	3.0	.00
	12 <sup>th</sup>	Talking to other students in English	2.9	1.43
<b>Fourth Grade</b>				
	8 <sup>th</sup>	Listening to songs in English	3.1	1.09
	10 <sup>th</sup>	Writing letters in English	2.9	1.17
	12 <sup>th</sup>	Talking to other students in English	2.2	1.34

### **The Importance of LLSs between Kurdish EFL instructors and learners views**

To investigate the similarities/differences between instructors' and learners' views, a correlation test was used to figure out whether both views are significantly correlated or not. As it can be seen the correlation value is at 0.852. The result illustrated that there is a good correlation between the instructors' views on the importance of LLSs and the university learners' views on the use of LLSs.

**Table 4.16**  
**Pearson Correlations between instructors' view and learners' view**

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Instructors' view	0.852	0.00
Learners' view		

Regarding the Kurdish EFL instructors' and learners' survey reports, the analysed data seemed to demonstrate that the instructors' and learners' perceptions regarding the importance of LLSs seems to be similar. The instructors regarded 26 strategies as highly important and six strategies as somewhat important strategies, whereas learners reported 24 strategies as most important and eight strategies as somewhat important.

In order to figure out the similarities/differences in terms of importance of strategy use between instructor's and learners' view, table 4.17 shows that both the EFL instructors and student respondents stated only two strategies, item 25 (Listening to native speakers of English) and item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English) as most important LLSs. Furthermore, the Kurdish EFL instructors rated as the most important strategies: item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English), item 3 (Learning in an environment where the language is spoken), item 4 (Reading books in English), and item 16 (Consciously learning new vocabulary), whereas the EFL learners reported item 12 (Talking to other students in English), item 26 (Learning



from mistakes) and item 28 (Making friends with native speakers) as the most important LLS.

**Table 4.17**

**Comparative Statistics on the Most Important of LLSs**

Participants	Rank	Item	Mean	SD
<b>Teachers</b>	18th	Talking to native speakers of English	4.53	.67
	3rd	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken	4.4	1.07
	25th	Listening to native speakers of English	4.31	.82
	4th	Reading books in English	4.3	.96
<b>Students</b>				
	25th	listening to native speakers	4.35	.79
	18th	Talking to native speakers of English	4.14	1.11
	26th	Learning from mistakes	4.18	.99
	12th	Talking to other students in English	4.22	1.00

The results seemed to illustrate that both for the instructors and the learners listening to native speakers of English and talking to native speakers of English were important LLSs. Thus, the result indicates that Kurdish EFL instructors and learners think that one of the best ways to learn English language is to interact with native speakers. They assume that learners could learn a real language that used by native speakers and they could get accustomed to the way native speakers speak in casual English conversation. This result is in the line with related results by Griffiths (2003)

which the finding demonstrated that both teachers and learners have the same viewpoints on the use of LLSs.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter the statistical results of the collected data were presented. The data were analyzed in relation to the research questions. On the one hand the university instructors' belief on the importance of LLSs was investigated and their relation to instructors' gender and years of experience of teaching English, on the other hand the data dealing with the university students' responses on the LLSs use and their relation to learners' gender and university grade were considered. The statistical results indicated the degree of significance of each of the variables and their relationship. The next chapter discuss the conclusion and recommendations and the following sections concerning with the pedagogical implications and suggestion for further studies.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Presentation**

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings. The following sections also pertain to the pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.

#### **Summary of the Major Findings**

The present study explored the LLSs use in the Kurdish EFL context. Specifically, a survey was conducted with the language instructors and learners from five different universities in the province of Erbil. By administration of Griffiths' (2007) English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI), the study collected comprehensive quantitative data on the frequency as well as importance of the use of LLS in the context under investigation.

Regarding the Kurdish EFL instructors, the analysis of this study emphasized their high awareness of the importance of LLSs use by their students. Further, no statistically significant difference was found between the male and female instructors' survey reports. The result of the instructors' awareness of LLSs in relation to teaching experience was not significant as well. With regard to the learners, the analysis of the related survey data indicated that they employed the LLSs with high frequency. Furthermore, no statistically significant difference was found between the male and female learners' survey responses. However, the result of the analysed data revealed that the fourth grade learners used the strategies more frequently than their counterparts from the lower university grades. Finally, the

analysed data shows that there is a positive correlation between instructors' and learners' views.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The current study investigated the significance of LLSs in an EFL context. Since a small number of studies have considered the use and awareness of LLSs in a foreign language context, particularly in the Erbil province of Iraq, this study might contribute to the process of second and foreign language learning in general and the same process in Erbil in particular. The findings related to the frequency use of LLSs by university students and the awareness of strategies by university instructors will certainly provide insight information for both stakeholders and university administrators in order to develop the most beneficial system of language learning process. In this respect, the present survey provided valuable information for the Erbil province university instructors' awareness of the use of strategy by their students. Moreover, teachers should incorporate the strategies that the students consider as highly important in their teaching by inviting native speakers into their classrooms to give talks or by using authentic materials. In addition, less experienced instructors could cooperate with most experienced instructors in order to raise their awareness on the importance of LLSs use. All findings help syllabus designers and educational policy makers to consider the importance of LLSs in designing the language learning policies in the Erbil province.

It is hoped that the ministry of Higher Education in Erbil province will take into account the results of this study in order to help students to become aware of the significance of effective of the use of strategies in learning language. There are two goals that regarded language teachers, teaching learners "what to learn", and teaching them "how to learn". Thus, a good language instructor is the one teaches students

“how to learn, how to remember, how to think, and how to motivate themselves” (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986, p. 315).

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Further research on LLSs use might include the investigation of the employment of LLSs by students of secondary school in order to find out if the results in schools are in accordance with the findings at university level. The results would help teachers to raise their students' awareness in terms of the importance of LLSs at easier levels to make them more proficient users when they come to university. Further, secondary school teachers may train their students in the selection and employment of LLSs in the language learning process (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Cohen & Weaver, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). The studies to date indicate that learner training has a remarkable impact on language learners' noticing and selection as well as the implementation of LLSs (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989). The purpose of strategy training is to make learners notice their language learning abilities and develop their autonomy so that they will be able to control their language learning process with the help of using LLSs. Furthermore, prospective studies may examine a larger group of university instructors' or school teachers' awareness of students' use of LLSs, since in the current study, on the whole, a small group of university instructors were investigated. Having a large group of university instructors or school teachers will lead to more reliable results. In addition, further research might contain other provinces in Iraq since they have different culture and background than Kurdish culture, therefore, the findings might be different.

## **Conclusion**

The current study explored the LLSs use in the Kurdish EFL context. Specifically, a survey was conducted with the language instructors and learners from six different universities in the province of Erbil. By administration of Griffiths' (2007) English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI), the study collected comprehensive quantitative data on the frequency as well as importance of the use of LLS in the context under investigation.

Regarding the Kurdish EFL instructors, the analysis of this study emphasized their high awareness of the importance of LLSs use by their students. Further, no statistically significant difference was found between the male and female instructors' survey reports. The result of the instructors' awareness of LLSs in relation to teaching experience was not significant as well. With regard to the learners, the analysis of the related survey data indicated that they employed the LLSs with high frequency. Furthermore, no statistically significant difference was found between the male and female learners' survey reports. However, the result of the analysed data revealed that the fourth grade learners used the strategies more frequently than their counterparts from the lower university grades. Moreover, the results seemed to show a gradual increase in frequency use of strategies from the first university grade to the fourth university grade. Finally, the analysed data shows that there is a positive correlation between instructors' and learners' views. In this regard, this research provided important implications for the English language instruction in the context under investigation as well as made suggestions for prospective research.

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## **APPENDIXES**

## **Appendix A: Consent Form**

I understand what this research study is about and how my data will be used. Thus, by signing below, I give my consent to participate in it.

Name & surname: .....

Signature: .....

Date: ...../...../2012



## Appendix B: Background and English Language Learning Strategy

### Inventory Questionnaire (ELLSI): Teachers' version

Dear Instructor,

Spring, 2013

We are investigating the English language learning strategies used by Kurdish EFL learners. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire below. The data collected through this instrument will be used for the research purpose only. We assure you that your identity and the information you provide will be confidential. Many thanks for your co-operation.

Researcher

Polla Tahseen Mohammed

Department of English Language Teaching

Faculty of Education

Near East University

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#### Part I: Background Information

**Instructions:** Fill in the blanks or mark (X) where necessary

1. Nationality: Iraqi \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

3. Years of teaching experience (including previous institutions): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part II: The English Language Learning Strategy Inventory

**Instructions:** Read each of the statements and mark (X) in the table, according to the following rating scale

(1) *Not important*      (2) *Least important*      (3) *Somewhat important*      (4) *Important*

(5) *Most important*

Statement		Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Doing homework					
2	Learning from the teacher					
3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken					
4	Reading books in English					
5	Using a computer					
6	Watching TV in English					

(1) *Not important*      (2) *Leastt important*      (3) *Somewhat important*      (4) *Important*  
 (5) *Most important*

Statement		Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
7	Revising regularly					
8	Listening to songs in English					
9	Using language learning games					
10	Writing letters in English					
11	Listening to music while studying					
12	Talking to other students in English					
13	Using a dictionary					
14	Reading newspapers in English					
15	Studying English grammar					
16	Consciously learning new vocabulary					
17	Keeping a language learning notebook					
18	Talking to native speakers of English					
19	Taking note of language used in the environment					
20	Controlling schedules so that English study is done					
21	Pre-planning language-learning activities					
22	Not worrying about mistakes					
23	Using a library					
24	Trying to think in English					
25	Listening to native speakers of English					
26	Learning from mistakes					
27	Spending a lot of time studying English					
28	Making friends with native speakers					
29	Watching movies in English					
30	Learning about the culture of English speakers					
31	Listening to the radio in English					
32	Writing a diary in English					

(Adapted from ELLS I, Griffiths, 2007)

## Appendix C: Background and English Language Learning Strategy Inventory Questionnaire (ELLSI): Students' version

Dear Student,  
2013

Spring,

We are investigating the English language learning strategies used by Kurdish EFL learners. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire below. The data collected through this instrument will be used for the research purpose only. We assure you that your identity and the information you provide will be confidential.

Many thanks for your co-operation.

Researcher  
Polla Tahseen Mohammed  
Department of English Language Teaching  
Faculty of Education  
Near East University

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### Part I: Background Information

**Instructions:** Fill in the blanks or mark (X) where necessary

1. **Nationality:** Iraqi \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Sex:** Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Birth Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Years of English language learning** (including pre-university years):

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### Part II: The English Language Learning Strategy Inventory

**Instructions:** Read each of the statements and mark (X) in the table, according to the following rating scale

(1) *Not important*    (2) *Least important*    (3) *Somewhat important*    (4) *Important*  
(5) *Most important*

Statement		Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Doing homework					
2	Learning from the teacher					
3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken					
4	Reading books in English					
5	Using a computer					
6	Watching TV in English					

(1) *Not important*      (2) *Least important*      (3) *Somewhat important*      (4) *Important*  
 (5) *Most important*

Statement		Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
7	Revising regularly					
8	Listening to songs in English					
9	Using language learning games					
10	Writing letters in English					
11	Listening to music while studying					
12	Talking to other students in English					
13	Using a dictionary					
14	Reading newspapers in English					
15	Studying English grammar					
16	Consciously learning new vocabulary					
17	Keeping a language learning notebook					
18	Talking to native speakers of English					
19	Taking note of language used in the environment					
20	Controlling schedules so that English study is done					
21	Pre-planning language-learning activities					
22	Not worrying about mistakes					
23	Using a library					
24	Trying to think in English					
25	Listening to native speakers of English					
26	Learning from mistakes					
27	Spending a lot of time studying English					
28	Making friends with native speakers					
29	Watching movies in English					
30	Learning about the culture of English speakers					
31	Listening to the radio in English					
32	Writing a diary in English					

(Adapted from ELLS I, Griffiths, 2007)

## Appendix D: Instructors Mean and Standard Deviation's score

Item		Scale	Findings				
			F	%	N	M	St.dv
1	Doing homework	Not Important	1	3.1	32	4	.91
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat	4	12.5			
		Important	17	53.1			
		Most Important	9	28.1			
2	Learning from the teacher	Not Important	2	6.3	32	4.06	.80
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	3	9.4			
		Important	18	56.3			
		Most Important	9	28.1			
3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken	Not Important	0	0	32	4.4	1.07
		Least Important	2	6.3			
		Somewhat	2	6.3			
		Important	7	21.9			
		Most Important	21	65.6			
4	Reading books in English	Not Important	1	3.1	32	4.3	.96
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat	2	6.3			
		Important	11	34.4			
		Most Important	17	53.1			
5	Using a computer	Not Important	4	12.5	32	3.5	1.07
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat	11	34.4			
		Important	9	28.1			
		Most Important	7	21.9			
6	Watching TV in English	Not Important	0	0	32	4.18	.69
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	5	15.6			
		Important	16	50			
		Most Important	11	34			
7	Revising regularly	Not Important	2	6.3	32	3.87	.87
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	8	25			
		Important	14	43			
		Most Important	8	25			
8	Listening to songs in English	Least Important	2	6.3	32	3.5	1.13
		Not Important	2	6.3			
		Somewhat	14	43.8			
		Important	6	18.8			
		Most Important	8	25			
9	Using language learning games	Not Important	6	18.8	32	3.3	.93
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat	8	25			
		Important	16	50			
		Most Important	1	3.1			
10	Writing letters in	Not Important	7	21.9	32	3.3	.86

	English	Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	8	25			
		Important	16	50			
		Most Important	1	3.1			
11	Listening to music while studying	Not Important	13	40.6	32	2.5	1.2
		Least Important	6	18.8			
		Somewhat	6	18.8			
		Important	3	9.4			
		Most Important	4	12.5			
12	Talking to other students in English	Not Important	1	3.1	32	4.1	.99
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat	4	12.5			
		Important	11	34.4			
		Most Important	15	46.9			
13	Using a dictionary	Not Important	1	3.1	32	4.1	.78
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	4	12.5			
		Important	15	46.9			
		Most Important	12	37.5			
14	Reading newspapers in English	Not Important	3	9.4	32	3.7	1.06
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat	7	21.9			
		Important	12	37.5			
		Most Important	9	28.1			
15	Studying English grammar	Not Important	3	9.4	32	3.7	.95
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	10	31.3			
		Important	11	34.4			
		Most Important	8	25			
16	Consciously learning new vocabulary	Not Important	0	0	32	4.2	.67
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	4	12.5			
		Important	16	50			
		Most Important	12	37.5			
17	Keeping a language learning notebook	Not Important	2	6.3	32	4	.98
		Least Important	1	3.1			
		Somewhat	3	9.4			
		Important	16	50			
		Most Important	10	31.3			
18	Talking to native speakers of English	Not Important	0	0	32	4.53	.67
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	3	9.4			
		Important	9	28.1			
		Most Important	20	62.5			
19	Taking note of language used in the environment	Not Important	2	6.3	32	3.8	.83
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	7	21.9			
		Important	16	50			
		Most Important	7	21.9			

20	Controlling schedules so that English study is done	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	5 0 13 14 0	15.6 0 40.6 43.8 0	32	3.2	.72
21	Pre-planning language-learning activities	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	5 2 11 10 4	15.6 6.3 34.4 31.3 12.5	32	3.2	1.08
22	Not worrying about mistakes	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	4 0 9 12 7	12.5 0 28.1 37.5 21.9	32	3.6	.96
23	Using a library	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	4 3 11 8 6	12.5 9.4 34.4 25 18	32	3.3	1.20
24	Trying to think in English	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	4 0 5 12 11	12.5 0 15.6 37.5 34.4	32	3.9	.01
25	Listening to native speakers of English	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	1 0 4 11 16	3.1 0 12.5 34.4 50	32	4.31	.82
26	Learning from mistakes	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	3 0 7 13 9	9.4 0 21.9 40.6 28.1	32	3.87	.94
27	Spending a lot of time studying English	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	2 0 9 12 9	6.3 0 28.1 37.5 28.1	32	3.8	.90
28	Making friends with native speakers	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	12 12 4 3 1	37.5 37.5 12.5 9.4 3.1	32	3.9	1.09
29	Watching movies in English	Not Important Least Important Somewhat Important Most Important	0 0 6 14 12	0 0 18.8 43.8 37.5	32	4.1	.73

30	Learning about the culture of English speakers	Not Important	5	15.6	32	3.8	1.08
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	6	18.8			
		Important	10	31.3			
		Most Important	11	34.4			
31	Listening to the radio in English	Not Important	3	9.4	32	3.9	.98
		Least Important	0	0			
		Somewhat	7	21.9			
		Important	11	34.4			
		Most Important	11	34.4			
32	Writing a diary in English	Not Important	2	6.3	32	3.5	1.10
		Least Important	2	6.3			
		Somewhat	11	34.4			
		Important	10	31.3			
		Most Important	7	21.9			



## Appendix E: Learners' Mean and Standard Deviation's score

	Items	Scale	F	%	N	M	Std. Dev
1	Doing homework	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	32 17 98 211 201	37.7 17.5 36 3 5.7	559	3.97	1.01
2	Learning from the teacher	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	42 20 126 184 187	7.9 3.6 22.2 32.9 33.5	559	3.85	1.07
3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	27 26 91 146 269	4.8 4.7 16.3 26.1 48.1	559	4.08	1.11
4	Reading books in English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	41 18 93 184 223	7.3 3.2 16.6 32.9 39.9	559	4.0	1.05
5	Using a computer	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	59 39 127 189 145	10.6 7 22.7 33.8 25.9	559	3.62	1.16
6	Watching TV in English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	33 23 77 180 246	5.9 4.1 13.8 32.2 44	559	4.07	1.07
7	Revising regularly	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	82 42 163 173 99	14.7 7.5 29.2 30.9 17.7	559	3.38	1.13
8	Listening to songs in English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	70 59 137 166 127	12.5 10.6 24.5 29.7 22.7	559	3.42	1.25
9	Using language learning games	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	109 57 168 150 75	19.5 10.2 30.1 26.8 13.4	559	3.15	1.17

10	Writing letters in English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	83 62 100 176 138	14.8 11.1 17.9 31.5 24.7	559	3.45	1.29
11	Listening to music while studying	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	149 149 87 69 104	26.7 26.7 15.6 12.3 18.6	559	2.71	1.45
12	Talking to other students in English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	12 37 66 148 296	2.1 6.6 11.8 26.5 53	559	4.22	1.00
13	Using a dictionary	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	25 37 89 168 237	4.5 6.6 15.9 30.1 42.4	559	3.99	1.11
14	Reading newspapers in English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	49 35 85 192 198	8.8 6.3 15.2 34.3 35.4	559	3.85	1.16
15	Studying English grammar	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	42 33 115 193 176	7.5 5.9 20.6 34.5 31.5	559	3.79	1.13
16	Consciously learning new vocabulary	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	42 14 106 193 204	7.5 2.5 19 34.5 36.5	559	3.96	1.01
17	Keeping a language learning notebook	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	42 27 144 186 160	7.5 4.8 25.8 33.3 28.6	559	3.73	1.01
18	Talking to native speakers of English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	31 24 84 124 296	5.5 4.3 15 22.2 53	559	4.14	1.11
19	Taking note of the language used in the environment	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	79 34 180 176 90	14.1 6.1 32.2 31.5 16.1	559	3.37	1.09

20	Controlling schedules so that English study is done	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	71 56 190 171 70	12.7 10 34 30.6 12.5	559	3.24	1.12
21	Pre-planning language-learning activities	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	69 32 160 175 122	12.3 5.7 28.6 31.3 21.8	559	3.52	1.12
22	Not worrying about mistakes	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	48 56 101 165 189	8.6 10 18.1 29.5 33.8	559	3.7	1.26
23	Using a library	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	69 55 149 166 120	12.3 9.8 26.7 29.7 21.5	559	3.41	1.22
24	Trying to think in English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	49 20 73 159 258	8.8 3.6 13.1 28.4 46.2	559	4.05	1.1
25	Listening to native speakers of English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	19 15 54 135 336	3.4 2.7 9.7 24.2 60.1	559	4.35	0.79
26	Learning from mistakes	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	29 13 80 165 272	5.2 2.3 14.3 29.5 28.7	559	4.18	0.99
27	Spending a lot of time studying English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	50 28 96 216 169	8.9 30.2 5 38.6 17.2	559	3.8	1.11
28	Making friends with native speakers	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	24 21 79 168 267	4.3 3.8 14.1 30.1 47.8	559	4.14	1.04
29	Watching movies in English	Not important Least important Somewhat Important Important Most important	52 23 67 175 242	9.3 4.1 12 31.3 43.3	559	4.00	1.13

30	Learning about the culture of English speakers	Not important	73	13.1	559	3.67	1.19
		Least important	34	6.1			
		Somewhat Important	98	17.5			
		Important	188	33.6			
		Most important	166	29.7			
31	Listening to the radio in English	Not important	53	9.5	559	3.72	1.19
		Least important	38	6.8			
		Somewhat Important	115	20.6			
		Important Most	179	32			
		Important	174	31.1			
32	Writing a diary in English	Not important	51	9.1	559	3.82	1.18
		Least important	38	6.8			
		Somewhat Important	101	18.1			
		Important	195	34.9			
		Most important	174	31.1			

## **Appendix F: Permission Letters from Six Universities**

### **To The Head of English Department**

I am investigating the English language learning strategies used by Kurdish EFL learners. I have planned to collect data using Griffiths' (2007) ELLSI. Attached is the data collection instrument.

I would like to request your permission for collecting data. I assure you that the collected data will be kept confidential and the results will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Regards,

Researcher

Polla Tahseen Mohammed

Department of English Language Teaching

Faculty of Education

Near East University

Tel: +964 750 4729757

+90 533 864 9666

E-mail: [polaelts@yahoo.com](mailto:polaelts@yahoo.com)

## **Appendix G: Request and Permission Letters from Dr. Griffiths**

### **1. Request Letter to Dr. Griffiths**

On Mon, March 12, 2013 at 11:25 AM, Polla Mohammed <[polaiq@yahoo.com](mailto:polaiq@yahoo.com)> wrote:

Dear Dr. Griffiths,

I am an Iraqi MA student in ELT department at the Near East University in Northern Cyprus. I have completed my coursework and have started working on my Thesis proposal. I envisage exploring EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions on Language Learning Strategy Use in the Kurdish context. I therefore wonder if you could grant me permission to use your inventory, ELLSI, for data collection in my country.

I should be most grateful if you could consider my request favorably.

Best Regards

Polla Mohammed  
[polaiq@yahoo.com](mailto:polaiq@yahoo.com)  
+90 533 864 9666

**From:** Carol Griffiths <[carolgriffiths5@gmail.com](mailto:carolgriffiths5@gmail.com)>  
**To:** Polla <[polaiq@yahoo.com](mailto:polaiq@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 15, 2012 4:18 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Permission to use your inventory

Dear Polla

I am happy for you to use the ELLSI

I would be interested to know what you find

Best wishes

Carol