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UNIVERSITY OF GAZIANTEP  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING  
STRATEGIES AND VOCABULARY SIZE: THE CASE OF  
IRAQI LEARNERS OF EFL**

Master's of Arts Thesis

ISMAEL FARAJ

Gaziantep  
December, 2016

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Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Mehmet KILIÇ

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## APPROVAL OF THE JURY

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**Head of Department**

This is to certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master's of Arts.

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother for everything she has done, from loving me unconditionally and raising me in a stable household to her prayers of day and night that make me able to get such success and honor. Also to my father, who helped me in everything I ever did, but who is not here to see the end of my thesis. As you look down from heaven, I wish you are proud of your little son. I dedicate this work to my brother and sisters whose affection, love and encouragement kept me working.



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## ÖZET

### DİL ÖĞRENME STRATEJİLERİ VE KELİME DAĞARCIĞI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ: YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENEN IRAKLILAR ÖRNEĞİ

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Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim

Tez Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mehmet KILIÇ

Aralık-2016, 101 sayfa

Etkili bir dil öğreniminde stratejilerin önemli rolü sorgulanamaz, özellikle dil öğrenme stratejilerini kullanmaktaki amaç öğrencilerin kelime dağarcığını geliştirmekse. Bunun nedeni dil öğreniminde kelime bilgisinin önemli bir yerinin olmasıdır. Bu yüzden tezin amacı yabancı bir dil olarak İngilizcede dil öğrenme stratejileri ve kelime dağarcığı arasındaki ilişkiyi tespit etmektir. Bu amaçla Süleymaniye Üniversitesi Dil Okulu'ndaki 122 öğrenci bu çalışmaya katılımcı olmak üzere seçildi. Veri iki aşamada toplandı. Nitel aşamada yarı yapılandırılmış grup görüşmeleri yürütülürken, nicel aşamada veriler dil öğrenimi strateji envanteri ve kelime seviye testi aracılığıyla toplandı. Dil öğrenme stratejisi kullanımı ve alt kategori strateji tercihi sıklığını ortaya çıkarmak için tanımlayıcı istatistikler elde edildi. Pearson product-moment korelasyon değerleri, dil öğrenme stratejileri ve ileri düzeyde kelime dağarcığı arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığını bulmak için kullanıldı. Son olarak, kelime dağarcığı ileri seviyede olan öğrenciler ve kelime dağarcığı düşük seviyede olan öğrenciler arasında dil öğrenme stratejisi kullanımında önemli bir fark olup olmadığını ortaya çıkarmak için bağımsız örneklem t-testi kullanıldı. Sonuçlar öğrencilerin 3.2 ortalama ile dil öğrenme stratejilerine başvurduğunu gösterdi. Benzer şekilde alt kategori strateji kullanımı için olan sonuçlar, kelime dağarcığı yüksek seviyede olan öğrencilerin üst bilişsel stratejileri 4.66 ortalama ile en yüksek sıklıkla, ödünleme stratejilerini ise ortalama ile en az sıklıkla kullandığını gösterdi. Bunlara ilaveten, sonuçlar kelime dağarcığı düşük seviyede olan öğrencilerin biliş ötesi stratejileri 3.50 ortalama ile en yüksek sıklıkla ve bellek stratejilerini ise 2.86 ortalama ile en az sıklıkla kullandıklarını gösterdi. Analiz sonuçlarına göre, dil öğrenme stratejisi kullanımı ve yüksek kelime dağarcığı arasında güçlü bir pozitif korelasyon vardı ( $r=.96$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=11$ ). Buna ek olarak, kelime dağarcığı ileri seviyede olan ve kelime dağarcığı düşük seviyede olan öğrenciler arasında dil öğrenme stratejisi kullanımında ciddi farklılıklar ortaya çıktı ( $t=13.81$ ,  $df=24.87$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Ek olarak görüşmeden çıkan bulgular kelime dağarcığı ileri seviyede olan öğrencilerin, kelime dağarcığı düşük seviyede olan öğrencilerden daha fazla ve daha çeşitli stratejiler uyguladığı gerçeğini destekledi.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Dil öğrenme stratejileri, Kelime dağarcığı, Kelime öğrenme, Kelime bilgisi

**ABSTRACT****THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES  
AND VOCABULARY SIZE OF IRAQI EFL LEARNERS**

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The crucial role of strategies in effective language learning is unquestionable, especially when the purpose of using language learning strategies is to enhance learner's vocabulary size. This is because of the prominent place of vocabulary size in language learning and it is a vital aspect of lexical knowledge. Thus, this thesis examines the relationship between language learning strategies and vocabulary size in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. With this aim, 122 students at Sulaimani University, School of Languages were chosen as the participants of the study. The data were collected in two phases. In the quantitative phase, the data were collected through Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) while in the qualitative phase a semi-structured group interview was administered. So as to uncover the frequency of language learning strategy use and sub-category strategy preference, descriptive statistics were calculated. A Pearson product-moment correlation co-efficient was used to find out whether there is a relationship between language learning strategies and high vocabulary size. Finally, an independent-samples t-test was administered to reveal whether there is a significant difference between learners with high vocabulary size and low vocabulary size in their language learning strategy use. The results indicated that the learners applied language learning strategies with an average of 3.2. Similarly, the results for sub-category strategy use indicated that the learners with high vocabulary size employed metacognitive strategies most with an average of 4.66 and compensation strategies least with an average of 3.41. Additionally, the results showed that learners with low vocabulary size used metacognitive strategies most with an average of 3.50 and memory strategies least with an average of 2.86. According to the analysis results, there was a strong positive correlation between language learning strategy use and high vocabulary size ( $r=.96$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=11$ ). Moreover, a significant difference between the learners with large vocabulary size and small vocabulary size was revealed in their use of language learning strategies ( $t=13.81$ ,  $df=24.87$ ,  $p<.05$ ). In addition, the findings of the interview supported those of the quantitative analyses in that the learners with high vocabulary size deployed more and various strategies than the learners with low vocabulary size.

**Key words:** Language learning strategies, Vocabulary size, Vocabulary learning, Vocabulary knowledge



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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. PRESENTATION**

This study aims to find out whether there is a relationship between the use of foreign language learning strategies and vocabulary size.

In this chapter, after presenting the background of the study, the statement of the problem is identified. Next, the purpose of the study is mentioned. The significance of the study follows it. Then, research questions are stated. The chapter ends with some assumptions, abbreviations and definition of the terms.

### **1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Due to the fact that English is the most continuously growing language all over the world, the eagerness of learners to learn English is undoubtedly expected. Therefore, learners follow different routes and apply various mechanisms to achieve this goal.

Among other aspects, factors and learning variables such as learning styles, gender, age, motivation, attitudes and learning strategies that affect language learning are considered as crucial elements. Takač (2008) describes factors and learning variables as a significant component of second language acquisition. Consequently, in the past few decades a considerable number of researchers shifted their views from teaching methods and techniques to language learning strategies as an effective factor. Regarding their definitions, language learning strategies are defined on various occasions by different experts (e.g., Brown, 2007; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990).

Language learning strategies are general activities applied to the whole areas of learning, regardless of whether these tasks happen inside or outside classrooms

(O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). In addition, Anderson (1983) describes language learning strategies as a set of productions used deliberately until they turn to be procedural knowledge. Anderson's definition reveals that using language learning strategies are rather like a continuum starting from applying them intentionally until they are operated automatically. Besides, Scarcella & Oxford (1992) define language learning strategies as "specific actions, behaviors, steps or techniques-such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult task-used by students to enhance their own learning" (p. 63). In fact, Cohen (2011) explains that language learning strategies are continuously deployed in a complex and interacting ways which might be an evidence of their role in enhancing knowledge of the target language. It is also worth noting that whenever learners face some problem while dealing with a learning task, they deploy specific strategies to solve the problem (Brown, 2007).

Within the field of language learning strategies, different taxonomies have been offered in order to make the evaluation of strategy use easy to handle and lead to effective results. Some language learning strategies directly relate to the mental processes such as memory and cognitive strategies, which have a vital role in storing and retrieving information. On the contrary, some strategies like metacognitive and social strategies are external and viewed as additional tools to improve learning.

The second concern of the current research deals with vocabulary size. The quest for acquisition and knowledge of vocabulary moved forward after some years of neglect. Schmitt and Meara (1997) explain that "in the last twenty or so years, there has been a growing realization that total language proficiency consists of much more than just grammatical competence" (p. 18). Similarly, vocabulary shares a great proportion of language and it is a fundamental element of language use because of the need of learners to vocabulary items (Carter & McCarthy, 1988; Nation, 2011; Schmitt, 2010). Therefore, it is recognized as an indispensable aspect of language learning and any productive communication should heavily depend on vocabulary.

Generally, there are two main aspects of vocabulary knowledge, viz. vocabulary size and depth. Vocabulary size refers to the number of words known by the learner while the depth of vocabulary is about how well these words are known. So, according to Laufer and Goldstein (2004) vocabulary size relates to the first and essential element of meaning.



To sum up, both aspects that have been mentioned above, namely language learning strategies (LLSs) and vocabulary size (VS) are essential in language learning. In other words, deploying effective and appropriate learning strategies result in improving vocabulary size. That is why Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) point out that language learners deploy more strategies in vocabulary learning than in any other linguistic competence. Therefore, the present study describes language learning strategies and vocabulary size, then seeking the relationship between both constructs.

### **1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Oxford (1990) defines language learning as knowledge of language rules which is both a conscious and unconscious process. The essential and interesting questions within the field of language learning and teaching research are those Norris and Ortega (2006) mention “how do people learn languages other than their first language? What factors (linguistic, cognitive, social, educational, affective, material) may moderate or enhance their learning of another language?” (p. 3). In other words, learning any language can be affected by some cognitive and emotional factors such as intelligence, language aptitude, language learning strategies, motivation, and language attitudes (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). However, as Swan (2008) explains learning a foreign language as effortful, complex and time-consuming, any procedure that perhaps makes the learning easier, enjoyable, or more accomplished should be welcomed.

This study will mainly describe and investigate language learning strategies and their relation to vocabulary size. While learning English, Iraqi students spend many hours studying different fields of the language. They are supposed to be able to engage in communications with peers and other people. Nevertheless, most of these students are unable to take part in a simple conversation. Although the main areas of language such as grammar and vocabulary are primarily taught and intensive activities and efforts are allocated to develop learners' language skills (i.e., listening, reading, writing, speaking), the progress is not as much as it is anticipated and few of them can be considered successful learners. Here some questions arise; what makes some students more successful than others? Is it the result of language learning strategies? What are these learning strategies? However, while studying English from the first year of schooling, most of the students merely concentrate on specific tasks and memorize grammar rules just to pass the exams. They are unaware of language

learning strategies and the effectiveness of some of them in specific tasks rather than others.

On the other hand, vocabulary has been viewed as a fundamental aspect of language. Nunan (1999) explains teaching and learning vocabulary as a basic element of language development. Although grammar is essential in language learning, in recent years, most views and works have been turned to focus on vocabulary. Schmitt and Meara (1997) vividly claim that “total language proficiency consists of much more than just grammatical competence” (p. 18). Similarly, Nation (1990) portrays vocabulary knowledge as an aspect which academic achievement largely depends on.

Within vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary size has a crucial role in language learning together with vocabulary depth. Teachers try to improve the vocabulary size of students through employing learning strategies and other activities. They guide and motivate students to enhance their vocabulary inside and outside classrooms. Despite all of these facts, vocabulary size of most of the students is very limited which affects their language achievement. Additionally, the improvement of vocabulary size can unexpectedly be seen in a small number of these learners. As a result, this status impacts overall proficiency of the students.

Taking all of these points into consideration, this study will attempt to deal with these problems and find answers to some research questions through investigating language learning strategies and their relation to vocabulary size.

#### **1.4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to describe and investigate language learning strategies and vocabulary size of Iraqi EFL learners at the School of Languages at the University of Sulaimani. For this purpose, at first, language learning strategies and vocabulary size are defined and explained in detail. That is, the frequent use of the strategies is identified through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview while the size of the learners' vocabulary is assessed using a vocabulary size test. Furthermore, the major subcategory strategy that is used by the learners of high and low vocabulary size will be investigated. The learners with high and low vocabulary size will be identified through a vocabulary size test.

Moreover, the study seeks to explore whether there is a relationship between high vocabulary size and language learning strategy use. Finally, it attempts to discover whether there is any difference between learners with high vocabulary size and low vocabulary size in terms of language learning strategy use.

### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Research findings are one of the most significant sources of foreign language learning improvement. Due to a lack of research on language learning strategies and vocabulary size, at least in Iraq, the researcher decided to conduct the present study. Similarly, vocabulary learning has been problematic for most language learners. Therefore, they need to apply some learning strategies to deal with specific tasks or at least meet their communication needs where their vocabulary knowledge is insufficient. So to say, the results of the study are likely to reveal those strategies which are more effective to improve vocabulary size.

Additionally, the findings will be beneficial for learners, teachers, curriculum developers, and researchers. The results can also contribute to a better understanding of the nature of language learning strategies and vocabulary size and more generally to serve as a small step in providing the nourishment in the field of language learning and teaching.

### **1.6. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study aims to find answers to the following questions:

**Research question 1:** How frequently do Iraqi EFL learners reportedly employ language learning strategies:

**1a.** as reported in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)?

**1b.** as stated during the interview?

**Research question 2:** Which sub-category strategy is most frequently used by Iraqi EFL learners with high and low vocabulary size?

**Research question 3:** Is there a statistically significant relationship between language learning strategy use and high vocabulary size?

**Research question 4:** Is there a statistically significant difference between Iraqi EFL learners with high and low vocabulary size in their use of language learning strategies?

### **1.7. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

In this study, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used as a basic instrument to measure the frequency of learning strategy use. Besides, a semi-structured interview was settled for the same above-mentioned aim. To assess the vocabulary size of the participants, Vocabulary Levels Test was administered. The instruments were put in the reliability coefficients and it was concluded that the instruments used in this study have the criteria of validity and reliability. On the other hand, due to the limited scope of the study, other individual factors were not investigated.

### **1.8. DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

**Language Learning Strategies:** LLSs can be defined as a set of conscious or semi-conscious thoughts and behavior which are deployed by language learners to make learning process easier and faster (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002).

**Vocabulary Size:** It refers to the number of words which the learner knows, at least being familiar with some important aspects of the word meaning (Anderson & Freebody, 1981).

**Vocabulary Depth:** It simply refers to “how well words are known” (Schmitt, 2014, p. 913).

**L1:** First language

**L2:** second language

**LLS:** Language Learning Strategy

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**SILL:** Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

**VS:** Vocabulary Size

**VLT:** Vocabulary Levels Test

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. PRESENTATION**

This chapter presents the related literature about language learning strategies and vocabulary size. Firstly, language learning strategies are discussed in detail. Then, vocabulary size and related concepts are presented. The chapter ends with some studies which relate to the relationship between language learning strategies and vocabulary size.

#### **2.2. THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES AND MODELS**

One way of viewing intricate nature of second language learning and acquisition is to build up theoretical models in which factors and individual differences play a crucial role in explaining this complex nature. Among other variables, language learning strategies seem to have a significant effect on learning a second language. Consequently, language learning strategies contribute a significant role in many theories and models (e.g., in Bialystok's Second Language Learning Model, 1978; Second Language Acquisition Model, Ellis, 1995; Stern's Synthesis of Models, 1986). Three of the related theories and models will be discussed below.

##### **2.2.1. Interlanguage Theory**

The theory was originally invented by Selinker (1972) and it has been the earliest attempt to explain second language acquisition. The word interlanguage is regarded as the structure of language built by language learners while activating a second language. Language learning strategies play a key role in the theory in which the learner applies various strategies to control language input and output, and as a result interlanguage improves gradually (Takač, 2008). Generally, the theory

distinguishes between two types of learning strategies, namely cognitive strategies and communication strategies. In addition, In the light of the theory, Selinker, Baumgartner-Cohen, Kinahan, and Mathieu (2000) describe language learning strategies as cognitive activities in which the information recalled consciously or unconsciously to show the meaning. Similarly, it is emphasized that interlanguage is not recognized only by systematicity, but also by variability, which means it is changeable and flexible (VanPatten & Williams, 2006). This might be a strong evidence of involving language learning strategies in interlanguage evolution.

### **2.2.2. Second Language Learning Model**

In her model, Bialystok (1978) indicates the essential role of learning strategies in the process of second language learning. Indeed, she addressed two types of strategies, which are formal and functional strategies. The strategies in the model are displayed in the level of cognitive process, which as Oxford (2011, p. 46) refers to as “the mental process or faculty of knowing”. Formal strategies include those strategies that are labeled in practicing and monitoring. In other words, they involve in the conscious process of learning or those efforts which try to switch explicit learning to procedural learning. On the contrary, functional strategies refer to the procedures involve in language use while learners engage in communication tasks (Takač, 2008). From the viewpoint of Bialystok (1978), strategies are specific procedures used by learners to retrieve information in order to increase learning proficiency. So, from the Model of Second Language Learning, it can be concluded that language learning strategies are an essential contributor in second language acquisition.

### **2.2.3. Model of Adaptive Control of Thought**

This model has been proposed by Anderson during the construction of cognitive theory. Regarding the role of learning strategies in the model, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) explain that in his model, Anderson focuses on how information is stored in the memory and then how this data retrieved. This means that language learning strategies are viewed from the cognitive perspective rather than how learning develops. Furthermore, they take place from the early stages of cognition process, but later they cease and become procedural knowledge (Takač, 2008). From Anderson's perspective, two types of strategies play a key role in storing and

retrieving information, which are imagery and elaboration. Imagery strategy refers to connecting information to memory through concepts while elaboration strategy accentuates the linkage between one piece of information to another (Oxford, 1990)

### **2.3. LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Learning is regarded as the knowledge of language rules, which is processed consciously until some of its elements become automatic through practice (Oxford, 1990). This conscious process is for learners to become incrementally competent. However, Macaro (2001) explain that language learning involves more than just learners and teachers while communicating with each other. It seems from Macaro's explanation that language learning is not an easy task. That is why it has been described as a long and complicated process which learners need to go beyond the confines of learning second or foreign language, viz. learners need to engage culturally, physically, and intellectually (Brown, 2007). One way of overcoming difficulties of language learning is to apply language learning strategies. Although before 1970 the main concentration was on methods and language teaching products, the concern moved to focus on investigating how language learners process, store, retrieve and utilize language materials (White, 2008).

#### **2.3.1. Definition of Language Learning Strategies**

Language learning strategies are complex constructs and different notions are presented about them. However, regarding the definition of language learning strategies, there is still not a widespread and accepted definition of this concept (Takač, 2008). Therefore, miscellaneous definitions on language learning strategies have been presented (e.g., Oxford, 1990; Macaro, 2001; Brown, 2007; Ellis, 1997).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) define language learning strategies as specific procedures applied by the learner to improve comprehension, learning and retention of information. Though as Alexander, Graham, and Harris (1998) indicate that language learning strategies are arduous, time-consuming, and willful, they can not be considered as good or bad; rather, they are essentially useful in second language learning (Cohen, 1998). Mostly, language learning strategies are defined in the level of consciousness. That is to say, almost all of the definitions of language learning strategies demonstrate the conscious effort toward the learning target. For instance, Cohen (2011) describes language learning strategies either as actions or thoughts,

which help learners while consciously using them to complete specific tasks or applying them in language learning in general.

From the aforementioned definitions, it can be concluded that language learning strategies are complex structures and sometimes defined inexplicitly. Therefore, Swan (2008) points out that at least for pedagogical purposes language learning strategies should meet five criteria, namely they should be problem-oriented, prone to selecting among alternatives, managed consciously, describable, and effective. Perhaps, one of the most popular definitions of language learning strategies is that suggested by Oxford (1990), i.e. “ specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (p. 8).

### **2.3.2. Importance of Language Learning Strategies**

Language learning strategies are important sources for facilitating language learning. They are active, self-directed, and manageable tools which are crucial for enhancing communicative competence (Oxford, 1990). However, regardless of the fact that within any solution for a specific learning task, there is at least one strategy, which is the intentional action or procedure. This procedure is significant because when the learner is aware of his learning then it will be more effective. That is, the consciousness is the heart of language learning strategies. It is not surprising that most of the time language learning strategies are prerequisite for language learning. Bandura (1997) and Zimmerman and Pons (1986) insist that frequent use of language learning strategies results in high self-efficacy which is the sign of being an effective learner.

Depending on the results of some studies about language learning strategies and proficiency, Oxford (1999) concluded that language learning strategies make a significant difference in language proficiency. Though for the learners with limited language learning proficiency, Nation and Webb (2011) propose applying specific strategies related to experience to advocate learners to be more independent. Additionally, language learning strategies are essential for promoting the learner toward autonomy (Zarei & Elekaie, 2012). So, learners in one way or another use some sort of strategies to access and manage language learning. To make language learning strategies more useful and effective, they should meet certain criteria which



were proposed by Ehrman, Leaver, and Oxford (2003). According to Ehrman et al., strategies should suit the involved task, they should match learner's learning style, and the learner should make the link between the strategy which is at hand and other strategies. Overall, Weinstein and Mayer (1986) hint that language learning strategies pave the way for the learners to choose, acquire, and organize upcoming knowledge.

### **2.3.3. Features of Language Learning Strategies**

One way to distinguish language learning strategies from other aspects of language learning is to identify and recognize their features. Some distinctive features were proposed by researchers in the field. However, acknowledging characteristics of language learning strategies, like their definition, is fuzzy and paradoxical. Oxford (1990) suggests twelve key features of language learning strategies as follows:

- Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence.
- Allow learners to become more self-directed.
- Expand the role of teachers.
- Are problem-oriented.
- Are specific actions taken by the learner.
- Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive.
- Support learning both directly and indirectly.
- Are not always observable.
- Are often conscious.
- Can be taught.
- Are flexible.
- Are influenced by a variety of factors. (p. 9)

In addition to the aforementioned features, Takač (2008) indicates that language learning strategies are limited and they have a trait of systematicity which means learners apply them systematically. As a matter of fact, sometimes language learning strategies are characterized by the scope of features of good or successful learners and unsuccessful learners.

### **2.3.4. Characteristics of Good Language learner**

In the early years of research in the field of language learning strategies, namely in 1970s, the main focus was on identifying those strategies used by good language learners. Although all language learning strategies contribute to a better understanding of the learning task, some specific strategies are prerequisite for success and high achievement. This is why some researchers in the field argue that

there might be some procedures to guide some learners towards success (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Rubin (1975) describes good language learners as those that have strong motivation to communicate, they are not restrained, they practice and pay attention to their own and others speech to elicit meaning and attend form. On the other hand, while learners break down during conversations, good language learners can survive by using strategies such as paraphrasing when the exact word is unknown and they borrow words from the first language, or composing new words (Ellis, 1997). More specifically, Vandergrift (2011) emphasizes that metacognitive strategies are critical and are a source of successful learning. Regarding the use of strategies in vocabulary learning, some scholars (i.e. Catalan, 2003; Schmitt, 1997) claim that highly successful learners apply more and various strategies than underachievers.

However, sometimes those language learning strategies, which are used inappropriately are considered as a source of failing in language learning tasks, are addressed as another way of recognizing successful learners. From this perspective, a learner whose name was Bell used the same strategies of first language to learn a second language (Griffiths, 2003). Moreover, unsuccessful learners view the learning process as simple and effortless (Graham, 1997). As a result, it is important for learners to avoid such notions. Additionally, Cohen (2011) states that it is not reasonable to set apart a strategy because strategies take place in sequence or cluster and the effect of one strategy is cumulative.

### **2.3.5. Taxonomies of Language Learning Strategies**

Categorizing language learning strategies is one of the most essential issues in the domain because such classifications are helpful in better and deeper understanding of the nature of language learning strategies. However, in some classifications individual items of subgroups overlap. Moreover, it is hard for learners and teachers to internalize them and work in the scheme (Dörnyei, 2005, 2006; Swan, 2008). Three models of taxonomies are addressed in this section, namely Rubin's (1981), O'Malley and Chamot's (1990), and Oxford's (1990) taxonomies respectively.

### **2.3.5.1. Rubin's Taxonomy**

One of the pioneers in the field of language learning strategies is Rubin (1981). Her first contributions dealt with researching good language learners. Generally, Rubin classified language learning strategies into two groups, which they contribute learning directly and indirectly.

Strategies which directly affect learning subdivide into six strategies that are clarification, monitoring, memorization, guessing, deductive reasoning, and practicing, respectively. Clarification, which is also called verification, relates to the situation in which the learner asks for more detail such as giving examples or repeating unknown words. Monitoring comprises strategies such as correcting pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary errors. Memorization is a mental strategy in which the learner utilizes mnemonics or writes notes. Guessing or inductive inference relates to the inference from keywords, pictures, and context, while deductive reasoning deals with the comparison between native and target languages. The last direct strategy is practicing, which concerns about imitating through listening or repeat the sentences until they are comprehended.

Regarding strategies that contribute indirectly, they are subdivided into two groups. The first one is about creating opportunities for learning such as watching TV or initiating conversations with native speakers and peers. Production tricks, on the other hand, includes a group of strategies such as learner's attempt to survive while engaging in a task through using cognates, synonyms, or contextualizing to express the meaning.

### **2.3.5.2. O'Malley and Chamot's Taxonomy**

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) designed this taxonomy which was the basic instrument in many studies. The taxonomy was essentially the result of some studies carried out by the designers interviewed experts and novices on psychological tasks, theoretical analysis, and reading comprehension tasks. However, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) emphasize that there are some overlaps and differences between some sets of the strategies. The taxonomy is classified into three categories, namely metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategies.

Metacognitive strategies are special strategies which manage cognitive aspects of second language and successful learners use such strategies all over the

world (Oxford, 2011). Strategies that are labeled under metacognitive set are 'selective attention, planning, monitoring, and evaluation'. Selective attention focuses on specific dimensions of learning tasks such as listening to key words while planning refers to organizing written or spoken discourse. Procedures such as reviewing comprehended information or paying attention to the task can be labeled under monitoring but evaluation strategies refer to the evaluation of receptive and productive information.

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), cognitive strategies such as imagery, deducing, and transferring are used to rehearse the names of the items, organize words or concepts, guess and predict the meaning from upcoming items, summarize the information which has been heard, and elaborate the information by linking ideas. Considering socioaffective strategies, it can be realized that these strategies relate to the social and emotional aspects of the learner such as cooperating with peers, asking for an explanation from a teacher or students, and talking to oneself to reduce anxiety.

#### **2.3.5.3. Oxford's Taxonomy**

Among taxonomies of language learning strategies, Oxford's classification (1990) is perhaps the most comprehensive taxonomy. Very broadly, Oxford's taxonomy includes direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies subdivide into memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies while indirect strategies include metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2). Oxford's taxonomy is different from O'Malley and Chamot's taxonomy in that social and affective strategies are two independent categories and she added compensation strategies to the learning strategy taxonomy. However, like other taxonomies Oxford's taxonomy was not out of criticism. As Dörnyei (2006) claims that there are some items of cognitive and memory categories which overlap each other.

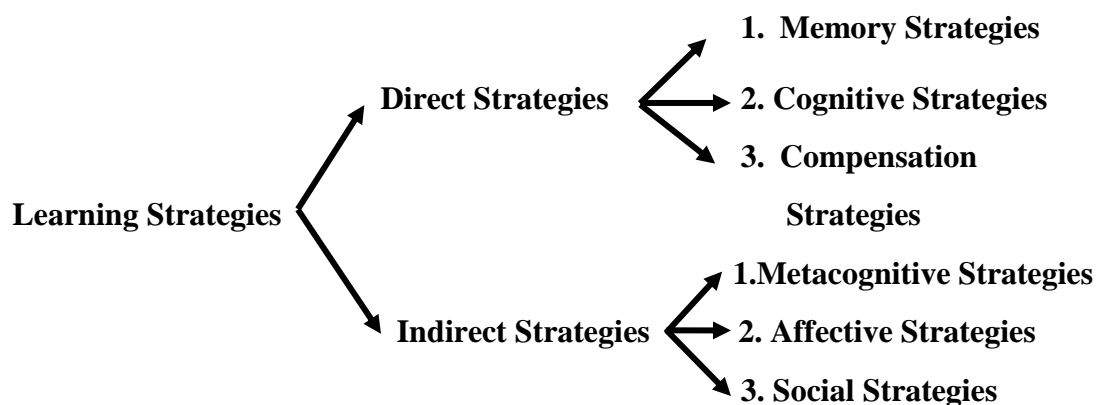
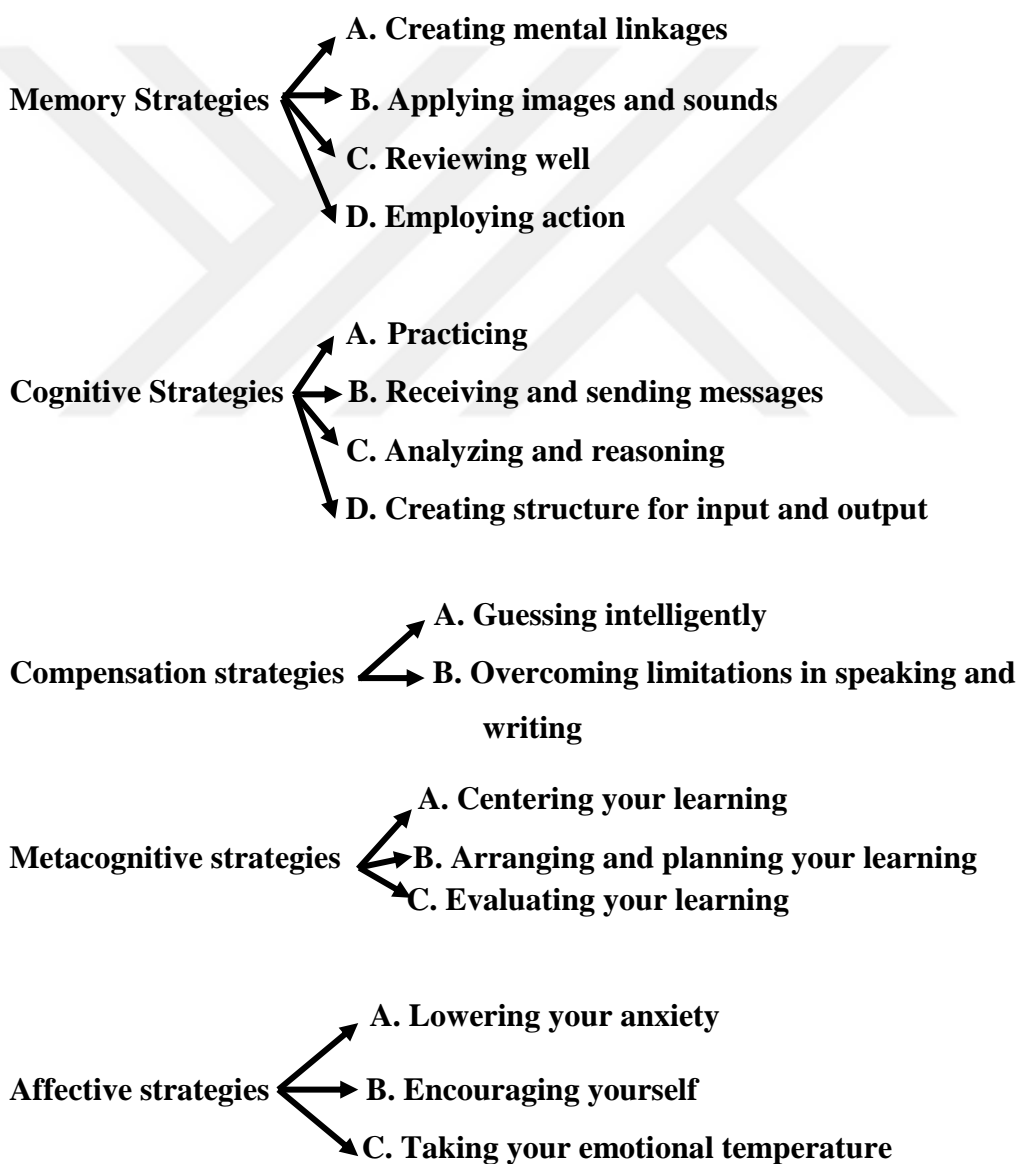


Figure 2.1 Diagram of the Strategy System (Oxford, 1990, p. 16)



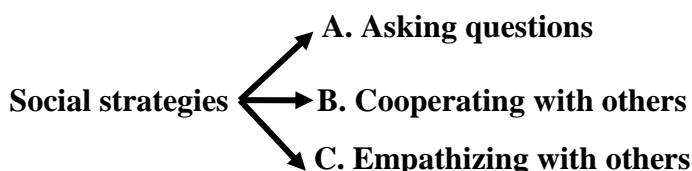


Figure 2.2 Diagram of the strategy system six groups and 19 sets (Oxford, 1990, p.17)

Memory strategies are defined as “techniques specifically tailored to help the learner store new information in memory and retrieve it later” (Oxford & Crookall, 1989, p. 404). Some strategies of this category create mental linkages such as grouping and associating or employing action like using mechanical techniques. Memory strategies are very useful in vocabulary learning. For instance, word cards are an effective technique in learning words which later plays a key role in language use (Elgort, 2007). Similarly, Oxford (1990) mentions that memory strategies are important in language skills development. For example, ‘grouping’ is effective in listening and reading while ‘placing new words into a context’ is essential in all skills.

Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, which relate to analyzing, synthesizing, and transforming available information, are fundamental in language learning (Ellis, 1997). Examples of cognitive strategies are ‘receiving and sending messages’ to get the idea as soon as possible or ‘practicing’ to repeat utterances of the native speaker. Cognitive strategies are useful in improving language skills as well. An example of such strategies is ‘deductive reasoning’ which contributes in enhancing all skills. Similarly, such strategies facilitate the process of cultural and mental construction of a second language (Oxford, 2011). Compensation strategies are another group which as Zhang and Li (2011) state “allow learners to compensate for missing knowledge, such as by guessing” (p. 143). In other words, these strategies allow learners to express spoken or written ideas without the need for complete knowledge (Oxford, 1990). ‘Using synonyms to survive’ is an example of compensation strategies that is effective during speaking and writing.

Regarding metacognitive strategies, it was emphasized that most successful learners use this type of strategies (Ansarin, Zohrabi, & Zeynali, 2012; Oxford, 2011). ‘Planning’ is a key strategy in this category which directs the reception and production of language (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990) and they affect language skills in different degrees. Affective strategies, then, are efforts undertaken by the learner

to realize and overwhelm feelings (Bimmel, 1993). Therefore, affective strategies such as reducing anxiety by using music influence emotions and attitudes of the learner. The last group of strategies is social strategies, which facilitate the communication process. For learners, who are in the medium of second language learning, Mohan (2011) emphasizes that these strategies are crucial. So, social strategies such as ‘cooperating with peers’, are critical in making the learning task easier.

### **2.3.6 Factors Influencing Language Learning Strategy Choice**

One of the most extensive domains of research in second language learning deals with the effect of learning factors on language learning strategies. The importance of learning factors or individual differences emerged especially when the provided evidence about successful and unsuccessful learners was inadequate. In this regard, many studies on individual differences have been conducted (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 1994; Gardner, 1988; MacIntyer, Dörnyei, Clement, & Noels, 1998; Oxford & Sherian, 1994; Skehan, 1989). Nevertheless, this field needs more research. All psychological evidence suggests that learners are different regarding their learning outcomes. This variety is perhaps due to individual differences (Mitchell et al, 2013). Some of these factors are innate such as gender, age, language learning aptitude, intelligence, and learning styles while some others can be acquired like language learning strategies, beliefs, and motivation (Benson & Gao, 2008).

Language aptitude is an individual difference, which is sometimes viewed as a gift. It is generally related to the broader concept of intelligence. John Carrol (1981), as a pioneer in this field, regards aptitude as a construct comprises of four constituent abilities, namely phonemic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, inductive language ability, and rote learning ability. Indeed, among other psychological concepts language aptitude is a concept which researchers scrutinize due to its variety from an individual to another one (Dörnyei, 2006). In the study by Sadeghi and Khonabi (2015) who used the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to investigate the relationship between language aptitude and learning strategies. They revealed significant relationship between language aptitude and learning strategies.

Age, as another factor, affects language learning strategies. It is argued that specific strategies are more effective at a certain age compare to other strategies (Oxford, 1990). Similarly, Burling (1981), Krashen (1982), Oyama (1976), and Schmidt (1983) support the idea that younger learners are superior to older learners regarding their use of learning strategies. However, Ehrman and Oxford (1990), Fathman (1975), and Swain (1981) concluded that inferiority of older learners is uncertain and still debatable.

Concerning degree of awareness, Oxford (1990) claimed that more aware learners deploy more strategies when they engage in learning tasks. Regarding the effects of nationality on language learning strategy choice, Griffiths (2003) conducted a study on multinational learners and later she found that western learners use some strategies that are different from those used by eastern learners for the same task. Griffiths's finding is in parallel with Politzer and McGroarty (1985) who revealed that strategies of successful learners are applied less by Asian learners than Hispanic learners.

Learning factors, to all intents and purposes, play a critical role especially when the learners conduct language learning strategies. Therefore, three more individual differences are included, namely motivation, learning style, and gender.

### **2.3.6.1. Motivation**

Motivation is an affective factor, which is considered to have the strongest influence on language learning strategy choice (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). It is a complicated construct comprises of three major components that are “desire to achieve a goal, effort extended in this direction, and satisfaction with the task” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, p. 2).

Some studies on the relationship between motivation and language learning strategies were presented (e.g., Oxford, 1996; Schmidt & Watanabe 2001). Yang (1999) used a questionnaire depending on Horwitz's (1988) Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory, the SILL, and some self-designed questions. It was discovered that high degree of motivation and beliefs will result in a high frequent use of strategies and similarly strategy use increases motivation. In another study which has been carried out by Kirby, Silvestri, Allingham, Parrila, and La Fave (2008) it was found that those students motivated intrinsically applied the higher order of cognitive



strategies to complete learning tasks while students who motivated extrinsically use inefficient cognitive strategies such as rote rehearsal. It has been found that motivation also affects listening strategies. For instance, Oxford, Nyikos, and Crookall (1987), Dörnyei (2001), and Vandergrift (2005) found that high level of motivation leads to frequent use of effective listening strategies and contribute to the learning process and achievement.

### **2.3.6.2. Learning Styles**

The contribution of learning styles in language learning success is unquestionable, especially when this factor is linked to learning strategies (Carell, Prince, & Astika, 1996; Littlemore, 2001). Learning styles are defined as “an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills” (Reid, 1995, p.34). Although learning styles and learning strategies are two interrelated constructs, Ehrman et al. (2003) believe that there should be some differences between them. Therefore, this difference should be made at the level of the degree of awareness, intentionality, and stability (Baily, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, 2000; Brown, 1994; Reid, 1998).

Concerning the influence of learning styles on learning strategies, Elbaum, Berg, and Dodd (1993) emphasize that language learning strategies choice is influenced by learning styles. In addition, Cohen (2003) hypothesized that the analysis of task and learning styles can predict strategy use. In an empirical study conducted by Ehrman and Oxford (1995) who used MBII-G (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) and SILL (Oxford, 1990a) to explore whether there is a relationship between learning styles and language learning strategies. The results revealed that learning styles may significantly influence the choice of language learning strategies. Another key study which was conducted by Littlemore (2001) who investigated 82 Belgian university students to find out the extent to which communication strategies relate to holistic and analytic cognitive styles. The findings suggested that holistic participants used significantly more holistic communication strategies than analytic participants while analytic participants used significantly more analytic communication strategies than holistic participants.

All in all, it is important for learners to be aware of their learning styles and use them in a way that affect their learning strategies positively. As Seker (2015) and

Ehrman et al. (2003) insist on finding learning opportunities depending on learner's learning style preferences.

### **2.3.6.3. Gender**

Even though gender has been identified as an influential variable in learning strategy use (Brown, 2007), there are few studies carried out on the relationship between language learning strategy use and sex (Griffiths, 2003). In a study conducted by Oxford (1995) gender differences exist with the priority of woman in frequent use of strategies. Moreover, Oxford and Ehrman (1989) conducted a study on both students and instructors at the U.S. Foreign Service Institute which led them to the conclusion that females used more frequent and a wider range of strategies than males. Similarly, Chang, Liu, and Lee (2007) investigated 1758 Taiwanese college students and they found that females used more cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies than males. On the contrary, Tran (1988) investigated a group of Vietnamese learners. It was found that male learners used more strategies than females.

In some other studies it was found that both genders used different groups of learning strategies without prioritizing any of them. For example, Merchie et al. (2014) found that girls were more integrated strategy users while boys were identified as users of memory strategies. Regarding the relationship between gender and language learning strategies, Shmais (2003) revealed that there was not a significant relationship between gender and the six categories of the SILL. Finally, although there is not adequate evidence to confirm that females are innately better learners, it is part of female's features to apply planning, revising, and evaluating strategies more frequently than males (Macaro, 2001).

### **2.3.7. Instruction of Language Learning Strategies**

Wenden (1985) brought up an old proverb to our attention who states "give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime". This proverb might apply to language learning strategies in that sense teaching learning strategies will provide a better understanding of learning tasks and as a result leads to high proficiency. What makes instruction of language learning strategies more feasible is that as Oxford (1990) and Takač (2008) explain they are amenable to modification. The general assumption is that teaching strategies will

lessen the gap between successful and unsuccessful learners (Rubin, 1975). Moreover, sometimes learners are not aware of learning strategies and as a result, they do not know how to apply them. Consequently, as Ansarin et al. (2012) explain teacher's training of learners with strategies is critical.

On the other hand, some studies suggest that incorporating learning strategies with other variables such as learning styles will perhaps increase learner's learning efficiency (Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006). Furthermore, there are many empirical studies support the idea of significant role of strategy instruction (e.g., Cohen & Weaver, 1995; Dadour & Robbins, 1996; Ikeda, 2007; Nunan, 1997; Zaki & Ellis, 1999).

In an experimental study, Dörnyei (1995) investigated five students of a secondary school who received six-week learning strategies training. He concluded that the experimental group achieved higher than the control group. Nonetheless, Dörnyei (2005) stated "currently available evidence gives only moderate support, at least, for strategy training" (p. 177). To some extent, the study of O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, and Küpper (1985a) supports Dörnyei's perspective who revealed that there is not significant relationship between strategy instruction and language proficiency. However, to make strategy instruction more effective, McDonough (1999) proposes incorporating the strategies with daily classroom activities.

### **2.3.8. Studies Involving Language Learning Strategy Use**

Researchers have tried to investigate the use of language learning strategies in various contexts. Because as (Oxford, 2011) emphasizes such assessments play a crucial role in advancing teachers' and learners' awareness of effective learning. Therefore, different methods have been used to assess learning strategy use such as interviews, questionnaires, diaries, and tracking language tasks (Macaro, 2001).

For example Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) conducted classroom observation, interviews, questionnaires, and tests to find out strategies used by French learners. As a result, they concluded that observable strategies such as self-correction, student initiated repetition, student questioning, self-initiated responding used by learners while interviews showed learners' intentions to use specific strategies in vocabulary learning. In another pioneering research, O'Malley, Chamot, and Küpper (1989) investigated a group of learners to reveal effective

strategies in listening improvement. It was found that learners use monitoring, elaboration, and inferring strategies to develop their listening skills.

In addition, Fan (2003) carried out a study on college students in Hong Kong to discover the most frequent used strategies among 56 strategies. The results led him to conclude that using bilingual dictionary, guessing from textual context, asking classmates for meaning, verbal repetition, written repetition, and studying the spelling were among the most used strategies. In two different studies by Lee (2007) and Chang et al (2007) who used two different instruments, the former used Listening Productive Strategy while the latter used Strategy Inventory for Language Learning to investigate the frequent use of strategies by Taiwanese learners. Lee concluded that students used problem-solving strategies the most and English-comprehension strategies the least. Unexpectedly, Chang et al. found that learners did not apply strategies as frequently as expected.

In short, frequent use of strategies leads to effective learning which in turn affects learner's achievement and general proficiency. However, one point that should be considered is that using strategies more frequently may lead to unconscious use which then can not be considered as strategies. Rather, they are procedures or procedural skills (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

## **2.4. THE NATURE OF VOCABULARY**

### **2.4.1 Definition of a Word**

Although there is an acceptable view that individual words are stored in mental lexicon (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012), understanding different dimensions of a word is not straightforward (Pearson, Hiebert, & Kamil, 2007). That is, whenever linguistic features of lexical items are a focal issue, several problems arise such as definition of a word (Takač, 2008). Perhaps, as Schmitt (2010) explains this is because researchers defined a word according to their contexts or testing aims. For instance, Daller, Milton, and Treffers-Daller (2007) state that “words are the blank marks you are reading on this page and you know when one ends and another one begins because there are spaces between words” (p.2). Similarly, Carter(1992) defined a word as a construct comprises of letters which are happening in sequence in addition to some other features such as hyphen and apostrophe, space or punctuation bound these letters on each side. These two definitions identify a word

from an orthographic perspective. Therefore, these definitions and perhaps other definitions do not present a thorough picture of a word.

Such notion prompted Read (2000) to claim that “the word is not an easy concept to define, either in theoretical terms or for various applied purposes” (p.17). As a result, some basic points should be considered to clarify these controversial perspectives such as making a distinction between methods of counting vocabulary like tokens, types, word forms, lemmas, and word families.

Tokens and types are two different methods of measuring the number of words in any text and they are particularly used in corpus researches. That is to say, they are used to count words according to context and need. Schmitt (2010) defined tokens as “the number of running words in a text” while types “are the number of different words” (p.188). For instance, in the sentence ‘the cat chased the mouse’, there are five tokens while the number of words according to types is four as the word ‘the’ occurs twice.

Word form is another method of counting. As words in English take different forms while adding inflections and/or derivations, the issue which arises here is whether they should be treated as different words or different forms of the same word. For example, the word ‘realize’ has various forms such as ‘realizer’, ‘realizing’, ‘realized’, and ‘unrealized’. For lexical researchers they are different forms of the same word and their focus is on the content while measuring vocabulary (Read, 2000). Conceivably, learners in general focus on the basic word while they are in the process of acquiring vocabulary and less pay attention to the inflected forms of words except when they are in high frequency (Kuiper, Egmond, Kempen, & Sprenger, 2007).

Lemmas and word families are also important concepts for measuring vocabulary. Francis and Kučera (1982) define lemma as “a set of lexical forms having the same stem and belonging to the same major and class, differing only in inflection and/or spelling” (p.70). Therefore, the base and inflected forms of a word is known as a lemma. As Aitchison (2003) claim that lemmas are the most suitable method in counting vocabulary because psycholinguistically the mind firstly stores the base form of the word and then attaches inflectional suffixes. Word families, on the other hand, are the root form and its inflected and derived forms of a word

(Daller et al., 2007). For example, the verb ‘work’ has other forms such as ‘worker’ which is noun, and ‘workable’ which is an adjective. As a result, all word forms which are semantically related to each other are known as word family. The use of word families, as Schmitt (2010) explains, is more problematic when determining which word forms belong to the family and which ones do not.

To summarize, deciding on a unitary definition of a word and choosing best method of counting perhaps would be more difficult than it is expected. The best conclusion that can be drawn in this regard is that the appropriate method for counting words is somehow depends on the perspective of the researchers and technical resources which are available (Ibid).

#### **2.4.2 Importance of Learning Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is an indispensable building block of language learning (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001; Schmitt, 2008; Zhang & Li, 2011) and it is critical for language learners to improve their language skills, which leads to an effective communication (Amiryousefi, 2015; Zimmerman, 1998). In spite of these facts, vocabulary was ignored and the main focus was on grammar due to the view that learners can get more from grammar than vocabulary (Milton, 2009). But then, this perspective has been downplayed as the sociocultural needs and developments in linguistic area emerged (Richards & Rodgers, 2003). As Wilkins (1972) described vocabulary “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p.111). That is, the widespread area of language teaching research in the present day is vocabulary (Ellis, 2009).

It is worth noting that learners are always seeking the best method for learning vocabulary. That is, learning vocabulary is an incremental and an ongoing process, unlike grammar, which comprises of limited set of rules that can be mastered in a specific time (Crystal, 1987; Hiebert & Kamil, 2005; Schmitt, 2000). This suggests that as Klapper (2008) states “for learners in all contexts, whether wholly independent, semi-independent or interdependent, we should conceive of lexical knowledge as a progressive scale rather than an either/or phenomenon” (p.160).

Researchers propose various techniques to guide learners while they engage in vocabulary tasks. The focal point that should be considered here is that while one

learning method which is workable for a learner may not be effective for another. That is why two major points should be taken for granted, namely the needs of the learner and the usefulness of the vocabulary items (Schmitt, 2010). Similarly, Nation (2001) proposes familiarity with the patterns of a word as a good technique to make learning of vocabulary an easier task. For Krashen (1985) the best way for learning vocabulary is reading textbooks, especially when it is for pleasure. However due to the limited amount of input in the EFL contexts, Laufer (in Webb & Chang, 2012) prefers learning vocabulary with the help of teachers as it leaves the greatest influence on the learning. Waldvogel (2013) proposes learning strategies like word cards as an effective method while encountering lexical items.

Another interesting point is that introduced by Nation (2007) entitled 'conditions for learning vocabulary'. The first condition is motivation, which is one of the most influential factors in vocabulary learning. Another condition is repetition which means the more the learner meets the word, the more the chance of acquiring that word would be. Four strands are also important conditions that are 'meaning-focused input', 'meaning-focused output', 'language-focused learning', and 'fluency development'. Thoughtful processing and meaningful relationships are also significant. While the former refers to paying attention to vocabulary items, retrieving, and producing known items, the latter is about making lists of related items.

To sum up, while learning vocabulary unlike a child who acquires first language, learners cannot improve their vocabulary only through exposure to the language input. They cannot expand their vocabulary only through classroom contexts either (Sokmen, 1997). As a result, using various strategies and methods are the best choices which are at hand for this purpose.

### **2.4.3 Vocabulary Knowledge**

In the last 20 or so years, there has been a general recognition that language proficiency consists of much more than just grammatical competence (Schmitt & Meara, 1997). As a result, vocabulary knowledge was identified as a fundamental aspect in language acquisition. Such notion made Singleton (1999) and other researchers to express their endorsement toward learners who focus on strengthening and expanding their vocabulary knowledge. Researchers presented different

definitions of vocabulary knowledge. Nation (2001) defines it as the quantity of interrelated subknowledges including spoken and written form, morphological knowledge, word meaning knowledge, connotative and associational knowledge, collocational and grammatical knowledge, and the social knowledge.

Regardless of the significant contribution of vocabulary knowledge to overall language success (Schmitt, 2010), it is multifaceted in the sense that it comprises various aspects such as vocabulary breadth and depth (Read, 2000). However, Vermeer (2001) emphasizes that there is no conceptual distinction between size and depth of vocabulary. Vocabulary breadth which is also called vocabulary size is a quantitative term refers to the number of words known by the learner (Marzaban & Hadipour, 2012; Schmitt, 2014; Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008). While Schmitt and Meara (1997) define the quality of vocabulary or vocabulary depth as “how well different word knowledge components are known” (p. 20). Vocabulary size includes components such as form and meaning of a word while depth of vocabulary consists of various aspects such as pronunciation, spelling, register, and frequency.

Like its definition, different frameworks of a word have been proposed by researchers as well. For instance, Richards (1976) suggested a framework which includes some aspects, namely associations, morphosyntactic properties, register, and frequency level. Based on Richards’ framework, Nation (2001) took further steps to propose a more comprehensive construct which in turn presents more aspects of vocabulary knowledge, such as spoken and written form, word parts, form and meaning, concept and referents, associations, collocations, grammatical functions, and register (see Table 2.1).



Table 2.1. What is involved in knowing a word

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelled?
	word parts	R	What parts are recognizable in this word?
		P	What word parts are needed to express this meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concept and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	R	What other words does this make us think of?
	Use	grammatical functions	P
R			In what patterns must we use this word?
Collocations		P	What words or types of words occur with this one?
		R	What words or types of words must we use with this one?
Constraints on use (register, frequency, ...)	P	Where, when and how often would we expect to meet this word?	
	R	Where, when and how often can we use this word?	

(Nation, 2001, p. 27)

Later, Daller et al. (2007) on the basis of Nation's framework presented the notion of *lexical space* (Figure 2.1). In this model learner's vocabulary knowledge is viewed as a three-dimensional space. Each dimension represents an aspect of word knowledge. The vertical axis represents vocabulary depth while the horizontal axis is vocabulary breadth. Fluency is the last axis which indicates learner's automaticity to use known words.

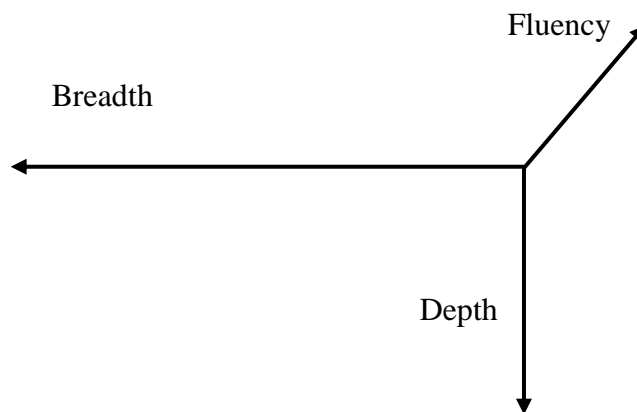


Figure 2.3. The lexical space: Dimensions of word knowledge and ability (Daller, Milton & Treffers-Daller, 2007, p. 8)

If all the above-mentioned components are mastered, then learner can use language efficiently and fluently. Although it is impossible to master all of the aspects even by native speakers, learners can get the control over a limited number of these components (Schmitt & Meara, 1997). That is, vocabulary knowledge is a continuum which ranges from superficial familiarity with the word and ending with the ability to use the word precisely (Faerch, Haastrup, & Phillipson, 1984; Palmberg, 1987).

#### 2.4.3.1. Vocabulary Size

Vocabulary size, which concerns the number of words known by the learner, is one of the primary aspects of vocabulary knowledge with depth of vocabulary. On the importance of vocabulary size, Meara (1996b) points out that the learners with large vocabulary size are more proficient in different language skills than learners with smaller vocabularies which directly contributes to overall second language proficiency. Furthermore, the size of vocabulary guides teachers to select suitable teaching method and leads them to focus on which type of vocabulary needs to be learned (Nation & Webb, 2011; Schmitt, 2010). On the other hand, learner's vocabulary size influences their achievement in language tests (Alderson, 2005).

However, as Beglar (2010) reminds us that acquiring a large vocabulary size is effortful which takes place gradually over many years and this situation is right for both native speakers and foreign language learners. Due to the key role of vocabulary size in almost all language aspects, researchers conducted many studies to find out the amount of vocabulary size, which is needed by the learner to perform in different language skills and tasks. Besides, the number of words known by native speakers

and second language learners is controversial. Some studies have estimated vocabulary size of English-native speaking university graduates to be 20,000 word families (Goulden, Nation, & Read, 1990; D'Anna, Zechmeister, & Hall, 1991).

Due to the fact that there are not ample opportunities like the one of native speakers, second language learners should concentrate on discovering the minimum number of words to deal with learning tasks (Read, 2000). In order for learners to be able to involve in spoken discourse they need to know more than 2,000 word families (Adolphs & Schmitt, 2003). What Adolphs and Schmitt concluded is somehow in contrast to what was previously assumed by Schonell, Medletton, and Shaw (1956) who claimed that 2,000 word families are sufficient to engage in daily conversation. Laufer (1997) proposes that the essential vocabulary size for reading comprehension is about 3,000 word level while Sutarsyah, Nation, and Kennedy (1994) suggest 4,000-5,000 words to be able to comprehend an undergraduate economics textbook. The latter is likely in parallel with what Hirsh and Nation (1992) claim that at least 5,000 words needed to read advanced, authentic, and academic texts.

Later, Nation (2006) expressed his belief that for learners to read an academic text without getting help from dictionaries or other sources they need to know 8,000 word families. Regarding listening comprehension, a study by Van Zeeland and Schmitt (2012) indicate that language users would need to understand 2,000-3,000 word families for adequate listening comprehension.

#### **2.4.3.1.1. Form-Meaning of a Word**

Whenever the aim of the research is to evaluate vocabulary knowledge, it inevitably involves form and meaning and the link between these two components. As it has been claimed that the knowledge of word meaning plays a significant role in word knowledge and a good vocabulary test should measure the meaning as it measures the form of the word (Laufer, Elder, Hill, & Congdon, 2004; Laufer & Goldstein, 2004). In other words, word meaning boosts vocabulary size of the learner (Nacera, 2010, p. 4022). Although the form dimension is frequently disregarded (Schmitt, 2010), at least it has the same effect on the learner as word meaning.

The common assumption is that these two elements, namely form and meaning of a word, should be viewed in the light of the degree of link between them. The justification for this is that if the form of a word is recognized but not its

meaning, the learner will not be able to use the item in communication. Similarly, if a learner knows the meaning of a word without form familiarity, the item can not be produced or recognized.

In the assessment of learner's knowledge of form-meaning, the learners are asked to recognize and recall the appropriate form or meaning. Here, recognition means that the target word is presented and the test-taker should know its meaning. In the case of recall, some stimulus of the target word is presented to assist the learner to provide the appropriate word. In order to know a word, the learner should be able to recognize and recall both form and meaning. As Cameron (2002) points out that knowing a word involves much more than just recognizing it. For the receptive purpose, knowing the form-meaning link perhaps would be enough. That is to say, the form is given in the speech or writing, and the learner should recognize the form then attach the meaning. However this is not sufficient for productive knowledge (Schmitt, 2014).

Each of recall and recognition knowledge comprises of active and passive level. Active recall involves providing word form in which the first letter of the word is given while passive recall means to present L1 equivalent to show that the L2 word is understood. For active recognition, the learner should provide L2 equivalent while passive recognition involves recognizing L2 word which is given and the learner should provide L1 word with the same meaning (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2. Recall and recognition of a word

<b>Word knowledge</b>	<b>Word-knowledge tested</b>	
<i>Given</i>	<i>Recall</i>	<i>Recognition</i>
Meaning	Form recall (Supply the L2 item)	Form recognition (select the L2 item)
Form	Meaning recall (supply definition/L1 translation, etc.)	Meaning recognition (select definition/ L1 translation, etc.)

(Schmitt, 2010, p. 86)

Altogether, Ellis (1997) indicated that meaning is an essential element of learning and developing knowledge of lexical item. Besides, knowledge of the word form is undoubtedly vital in lexical learning which is mostly acquired through exposure.

#### **2.4.3.1.2. Receptive and Productive Vocabulary Size Knowledge**

An area which is received growing interest within the broad field of vocabulary knowledge is the interface between receptive and productive vocabulary (Zhong, 2012). Although on the surface the distinction between these two components seems easy, in the content it is difficult to draw the conclusion. Receptive or passive vocabulary is associated with knowing the meaning of words and storing them in the memory which can be achieved through listening and reading. On the contrary, productive or active vocabulary is about the ability to retrieve the stored words and using them appropriately which can be gained through speaking and writing (Fan, 2000; Laufer & Goldstein, 2004; Tilfarlioglu & Bozgeyik, 2012). Regarding the difference between receptive and productive, researchers presented different results. Melka (1997) concluded that there is a rather small distance between these two components. In contrast, Meara (1990) argues that the difference between receptive and productive exists, but the degree of this difference depends on the word status within the lexical network.

Considering the degree of mastering receptive or productive vocabulary, Mondria and Wiersma (2004) concluded that productive vocabulary is more difficult to expand than receptive vocabulary. Similarly, productive vocabulary decays faster than receptive vocabulary (Waring, 1997). In general, receptive vocabulary occurs first and then follows productive vocabulary with the exception for some lexical items. It is also assumed that receptive knowledge is larger than productive knowledge (Read, 2000; Schmitt, 2010). Cameron (2002), Shintani (2011), and Webb (2009) suggest that to expand both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge, learners need to engage in input-based tasks and output-based tasks.

#### **2.4.4. Assessing Vocabulary**

Testing vocabulary has been an area of interest from the earliest times when foreign languages were studied (Schmitt, 2000). This might be because vocabulary assessment is necessary and feasible (Read, 2000). Generally, vocabulary tests measure either vocabulary size or depth. Examples of such tests are Vocabulary Levels Test (Nation, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2001), Word Associates Test (Read, 1993, 1998), and Productive Levels Test (Laufer & Nation, 1999). Such tests as Webb and Sasao (2013) claim have a significant contribution to both learners and teachers. In

spite of the fact that the issue of assessing either vocabulary size or depth is highly controversial (e.g., Foster & Skehan, 1996; Laufer & Nation, 1999; Meara & Fitzpatrick, 2000; Read & Chapelle, 2001; Singleton, 1999), for the present study vocabulary size has been chosen to be assessed.

#### **2.4.4.1. Vocabulary Size Assessment**

In most cases when just one aspect of vocabulary knowledge is assessed, it is reasonable to test a large number of lexical items which then the results of such tests can provide an overall vocabulary of the learner. Commonly, such tests are known as vocabulary size tests. Examples of vocabulary size tests are Eurocenters Vocabulary Size Test (EVST) (Meara & Buxton, 1987), The Productive Vocabulary Levels Test (PVL) (Laufer & Nation, 1995, 1999), Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007), and Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) (Nation, 1983; Schmitt et al., 2001). Each of these tests has research evidence to indicate its validity (Schmitt, 2010). Beglar and Hunt (1999) emphasize the need for reliable and valid tests of vocabulary size which is the crux matter in second language acquisition.

The purpose of using such tests is to find out how many words a learner has acquired, or to determine how many items a learner or a group of learners need to understand a conversation. Vocabulary size tests also indicate vocabulary growth of learners. Such tests can be used to make mastery decisions or make a better understanding of the effect of the educational reform on vocabulary progress (Beglar, 2010; Schmitt, 2010). Likewise, Laufer (1997) and Laufer et al. (2004) point out that tests of vocabulary size can determine the level of proficiency and admission in language teaching projects because they are directly related to language skills. For the reason of practicality, Vocabulary Levels Test (Schmitt et al., 2001) was used in the present study to gauge the learners' vocabulary size. A common description of the test will be provided in (Data collection instruments, Chapter 3).

## **2.5. STUDIES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND VOCABULARY SIZE**

A huge number of studies have been conducted in the area of second language acquisition. Part of these studies has been related to the role of language learning strategies in vocabulary learning. It was identified that language learners use more strategies in learning vocabulary than in any other linguistic areas. Because learners need strategies when they study words (Hamzah, Kafipour, & Abdullah, 2009; Schmitt, 1997).

In two studies by Ahmad (1989), and Lawson and Hogben (1996) students presented with a range of L2 words to reveal which strategies they use to comprehend the words. In both studies, it was found that good vocabulary learners used larger and various strategies to cope with the words than poor learners. In another study by Gu and Johnson (1996) who used both general proficiency and a vocabulary size measure to find out those strategies used by participants. It was concluded that some of the strategies related to vocabulary retention correlated significantly with vocabulary size but not with general proficiency. Moir and Nation (2002) carried out case studies and they revealed that only one participant developed suitable and sufficient set of strategies for vocabulary learning.

On the other hand, Nacera (2010) conducted a study on 46 college students to reveal whether there is any relation between language learning strategies and vocabulary size. She discovered that students used various strategies especially metacognitive strategies. She also found that students with high vocabulary size used different strategies (e.g., using English in different ways, making summaries, and guessing) from those used by lower vocabulary size. These results are similar to the studies carried out by Waldvogel (2013) and Ansarin et al. (2012) who discovered significant relationship between certain types of learning strategies and vocabulary size among advanced learners but not among beginners and intermediate level students.

In contrast to the above-mentioned results, Kalajahi and Pourshahian (2012) gauged the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size of 125 undergraduate students. Unexpectedly, no relationship was found between psycholinguistic strategy and the vocabulary size. The results of such studies

promoted Fowle (2002) to claim that learners should use various strategies to discover meaning and other related aspects of unknown lexical items.





## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. PRESENTATION**

The primary aim of the current study is to find out the relationship between language learning strategies and vocabulary size. Therefore, the learners' frequency of strategy use will be addressed. Additionally, the difference between learners with high and low vocabulary size will be investigated based on the language learning strategy use. Therefore, this chapter presents information about research design, research population and sampling, instruments, data collection, and data analyses. For further clarification, a variety of tables and figures are provided.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design of the current study is descriptive. Descriptive study unveils the characteristics of a specific group of participants comprehensively (Lambert & Lambert, 2013). Thus, both quantitative and qualitative methods are employed to investigate language learning strategies and vocabulary size of undergraduate students at Sulaimani University. The reason behind using mixed methods is that, as Sandelowski (2003) explains, to get a more comprehensive understanding of a target phenomenon and to prove the findings of one set against the other. Similarly, a single approach is insufficient for the purpose of the current study.

In the quantitative phase, both a questionnaire and a language test were employed. The questionnaire was employed to enquire the use of learning strategies by the learners while the test was used to determine the vocabulary size of the learners. On the other hand, in the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview was administered to provide greater insights into the learning strategies used by the learners.

### 3.3. RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLING

122 Iraqi sophomore, junior, and senior students participated in this study from a student population of 300 undergraduate students in English Department, School of Languages at the University of Sulaimani. In the study, first, cluster sampling was used in selecting participants for both learning strategy questionnaire and vocabulary size test. Then, stratified purposeful sampling was administered in order to select participants for the interview section. Consequently, eight participants, who were part of the sample of the first phase, were recruited according to the scores on the vocabulary levels test (see Table 3.1). That is, four high-proficiency and four low-proficiency participants were chosen. About cluster sampling, Dörnyei (2007) states that “One way of making random sampling more practical...is to randomly select some larger groupings or units of the participants” (p. 98). Regarding stratified purposeful sampling, Mertens (2010) explains that participants are opted according to specific criteria which lead to the classification of subgroups (strata).

Table 3.1. Ranking participants according to their scores in vocabulary levels test (N=8)

Ranking	Participants	Age	Gender	VLT scores (max. score: 120)
1	P1	21	Female	118
2	P2	23	Male	112
3	P3	19	Female	111
4	P4	22	Male	110
5	P5	20	Female	58
6	P6	18	Female	49
7	P7	25	Male	24
8	P8	20	Female	23

Participants' age ranges from 18 to 23 years with the exception of only 6 students who are aged over 23. Figure 3.1 shows the descriptive statistics for the age of participants. In parenthesis, frequencies of the age are given.

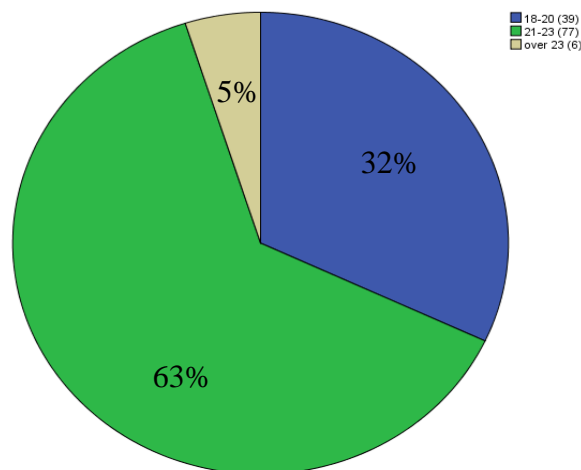


Figure 3.1. Age distribution of the participants

Figure 3.1 illustrates that 32% of the students are aged from 18 to 20, while 63% of the participants are aged from 21 to 23. In addition, 5% of the students are aged over 23.

Considering the gender of the participants, 60 of the students are female while the number of male students is 62. As illustrated in figure 3.2, 51% of the participants are male and 49% are female.

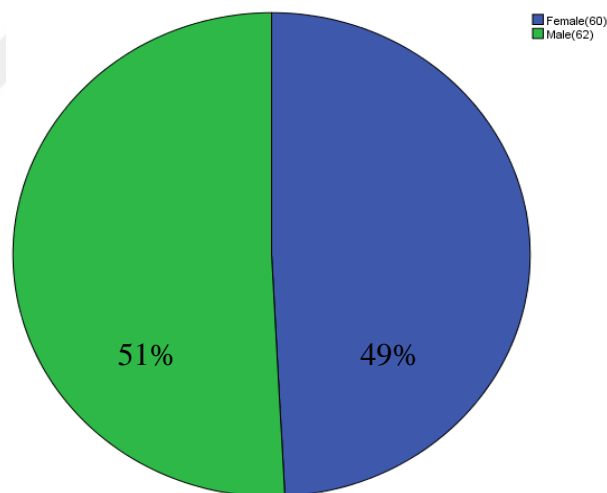


Figure 3.2. Gender distribution of the participants

The schooling background was among the concerns of the study. Both public schools and private schools exist in the setting in which the study was conducted. 109 of the participants graduated from public high schools and 13 of the participants are private high school graduates. Similarly, English background of the participants was taken for granted as well. It was elicited that almost all of the students have studied English from the first year of schooling. The participants also take English lectures 24 hours per week. The main English language and literature subjects are taught such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, essay, academic debate,

morphology, drama, poetry, and novel. The aim of teaching such subjects is to enhance students' comprehension of oral and written English, express opinions and manage communicative tasks, and develop academic skills. English knowledge of the students is assessed through quizzes, homework, papers, presentations, and tests of the terms. The department staff determines language proficiency on the basis of the above-mentioned tasks and tests. Therefore, proficiency level of the students is ranged from beginner to upper intermediate.

### **3.4. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

For the current study, two quantitative instruments and a qualitative instrument were employed. In the first phase of the study, the questionnaire of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (see Appendix A-1) and Vocabulary Levels Test (see Appendix A-2) were used, whereas in the second phase, semi-structured interview was conducted depending on the prepared guidelines (see Appendix A-3). Below is the detailed description of each of the instruments.

#### **3.4.1. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)**

The basic instrument for measuring frequency of the language learning strategy use in this study was the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) which was created by Oxford (1990). It has been used in many studies to investigate second and foreign language learner's use of learning strategies (e.g., Green & Oxford, 1995; Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Park, 1997; Yang, 1999). Likewise, researchers used the questionnaire to assess learning strategies used by the learners with different languages such as German, Chinese, Turkish, Japanese, Russian, and Italian (Oxford, 1990). In addition, the psychometric properties of the questionnaire were taken into account by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) who mention that the instrument has both reliable and valid features.

The SILL has a 50 item version for learners of English as a second or foreign language. It is a self-scoring, paper-and-pencil survey, which includes statements such as 'I read for pleasure' and 'I look for people I can talk to in English', to which students are asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never or almost never true of me) to 5 (always or almost always true of me).

Strategy items that are included in the SILL cannot be viewed uncritically. As Oxford (1990) and Swan (2008) emphasize that there are certain problems in

classifying categories and overlaps between subcategories of the SILL. Gu, Wen, and Wu (1995), likewise, claim that there are ambiguities in some items which may affect the results. To overcome such difficulties, it has been recommended by Dörnyei (2003) that methodological triangulation should be employed.

### **3.4.2. Semi-Structured Interview**

In up-to-date research practice, it is recommended to use multiple instruments to triangulate results in order to make the information more beneficial, which is gained from the primary sources of quantitative approaches such as questionnaires (Denzin, 1997; Dörnyei, 2007; Gao, 2004; Schmitt, 2010). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) also hint that using interviews help the researcher to elicit information that might be failed to gain through questionnaires. Therefore, in this study the most common qualitative instrument, semi-structured interview, was employed (Harklau, 2011). It seems that by employing semi-structured interview, the results will be more practical and the participants will have further insights to express about learning strategies. As Nunan (2000) validates this point by stating that “we can learn a great deal from listening to our learners” (p. 8).

The interview took place with a group of 8 students from high and low proficiency levels as set out in Table 3.1. However the students were free to express additional ideas, semi-structured interview questions were used as a basic instrument during the interview.

### **3.4.3. Vocabulary Levels Test**

The Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) was designed to provide an estimate of written receptive word knowledge (Karami, 2012) for the general or academic English learners of second language (Schmitt et al., 2001). It involves word definition matching exercise. The VLT was originally designed by Nation (1983, 1990) as a diagnostic vocabulary test to be used by English teachers. Later, it has been revised by Schmitt, Schmitt, and Clapham (2001) to include three new forms. It measures learner's knowledge of words from a number of distinctive frequency levels. It has been claimed that the test measures overall vocabulary as well as vocabulary size of the learner (Ibid). Similarly, Meara (1996b) called it as the “nearest thing we have to a standard test in vocabulary” (p.38). It has also been claimed that the test still has the same distinctive feature (Nation, 1983, 1990; Beglar

& Hunt, 1999) especially in the EFL settings where the exposure to English is either rare or nonexistent (Mizumoto & Takeuchi, 2009; Webb & Sasao, 2013).

The test comprises of five sections: 2,000, 3,000, 5,000, 10,000 frequency levels and an academic vocabulary section, respectively. The first four sections were sampled from Thorndike and Lorge (1944), Kučera and Francis (1967), and the General Service List (GSL) (West, 1953), while the academic section was sampled from the University Word List (Xue & Nation, 1984). Schmitt and Schmitt (2012) argue that the high-frequency vocabulary consists of about 3,000 frequency level, the low-frequency vocabulary includes around 9,000 frequency level, and the mid-frequency vocabulary labels between high and low frequency vocabulary.

The VLT comprises of 60 words and 30 definitions at each level, in groups of six words and three definitions or synonyms. Testees are required to match three words to three definitions. Below is an example sampled from the 3,000 word level.

- 1 bench
- 2 charity        1   long seat
- 3 jar              2   help to the poor
- 4 mate            6   part of a country
- 5 mirror
- 6 province

It is worth noting that the test reduces the chances of guessing to one response in six distractors. That is, according to the instruction which is provided with the test if participants have no idea about the meaning of a word, they do not have to guess but if the learners might think that they know the meaning they should try to find the answer and this is what followed in the present study. For scoring the VLT, a correct match of each word is given a score of 1 and, therefore, the highest score is 150 points. Additionally, Webb and Chang (2012) stated that “each point scored on the VLT represents knowledge of 33.3 words” (p.118).

### **3.5. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

This section provides the necessary explanation about piloting procedure, data collection, and data analysis.

#### **3.5.1. Piloting Procedure**

Piloting procedure is necessary to check the reliability and validity of the instruments and to do rearrangements if needed. It is also a great help for the researcher to recognize the ambiguities and pitfalls if existed. Another aim of the current piloting was that to determine the amount of the time required to complete the instruments during the main study. Before carrying out the pilot study, the researcher got permission to apply the questionnaire, the test of vocabulary size, and semi-structured interview. That is, 16 males and 14 females voluntarily participated in the quantitative phase while four students participated in the qualitative phase. The researcher managed the process and the whole process took place within a week. The questionnaires and test sheets were pre-marked with a three-digit number in order to match the two forms to recognize the answers each student gave in each of the two assessment instruments. Moreover, all the participants were assured that the information obtained from this study would be kept confidential, and it is merely used for the purpose of research. Later, the questionnaires were handed out, followed by vocabulary size test in the following day. Then, semi-structured interview was conducted.

After collecting the questionnaires and the test sheets, the data were entered into SPSS 20.0 to administer necessary analyses. The results of the analyses indicated that the questionnaire was reliable with the Cronbach's alpha value of .90. On the other hand, the reliability value for the VLT was .92. These reliabilities, using Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency, shows that both instruments are highly reliable. Another point of view is that the results of the VLT revealed that no one of the participants reached the required score for 10,000 word level, which is the score of 24 or above (Xing & Fulcher, 2007), in order to determine that the level has been acquired. Therefore, for the main study 10,000 word level was excluded. Based on pilot study, the sufficient time to complete the questionnaire was 30 minutes while the needed time for finishing VLT was 35 minutes. On the other hand, after directing

the interview questions, the answers and the feedback indicated that the questions and probes were clear, explicit, and adequate to provide rich responses.

### **5.3.2. Data Collection**

Like piloting procedure, the researcher took necessary permission to conduct the study. As far as possible, the instruments were administered according to the procedures suggested by the designers of the SILL and VLT on the one hand and on the other hand according to the interview guidelines. The instruments were marked with a three-digit number to match the two forms to be recognized during the analysis procedures. The SILL, VLT, and semi-structured interview were conducted in different days within a week. The research purpose was explained and similarly, the participants were assured that their information would be kept confidential, and anonymity was taken into consideration.

Later, the SILL was administered and followed by the VLT. Finally, a semi-structured interview was done with a group of 8 participants who were also participated in the quantitative phase. The students were very willing to participate and they were not rewarded materially in any way for their consent to participate. During the interview, the students were free to speak either in their native language or English in order to decrease the effect of anxiety and hesitation. The interview continued for two hours and thirty minutes. In the middle of the interview, ten minutes were taken as a rest to refresh the interviewees. It is worth mentioning that the instruments were conducted separately from the daily classes to reduce the potential influence of learning and during the interview the researcher ensured that every participant was heard and the discussion was kept on track. Only five questionnaires and test sheets had to be discarded because they were left unfinished. In all, 122 completed questionnaires and VLT papers were collected.

### **3.5.3. Data Analysis Procedures**

Once collected, the data from the SILL questionnaires and VLT were coded into the database of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to be analyzed. In order to determine the reliability of both the questionnaire and VLT, Cronbach's alpha was used. The questionnaire was reliable with .89 while the reliability of the VLT was .92 Descriptive statistics were administered to obtain average reported frequency of strategy use across all students, plus the most and the least use of



subcategory strategies. A Pearson product-moment correlation co-efficient was used to investigate whether there was a statistically significant relationship between high vocabulary size and language learning strategy use. An independent-samples t-test was administered to investigate whether there was a statistically significant difference between the learners with high and low vocabulary size based on the use of language learning strategies.

Lastly, after translating and transcribing the interviews, a deductive analysis was done to analyze the qualitative data. Deductive analysis of the data involves using a previously constructed framework (Patton, 2002). In other words, it is a procedure which begins with a general perspective or theory and moves to the investigation of a particular circumstance in order to confirm or disconfirm the theory (Tracy, 2013).

So, the data were analyzed depending on the Oxford's taxonomy (1990) of LLSs. The themes or categories which were created are memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. That is to say, after scrutinizing transcripts, each transcript was analyzed to identify the reported language learning strategies according to Oxford's taxonomy. The statements of the participants were organized into categories and each category was further categorized into sub-categories such as reviewing well, practicing, and reasoning and so on.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **4.1. PRESENTATION**

This chapter sets out the detailed analyses of the data that were collected through the qualitative and quantitative instruments. The results provide answers for the research questions of the current study.

#### **4.2. DATA ANALYSES**

The data, which were collected via the instruments, were analyzed in two phases. In the first phase, the quantitative data were analyzed through the statistical procedures. Then, in the second phase, the deductive analysis was done to analyze the qualitative data.

##### **4.2.1. Data Analysis of the Quantitative Phase**

###### **4.2.1.1. Reported Frequency of Language Learning Strategy Use**

Before administering the descriptive statistics to obtain results for the first research question, the alpha co-efficient for the reliability of the instrument across all students was calculated, which was .89.

###### **Results for Research Question 1: How frequently do the Iraqi EFL learners reportedly employ language learning strategies (as listed in the SILL)?**

So as to answer this question, descriptive statistics were administered. The average reported frequency of strategy use along with the standard deviations for the SILL statements across all students are illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Average reported frequency of language learning strategies (as is listed in the SILL) with standard deviations (SD)

<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>SILL</b>	<b>Statement (paraphrased for brevity)</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Metacognitive</b>	32	I pay attention to someone speaking English	4.0*	1.1
<b>Metacognitive</b>	33	I try to find how to be a better learner	3.9*	1.1
<b>Metacognitive</b>	31	I use my mistakes to help me do better	3.7*	1.0
<b>Affective</b>	40	I encourage myself to speak even when afraid	3.7*	1.2
<b>Metacognitive</b>	38	I think about my progress in learning English	3.6*	1.0
<b>Affective</b>	39	I try to relax when afraid of using English	3.6*	1.2
<b>Metacognitive</b>	37	I have clear goals for improving my English	3.6*	1.1
<b>Social</b>	45	I ask others to speak slowly or repeat	3.6*	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	11	I try to talk like native speakers	3.5*	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	12	I practise the sounds of English	3.5*	1.1
<b>Cognitive</b>	15	I watch TV or movies in English	3.5*	1.2
<b>Metacognitive</b>	35	I look for people I can talk to in English	3.5*	1.3
<b>Metacognitive</b>	36	I look for opportunities to read in English	3.5*	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	13	I use words I know in different ways	3.4**	1.0
<b>Cognitive</b>	19	I look for similar words in my own language	3.4**	1.2
<b>Compensation</b>	29	If I can't think of a word I use a synonym	3.4**	1.2
<b>Metacognitive</b>	30	I try to find many ways to use English	3.4**	1.1
<b>Metacognitive</b>	34	I plan my schedule to have time to study	3.3**	1.3
<b>Social</b>	49	I ask questions in English	3.3**	1.1
<b>Social</b>	50	I try to learn the culture of English speakers	3.3**	1.1
<b>Memory</b>	9	I use location to remember new words	3.2**	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	10	I say or write new words several times	3.2**	1.1
<b>Cognitive</b>	14	I start conversations in English	3.2**	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	16	I read for pleasure in English	3.2**	1.2

<b>Cognitive</b>	18	I first skim-read then read carefully	3.2**	1.2
<b>Compensation</b>	28	I guess what the other person will say next	3.2**	1.0
<b>Affective</b>	41	I give myself a reward for doing well	3.2**	1.2
<b>Social</b>	46	I ask for correction when I talk	3.2**	1.2
<b>Social</b>	47	I practise English with other students	3.2**	1.2
<b>Memory</b>	2	I use new words in a sentence	3.1**	1.2
<b>Memory</b>	3	I create images of new words	3.1**	1.1
<b>Memory</b>	4	I make mental pictures	3.1**	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	17	I write notes, messages, letters, reports	3.1**	1.1
<b>Affective</b>	42	I notice if I am tense or nervous	3.1**	1.2
<b>Social</b>	48	I ask for help from English speakers	3.1**	1.2
<b>Memory</b>	8	I review English lessons often	3.0**	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	22	I try not to translate word for word	3.0**	1.2
<b>Compensation</b>	25	When I can't think of a word I use gestures	3.0**	1.2
<b>Memory</b>	1	I think of relationships	2.9**	1.0
<b>Cognitive</b>	23	I make summaries	2.9**	1.2
<b>Compensation</b>	26	I make up words if I don't know the right ones	2.9**	1.2
<b>Affective</b>	44	I talk to someone else about how I feel	2.9**	1.3
<b>Memory</b>	7	I physically act out new words	2.8**	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	21	I divide words into parts I understand	2.8**	1.1
<b>Compensation</b>	24	I guess the meaning of unfamiliar words	2.8**	1.2
<b>Compensation</b>	27	I read without looking up every new word	2.8**	1.2
<b>Cognitive</b>	20	I try to find patterns in English	2.7**	1.2
<b>Memory</b>	5	I use rhymes to remember new words	2.6**	1.2
<b>Affective</b>	43	I write my feelings in a diary	2.6**	1.3
<b>Memory</b>	6	I use flashcards to remember new words	2.5**	1.4
<b>Overall average reported frequency of strategy use</b>			<b>3.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>

*Note.* \* = high frequent use of LLS      \*\* = moderate use of LLS

The participants of the current study (N=122) reported an average frequency of strategy use overall SILL items of 3.2, ranging from 2.5 to 4.0. According to Oxford (1990), the average of 3.5 or above is regarded as a high frequent use of the

strategies. Therefore, in this study thirteen strategies were reported highly frequently. Among these strategies, the strategy 'I pay attention when someone is speaking English' (Item 32) was the most frequently used strategy with an average of 4.0. On the contrary, the strategy 'I use flashcards to remember new English words' (Item 6) was the least frequently used strategy with an average of 2.5.

The results also indicated that the use of the strategies by overall students stays within the scope of high frequency (3.5-5.0) and moderate use (2.5-3.4). So, according to the results, there was not low frequent use of any of the strategies (1.0-2.4). In addition, the overall average reported frequency of strategy use was 3.2 as it is illustrated in the bottom of the table.

#### **4.2.1.2. Reported Major Sub-category Strategy Use according to the Vocabulary Size Level**

The alpha co-efficient for the reliability of the second instrument, namely Vocabulary Levels Test across all students (N=122) was .92. After scoring the responses which were given by each student in each level, the students' responses were divided into the learners with high vocabulary size and learners with low vocabulary size. The score of 24 or above in each level was considered as high vocabulary size and lower than 24 points was considered as low vocabulary size as defined by Schmitt (2003) and employed by Xing and Fulcher (2007). Therefore, in the present study, only eleven students obtained at least 24 correct answers in each of the four levels and the rest of the students (n=111) were not able to reach at least 24 points for each level. However, some of these students gained 24 correct points in a level or more, but not in all the levels.

So, the average vocabulary test score for the students with high vocabulary size was 107.54 out of 130 possible points, with a range of 99 to 118. The participants with low vocabulary size obtained the average score of 65.92, with a range of 13 to 107. The average vocabulary test score across all students was 69.67 as is illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Descriptive statistics of the vocabulary levels test results

VS Level	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
<b>High VS</b>	11	107.54	5.46	99	118
<b>Low VS</b>	111	65.92	23.06	13	107
<b>Total</b>	122	69.67	25.09	13	118

*Note.* VS= vocabulary size

**Results for Research Question 2: Which sub-category strategy is most frequently used by Iraqi EFL learners with high and low vocabulary size?**

One way of assessing language learning strategy use is to examine sub-category strategies that were employed by the learners. So, to answer the current question, descriptive statistics were performed (see Table 4.3) in order to find out the frequency of the sub-category strategies used by the learners with high and low vocabulary size.

Table 4.3. Average reported frequency of sub-category strategies with standard deviations

Sub-categories	High VS		Low VS		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Memory</b>	3.47	0.56	2.86	0.25	3.16	0.43
<b>Cognitive</b>	4.11	0.45	3.08	0.28	3.59	0.72
<b>Compensation</b>	3.41	0.56	2.98	0.23	3.19	0.30
<b>Metacognitive</b>	4.66*	0.25	3.50*	0.24	4.08*	0.82
<b>Affective</b>	4.05	0.51	3.11	0.40	3.58	0.66
<b>Social</b>	4.30	0.49	3.19	0.20	3.74	0.78

*Note.* \* = most frequent use of sub-category strategy

The learners with high vocabulary size reported using metacognitive strategies with an average of 4.66 which was the highest frequent use for this group of learners while learners with low vocabulary size reported using metacognitive strategies with an average of 3.5 which was also the highest level of frequency for the learners with low vocabulary size.

Additionally, the students with high vocabulary size reported using social strategies with an average of 4.30, cognitive strategies 4.11, affective strategies 4.05, memory strategies 3.47, and compensation strategies 3.41. Likewise, it was revealed that the students with low vocabulary size reported using social strategies with an

average of 3.19, affective strategies 3.11, cognitive strategies 3.08, compensation strategies 2.98, and memory strategies 2.86. The overall average reported frequency of sub-category strategy use for the students with high and low vocabulary size is also illustrated in (Table 4.3).

**Results for Research Question 3: Is there any statistically significant relationship between language learning strategy use and high vocabulary size?**

As previously mentioned, only 11 students were able to acquire all four levels in the Vocabulary Levels Test (24 points or above in each level). The scores of the learners with large vocabulary size and their use of the language learning strategies are shown in (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. VLT Scores and LLS use for the learners with high vocabulary size

Vocabulary Size	Language Learning Strategies
118*	4.28**
112	4.26
111	4.14
110	4.10
109	4.08
108	4.04
107	4.00
105	3.96
104	3.84
100	3.80
99	3.78

*Note.* \* = highest score in VLT      \*\* = most frequent use of LLSs

So, in order to find out whether there is a significant relationship between language learning strategy use and high vocabulary size, Pearson product-moment correlation co-efficient was computed.

Table 4.5. Relationship between language learning strategies and high vocabulary size

	LLS	High VS
<b>LLS Pearson Correlation</b>	1	.964**
<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>		.000
<b>N</b>	11	11
<b>VS Pearson Correlation</b>	.964**	1
<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.000	
<b>N</b>	11	11

Note. \*\* =  $p \leq .01$ .

The results, as illustrated in (Table 4.5), indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between reported frequency of language learning strategy use and high vocabulary size ( $r=.96$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=11$ ). That is, high frequent use of language learning strategies associates with high vocabulary size. In other words, when the learners deploy the learning strategies frequently, the vocabulary size of the learners enlarges.

#### **Results for research question 4: Is there any statistically significant difference between Iraqi EFL learners with high and low vocabulary size based on their use of language learning strategies?**

Lazaraton (2005) states that “comparing various groups of people is the most common statistical procedure in applied linguistic research” (p.215). So, the current research question seeks out whether there is any significant difference in reported frequency of language learning strategy use between learners with high and low vocabulary size. To answer this question, an independent-samples t-test was used. That is, an independent-samples t-test was performed to compare the use of language learning strategies in high and low vocabulary size conditions (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6. *t*-test results comparing learners with high and low vocabulary size on language learning strategy use

	VS	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
LLS	High	11	4.03	.17	13.81	24.87	.000
	Low	111	3.12	.42			

The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $t=13.81$ ,  $df=24.87$ ,  $p<.05$ ). In other words, there was a significant difference in scores for learners with high vocabulary size ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD=$



.17) and learners with low vocabulary size ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = .42$ ),  $t(24.87) = 13.81$ ,  $p < .05$ , and the magnitude of the difference in the means was moderate (eta squared = .6). It was worth noting that the Levene's test was significant with a ( $p$ ) value of .01, which means the variances were not equal. So, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met, and therefore the data results associated with the "Equal variances not assumed" row (the bottom row) were considered which takes into account the Cochran and Cox (1957) adjustment for the standard error of the estimate and the Satterthwaite (1946) adjustment for the degrees of freedom. To put it simply, the Levene's test showed the significant difference- i.e. it was smaller than .05, so the results in the bottom row were considered.

These results suggest that vocabulary size does have an effect on the use of language learning strategies. Specifically, the results suggest that when the learners have large size of vocabulary, they use language learning strategies more frequently.

In addition, the descriptive statistics indicated that the learners with high vocabulary size employed language learning strategies more frequently (average=4.0) than the learners with low vocabulary size (average=3.1) except (Items 5 and 27), and (Items 9 and 10) were reportedly used with the same frequency for both groups (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Average reported frequency of language learning strategy use for the learners with high and low vocabulary size

Sub-group	SILL	Statement (paraphrased for brevity)	HVS	LVS
Memory	1	I think of relationships	3.5*	2.8
Memory	2	I use new words in a sentence	4.0*	3.0
Memory	3	I create images of new words	3.5*	3.0
Memory	4	I make mental pictures	4.0*	3.0
Memory	5	I use rhymes to remember new words	2.3	2.5**
Memory	6	I use flashcards to remember new words	2.9	2.4
Memory	7	I physically act out new words	3.8*	2.7
Memory	8	I review English lessons often	3.8*	2.9
Memory	9	I use location to remember new words	3.1	3.1
Cognitive	10	I say or write new words several times	3.1	3.1
Cognitive	11	I try to talk like native speakers	4.5*	3.4
Cognitive	12	I practise the sounds of English	4.5*	3.3

<b>Cognitive</b>	13	I use words I know in different ways	4.1*	3.3
<b>Cognitive</b>	14	I start conversations in English	4.7*	3.0
<b>Cognitive</b>	15	I watch TV or movies in English	4.6*	3.3
<b>Cognitive</b>	16	I read for pleasure in English	4.5*	3.0
<b>Cognitive</b>	17	I write notes, messages, letters, reports	3.9*	3.0
<b>Cognitive</b>	18	I skim read then read carefully	4.0*	3.1
<b>Cognitive</b>	19	I look for similar words in my own language	3.7*	3.3
<b>Cognitive</b>	20	I try to find patterns in English	4.0*	2.5
<b>Cognitive</b>	21	I divide words into parts I understand	4.0*	2.6
<b>Cognitive</b>	22	I try not to translate word for word	3.5*	2.9
<b>Cognitive</b>	23	I make summaries	4.0*	2.7
<b>Compensation</b>	24	I guess the meaning of unfamiliar words	3.1	2.7
<b>Compensation</b>	25	When I can't think of a word I use gestures	4.0*	2.9
<b>Compensation</b>	26	I make up words if I don't know the right ones	2.9	2.8
<b>Compensation</b>	27	I read without looking up every new word	2.7	2.8**
<b>Compensation</b>	28	I guess what the other person will say next	3.5*	3.1
<b>Compensation</b>	29	If I can't think of a word I use a synonym	4.0*	3.3
<b>Metacognitive</b>	30	I try to find many ways to use English	4.7*	3.2
<b>Metacognitive</b>	31	I use my mistakes to help me do better	5.0*	3.5*
<b>Metacognitive</b>	32	I pay attention to someone speaking English	5.0*	3.9*
<b>Metacognitive</b>	33	I try to find how to be a better learner	4.6*	3.8*
<b>Metacognitive</b>	34	I plan my schedule to have time to study	4.1*	3.1
<b>Metacognitive</b>	35	I look for people I can talk to in English	4.4*	3.3
<b>Metacognitive</b>	36	I look for opportunities to read in English	4.6*	3.4
<b>Metacognitive</b>	37	I have clear goals for improving my English	4.6*	3.5*
<b>Metacognitive</b>	38	I think about my progress in learning English	4.6*	3.5*
<b>Affective</b>	39	I try to relax when afraid of using English	4.7*	3.5*
<b>Affective</b>	40	I encourage myself to speak even when afraid	4.5*	3.5*
<b>Affective</b>	41	I give myself a reward for doing well	4.0*	3.1
<b>Affective</b>	42	I notice if I am tense or nervous	3.5*	3.0
<b>Affective</b>	43	I write my feelings in a diary	4.0*	2.5

<b>Affective</b>	44	I talk to someone else about how I feel	3.4	2.8
<b>Social</b>	45	I ask others to speak slowly or repeat	4.4*	3.5*
<b>Social</b>	46	I ask for correction when I talk	4.4*	3.0
<b>Social</b>	47	I practise English with other students	4.8*	3.0
<b>Social</b>	48	I ask for help from English speakers	4.0*	3.0
<b>Social</b>	49	I ask questions in English	4.6*	3.2
<b>Social</b>	50	I try to learn the culture of English speakers	3.4	3.3
<b>Overall average reported frequency of strategy use</b>			<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.1</b>
<b>Number of strategies used highly frequently</b>			<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>

*Note.* \* = high frequent use of LLS      \*\* = higher use of LLS by LVS than HVS

The results also revealed that there was a major difference in means for the learners with high and low vocabulary size. For instance, for (item 8) the difference in mean score was 1.1 while for (item 30) the difference was 1.5. In addition, the strategies that directly relate to vocabulary such as (items 2, 3, 13, 19, 21, 29) were used highly frequently by the learners with large vocabulary size which advocates the idea that vocabulary is a critical element to language improvement.

It is also worth mentioning that the learners with high vocabulary size reported the use of each of the items: 31 'I use my mistakes to help me do better' and 32 'I pay attention to someone speaking English' with an average of 5. This finding reveals that the more proficient learners take advantage from their mistakes while involving in learning tasks in order not to repeat such mistakes which in turn supports the view that what the learners learn from their mistakes, cannot be learnt from others. Similarly, this group of the learners pays special attention to the speeches of others, especially native speakers because for these learners the actions such as imitation play a crucial role to enhance English language capacity and it is a prerequisite for being a native-like speaker.

There were only two strategies (items 5 and 27), which were used more frequently by the learners with low vocabulary size. This may possibly be due to what Vann and Abraham (1990) mention: the unsuccessful learners deploy the strategies unsophisticatedly and with less effort comparing to successful learners.

#### **4.2.2. Data Analysis of the Qualitative Phase**

After analyzing quantitative data, deductive analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data, which was gathered through administering semi-structured interview. The data were analyzed based on Oxford's classification of LLSs in order to determine which types of strategies the participants use while learning English.

The Oxford's classification of LLSs contains three levels. At the first level, LLSs are classified into direct and indirect strategies. Then, each of these two broad categories is divided into smaller sub-categories. Direct strategies are subdivided into memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies are subdivided into metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Next, each of these sub-categories is classified into more manageable and specific groups (e.g., using imagery, grouping, using keywords). During the analysis, quotations from participants' speech were provided to support the findings. It is worth mentioning that for the sake of confidentiality, the letter (p) was used with numbers to represent the participants' names during reporting the data.

##### **4.2.2.1. Direct Strategies**

Those strategies that involve the target language directly are called direct strategies (Oxford, 1990).

##### **4.2.2.1.1. Memory Strategies**

During the interview, five participants (P4, P1, P5, P7, P8) reported using memory strategies. The participants make mental linkages to remember information. For example, P4 arranges words or concepts and makes a relation between them as he explained this by stating that:

“Whenever I face difficulties of memorizing new words, I will link the keyword with other words which relate to the keyword”.

He also mentioned that the use of keywords is another strategy he conducts to memorize and remember vocabularies. Such strategies are fundamental, especially during writing and speaking. P1, on the other hand, addressed the use of visual imagery to link the new information with the previously memorized one:

“By employing imagery in a way that I imagine the new information and visualizing it in my mind, I can remember such information better”.

She also mentioned that the visual imagery is more effective when accompanied by revision in a proper manner. For P5, memorizing information is more practical if the words or topics are divided into meaningful or related units or groups. So, she primarily follows such strategy as she stated:

“For me, dividing topics into groups is very useful such as words and expressions related to sport, weather, and holidays”.

P7 employs the strategy of association when he memorizes a piece of information. He mentioned that:

“I usually make association between words in an alphabetical order. For example, when I want to memorize a word like ‘nightingale’, I link it to the word ‘night’ to make the process easier”.

Using new words in a context is a strategy applied by P8 to retrieve the knowledge, as she explained:

“I use new words, phrases, and expressions by putting them in a sentence or using them in my speech while I am conversing with peers or other people”.

Memory strategies are crucial because by conducting them the new information can be transferred into a long-term memory. However, during the interview there was no evidence for the use of some memory strategies, namely ‘representing sounds in memory’, ‘physical response or sensation’, and ‘using mechanical techniques’.

#### **4.2.2.1.2. Cognitive Strategies**

Regarding cognitive strategies, six participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, P8) addressed the use of some of the strategies. P2 mentioned that he uses repetition as an effective strategy to learn new information and I would quote him stating that:

“I always repeat new words many times either orally or graphically because I am sure this helps me to learn new information and use it without mental thinking”.

Additionally, he talked about the use of making summary whenever he does not have enough time to study. Similarly, P7 mentioned that by using the strategy of skimming he can learn new information without allocating a lot of time to the learning task. Furthermore, he showed his eagerness to learn new material through practicing. He put it into words by stating that:

“I always look for chances to practice my language such as during lecture, writing essays or communicating with peers”.

When asked about the best way to learn new information, P1 talked about analyzing and breaking down the expressions and phrases into smaller units to understand the meaning of the whole expression or concept. P1 and P3 also emphasized on the use of highlighting the important parts while reading, and writing down notes when she listens or reads. P8 revealed that she relies too much on translating from native language to English

“When I want to practice my English, I try to translate the words and expressions that I want to utter, and this is not a good thing”.

Such strategy indicates the difficulties of learning English for P8 because she mentally works on two process; on one hand, she tries to understand the input and on the other hand, she wants to express her ideas. P4 conveyed his impression to the use of formulas and patterns such as idioms and collocations to make his language be more natural:

“However, in my context English learners do not pay much attention to the idioms and collocations, I try to memorize a large range of such expressions and use them frequently”.

Considering other cognitive strategies, namely ‘formally practicing with sound and writing system’, ‘recombining’, ‘using resources for receiving and sending messages’, ‘reasoning deductively’, ‘analyzing contrastively’, and ‘transferring’, there was no evidence for the use of such strategies. Perhaps, this is because of the fact that the learners face the difficulties of finding the right way to apply them as P1 explained:

“Regarding some of the strategies, we need the help from the experts and trainers to guide us about the best way and the good time of conducting them”.

Such a grave point indicates the need of strategy training to direct the learners about how to employ the strategies to learn easily and efficiently.

#### 4.2.2.1.3. Compensation Strategies

Considering compensation strategies, four students (P1, P3, P6, P8) reported the use of such strategies. One of the strategies reported by the learners is choosing the topic of conversation. In this regard, P8 explained the importance of conducting such strategy in order to direct the conversation in one's own interest. P8 confirms this by saying that:

“Whenever I involve in conversation with friends and other people, I will try to direct the discussion in a way that I have sufficient knowledge about the topic, especially regarding vocabulary and grammar”.

Similarly, P6 explained that she uses synonyms when she does not know the exact word during involving in learning tasks. Using synonyms and circumlocutions while engaging in learning tasks, is important to help the learner to continue in practicing language without distraction.

For P1, making up new words during speaking and writing to keep herself in the process of learning is very effective. She demonstrated that she coins new words to express her ideas about the topic which is in hand. She also revealed that she uses gestures or memes to express the meaning, especially when she is unable to express the meaning by words as she said:

“I will act out what I cannot say to manage the learning task”.

In addition, P1 employs the strategy of seeking for clues during reading and listening. She showed her desire to guess from the context or situation. Such strategy is vital, especially for adult learners when they do not have sufficient vocabulary. Finally, P3 like P1 emphasized the use of clues by saying that:

“Because for several years I have lived in France, I always seek for similar words between English and French, specifically when I do not know the meaning of English words...this strategy helped me many times”.

P3 also reported the use of switching from the target language to the mother tongue to compensate for the lack of knowledge without feeling embarrassed.

The four participants rejected to avoid the communication either partially or totally and emphasized on taking part in the conversations because it is the good opportunity to practice their language. However, most of the participants were in

agreement that the learners should heavily depend on themselves; P2 explained that he asks for help during engaging in hard tasks. As O'Malley et al. (1985a & b) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) validate this point by the fact that if the learners get help, they will improve at least in some aspects of their language learning.

#### **4.2.2.2. Indirect Strategies**

Indirect strategies involve the target language indirectly through supporting and managing the language learning (Oxford, 1990). The analysis of the data revealed that the participants used indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social) predominantly over the use of direct strategies (memory, cognitive, and social).

##### **4.2.2.2.1. Metacognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive strategies help learners to regulate language learning through planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning process. All of the participants addressed the use of metacognitive strategies. For example, P2 reported the employment of two types of strategies, namely specifying goals and objectives and evaluating the learning progress. He said:

“After selecting the linguistic skill like vocabulary or pronunciation, I will select the aims and objectives to reach the goal I have already planned for”.

He further explained this by saying that he restricts himself to the goals to keep his learning on track and later evaluating his progress by making comparison between his previous language knowledge and recent capacity. P5 described her learning in the way that she restricts herself to focus on one of the language skills rather than others for a specific time like working on writing or reading.

Regarding the strategy of making a link between what has already been learnt and what is supposed to be learnt, P3 mentioned this and she said that she connects the task which is in hand with the previous information because as she said:

“I can learn the new material and remember previous information”.

It seems that by conducting such strategy P3 conducts both metacognitive and memory strategies. Likewise, P4 uses such strategy and he added that he also monitors his learning to diagnose the pitfalls and errors in order to adjust them.



Both organizing and concentrating on the learning task are prior strategies for P1. She said:

“I organize and schedule the learning task in a way that keeps my mind to focus on the activity and avoid any distractions”.

She said that she organizes the procedure according to the priorities. P8 described how she encourages herself to improve her English skills. She said that she uses various tools to enhance her knowledge such as watching movies, listening to podcasts, attending conferences, and reading for pleasure.

Moreover, P6 accentuates the focal role of conducting the strategy of planning. She illustrated that she identifies the learning task and then she determines the requirements of involving in the task and takes advantage from anything that makes the learning easier. Similarly, P7 confirmed the role of planning in learning English and he also talked about the way of practicing what he has achieved:

“I am used to stand in front of the mirror and talk to myself in English. Besides, I always seek for the opportunities to practice my English language”.

#### **4.2.2.2.2. Affective Strategies**

During the interview, all of the participants showed their desire and positive attitude toward affective strategies and they ensured that they use such strategies. P2 mentioned that he always speaks with himself to facilitate the learning task:

“In my mind I create a picture that I can learn even if the task is difficult”.

P3 described that she plays music whenever she is under pressure or feels anxious during learning. P4 demonstrated how he encourages himself by listening to music and doing pray to feel relaxed.

Both P5 and P7 feel frustration while studying for exams. Furthermore, they hesitate when they want to take part in practicing English. They corroborated their feelings of frustration and hesitation by attempting to decrease such feelings through watching funny movies and reading jokes. P7 said:

“After feeling frustration, I immediately listen to jokes and start laughing to turn to a good mood”.

For P8, P6, and P1, the affective strategies are significant. P1 said that because she has a high degree of motivation, she participates in different discussions without feeling shy. P8, on the other hand, preferred to discuss her feelings with close friends to help her to decrease negative feelings. P6 enjoys rewarding herself or taking valuable rewards from others, especially when she did a good performance in a particular task. Among affective strategies, there was no evidence for the use of two strategies, viz. ‘listening to your body’ and ‘using a checklist’.

#### **4.2.2.2.3. Social Strategies**

Six of the participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6) indicated the urgency of using social strategies. For instance, P6 and P2 pronounced the use of asking for clarification while they did not understand what the speaker said. P6 said:

“When I misunderstood or did not understand what the interlocutor said, I ask him/her to provide an example, particularly during lectures”.

P1 and P2 also conduct the strategy of cooperating with experts and English native speakers, especially through using social media as P1 clarified it:

“I allocate half an hour every night to practice my English with native speakers through Facebook and Skype”.

By using social media, the learners can be aware of people’s attitude and it is a good chance to improve vocabulary and daily expressions. P3 shows his desire to imitate native speakers to learn more about English language.

P4 explained that he enjoys being corrected by others while involving in the target language:

“I feel comfortable when my mistakes are corrected by teachers or people around”.

He assured that by correcting his mistakes, he will learn more. Finally, P5 expressed his willingness to cooperate with peers regarding different activities such as writing essays or preparing presentations. The only social strategy which was not addressed by the learners was ‘developing cultural understanding’. This might be due to the difficulty of reaching the culture of other people.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSIONS**

#### **5.1. PRESENTATION**

This chapter presents the findings of the current study and compares them with the findings of other researchers. The discussion and findings together provide answers for the research questions with implications for the learning and pedagogical situation.

#### **5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LEARNING AND PEDAGOGICAL SITUATION**

##### **5.2.1. Reported Frequency of Language Learning Strategy Use (as listed in the SILL)**

While researching language learning strategies, it inevitably involves examining the frequency of language learning strategy use. The findings indicated that the learners of this study employed thirteen strategies highly frequently. Although the most frequent strategies emerged from four different sub-categories, most of the metacognitive strategies were among the most frequent used strategies (seven strategies out of nine). Such results have some elements in common with the results of Griffiths (2003) and Green and Oxford (1995) as the latter explain that such strategies “contribute significantly to the learning process of the more successful students although not being in themselves sufficient to move the less successful students to higher proficiency levels” (p. 289). Use of the metacognitive strategy ‘I pay attention to someone speaking English’ with the highest frequency is an interesting finding as it shows that the students listen to English speakers eagerly and accurately in order to improve listening skill and as a result to decode the meaning of words. This finding supports Gu’s (2010) view who claims that

“learning strategies matter most for those words learner pay special attention” (p. 115).

However, as Nation (2001, 2008) mentions that using flashcards is an effective strategy which helps with current and future word learning, in this study this strategy was the least frequent used strategy across overall students. One explanation that can be suggested in this regard is that such strategy is perhaps effective for beginners or learners with small vocabulary size. The other side of the coin is that the learners may not be aware of the importance of the strategy. The pedagogical implication in this perspective is probably that teachers need to identify the students who are unaware of this strategy or have small vocabulary size and encourage them to conduct such strategy.

The results also indicated that the engagement in practicing English sounds is essential for the learners. This finding suggests that even when a learner has a large vocabulary size but bad pronunciation, people may not figure out what s/he means. So, while English students conduct LLSs with regard to particular task, they should take this strategy into consideration because pronunciation plays a central role in enhancing language skills, especially speaking and listening.

Due to the lack of adequate opportunities for practicing English, as it is the case with every context in which English is learnt as a foreign language, one of the primary aims of English learners is to seek for chances to rehearse their knowledge. That is why the learners in the current study and probably in all foreign contexts look for opportunities to involve in English language tasks. In this regard, teachers can apply ‘student-centered learning method’ which may be highly effective. The teachers can encourage students to involve in daily activities such as conversing about daily topics. Because the traditional role is not effective anymore which the teacher knows the right answer and the learner should absorb it. Such notion supports the theory of self-regulation as Dörnyei (2005) explains that learning tasks are clearly in the hands of the learners, and McLaughlin (1978) suggests that in this way the learners can play active role in their learning.

However the findings demonstrated that the learners employ various strategies with high frequency, somewhat surprisingly each of the memory and compensation strategies were out of this scope. This is probably one of the reasons

that only eleven students had high vocabulary size. The best way to use the LLSs is that to make learners be aware of the various strategies because as Green and Oxford (1995) explain the power of strategies which “derives from all its pieces and the way they are combined” (p. 292).

### **5.2.2. Reported Major Sub-category Strategy Use According to the Vocabulary Size Level**

Regarding the frequency of the sub-category strategy use by the learners with high and low vocabulary size, the results demonstrated that the students of both levels used the metacognitive sub-category strategies more frequently than other sub-groups. It was also not surprising to see that the learners with large vocabulary size deployed metacognitive strategies far more frequently than learners with small vocabulary size. Additionally, the learners with high vocabulary size conducted the strategies of four sub-categories, namely metacognitive, social, cognitive, and affective strategies highly frequently while learners with low vocabulary size reported the use of only metacognitive strategies with high frequency.

Such results provide answers for some questions that could arise such as why most of the students in this research had small vocabulary size. Perhaps, because the learners rely heavily on metacognitive strategies and somehow neglect other groups of strategies. That is, the learners should consider various strategies and more notably metacognitive strategies as Cohen (2011) stated “good learners use a variety of strategies to accomplish what they accomplish, especially metacognitive ones” (p. 683). Moreover, the learners with large vocabulary size surprisingly reported the use of each of memory and compensation strategies moderately. The pedagogical implication that can be drawn in this regard is probably that teachers need to raise the awareness of the learners regarding the importance of the memory and compensation strategies. However, the question of how teachers encourage their students to be more aware about LLSs is still arguable (Brown, 2001).

### **5.2.3. The Relationship between Language Learning Strategies and High Vocabulary Size**

The results indicated that there was a strong positive correlation between language learning strategies and high vocabulary size. This finding is in agreement with many studies in both ESL and EFL contexts (e.g., Green & Oxford, 1995; Gu &

Johnson, 1996; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). This finding supports the view that more proficient learners conduct the strategies more frequently. That is, the use of LLSs frequently is fundamental in improving vocabulary size knowledge.

On the other hand, quite surprisingly, none of the learners had the sufficient knowledge of 10,000 word families. Regarding vocabulary size, this finding can be considered pivotal and hence pedagogical issue emerges. While both teacher and students engage in vocabulary tasks, the teacher needs to dedicate most of the time working on the technical vocabulary. The importance of this type of vocabulary emerges from what Hazenberg and Hulstijn (1996) found and emphasized on that learners should acquire the vocabulary of this magnitude to encounter the challenges of university study in a second language.

#### **5.2.4. The Difference between the Learners with High Vocabulary Size and Low Vocabulary Size Based on the Language Learning Strategy Use**

Based on the LLS use, the results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the learners with high vocabulary size and low vocabulary size. Additionally, the effect size was strong which provides enough support to justify for further explanation of the difference. As was supposed, the learners with large vocabulary size reported higher frequent use of various strategies than learners with small vocabulary size. This finding supports the previous findings (e.g., Abraham & Vann, 1987; Chamot & O'Malley, 1996; Nunan, 1991) and also advocates the notion suggested by Bandura (1997) and Zimmerman and Pons (1987) that students who deploy LLSs frequently receive a high level of self-efficacy, which is a strong prediction of being an effective learner.

The results also revealed that both groups of the learners used part of the strategies with high frequency. For instance, the learners with large vocabulary size reported the high use of the strategy of identifying the mistakes and using them to expand their knowledge. This also has an important pedagogical implication that teacher can help students to identify and be aware of their mistakes and both, teacher and students, work on them to cope with learning task difficulties, and this is commonly known as 'washback effect'.

It is worth mentioning that the learners who had small vocabulary size reported the use of two strategies 'I use rhymes to remember new words' and 'I read

without looking up every new word' with higher frequency than the learners with large vocabulary size. However the difference in the means can be regarded as minor, this finding has great importance because it confirms Dörnyei's (2005) view who emphasizes that the quality rather than the quantity is indeed important in second language learning. So, it undoubtedly makes a big difference if the learners are motivated to employ the learning strategies according to the tasks, which results in the frequent use of a large number of strategies and finally as Rubin (1975) mentions "enhance their success record" (p. 42).

Two of the strategies 'I use location to remember new words' and 'I say or write new words several times' did not illustrate significant difference in use between the learners of both groups. That is, both of the strategies were used with the same frequency. This is an interesting finding because as Green and Oxford (1995) described that it gives a continuous argument about the significant role of explicit in contrary to implicit knowledge about language in L2 learning. In addition, the findings indicated the need for conducting the strategies according to the proficiency level. This perspective is in agreement with the findings of MacIntyre (1994) and Oxford (1990) that teachers need to remember that the use of particular strategies might lead to certain level of proficiency, while proficiency might lead to conduct or abandonment of certain type of strategies.

#### **5.2.5. Reported Use of Language Learning Strategies during the Interview**

The remarks and explanations of the interviewees revealed that the LLSs play a key role in learning English language. During the interview, the students with high vocabulary size addressed the more regular use of various strategies in the right place at the right time in a harmonious manner. This finding is in parallel with the findings of Abraham and Vann (1987), Chamot and O'Malley (1996), and Ehrman et al. (2003) who convey that effective learners employ learning strategies in a harmonic and orchestrated manner while less effective learners use learning strategies almost aimlessly and randomly.

Though the comments on the LLSs revealed that most of the students were to some extent aware of the basic role of the strategies, the learners mentioned that they have problems with the mechanisms of applying the strategies. Undoubtedly, the mechanisms of conducting particular strategies vary from one level of proficiency to

another. In other words, while specific strategies are effective for the learners who have small vocabulary size might not work for the learners who have large vocabulary size. This is a critical finding and indicates the need for strategy training. Obviously, the one that should take the primary responsibility is teacher. Hence, the good question is posed which is that how can LLS training be directed in order to leave a great and permanent effect on the learners. Perhaps, one of the options for the teachers is to integrate LLSs into daily lessons and remind the students about the prominent role of LLSs explicitly. Furthermore, teachers need to attempt to take advantage of as many materials as possible inside and outside the classrooms such as newspaper, flashcards, TV, movies, and radio.

It is worth remembering that although other individual differences were not examined in the current study, it is important for teachers to take these factors into consideration while encouraging students in choosing and using particular group of strategies. For instance, students with different learning styles usually choose strategies that suit their style preferences. Gender of students makes a big difference in LLS choice. The students with different types of motivation conduct strategies that reflect their types of motivation. Therefore, the awareness of teachers about these factors makes the process of diagnosing differences among the students easier, and as a result helps the students in applying strategies in an effective way.



## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1. PRESENTATION**

This chapter presents the summary of the current research and the key findings. In addition, the limitations of the study are mentioned and on the base of the findings some suggestions for further research are recommended. Finally, the chapter ends with the conclusion.

#### **6.2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AND KEY FINDINGS**

This study chiefly aimed to seek out the relationship between language learning strategy use and vocabulary size among a selected group of Iraqi students. So, The SILL questionnaire was used to reveal the frequency of strategy use. Vocabulary Levels Test was administered to assess the participant's vocabulary size. To amplify the results of the quantitative phase, semi-structured interview was administered. Before carrying out this study, a pilot study took place with thirty students. The reliability of the SILL was .90 while the reliability of VLT was .92.

Participants of the current study were one hundred and twenty two students from English Language Department at the University of Sulaimani. 62 of the participants were male while 60 of the learners were female. The age of the learners was between eighteen to thirty. After administering the instruments, the data were collected and analyzed by using SPSS 20.0. The reliability of the questionnaire (SILL) was .89 and VLT was reliable with the Cronbach's alpha value of .92.

The average reported frequency of strategy use across all students was 3.2, ranging from 2.5 to 4.0. Therefore, according to Oxford (1990) the frequency of strategy use in this study can be regarded as moderate across all students. Considering the most frequent use of sub-category strategy, it was discovered that the learners with high vocabulary size reported the use of metacognitive strategies

with an average of 4.66 while the learners with low vocabulary size used metacognitive strategies with an average of 3.50. Likewise, the overall learners deployed metacognitive strategies with an average of 4.08 which was the most frequent use of sub-group strategy.

The significant relationship was discovered between reported frequency of language learning strategy use and high vocabulary size ( $r=.96$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $n=11$ ). Such strong correlation supports Oxford's (1999) and Cohen's (2011) views that the more the learner uses language learning strategies, the more proficient the learner. Regarding the reported frequency of language learning strategy use by the learners with high and low vocabulary size, the statistically significant difference was discovered ( $t=13.81$ ,  $df=24.87$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

The qualitative element in the form of semi-structured interview was added through using a guideline as a main tool to elicit further information about language learning strategy use. However, the flexibility was considered to allow the participants to express additional ideas. The deductive analysis of the qualitative data revealed that the participants used consistent and various types of strategies, especially in the first level, namely direct and indirect strategies, and second level viz., memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. However, in the third level there was no evidence for the use of some strategies. It was also discovered that the overall learners addressed the use of wider range of indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) than direct strategies.

Furthermore, the results of the deductive analysis indicated that the learners with large vocabulary size conduct language learning strategies regularly and they use variety of strategies comparing to the learners with small vocabulary size. Such findings are the sign to what O'Malley et al. (1985a) emphasize on that language learning strategies are "an extremely powerful learning tool" (p. 43). To some extend, the results of the interview data supported the findings of the quantitative phase in respect of the difference between the learners with high and low vocabulary size about the use of the language learning strategies. An interesting point that should be considered is the urgent need of the learners for teaching strategies.

### **6.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The current study, like any study, has a number of limitations. Perhaps, the most obvious one was the sample size involved in the study (N=122) which might have limited the scope for generalizing the results. Using a single instrument (SILL) to measure the frequency of language learning strategies may have been inadequate to demonstrate a complete picture. Usually, when language learning strategies are investigated, the learning factors such as gender, motivation, and learning styles are taken into consideration, but Because of the limited scope of this study, these factors were not tackled. Conceivably, guessing from context might have been a threat on measuring actual size of vocabulary knowledge. Lastly, it was not reasonable to apply random sampling in selecting participants which might have affected the outcomes negatively.

### **6.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Despite the fact that this study has introduced some interesting findings about the relationship between language learning strategy use and vocabulary size, some key questions have been raised which might in turn pave the way for further research. Since the current research has been conducted in one institution, it would be interesting to replicate the study in more than a single context and involve a larger number of students to pave the way for generalization. A longitudinal project might be carried out to investigate the extent to which the strategies are deployed overtime.

A study might be set up to include strategy training as far as there might be some students who are not aware of learning strategies. However in this study qualitative phase has been followed during inquiring language learning strategy use, this phase has been excluded for measuring the vocabulary size. So, a study in this kind would be welcomed with including qualitative approach. Likewise, another study might be conducted in which non-words (pseudonyms) are included in the Vocabulary Levels Test to restrict the threat of guessing. Moreover, further research is required to find out the relationship between language learning strategies and vocabulary knowledge with investigating vocabulary depth beside vocabulary size.

## 6.5. CONCLUSION

In general, the results of the current study indicate that the learners as speakers of other languages reported the use of language learning strategies in a moderate level. This might explain why most of the students (n=111) have small size of vocabulary knowledge. In other words, the more the use of learning strategies, the higher the level of proficiency. The best evidence to support such notion in this study is that the learners with large vocabulary size (n=11) conducted learning strategies highly frequently while learners with low vocabulary size reported the use of learning strategies moderately.

Although, on the individual level, there are exceptions, the results lead to the fact that the high vocabulary size learners report the use of language learning strategies highly frequently which enable them to increase their vocabulary size through conscious efforts and searching for opportunities to interact with other English speakers. The learners also reported using strategies (such as watching TV and movies) to improve listening skill, and strategies (such as trying to talk like native speaker) to enhance speaking skill.

The qualitative data, in general, supported the findings of the quantitative phase with the emergence of a crucial point, the necessity for strategy training. As Swan (2008) emphasizes the essential role of strategy instruction:

Nobody would dispute the value, up to a point, of learner independence. But learners are not necessarily themselves the best judges of what learning strategies are appropriate for them...learner independence needs to be guided. And, of course, teaching strategies does not remove the need to teach language. It is of limited value, for instance, to train students to handle aural comprehension difficulties by deploying broad-spectrum 'listening skills' (scanning, asking for repetition or whatever). (p. 272)

To sum up, if the frequent use of language learning strategies is the source of being better in language proficiency, as it was the case in this study, the awareness of how more proficient learners apply learning strategies would be appreciated by less proficient learners.

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**APPENDICES**



**Appendix I. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)**  
(R. Oxford, 1990)  
**DIRECTIONS**

Please read the sentences and answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers. Write your answers on the line beside the number of the statement.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

*Never or almost never true of me* means the statement is very rarely true of you.

*Usually not true of me* means the statement is true less than half the time.

*Somewhat true of me* means the statement is true about half the time.

*Usually true of me* means the statement is true more than half the time.

*Always or almost always true of me* means the statement is true of you almost always

**Gender** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**64** \_\_\_\_\_

**PART A** (memory)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I use new English words in a sentence so that I can remember them
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I use rhymes to remember new English words
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I use flashcards to remember new English words
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I physically act out new English words
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I review English lessons often
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign
- \_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL A**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AVERAGE** (= total divided by 9)

**PART B** (cognitive)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I say or write new English words several times
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I try to talk like native English speakers
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I practise the sounds of English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I use the English words I know in different ways
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I start conversations in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to the movies spoken in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I read for pleasure in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I write notes, messages, letters or reports in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I first skim-read an English passage (read over the passage quickly), then go back and read carefully

- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words  
in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I try to find patterns in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I  
understand
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I try not to translate word for word
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL B**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AVERAGE** (= total divided by 14)

**PART C****(compensation)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. To understand unfamiliar English words I make guesses
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use  
gestures
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I read English without looking up every new word
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means  
the same thing
- \_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL C**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AVERAGE** (= total divided by 6)

**PART D****(metacognitive)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do  
better



- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. I plan my schedule so that I will have enough time to study English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. I look for people I can talk to in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. I think about my progress in learning English

\_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL D**

\_\_\_\_\_ **AVERAGE** (= total divided by 9)

### **PART E**

**(affective)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English

\_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL E**

\_\_\_\_\_ **AVERAGE** (= total divided by 6)

### **PART F**

**(social)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. I practise English with other students

- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. I ask for help from English speakers  
\_\_\_\_\_ 49. I ask questions in English  
\_\_\_\_\_ 50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers

\_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL F**

\_\_\_\_\_ **AVERAGE** (= total divided by 6)



## Appendix II. Vocabulary Levels Test

This is a vocabulary test. You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning. Here is an example.

- |            |                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 business |                                  |
| 2 clock    | _____ part of a house            |
| 3 horse    | _____ animal with four legs      |
| 4 pencil   | _____ something used for writing |
| 5 shoe     |                                  |
| 6 wall     |                                  |

You answer it in the following way.

- |            |                                     |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 business |                                     |
| 2 clock    | <u>6</u> part of a house            |
| 3 horse    | <u>3</u> animal with four legs      |
| 4 pencil   | <u>4</u> something used for writing |
| 5 shoe     |                                     |
| 6 wall     |                                     |

Some words are in the test to make it more difficult. You do not have to find a meaning for these words. In the example above, these words are business, clock, and shoe.

If you have no idea about the meaning of a word, do not guess. But if you think you might know the meaning, then you should try to find the answer.

## The 2,000 word level

1 birth  
 2 dust \_\_\_\_\_ game  
 3 operation \_\_\_\_\_ winning  
 4 row \_\_\_\_\_ being born  
 5 sport  
 6 victory

1 adopt  
 2 climb \_\_\_\_\_ go up  
 3 examine \_\_\_\_\_ look at closely  
 4 pour \_\_\_\_\_ be on every side  
 5 satisfy  
 6 surround

1 choice  
 2 crop \_\_\_\_\_ heat  
 3 flesh \_\_\_\_\_ meat  
 4 salary \_\_\_\_\_ money paid regularly  
 5 secret \_\_\_\_\_ for doing a job  
 6 temperature

1 bake  
 2 connect \_\_\_\_\_ join together  
 3 inquire \_\_\_\_\_ walk without purpose  
 4 limit \_\_\_\_\_ keep within a certain  
 5 recognize size  
 6 wander

1 cap  
 2 education \_\_\_\_\_ teaching and learning  
 3 journey \_\_\_\_\_ numbers to measure  
 4 parent \_\_\_\_\_ with  
 5 scale \_\_\_\_\_ going to a far place  
 6 trick

1 burst  
 2 concern \_\_\_\_\_ break open  
 3 deliver \_\_\_\_\_ make better  
 4 fold \_\_\_\_\_ take something to  
 5 improve someone  
 6 urge

1 attack  
 2 charm \_\_\_\_\_ gold and silver  
 3 lack \_\_\_\_\_ pleasing quality  
 4 pen \_\_\_\_\_ not having something  
 5 shadow  
 6 treasure

1 original  
 2 private \_\_\_\_\_ first  
 3 royal \_\_\_\_\_ not public  
 4 slow \_\_\_\_\_ all added together  
 5 sorry  
 6 total

1 cream  
 2 factory \_\_\_\_\_ part of milk  
 3 nail \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of money  
 4 pupil \_\_\_\_\_ person who is studying  
 5 sacrifice  
 6 wealth

1 brave  
 2 electric \_\_\_\_\_ commonly done  
 3 firm \_\_\_\_\_ wanting food  
 4 hungry \_\_\_\_\_ having no fear  
 5 local  
 6 usual

## The 3,000 word level

1 belt  
 2 climate \_\_\_\_\_ idea  
 3 executive \_\_\_\_\_ inner surface of your  
 4 notion \_\_\_\_\_ hand  
 5 palm \_\_\_\_\_ strip of leather worn  
 6 victim \_\_\_\_\_ around the waist

1 betray \_\_\_\_\_  
 2 dispose \_\_\_\_\_ frighten  
 3 embrace \_\_\_\_\_ say publicly  
 4 injure \_\_\_\_\_ hurt seriously  
 5 proclaim  
 6 scare

1 acid  
 2 bishop \_\_\_\_\_ cold feeling  
 3 chill \_\_\_\_\_ farm animal  
 4 ox \_\_\_\_\_ organization or  
 5 ridge \_\_\_\_\_ framework  
 6 structure

1 encounter  
 2 illustrate \_\_\_\_\_ meet  
 3 inspire \_\_\_\_\_ beg for help  
 4 plead \_\_\_\_\_ close completely  
 5 seal  
 6 shift

1 bench  
 2 charity \_\_\_\_\_ long seat  
 3 jar \_\_\_\_\_ help to the poor  
 4 mate \_\_\_\_\_ part of a country  
 5 mirror  
 6 province

1 assist  
 2 bother \_\_\_\_\_ help  
 3 condemn \_\_\_\_\_ cut neatly  
 4 erect \_\_\_\_\_ spin around  
 5 trim \_\_\_\_\_ quickly  
 6 whirl

1 boot  
 2 device \_\_\_\_\_ army officer  
 3 lieutenant \_\_\_\_\_ a kind of stone  
 4 marble \_\_\_\_\_ tube through which  
 5 phrase \_\_\_\_\_ blood flows  
 6 vein

1 annual  
 2 concealed \_\_\_\_\_ wild  
 3 definite \_\_\_\_\_ clear and certain  
 4 mental \_\_\_\_\_ happening once a  
 5 previous \_\_\_\_\_ year  
 6 savage

1 apartment  
 2 candle \_\_\_\_\_ a place to live  
 3 draft \_\_\_\_\_ chance of something  
 4 horror \_\_\_\_\_ happening  
 5 prospect \_\_\_\_\_ first rough form of  
 6 timber \_\_\_\_\_ something written

1 dim  
 2 junior \_\_\_\_\_ strange  
 3 magnificent \_\_\_\_\_ wonderful  
 4 maternal \_\_\_\_\_ not clearly lit  
 5 odd  
 6 weary

## The 5,000 word level

1 balloon  
 2 federation \_\_\_\_\_ bucket  
 3 novelty \_\_\_\_\_ unusual interesting  
 4 pail \_\_\_\_\_ thing  
 5 veteran \_\_\_\_\_ rubber bag that is  
 6 ward \_\_\_\_\_ filled with air

1 blend  
 2 devise \_\_\_\_\_ mix together  
 3 hug \_\_\_\_\_ plan or invent  
 4 lease \_\_\_\_\_ hold tightly in your  
 5 plague \_\_\_\_\_ arms  
 6 reject

1 alcohol  
 2 apron \_\_\_\_\_ stage of  
 3 hip \_\_\_\_\_ development  
 4 lure \_\_\_\_\_ state of untidiness  
 5 mess \_\_\_\_\_ or dirtiness  
 6 phase \_\_\_\_\_ cloth worn in front to  
 protect your clothes

1 abolish  
 2 drip \_\_\_\_\_ bring to an end by  
 3 insert \_\_\_\_\_ law  
 4 predict \_\_\_\_\_ guess about the  
 5 soothe \_\_\_\_\_ future  
 6 thrive \_\_\_\_\_ calm or comfort  
 someone

1 apparatus  
 2 compliment \_\_\_\_\_ expression of  
 3 ledge \_\_\_\_\_ admiration  
 4 revenue \_\_\_\_\_ set of machinery  
 5 scrap \_\_\_\_\_ instruments or  
 6 tile \_\_\_\_\_ money received by  
 the Government

1 bleed  
 2 collapse \_\_\_\_\_ come before  
 3 precede \_\_\_\_\_ fall down suddenly  
 4 reject \_\_\_\_\_ move with quick  
 5 skip steps and \_\_\_\_\_ jumps  
 6 tease

1 bulb  
 2 document \_\_\_\_\_ female horse  
 3 legion \_\_\_\_\_ large group of  
 4 mare \_\_\_\_\_ soldiers or people  
 5 pulse \_\_\_\_\_ a paper that provides  
 6 tub \_\_\_\_\_ information

1 casual  
 2 desolate \_\_\_\_\_ sweet-smelling  
 3 fragrant \_\_\_\_\_ only one of its kind  
 4 radical \_\_\_\_\_ good for your health  
 5 unique  
 6 wholesome

1 concrete  
 2 era \_\_\_\_\_ circular shape  
 3 fiber \_\_\_\_\_ top of a mountain  
 4 loop \_\_\_\_\_ a long period of time  
 5 plank  
 6 summit

1 gloomy  
 2 gross \_\_\_\_\_ empty  
 3 infinite \_\_\_\_\_ dark or sad  
 4 limp \_\_\_\_\_ without end  
 5 slim  
 6 vacant

## The 10,000 word level

1 antics  
 2 batch \_\_\_\_\_ foolish behavior  
 3 connoisseur \_\_\_\_\_ a group of things  
 4 foreboding \_\_\_\_\_ person with a good  
 5 haunch \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of art or  
 6 scaffold \_\_\_\_\_ music

1 acquiesce  
 2 bask \_\_\_\_\_ to accept without  
 3 crease \_\_\_\_\_ protest  
 4 demolish \_\_\_\_\_ sit or lie enjoying  
 5 overhaul \_\_\_\_\_ warmth  
 6 rape \_\_\_\_\_ make a fold on cloth  
 or paper

1 auspices  
 2 dregs \_\_\_\_\_ confused mixture  
 3 hostage \_\_\_\_\_ natural liquid  
 4 jumble \_\_\_\_\_ present in the mouth  
 4 jumble \_\_\_\_\_ worst and most  
 5 saliva \_\_\_\_\_ useless parts of  
 6 truce \_\_\_\_\_ anything

1 blaspheme  
 2 endorse \_\_\_\_\_ slip or slide  
 3 nurture \_\_\_\_\_ give care and food to  
 4 skid \_\_\_\_\_ speak badly about  
 5 squint \_\_\_\_\_ God  
 6 straggle

1 casualty  
 2 flurry \_\_\_\_\_ someone killed or  
 3 froth \_\_\_\_\_ injured  
 4 revelry \_\_\_\_\_ being away from  
 5 rut \_\_\_\_\_ other people  
 6 seclusion \_\_\_\_\_ noisy and happy  
 celebration

1 clinch  
 2 jot \_\_\_\_\_ move very fast  
 3 mutilate \_\_\_\_\_ injure or damage  
 4 smolder \_\_\_\_\_ burn slowly  
 5 topple \_\_\_\_\_ without flame  
 6 whiz

1 apparition  
 2 botany \_\_\_\_\_ ghost  
 3 expulsion \_\_\_\_\_ study of plants  
 4 insolence \_\_\_\_\_ small pool of water  
 5 leash  
 6 puddle

1 auxiliary  
 2 candid \_\_\_\_\_ bad-tempered  
 3 luscious \_\_\_\_\_ full of  
 4 morose \_\_\_\_\_ self-importance  
 5 pallid \_\_\_\_\_ helping, adding  
 6 pompous \_\_\_\_\_ support

1 arsenal  
 2 barracks \_\_\_\_\_ happiness  
 3 deacon \_\_\_\_\_ difficult situation  
 4 felicity \_\_\_\_\_ minister in a church  
 5 predicament  
 6 spore

1 dubious  
 2 impudent \_\_\_\_\_ rude  
 3 languid \_\_\_\_\_ very ancient  
 4 motley \_\_\_\_\_ of many different  
 kinds  
 5 opaque  
 6 primeval

## Academic Vocabulary

1 benefit  
 2 labor \_\_\_\_\_ work  
 3 percent \_\_\_\_\_ part of 100  
 4 principle \_\_\_\_\_ general idea used  
 5 source \_\_\_\_\_ to guide one's actions  
 6 survey

1 achieve  
 2 conceive \_\_\_\_\_ change  
 3 grant \_\_\_\_\_ connect together  
 4 link \_\_\_\_\_ finish successfully  
 5 modify  
 6 offset

1 element \_\_\_\_\_ money for a special  
 purpose  
 2 fund \_\_\_\_\_ skilled way of doing  
 3 layer \_\_\_\_\_ something  
 4 philosophy \_\_\_\_\_ study of the meaning  
 5 proportion \_\_\_\_\_ of life  
 6 technique

1 convert  
 2 design \_\_\_\_\_ keep out  
 3 exclude \_\_\_\_\_ stay alive  
 4 facilitate \_\_\_\_\_ change from one thing  
 5 indicate \_\_\_\_\_ into another  
 6 survive

1 consent  
 2 enforcement \_\_\_\_\_ total  
 3 investigation \_\_\_\_\_ agreement or  
 permission  
 4 parameter \_\_\_\_\_ trying to find  
 5 sum \_\_\_\_\_ information about  
 6 trend \_\_\_\_\_ something

1 anticipate  
 2 compile \_\_\_\_\_ control something 3  
 convince \_\_\_\_\_ skillfully  
 4 denote \_\_\_\_\_ expect something will  
 happen  
 5 manipulate \_\_\_\_\_ produce books and  
 newspapers  
 6 publish

1 decade  
 2 fee \_\_\_\_\_ 10 years  
 3 file \_\_\_\_\_ subject of a  
 4 incidence \_\_\_\_\_ discussion  
 5 perspective \_\_\_\_\_ money paid for  
 6 topic \_\_\_\_\_ services

1 equivalent  
 2 financial \_\_\_\_\_ most important  
 3 forthcoming \_\_\_\_\_ concerning sight  
 4 primary \_\_\_\_\_ concerning money  
 5 random  
 6 visual

1 colleague  
 2 erosion \_\_\_\_\_ action against the  
 law  
 3 format \_\_\_\_\_ wearing away  
 4 inclination \_\_\_\_\_ gradually  
 5 panel \_\_\_\_\_ shape or size of  
 6 violation \_\_\_\_\_ something

1 alternative  
 2 ambiguous \_\_\_\_\_ last or most  
 important  
 3 empirical \_\_\_\_\_ something different  
 that can be chosen  
 4 ethnic \_\_\_\_\_ concerning people  
 5 mutual \_\_\_\_\_ from a certain nation  
 6 ultimate



### **Appendix III. Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

#### **Memory Strategies**

- 1- Which strategies work more effectively for you to remember information? How?
- 2- How do you make connections between new knowledge and previous knowledge?

#### **Cognitive Strategies**

- 1- How do you learn new information?
- 2- Which strategies do you use to process and practice new and previous knowledge? How?

#### **Compensation Strategies**

- 1- Which strategies do you employ to compensate for missing knowledge? How?
- 2- What do you do when you do not know how to express your opinions in English?

#### **Metacognitive Strategies**

- 1- How do you organize your learning?
- 2- How do you monitor and evaluate your learning?

#### **Affective Strategies**

- 1- How do you feel when you learn and practice English?
- 2- What do you do to emotionally encourage your learning?
- 3- How do you manage your emotions while you are engaging in learning tasks?

#### **Social Strategies**

- 1- How do you learn English while you are interacting with other people?
- 2- What do you do to practice English outside class?



## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Ismael Faraj was born in Halabja in 1986. He graduated from the English Language and Literature Department of Sulaimani University in 2010. He has started working as a teacher at Shakraly Basic School in the same year. He voluntarily taught English language in many institutes. He speaks English fluently, and he has survival Arabic and Persian skills.

## **ÖZGEÇMİŞ**

Ismael Faraj 1986'da Halepçe'de dünyaya geldi. 2010 yılında Suleymaniye Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü'nden mezun oldu. Aynı yıl Shakraly Temel Okulu'nda Öğretmen olarak çalışma hayatına adım attı. Faraj, gönüllü olarak birçok kurumda İngilizce eğitimi verdi. İngilizceyi akıcı bir biçimde konuşmanın yanısıra kendini ifade edecek kadar Arapça ve Farsça konuşmaktadır.