AN INVESTIGATION INTO STRATEGY USE AND BACKGROUND VARIABLES IN LEARNING ENGLISH: THE CASE OF TERTIARY LEVEL STUDENTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Dedication

_Dedicated to the loving memory of
my mother, whom I lost whilst
working on this paper, and whose
wishes would have been fullfilled
by the completion of this study._

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Abstract

This study investigates the interrelationship between the learning strategies as used by Arabic learners of English, their individual variables, and their proficiency level. The subjects are students in King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia. They came from various educational backgrounds and proficiency levels to learn English mainly for academic purposes.

The data consisted of recorded interviews with the subjects, questionnaires, and their academic achievements in four different types of language tests. The information obtained provides an overview of the learners' educational background and learning experiences. Some evidence of correlation has been found between the use of learning strategies, the level of proficiency and the individual variables such as motivation, age, attendance of private schools versus government schools, extracurricular exposure to English, etc. All of these variables are affected by the current provision of language teaching in Saudi Arabia and which the study had shed light on its weaknesses.

Beside students' needs as reflected in the interview, the findings appear to indicate the need for a change in the current English teaching situation in Saudi Arabia. The study reviews the deficiencies in the current system and whether any features of it would be obstacles should a more flexible, communicative style of ELT, encouraging strategies, be introduced. The study draws some implications from the results for future research.

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Introduction and Background Information

1.0 Introduction

The focus of second language research has, in recent years, shifted from teaching to the learning process. Dissatisfaction with traditional approaches and research in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics have led to a growing awareness of individual needs and increased emphasis on learner-centered education. Studies in foreign language learning suggest that good learners use a variety of strategies to assist them to gain command over new language skills. It has been assumed that once these strategies are identified and classified, they can be made available and, where useful, used by less able learners to enable them to learn a second language more efficiently (O'Malley, 1990, Oxford, 1990).

This study investigates the learning strategies as used by Saudi Arabian learners of English, their individual variables, and their relation to language proficiency. The subjects are students, at the first year college level in King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia, studying English as a foreign language.

Teachers, parents and officials in the field of education in Saudi Arabia have always expressed concern and dissatisfaction about the students' abilities to use English correctly. In spite of the fact that the students study English for six years at school, for an average of four hours a week, most of them go to the university with very little skill in expressing themselves in English.

As early as 1984, the issue of low achievement levels in English was raised in two major newspapers in Saudi Arabia. Al-Riyadh, the principal daily newspaper, stated "Students' low achievement level in English is a big problem that needs a solution"(April, 1984, p.4). Okaz, another daily newspaper, brought the following questions to public attention in an attempt to urge all those concerned to pin-point the causes of the problem:

"1) What is the main cause of students' low achievement in English?

2) When and how do we improve English language acquisition/ learning?

3) Are the course books suitable for the students?

4) Is the method of instruction one of the factors that led has to the falling standards of achievement in English?

5)What are the solutions to the problem of students' low achievement in English?" (May 1984, p.6)

No answers were suggested since this was simply an attempt to bring the problem into the public consciousness. Many studies, in section (1.5), were carried out to try to offer some solutions, but few solutions were suggested and most of them have not yet been applied.

Since the issue of low achievement in English among students, as raised by the government in principal newspapers and pointed out in the work plan of the general presidency of education, is a series problem facing officials and educationalists, and as there is a lack of research in this field, I was encouraged to undertake this study. Having been myself a learner of English as a foreign language, and later a lecturer and a coordinator in the English department of King Faisal University, having viewed with frustration and some despair the futile efforts of my colleagues in teaching English as a foreign language, I hope that this study will highlight the particular areas of difficulty for the Arabic learner and teacher of English.

The following section of this chapter will be devoted to discuss the objectives of the study. It is important to know the reason underlying the conducting of such a study. Therefore, these objectives are as useful as a guide to the study.

1.1 The objectives of the study:

1- To reveal and shed light on current provision of university teaching/learning English, which represents the educational background of the students, and to discuss its shortcomings. This suggests the need for a change. (Discussed in chapter one).

2- The need for a change in the current system was the motivation for this study to provide a richer picture of Saudi students by drawing a profile for students from different language

proficiency levels and background variables, and analyse their learning strategies. (Discussed in chapter five).

3- The purpose, of providing a detailed analysis of the learning strategies of Saudi students, is to answer the following three research questions (discussed in chapter four): is it possible to :

> 1) identify the range and variety of learning strategies used by tertiary learners in King Faisal university in Saudi Arabia?
>
> 2) discover whether there are differences in strategy use between successful language learners and less successful ones and to classify the strategies identified into the more successful strategies and less successful ones; and to find out the relation between proficiency and these strategies?
>
> 3) discover whether there are differences in strategy use between students with different individual variables and proficiency levels, and to identify the relation between the three?

4- The fourth objective is to identify the reasons behind many problems that teachers and students might encounter in encouraging strategy use through a more flexible, communicative style of ELT which suits the Saudi context, and suggest ways to solve these problems. (Discussed in chapter six).

5- To derive implications from the findings for further research. (Discussed in chapter six).

The following section of this chapter will be devoted to the language background of the subjects involved in this study. It is important to know some background factors before talking about the learning strategies, the level of proficiency, and the individual variables of Arabic students. "All forms of language teaching could be greatly improved if we had a better understanding of the language learning process" (Naiman, 1978)

1.2. General Background:

The low standard of achievement in English among students in Saudi state schools has been of concern to officials and educationalists for some time. Although students receive six years of formal English teaching, they graduate from high school unable to use the language efficiently. The problem of deficient standard of English language becomes preeminent at university level.

English is taught as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. It is the medium of instruction at the university level in science and medicine colleges. English is taught to Arabs to enable them both to continue their education at the university level and to use it as a medium of communication with the international community. Unfortunately, most students consider English as a difficult subject which should be passed instead of a useful language which can be used for pursuing their university studies or as a medium for communicating internationally.

This study investigates the relation between the learning strategies as used by Saudi Arabian learners of English, their proficiency level, and their individual variables. The subjects are students at the university of King Faisal in Saudi Arabia. They come from various educational backgrounds and proficiency to learn English mainly for academic purposes. The data consists of recorded interviews with the subjects, questionnaires, and their achievements in four different types of language achievement tests which include structure, reading, writing and listening comprehension. Some evidence of correlation has been found between the use of learning strategies, the level of achievement and students' individual variables. In order to understand the nature of this relation between the three, it is essential to provide information on students' language background. The following sections of this chapter will be devoted to the various aspects of the students' background.

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1.2.1. Historical Background:

The roots of education in Saudi Arabia go deep into the Islamic heritage which started fourteen centuries ago at the time of prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) who exhorted his followers "to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave". As well as a religion, Islam is a system of social organization, law, culture and thought. It gave particular priority to education and used it as the main instrument to construct Arab society. Education was based on the study of the holy Quran which gives education the status of religious duty. The importance of education was stressed in various verses of the Quran. The first verse, as an example, was: "Read, in the name of Thy Lord and Cherisher Who created, Who taught the use of the pen"(The Quran, Sura xvi Verse 1). Many other verses encouraged Moslems to seek knowledge and exalt the position of a learned man:"..Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition" (Quran 39:9). Many other different verses of Quran have affirmed that God has created mankind in different origins, colours, and languages so that people may get to recognize each other. The Quranic verses have been the point of departure in implementing the learning of at least one foreign language in the education system in most Arab countries, so as to facilitate communication and develop relations. Arabic students are affected by these verses and sayings since it gives education the status of religious duty by which all Moslems are obliged to learn not only about their religion but also about all kinds of knowledge and languages.

At the beginning of the Islamic era (7th century AD), education was informal and restricted to reading and writing. There were no school buildings but mosques were used to practice the religious education. The sort of teaching at that time was the "Kuttabs" in which students would sit in a circle with the teacher, as a model in the centre, imitating him in every thing in which he should be a good example to be copied. As Islamic civilization began to expand, Islamic rulers came to meet different civilizations, and thus realized the need to learn foreign languages and the need to develop their education system. Arab educators,   therefore,   devised   a theory   that would facilitate the process of learning

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foreign languages and indeed any other subjects: their theory was that emphasis should be shifted from memorization to discussion and interaction between students and teachers and among themselves. They based their teaching on their observation of the learner's interests and motivation. New topics were approached by an example which was compatible with the student's understanding or within his experience, using a simple level of language suitable for his age, before moving on to more complex concepts. Students would join the school at the same time and once they started to show differences in ability, they would be streamed accordingly. The individual differences in intelligence, abilities, and interests were all taken into consideration. Peer group teaching was applied as advanced students taught new students and worked as teachers' assistants and aided the teacher in giving individualized instructions to new learners (Al-Zaid, 1982). All of these were features of what we now call communicative language teaching and, unfortunately, what we miss in Saudi Arabia now and try to apply in the late twentieth century.

As many economical and political changes took place, in Saudi Arabia, throughout the centuries, that led, unfortunately, to the decline of education as a consequence. During that era, education was not public until the first quarter of the twentieth century and was considered to be a luxury for the wealthy upper classes. The majority never received any kind of education and did not expect their children to do so. The family was the main source of education through which a person learned about and knew much of his country's history in detail and could recite the Quran, in addition to a great deal of folk poetry. Through this informal education, the sons inherited their fathers' careers which passed to them from one generation to another. However, there were some types of education that were held in kuttab, the mosques, and a very few private schools.

Many schools were established, with the gradual expansion of the Arabic civilization, as the need to educate young people intensified. Those schools were the foundation for the modern system of education which began in 1923 through the establishment of the directorate of education.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by King Abdulaziz Al-Saud, who united the whole of Arabia under his leadership. Oil was not discovered in commercial quantities until 1938. Since that time economic development in the kingdom has grown extensively. Beneath Saudi Arabia's sands are the largest oil reserves of the world. Current estimates suggest Saudi Arabia possesses one quarter of the world's oil reserves and substantial reserves of natural gas. Saudi Arabia's exploitation of this natural resource has generated enormous wealth. The blessing of this oil wealth is a major factor in developing the educational system in the country.

1.2.2. Geographical Background:

One glance at contemporary international society and the interchange and intricacy of its relations is enough to prove the need for all nations to interrelate with each other no matter how influential or prosperous a nation might be. Alongside the religious incentive, which was mentioned earlier, other contributing factors made it imperative for implementing the use of at least one foreign language in the Arabic countries:

1- Military and cultural colonisation after the collapse of the Ottoman empire, and the attempt to impose foreign languages on the occupied lands, e.g. English in Egypt, Sudan and Iraq; French in Lebanon, Syria and North Africa.

2- Political, economic and scientific sovereignty of the western countries.

3- The need for developing countries to learn languages for development purposes.

Unlike neighbouring Arabic countries, Saudi Arabia was an exception, in respect of military intervention. However, with the discovery of oil, Saudi Arabia felt a strong need to promote contacts with the international community and English language was used for that purpose.

The Kingdom lies at the crossroads of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. With an area of 870,000 square miles, it occupies the largest part of the Arabian peninsula. It is roughly the same size as western Europe. It extends from the Red Sea on the west to the Arabian Gulf on the east (see the map in appendix 1). To the north, it borders Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait, and to the south, Yemen and Oman. To the east lie the United Arab Emirates,

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Qatar and Bahrain. The capital of Saudi Arabia is Riyadh in the central province. The other principal cities are Makkah and Madina (the holy cities), Jeddah (the largest city in the western province), and Dammam (the important sea port on the Gulf). The central province has dry and hot summers and dry and cold winters, while the eastern province has a typical subtropical climate similar to the western province. The southern and northern provinces have moderate weather during summers but very cold winters. The kingdom's population is about 12 million. Only about 10 percent are Bedouin (nomadic desert dwellers). A Semitic people, Saudi Arabians share a common religion, Islam, and a common language, Arabic, which is the language of holy Quran and the official language of the country. Saudi Arabia is regarded as the heartland of Islam and about two million pilgrims of different nationalities and languages come to the country each year to perform pilgrimage. English, as an international language, is used to communicate with such visitors. The Shari'a, the Islamic code of law based on the Quran, is the basis of the legal system of Saudi Arabia. The Quran itself is considered the constitution of the land and provides the country with ethical values and guidance.

Saudi Arabia officially uses the Islamic Hijri calender based on a lunar year rather than the Gregorian calender based on a solar year used in the West. Although containing 12 months, the Hijri year, consisting of 354 days, is 11 days shorter than the solar year, hence the holy days and other occasions gradually shift from one season to another. However, Summer and midyear holidays, for schools, follow a different system based on a solar year so that they occur at the same time each year. Friday is the official weekend holiday when all government offices, educational institutes and most businesses are closed.

1.2.3 Educational Background:

With the discovery of oil in 1938, the demand to open schools everywhere in the country (in cities, towns, villages and among nomadic tribes) increased. People began to view education as a requirement everybody should have. The increasing demand for the opening of schools throughout the country has also increased the demand for native Saudi teachers.

In reaction to this latter demand during this period of building schools and expanding education, great interest was generated in establishing various types of teacher training institutions to educate and create Saudi teachers. The rapid expansion of education increased the demand to establish the Ministry of Education.

The establishment of the Ministry of Education coincided with the discovery of oil in quantities of such great commercial value that it could provide the economic capital needed to build an educational system which could expand to reach a larger segment of the population. When the Ministry of Education was established in 1953, a new era in the history of education in Saudi Arabia began. At present, the responsibility for education lies in the three following authorities that are supervised by the Higher Committee for Educational Policy headed by the King:

> 1)The Ministry of Education, which is the principal authority for boys education to the end of the secondary stage.
>
> 2) The Presidency of Girls Education which was founded in 1960 and established a complete system of education for the Saudi girls which goes up from the elementary stage to intermediate and secondary stages.
>
> 3) The Ministry of Higher Education which was founded in 1976 and which is responsible for universities and junior colleges.

The educational system in Saudi Arabia is divided into three main levels. The first level of education is the elementary stage lasting for six years. The second level is divided into two stages - intermediate and secondary- each lasting three years. In the last two years of the secondary school, the programme has a bias to either Arts or Science to prepare students for higher studies. The third level is higher education which includes a number of universities and colleges in different parts of the Kingdom. Education is free of charge for everybody at all levels and there has never been any need to make it compulsory. Students are encouraged to continue their higher education by receiving financial bursaries (at university

level only), free housing, free meals and books. The material and social objectives of the education curriculum in the Kingdom are based on the Islamic values and cultural heritage of Saudi society, and constitute the cornerstone of long-term development. All four previous development plans have placed emphasis on inculcating these values in students and on imparting to them the knowledge and skills that will enable them to participate effectively in all social, economic and cultural activities. The Kingdom's educational system has continued to grow in terms of both quality and quantity, during the fourth plan period. With the commitment to free education, total student enrollments in general education have grown more than fourfold over the last two decades, to more than two millions. At the beginning of the first plan, 7000 students were enrolled in the Kingdom's higher education institutions. This number has increased more than sixteen times over the last four plan periods, so that there are now more than 114,000 students (male and female) enrolled in these institutions. The rapid growth in student numbers has been accompanied by a similar expansion in the number of schools and colleges. Over the last two decades, the number of elementary schools increased from 1,824 to 8,426, the number of intermediate schools from 126 to 2,772 and the number of secondary schools from 23 to 1,171.

It can be seen from the above that the Saudi education system has made remarkable progress in a relatively short period. It has developed from basic education to cover all stages of general and higher education, and from a male-only education to a more open educational system that caters for girls in all stages, covering almost all fields of education.

1.2.4 Female Education:

It is essential to introduce some background information about female education, in particular, because all subjects participating in this study are female students. Prior to the establishment of formal education in 1960, Saudi Arabian females had limited access to any type of schooling. The Kuttabs, or female tutors, were one of the very few tutorial channels available to females. From these Kuttabs, some women who had been taught to read and write the holy Quran, would open their own houses to teach the reading (pronouncing

letters as well as understanding words' meaning) of the holy book. Private education played a vital role in the absence of government provisions. Religious studies dominated the curriculum, as in Kuttabs, although it was extended to include some maths and general readings.

In 1960, the government issued a statement allowing for the establishment of female education. Curricula are still differentiated between the two sexes in all educational levels. Physical education which is offered to boys is replaced by home economics for the girls. A considerable amount of time is devoted to religious studies, followed by Arabic. The highest priority given to religious studies comes as a result of the recommendations issued by the highest committee for education policy in 1980 which reduced English language classes from six hours a week to four hours a week and reduced mathematics classes from five to four hours a week in order to allow for more religious studies within the timetable. The change in the number of hours devoted to the teaching of English language has its own bad consequences that were reflected in the achievement level of students.

1.2.5 Higher Studies:

The opening of the university to females, in 1967, started five years after that for males. Five of the seven universities offer females, studying on separate campuses from males, different areas of studies. These universities are:

1- King Saud University was established in Riyadh in 1957 with twelve faculties for education, arts, medicine science, dental medicine, engineering, vetinerary medicine, commerce, agriculture, pharmacy, and an institute for the Arabic language.

2-King Abdul Aziz University was founded in Jeddah in 1971. It includes nine faculties for science, engineering, arts and the humanities, geology, meteorology, medical science, economics, and marine science.

3-King Faisal University which was established in Dammam in 1975. It includes faculties for medicine, medical sciences, agriculture, education, veterinary sciences, planning, construction and interior design.

4-Imam Muhammad Ben Saud University was established in Riyadh in 1974. It is an international institution for Islamic studies which produces preachers, teachers and judges.
5-Um Al-Qura University was established in Macca in 1981. It specializes in Islamic studies, Arabic language and educational studies.

Each university is functionally autonomous and has its own Council headed by the Minister of Higher Education. However, it is not the councils who set up academic programmes. They are coordinated with the supreme council for universities which formulates and implements policies, establishes new departments, and determines academic programmes and admission policy.

The types of subjects and specialities available to women in these universities are affected by the traditional expectations of female roles in society. Females are admitted to colleges that offer Art, Literature, Education, Social and Religious studies, Administration, Pure Science and Medicine. Other majors, such as Engineering and technical studies, are exclusively male majors. Most females in higher education study arts rather than science. Ninety percent of female students studied humanities such as literature, education and social studies and only 10 percent studied pure science including medical colleges. (The Ministry of Education: Educational statistics 1983:123).

Most post graduate programs offer masters degrees only. The graduates are likely to work in higher educational centres and colleges. Because of the limited educational opportunities, students of both sexes used to seek education abroad either with the help of the state or on their own. Prior to 1970, women were able to apply for and were granted scholarships. By 1970, a law was passed which requires female students to be either specialized in certain fields that were thought to be needed, or accompanied by their husbands only for the duration of their husbands' studies. This prevents most women from embarking on a course of study that may not be completed by the time their husbands terminate. The policy has adversely affected the number of females granted scholarships, since not all females are able

to meet the government requirements. Thus, the provision of female education has been limited compared with that of males. There is a clear disparity between the numbers of male and female students, the educational facilities and the different type of specialities available to each at all educational levels.

1.3 English in Saudi Arabia:

English language was reintroduced into Saudi Arabia with the discovery of oil in the thirties. At that time, most of the oil production was dominated by foreign companies. This fact drew the attention to the importance of English language as a medium of communication. English is used in everyday life as a common language between foreigners of different native language groups and between foreigners and Arab speakers. Equally significant is the extent to which English is used in business, commerce, technology, and as a medium of instruction in some colleges.

As the heartland of Islam, about two million pilgrims of different nationalities and languages come to Saudi Arabia each year on pilgrimages. Obviously such visitors need to communicate with their Arabic hosts, and English, for many of them is the lingua franca. This situation demands Saudis who know English to communicate with them. Due to the developing phase the country is passing through, particularly in the sectors of oil, petrochemicals and other industries, proficiency in English has played a distinctive role not only in developing the industries and marketing the products, but also in training the manpower to staff the technical positions created by these industries.

English plays a very distinctive role in Saudi Arabia as a means for achieving academic and educational targets. At the university level, it is the medium of instruction in science, engineering, and medicine colleges. English is taught to students to enable them both to continue their education at university level and to use as a medium of communication with the international community.

The rapid growth in the Saudi Arabian economy, the investment of oil revenues in domestic economic development, and the increase in the personal income, all led to a reliance on

foreign workers from all over the world. This reliance created a need to use English as a mutual language for communication. People use English, at home, to interact with the domestic helpers who come from Philippines or India and in this way children are exposed to a certain amount of English at an early age. Outside the home, at street level, some shop keepers use English to deal with foreign customers. Similarly, in day-to-day activities, English is used in professional organizations to communicate with staff from different nationalities. English language also features in the media through special radio and TV channels broadcasting in English and offering a wide variety of programmes.

The increased numbers of foreigners of different nationalities, both in professional employment and on the domestic level, left the Saudis with no choice but to use English to communicate with them, no matter how poor that English may be, as long as they get their message across. It can be seen here that there are at least two forms of English in Saudi Arabia: the informal, communicative, oral English of domestic and professional exchanges, and the formal English of a standard nature that is taught in the schools.

1.3.1 English teaching in the Kingdom:

Since English has become the principal world language because of the important position it plays in today's economy and politics, Saudi Arabia adopted it as instructional language in many colleges. English is the only foreign language taught in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Students, at government schools, start learning English in the first year of intermediate level and continue studying English for six years, through to secondary level. In some private schools, students start learning English earlier, from the first year of primary level. In both, intermediate and secondary levels, students have only four English classes per week. In each class that lasts for forty-five minutes, the teacher must cover, by any means, the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The English syllabus, together with books and materials used, is the same in all schools. It is compulsory to pass English in order to qualify and be able to apply for higher education. English is the medium of instruction at the university level in science and medicine colleges.

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It is considered, in other colleges, as a requirement and taught for a year or two, depending on the needs of the various specializations.

1.3.2 Goals of teaching English:

All social and economic changes in Saudi Arabia, previously mentioned, have created the need for communication between Saudi society and the international community. This need for communication has, in turn, led to emphasize the important role of teaching the English language. Seven goals are set by Ministry of Education for teaching English as a subject in general education. Some of them are set by researchers and educationists in the field but have been referred to the Ministry of Education as a source:

"1)English is the language most widely used in travel around the world and it is the most broadly used in mass media.

2) Since Saudi Arabia has established diplomatic relations with the western world, English must become the most important foreign language taught in all government schools. Therefore, a number of Saudi students are expected to hold positions that require them to deal with English-speaking people; in this case they need good instruction in English so that they can understand the other party and whatever materials are required in their professional development.

3) English is acknowledged as the leading language of science, technology, education and politics, as well as business and commerce.

4) References, scientific researches and technological terms are written in English, so English should be taught to our students in order for them to comprehend what they read.

5) Understanding the culture and thinking of other peoples requires us to understand the language which reflects their thoughts and ideas. Al-Kamookh (1981:3-4)

6) Developing language ability in various ways that can add to the strength of the Arabic language and help in deriving enjoyment from it and in sensing the aesthetic aspects of its style and ideas.

7) Teaching the students at least another living language beside their own native one in order to allow them to enrich themselves with science, cultural affairs, arts and useful

creative things and working on the conveyance of our science and intellectual achievements to their societies, thus contributing to the spread of Islam and the service of humanity."Al-Zaid (1982:11).

The goals reflect the philosophy of teaching English in general education. The first goal represents a vital purpose for introducing English to the community of Saudi Arabia. When English became the world language at the beginning of this century, it was awarded the highest position among languages for tourism and business.

The political view expressed by the second goal springs from the crucial role English plays in international meetings, conferences, conventions and diplomatic assemblies. Many purposes can also be inferred from the third goal since it describes English as "the leading language of science, technology, education and politics, as well as business and commerce.". The fourth goal adds more targets by ascertaining the importance of English in reading references, scientific researches and technological books. The last two goals are loftier and formulated in a very broad sense. These goals as stated before illustrate the general demands on the English language felt by the government. They reflect the aspirations and ambitions of the country with respect to the expansion of its economic affairs and the need for English as a business language.

1.3.3 English teacher education:

The role of the language teacher is considered to be crucial to the learning process for the dual role he plays as an educationist and as an instructor, and for the dual functions he\she fulfils as a transmitter of knowledge and a facilitator for acquiring that knowledge (Finocchiaro and Bonomo, 1973). Teacher's message in the field of language is more effective in bringing about changes in attitudes, habits and skills in his\her students. It is reported from a learner:

> " When we look back on our schooling, we remember teachers
> rather than courses, we remember their manner and methods,
> their enthusiasm and intellectual excitement, and their capacity

to arouse our delight in, or our curiosity about, the subject taught"(Burt et al, 1978, p.37).

Qualification of Saudi teachers of English ranged from B.A. to diploma in English, with only a small number of them having M.A., but more important than the range of qualifications is the very wide range of experience of using English communicatively that teachers have. While some teachers trained, at some level, in English speaking countries, and more have, at the same time, benefitted from contact with native speakers, it is still true that most teachers have had little or no personal contact with English native speakers in their professional life. Due to the increased number of Saudi graduates recently, the problem of the shortage of English teachers was overcome in intermediate and secondary schools. At university level, there is still a clear shortage of adequately qualified Saudi teachers. This has led to recruitment of qualified expatriate teachers from abroad.

Some training programs have been set up to equip teachers with techniques necessary to adapt the textbook's material in order to satisfy learners' needs, in addition to the ability to produce and use the teaching aids effectively. Strevens (1978, p.21) stated that: "The general effectiveness of language learning and teaching in any given country is heavily dependent on the nature and quality of the training which teachers undergo before entering their profession."

Saudi teachers of English have two types of training in Saudi Arabia. The first is a four year BA degree programme offered by colleges of Arts and Education with English as major. Teachers joining colleges of education are trained as teachers of English as a foreign language. The second type of programme is run by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Institute of General Administration for teachers already working in the elementary schools. The duration of the second programme is three years, at the end of which successful candidates are awarded a Diploma.

The quality of teacher preparation is a significant factor in determining the degree of programme success. Howkins stated that:

"Reform movements may come and go but real progress in language teaching must depend on the quality of the teachers"

Howkins (1981, p.286)

1.4 Current provision of English teaching in Saudi Arabia:

As stated earlier in (1.1), the first objective of this study is to reveal and shed light on current provision of tertiary teaching/learning conditions and its shortcomings. In doing so, the study will attempt to discuss the educational background factors of the students in this research.

The teaching of English in Saudi Arabia faces some problems that affect its process and its end product. Different views have been expressed as regards the causes of the weakness in English among students. Some educators have blamed it on the teaching method adopted in schools, some have attributed the problem to the limited time devoted to teaching English in schools, others have blamed the teachers, claiming that they were not well enough qualified and they were not willing to make an effort to improve their teaching skills. Some have pointed out that students do not have motivation to learn the language or use it in class and that their interest lies only in passing the end of year examination. (AlAnsari, 1995).

As early as 1983, a scientific symposium for improving English teaching methods at state education stages in the Arab Gulf states was held in Bahrain (Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf states, 1983). Participating members from Saudi Arabia grouped possible causes under three categories: Problems concerning English teachers, problems concerning students, and problems concerning inspectors. Regarding the first category, the problems were listed as follows:

1- Arabic was used by teachers in classrooms for a variety of purposes. New language items were presented in one context only. Students were not afforded the opportunity to actually use the language.

2- When new materials were implemented on a national scale, teachers were not given

training on how to approach them.

3- language laboratories available in schools were not used because of time constraints on the part of the teachers and lack of good materials.

Problems that concern the students were:

1- The teaching method employed affects students' learning because it does not accommodate individual differences; it is too rigid, not flexible.

2- Lack of intrinsic motivation.

3- Previous distressing experiences that some students encountered tend to affect others, either their peers or their younger brothers or sisters who would then join English classes with a ready built-in barrier against learning the language.

4- Difficulty in using the new language since they are not given opportunities to use it in class.

As for the problems concerning the third category:

1-Lack of materials and periodicals that update inspectors' knowledge in their field of work.

2- Lack of professional native inspectors.

The problem of deficient standards of language competence becomes eminent at university level. Students' weakness in English has continued to attract educators' attention. In an issue of Al-Riyadh newspaper (May 7,1985, no.6162), Dr. Jasser Al-Jasser, the director of the centre of European languages at King Saud University, indicated that the percentage of success in the intensive English program that is required from secondary school graduates before being admitted to college is very low. The percentage of success was 54% for male students and 56% for female students.

Dr. Al-Jasser believes that this low level of success is caused by three factors. Firstly, the level of students' achievement before joining the university is very low and it cannot be overcome in the time allocated for the intensive English Program which is one semester. Secondly, the curriculum of English language in intermediate and secondary schools does not go along with the objectives for which it is designed. Thirdly, the instability in teaching

methods and in teaching experiences, through which students go, leaves a negative effect on their progress and achievement.

Students' weakness in English has continued to attract educators' attention. One of the major reasons for low achievement, discovered by many researchers, is the late exposure to English. Students usually start learning English only in the intermediate stage at the age of twelve, except in some private schools where students start learning English in the primary school at the age of six. This late exposure to the target language has its own shortcomings (see section 4.3.2).

The above points indicate that deficiencies in English of learners in Saudi Arabia result from many factors. These deficiencies are rooted in the main factors of the learning process, namely, teachers, materials, teaching methods, condition of classrooms, and testing. Therefore, it is important to investigate the different elements involved in each factor. These factors represent the educational background factors that were mentioned in chapter four, as figure (1) shows, and which have a relation with other individual variables, strategy use and achievement.

1.4.1 Materials and Textbooks:

The teaching of English in Saudi Arabia began with a programme called "Living English for the Arab World" (Allen, 1962) published by Longman, for the secondary stage. The syllabus was brought from the neighbouring Arabic countries. It ran for twenty years or so till 1980 when a new English programme was especially designed and introduced to intermediate and secondary schools. To meet the needs and interests of the students and the new objectives set, "Saudi Arabian Schools English", -SASE- another programme, published by Macmillan, was implemented in 1980. It was a step forward towards improving the quality of the language programme. However, as the development and piloting stages were not carefully worked through, difficulties occurred and the programme was replaced by another one (Al-Subahi, 1982). The current programme is called "English for Saudi Arabia", a

modified version of the Macmillan programme, which to some extent, responds positively to the aspirations and needs of the Saudi society and learners. However it does not adequately apply the recent teaching approaches and is not able to meet communicative and educational needs.

The content of these programmes focuses on the person's knowledge of English grammar and how to create a sentence. It does not focus on how the student uses English sentences in real life situations. The four skills of: listening, speaking, reading and writing, do not function communicatively in the syllabus. No effort is made to reflect attention to students' intrinsic motivation by basing the content on their needs and interests. In each instructional unit, new words and structures are met first in a reading passage then explained through limited, sometimes inappropriate contexts, after which a few exercises usually follow.

The main teaching materials available are textbooks accompanied by tapes; use of blackboards; and, in some schools, language laboratories. Textbooks, which are the same in all schools, are issued by the Ministry of Education. They are especially designed for Saudi schools and based on the Saudi and Islamic culture. The teachers receive the syllabus and statements of its objectives, and they are responsible for its implementation and completion of the course in the alloted time which is four forty-five minute sessions a week in an academic year which does not exceed 35 weeks. The course books contain texts followed by a grammar lesson, composition, drills, vocabulary, and exercises. Most of the texts, with their identical page format and colourless pictures are unattractive to students and presented in a way that is more likely to inhibit learning than to motivate it.

As for language skills, the focus is on reading (reading aloud after the teacher's model) and writing, which involves filling in blanks, reordering words to form sentences, handwriting, dictation, and elementary composition. Speaking and listening are limited to fixed drills and dialogues. Students' interest is expected to be centred on satisfying teachers' expectations. In addition to the textbooks, there are readers containing short stories, accompanied sometimes by tapes. The course also includes a teachers' book which contains the answer

to all language exercises and guidance for the teacher on how to explain grammar and texts. Language laboratories are not available in all schools, and where they exist, they are for many reasons in a non-operative state. Most teachers are not trained to operate language laboratories. Poor maintenance is another reason, due to the unavailability of trained technicians or of spare parts. In addition, lack of time prevents the teachers from using the laboratory facilities.

As far as other teaching materials are concerned, despite the fact that the Ministry of Education recommends the use of blackboards, pictures, flash cards, tape recorder, educational tours and films, it seems that the blackboard is the main and often exclusive means readily available to the teacher who is required to devise his\her own teaching aids. The educational development department assumes the responsibility for evaluating textbooks and introducing further adjustments where appropriate. While language inspectors are consulted in this process, neither teachers nor students' views are sought in this respect.

1.4.2 Teaching Methods:

In general, English teaching is strongly influenced by the approach employed in the teaching of Arabic; that is memorization of written forms, formal instruction and academic analysis, rather than an emphasis on communicative competence and communicative pedagogies. In Saudi Arabia such kind of teaching is considered to be traditional but it shares a lot of features of the grammar-translation method. So it will be referred to it in the rest of the study as the traditional method. Instruction in the syllabus follows the traditional way of teaching Arabic which considers language as a content-based subject and not as a skill subject. It develops the competence of the student in English knowledge rather than performance. The student is still assessed with reference to his competence in knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary rather than his performance in the actual use of the language. As for language skills, reading and writing are dealt with separately and are focused upon at the expense of listening and speaking which are wholly ignored. Even test items on reading and writing do not assess the ability of the student to read and

write.Techniques used for instruction are: chorus work, answering questions, correction, individualizing learning. Games and role-play are rarely used. The audiovisual aids designed for the syllabuses are: wall charts, flash-cards and in some schools, cassettes.

Although the ministry permits the use of different teaching methods, language teachers tend to favour the traditional method, as stated above, in combination with some features of grammar-translation method. The main characteristics of this method are:

1- the teacher's role is an authoritative one. He is the knowledge provider.

2- The role of the learners is a passive one: it is to master the rules through memorization.

3- It starts from an abstract study of grammar moving from the simple to the more complex through translation.

4- It is detached from the practical mastery of the language and pays relatively little attention to listening and speaking.

5- It is mainly concerned with linguistic competence and gives priority to academic attainment. No attention is paid to everyday conversation or communicative competence.

Obviously, the teaching atmosphere in classes in Saudi Arabia tends to reflect the outdated traditional practice. Once the lesson has started the teacher spends a lot of time explaining and illustrating new language items, sometimes speaking to the students, sometimes writing on the board, while the students sit and either listen, read, or copy from the board when asked to.The traditional method, though producing a grammatically competent learner, fails to assist him in acquiring the ability to engage in normal everyday communication. It is, therefore, considered to be ineffective in mastering a language as a global skill.

1.4.3 Classrooms:

During the last quarter of the century, there has been an unbelievably high increase in the number of schools and students. This tremendous increase in the number of students created serious problems for the Ministry of Education because there were not enough schools to hold the yearly increase in students' numbers. Therefore, the ministry had to compromise by renting houses and buildings which were never designed as schools and so they lack many

the school's facilities such as laboratories, enough cloakrooms, workshops, libraries and theatres, playgrounds and yards. Now, the Ministry of Education is undertaking a great project of building schools instead of always having to rent accommodation.

Classrooms are not designed for language classes. Students, in every school at all stages from primary to university level, including the classroom in which the study was conducted, are seated in rows and the teacher is facing them in front of the blackboard. The arrangement of seats does not allow students to face each other and does not allow a teacher to move around to orient interaction in class. Classrooms are also small in size and overcrowded. Crowded classes are one of the great challenges facing English language teachers. The shortage of adequately qualified teachers has led to gather students of widely different abilities in one class. In such classes the teacher will be completely confused between those students who ask for basic explanations and those who, apart from being bored because of too much repetition, are eager to learn new skills or information in the target language. The large number of students in a relatively small classroom is not ideal for student-student interaction nor for group work that is needed for a better teaching\learning situations and communicative activities.

1.4.4 Teachers:

The tremendous increase in the number of schools and students, as mentioned earlier, has created a shortage of teachers. At school level, all English teachers are Saudis but at university level the majority are foreigners, some of whom are native English speakers.

In the learning process, the teacher plays a major role and he can contribute to the success or failure of the learning process. Many specialists and educators feel that the teacher of the English language in Saudi Arabia is the most important factor in accounting for the lack of language proficiency of students in English. The minimum requirement set by the Ministry for English language teachers is a degree in English, but previous training and experience, and higher qualifications though taken into consideration are not required. No regular in-service programmes are provided for English language teachers. Training sessions are run only when major changes are introduced into the English language programme. Most

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teachers have an adequate command of English, but they do not get guidance and enough attention in terms of updating their knowledge in the field of EFL. The interest of the majority lies in completing the uniform course books and seeing that students master the material within the time given. In other words, teachers are required to prepare for the examinations. Throughout the years, English language teachers have learnt to occupy themselves with finishing the teaching units on time by following every step recommended in the teachers book. Among the teacher population there is a very limited number of ambitious teachers who do not use the teacher's book so slavishly but employ it as a guide. They do their best to involve their students in all classroom activities, and prepare extra, relevant materials to their lessons.

A number of studies have revealed many problems, besides the above, related to English teachers (Arishi 1984; Jan 1984; Alansari 1995):

1-Most of the teachers lecture or dominate the talk in class at the expense of students' participation and practice of the language.

2- Some of the teachers use Arabic language in explaining English patterns or vocabulary. They use translation to make their job easier. The use of Arabic and translation impede students' progress in developing their communicative competence.

3-Quite a few teachers spend too much time correcting the students' grammatical and phonetic mistakes. In other words, those teachers seem to be more concerned about accuracy than fluency.

4- Some teachers do not budget the class time to cover well all the lesson material. As a result, they run out of time and consume the students' break.

5-The culture of the target language is rarely mentioned or considered by teachers.

6- Some teachers encourage students to memorize certain answers to some questions to prepare them to pass the examinations and not learn the language.

7- Newer methods of foreign language teaching, such as communicative approaches, are never tried by the teachers.

8-Some teachers consider textbooks an end not a means to create communicative abilities in students.

1.4.5 Examinations:

To be promoted from one grade to another, students have to pass final written exams prepared by teachers at the end of the academic year. These exams aim to test students on the content covered through the whole year. This creates considerable pressure on both teachers and students. Teachers are supposed to prepare the students for examinations and required to finish the syllabus in the time allowed. As for students, their focus is on what is covered in final exams; extra activities which are not measured are ignored. Anxiety about the test results has an unsatisfactory psychological effect on students and their parents as failing the exams is seen as degrading.

In general, English language tests are not stimulating. They do not aim to measure genuine communicative use of the language. They are still restricted to two skills, reading and writing. Listening and oral skills are neglected and the ability to communicate is not the criterion for success.

As discussed above, many English language specialists in the country acknowledge these shortcomings of the current condition. They argue that students do not have the basic language skills which they can practice in daily life. On this basis, the creation of a new method of language teaching becomes an unavoidable process to diagnose the deficiencies created by the current method and construct a new syllabus able to satisfy the communicative needs of the students.

As well as all the above shortcomings in English teaching in Saudi Arabia, there are many other important issues that have not been taken into consideration. Issues concerning "active learning" and the strategies employed by learners have not been brought to attention by researchers in Saudi Arabia, and that will be the major issue that will be discussed in this research in the following chapters.

1.5. Current status of research in ELT in Saudi Arabia:

Research on the teaching of English in Saudi Arabia is very limited. In the last decade, a few theses have been written which have investigated the status of English language education. Although each study concerned itself with a different aspect, all research so far reached the conclusion that the English language programme delivered in schools needs modification and continuous revision if it is to meet students' various needs and interests. Some of the most important studies are summarized below according to the dates of occurrence. One of the studies was conducted by Mulla, Mohammed Amin (1979). It investigates the attitudes, motivation, anxiety, and other biological variables as predictors of achievement in English as a foreign language. The study reflects some of the findings in this study that found a correlation between starting age to study the language and EFL achievement.

Another study looking at "the perception of the English language teachers towards methods of teaching English in Saudi Arabian schools", was conducted in 1981 by Ali Al-Kamookh. The study concludes that the teacher prefers dealing with the traditional method followed by the grammar translation method. A third study was led by Radhi Surur (1981) who surveyed the attitudes of students, teachers, and administrators towards English language in Saudi Arabian schools. The study showed that there is no satisfaction with the English curriculum including textbooks and the classroom activities. It concluded that there should be a more relaxed atmosphere in teaching and learning the language. The present research supports the suggestions made by that study to apply more communicative techniques in language teaching.

Another study by Sulaiman Al-Muarik (1982) analysed and compared the errors made by intermediate and secondary third grade students. The study indicated that there were some errors that come about as a result of inadequate teaching /learning situations. It suggested that the motivation and attitudes of Saudi Arabian students towards English learning need to be studied and recognised as an essential part of the learning process. It agrees with some

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of the findings in this study regarding the correlation between motivation and language learning.

Al-Shammary (1982) conducted a similar study concerning the development of motivation to learn English as a foreign language across several age groups. One of the implications of the study is the positive role of age and level of education in the development of motivation to learn English from the first grade intermediate to the first grade secondary.

Al-Twaijri(1982) conducted a study on the adequacy of students' preparation in English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia.The study revealed that many students had great interest in learning English, but were not encouraged or motivated by teachers. The study recommended that a revision and reevaluation of the materials used be undertaken by specialised Saudi educators, schools should be provided with language laboratories, and supervision of the teaching of English should be improved and increased.

An assessment of the in-service training needs of teachers of English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia was conducted by AlSaadat (1985). Results of the study showed that all respondents; EFL teachers, inspectors, and teacher trainers, were in agreement that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia needed in-service training in the area of professional skills. Supervision is the only form of in-service training available on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the inspectors' interest usually lies in the business of detecting teachers' linguistic errors. Since it is expected that it will be a long time before more provisions for in service training is established, the study recommends that classroom supervision needs to undergo a major overhaul in which a sense of collaboration and mutual understanding should be emphasised.

In 1986 Dhafar conducted a survey of the English language supervisors' and teachers' perceptions of the English language curriculum. The study showed that four periods per week are not enough for learning English, attempts are rarely made to relate the study of English to the actual needs of the learner, and the teacher is often armed with materials and

ordered to teach without any training. Accordingly, the study suggests that there is a need for more classes per week, the syllabus needs to be revised and improved, and there is a need for in-service programmes for both supervisors and teachers.

In one of the diagnostic studies concerning teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, Al-Ahaidib, Mohammad (1986) conducted research to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the English syllabuses of the intermediate and the secondary stages through the perceptions of supervisors, teachers and the third grade intermediate and secondary students. The study showed that students had a very high motivation to learn English when they entered the programme, but after some time their motivation diminished. Students' participation in class activities was almost absent due to the dominant role that teachers played in classrooms. Emphasis was on memorization instead of understanding. Teachers gave the first priority to finishing the assigned materials regardless of students' understanding and they tended to speak Arabic more than needed. The study recommended that English language curriculum should be modified and constantly evaluated by teachers, supervisors, students and educators for improvement. In-service programmes should be designed to help teachers in the areas of methodology, testing, language skills, and operating language laboratories.

In 1988 Al-Mazroou conducted a study to determine the status of teaching English as perceived by Saudi EFL teachers. The study recommended that in-service training should be conducted and that textbooks should be revised in order to meet students' needs. It suggested that the present examination system should be revised and new methods of testing and grading should be reached.

AlAnsari (1995) conducted a study on in-service education and training of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. The study set out to find solutions to improve the competence of inadequately trained teachers. The findings of the study revealed that there was a gap between the current in-service training provided by the Ministry of Education and the perceived needs. An

alternative in-service training model was designed to meet the target needs of EFL teachers.

The above mentioned studies discussed the methodology of the English language programme: supervision, teacher training, methods of teaching, attitudes and motivation of students towards English. They were the cornerstone for this study in giving views about the current provision and shortcomings of English teaching in Saudi Arabia, and revealing the critical need for a change in the current system. Such need for a change was behind the motivation for this study. Since no attempt was made, by these studies, to diagnose the learning strategies used by students, their individual variables, and their relation to language proficiency, the researcher was encouraged to undertake this study.

1.6 Learning English and Arabic culture:

English plays a very distinctive role in Saudi Arabia as a means for achieving academic and educational targets. On the level of national policy English is considered as the medium for most diplomatic relations in addition to its role in importing modern technology into the society. The basic aim of a language class in Saudi Arabia is to have the student learn to communicate in the foreign language. But the existence of cultural variations produces a problem in second language learning and teaching. The country is a centre of conservative Muslims in as much as it is the heartland of Islam which means that any cultural behaviours contradictory to the principles of Islam should not be employed. Material should be carefully designed so as not to embody any kind of forbidden experiences, disallowed behaviours or prohibited names or items. Therefore language teaching materials and methodology should be appropriate to the Saudi Arabian context, as Kramsch (1996:211) stated, "while authentic pedagogy tries to apply native-speaker practices across multiple contexts of use, irrespective of local conditions, appropriate pedagogy tries to revise native-speaker language use and make it fulfil both global and local needs".

Most of the cultural attitudes which an Arab learner of English has built into him\her are reflected in and influence his speech. That is one of the reasons for the difficulty in acquiring

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a foreign language. There are also many other differences in the elements of culture: speech habits, literature, and even religious beliefs. An English teacher should bear in mind that English reflects the way of life of the English-speaking people which is in many areas different from the way his students behave. Teaching a language without teaching its culture means teaching meaningless symbols, or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning. In every culture, there are many habits, customs, and thoughts that cannot be understood far from their cultural connotations. These connotations must be taught in the language classroom. The Arabic student will not understand what is meant by, e.g., "Halloween", "snowman", or "vampire" because there is no equivalent in his language and his culture. Many of the awkward mistakes of Arabic students could be avoided if their language classes had included information about the foreign culture as part of the course content.

A good environment for practising English is not always available for students in Saudi Arabia. Students are only taught grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing. Mastering rules of grammar is not adequate. What is more important is to practice speaking with native speakers. According to the data collected from the questionnaire, all students who have lived abroad were more successful in their academic tests, and used more learning strategies. The reason for that might be that the successful student has learned the language communicatively through his contact with the native speakers and their culture.

1.7 Summary:

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the background information of the present study. The researcher attempted in this chapter to give a profile of the country of Saudi Arabia and its people. The educational system was described from a historical point of view. This chapter has highlighted certain aspects in the teaching of English in Saudi Arabia in general and the teaching of English at tertiary level in particular. The motivation for carrying out the present study and the objectives were described in a way which showed the need for the present research. The study shows that despite the fact that teachers and the Ministry

of Education acknowledge both the need to teach English for communication, and the need to vary methods of teaching, the method widely used amongst teachers remains traditional: English teaching is strongly influenced by approach employed in the teaching of Arabic that is memorization of written forms, formal instruction and academic analysis, rather than an emphasis on communicative competence and communicative pedagogies. Many English language specialists in the country acknowledge the shortcomings of the current condition, as was discussed. On this basis, the creation of a new method of language teaching becomes an unavoidable process to modify the deficiencies created by the current method and construct a new syllabus able to satisfy the communicative needs of the students. Such need for a change was behind the motivation for this study. Since no attempt was made, by these previous studies, to diagnose the learning strategies used by students, their individual variables, and their relation to language proficiency, the researcher was encouraged to undertake this study. The next chapter will be devoted to the literature review on learning strategies and the issues related.

Chapter Two

Review of the related literature

2.0 Introduction:

Research efforts in second language learning have over the past years shifted from an emphasis on the role of the teacher to that of the learner. Optimizing the outcome of learning experiences has been and still is the aim of various theories and research studies in educational psychology. Educators in general naturally share this goal, and are continuously searching for ways to improve the education process.

Discovering what goes on in the minds of students, while they are in the process of learning a language, has become an important subject in second language research. Researchers in this field have identified various learning strategies which students use to gain control over new language skills in English. Studies about the learning strategies used for mastering English have been influenced by theories in second language learning and in cognitive psychology. (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1987).

Second language research has begun to investigate the area of cognitive learning strategies through a variety of different methods and techniques. Research on this subject has brought to light some interesting data about students in the language learning classroom and perhaps more important, a determined group of researchers who are convinced of the importance of continued investigation of students' language learning strategies. Research has shown that the learning strategies used by successful language learners might have considerable potential for increasing the development of language skills (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). These learning strategies might be taught with positive effects to second language learners who apply them. They may be extended to new tasks not only in the language class, but also in various content areas requiring language skills.

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If only there were an answer to the question of why some students perform well in a foreign language classroom setting and others do not, then the foreign language teachers' problems would be solved. For years, researchers attempted to find an answer to this question. However, it has not been until recently that researchers have begun to identify many factors that contribute to a learner's self-selection of learning strategies. Studies have shown that the way information is perceived, processed and stored varies from one individual to another and is influenced by many factors such as motivation, personality and past experiences (Oxford, 1993, 1989; Bialystok, 1983). These factors have an effect on the learner's choice of learning strategies. Because certain learning strategies used by successful language learners may assist them in gaining command over required skills, these strategies are positively associated with language proficiency (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Whether or not individuals' variables appear to influence their strategic approach to language learning, and their level of achievement, has become the basis for this study. It has focused on the correlational relationship between individual differences in the use of learning strategies, and language achievement.

This chapter reflects on the concept of strategy as is seen and understood in learning theories. It gives definitions for many other terms that affect, directly or indirectly, the use of learning strategies. It also reviews the early and recent studies, in the same field, and the results of these experiments.

2.1 Second language learning and cognitive theory:

Researchers suggest that second language learning is the "the acquisition of a language once a first language has been learned after the age of two" (Spolsky 1988,p.378). Interest in the role of cognition in second language acquisition is not new. In fact, the developing links between cognitive psychology and linguistics have been chronicled, analysed and applied to language teaching by Wilga Rivers for more than twenty-five years (Rivers, 1964). In the last years, a number of second language researchers have turned their attention to cognitive theories of learning (Bialystok 1981, Ellis 1984,Faerch and Kasper 1987,Spolsky 1985).

Psychological theories of learning have proposed that the way in which information is acquired cannot be understood without an analysis of the cognitive processes involved in the selection, interpretation, and construction of knowledge (Anderson 1980, 1985; Brown 1983). Cognitive strategies in particular have been concerned with the mental processes underlying how information is stored in memory and how information is learned. The original conception of memory processes in cognitive theory differentiated memory into short-term memory, in which a limited amount of new knowledge was retained for only short periods and long-term memory, in which there were fewer limitations on the amount or duration over which information could be retained. What enables long-term memory to accomplish the end purpose of collecting, retaining, and providing for the retrieval of large amounts of information is the organization of memory into schemata or interconnected frame works of concepts (Carrel and Devine 1988; Rivers 1983).

Information is said to be stored in long-term memory as either declarative or procedural knowledge (Anderson 1983,1985). This distinction between these two types of memory lies not only in how each is stored, but in how each is learned. "Declarative knowledge" consists of the facts that we know, i.e.the information that we can declare or describe. It is best learned by associating new information with prior knowledge and building on existing schemata (Gagne' 1985). On the other hand, "procedural knowledge" refers to the ability to perform various skills, including complex cognitive skills, such as the ability to use language. It is best learned through observation of an expert model and extensive practice accompanied by feedback (Gagne' 1985).

2.1.1. Stages of skill acquisition:

The cognitive theory of skills acquisition indicates that complex cognitive skills are acquired through a three-stage process in which the skills gradually become proceduralized or automatic (Anderson 1983, 1985).

In the first, or "cognitive stage", learners are provided with rules or condition-action sequences for task performance. This stage entails conscious analysis of the task

requirements and the activities that are likely to lead to the desired performance or task solution. Knowledge of the task and task requirements is largely declarative at this stage and can be described by the learner. Task performance at this stage has been referred to as controlled processing, or as processing that requires the attention of the learner and places demands on short-term memory (Shiffrin and Schneider 1977).

In the "associative", or second stage, Two main changes occur in task performance. First, errors in the original declarative representation are detected and eliminated, and second, the connections between components of the complex skill are strengthened. This strengthening leads to efficiency in task performance and reduction in the time required to perform the task. In a third, or "autonomous stage", the performance becomes increasingly fine tuned. Execution of the skill is nearly automatic and the skill can be performed effortlessly. The skill is said to have been proceduralized through the construction of a propositional representation of action or thought sequences that are converted into production systems. Task performance at this stage of acquisition is referred to as automatic processing (Shiffrin and Schneider 1977) to signal that little attention on the part of the learner is required and there are few demands on short-term memory.

The transition of a condition-action rule from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge occurs through "knowledge compilation" which has two components: proceduralization and composition. In proceduralization, declarative knowledge of condition-action sequences is stored in long-term memory as propositional representations and ultimately as production systems. In composition, individual productions are combined into larger productions. Anderson indicates that knowledge compilation in learning problem-solving skills is more efficient when analogies or sample problems with opportunities for practice are incorporated into new learning (Anderson, 1983, 1985). In Anderson's theory, strategies can be represented as "any other complex skill, and described as a set of productions that are compiled and fine-tuned until they become procedural knowledge" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:43).

2.2.1 The role of learning strategies in second language learning:

The role of learning strategies and their relationships to proficiency in learning English as a second language may be explained by concentrating on differences between second language learners and their choice of specific learning strategies. Good language learners use a variety of learning strategies, including cognitive strategies for associating new information with existing information in the long-term memory and for forming and revising internal mental models; metacognitive strategies for exercising "executive control" through planning, arranging, focusing, and evaluating their own learning process; social strategies for interacting with others and managing discourse; affective strategies for directing feelings, motivations, and attitudes related to learning; and compensation strategies for overcoming deficiencies in knowledge of the language. Appropriate learning strategies might help explain the performance of good language learners; similarly, the use of inappropriate learning strategies might explain the frequent failures of poor language learners and even the occasional weaknesses of good ones.

Students, learning a foreign language face a challenging task, given the length of study required to gain even a moderate degree of proficiency. Successful language learners differ from less successful ones in a number of ways, of which perhaps the most important is the degree to which they are strategic in their approach to the various tasks which comprise language learning. Teachers may be able to improve the performance of less successful language students by showing them how to use some of the strategic approaches of good language learners.

To understand the theories relating to learning strategy and to distinguish different types of learning strategies, it is first necessary to clearly define the term learning strategy.

2.2.2 Learning strategy definitions from researchers' perspectives:

All individuals are viewed in cognitive theory as learning most effectively through active, dynamic mental processes. Learning strategies are intentional mental processes that individuals use to select, organize, acquire, or integrate new knowledge or to change their motivational or effective state or enhance learning. (Weinstein and Mayer 1986). A learning

strategy may be a specific tactic or technique, or it may be a general plan for completing a task (Derry, 1990). Keefe (1982) defined a learning strategy as a way in which a student could perceive, interact with, and respond to his learning environment.

A learning strategy is a set of operations or steps used by a learner to facilitate the acquisition, storage or retrieval of information (O'Malley et al., 1985). It is one of many conscious attempts of a learner to cope with the learning environment and to improve language proficiency (Bialystock, 1978). A learning strategy is defined, by Brown (1980), as a method of perceiving and storing particular items for later recall. It refers to all levels of learning a target language; it is a "particular method of approaching a problem or task, a mode of operation for achieving a particular end, a planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information" (Brown, 1980).

Allwright viewed learning strategies as "means that learners seem to employ to help themselves improve their target language proficiency." (Allwright, 1991:142). Oxford (1990) defined learning strategies as specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations. An alternate definition for language learning strategies might be "the actions chosen by language students that are intended to facilitate language acquisition and communication" (MacIntyre, 1994:190).

These definitions and many others, while helpful, do not fully convey the excitement or richness of learning strategies. It is useful to expand this definition for the purpose of this study by adding that: learning strategies are actions or techniques that are either observable or unobservable and might be taught to help learners become more self-directed. They could be employed either consciously or automatically in response to communication problems, and could be influenced by a variety of factors. Each feature of learning strategies in this definition will be discussed in detail in (2.2.4).

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2.2.3 Learning strategy types or classification:

Learning strategy identification studies have uncovered a rich variety of strategies that learners of second languages employ as they seek to understand, remember, and use the new language (O'Malley 1990,Oxford 1990,Rubin 1981). Strategies may be used with simple learning tasks, such as mathematical problem solving, reading narrative and expository texts, listening, and written and oral language production. Some learning strategies, such as note-taking or outlining, are the observable study skills that are the familiar feature of the academic classroom. Other learning strategies cannot be observed because they are mental processes not necessarily accompanied by behavioural manifestations. Examples of purely mental learning strategies in a foreign language context are monitoring comprehension while listening to a radio broadcast, or activating prior knowledge during reading. This type of nonobservable strategy has been identified through interviews with students, questionnaires, and "think aloud" interviews in which students are asked to describe their thoughts as they work on a language task (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). These mental learning strategies are perhaps even more important in assisting students to learn more effectively than are the more traditional observable strategies.

This study used a language learning strategy system that is partially based on O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of psychological functions as metacognitive, cognitive and social affective strategies. Strategies not reported by students were eliminated and additional strategies reported were added, resulting in the augmented list of strategies shown in table (1) that will be discussed in detail in section (4.1.1).

"Metacognitive strategies" are higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring, or evaluating the success of a learning activity. They reflect the learner's knowledge of the learning process and are imposed by the learner to regulate his learning such as previewing and self-monitoring. "Cognitive strategies" operate directly on new

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information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning. They may be more limited to specific learning tasks, than are metacognitive strategies, such as note taking, inferencing and elaboration. The third type of learning strategy is "Social affective strategies", or strategies that influence the individual's motivational state, conceptualization of learning, or use of social interaction to enhance learning. Specific examples of social-affective strategies are asking questions for clarification, cooperative learning, and self-talk, or assuring one's self about the potential effectiveness of one's learning approaches or outcomes. Social-affective strategies are potentially applicable with a variety of learning tasks, as are metacognitive strategies.

Table (1)

Classification of learning strategies used by Saudi Students

Metacognitive strategies	**Selective attention**
	Self-monitoring
	Self-evaluation
	Self-management
	Planning
Cognitive strategies	Resourcing
	Note-taking
	Summarizing
	Inferencing
	Translating
	Imagery
	Reviewing
	Deduction
	Substitution
	Practising
	Grouping
Social\Affective Strategies	Clarification
	Cooperation

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2.2.4 Features of language learning strategies:

Learning strategies were defined for the purpose of this study, in (2.2.2), as actions or techniques that are, either observable or unobservable, and might be taught to help learners become more self-directed. They could be employed either consciously or automatically in response to communication problems, and could be influenced by a variety of factors.

There are many features to language learning strategies, but the following description will be related to the features in the above definition that serve the purpose of this study:

1-Learning strategies are problem-oriented: Language learning strategies are used by learners in response to communication problems to be solved, an objective to meet or a task to be done. For instant, substitution strategy can be used when learners cannot come up with the right word so they use synonyms or circumlocutions instead.

2-Learning strategies are often conscious: Language learning strategies, as suggested by some researchers, are often conscious actions used by the learners. However, after a period of practice and use, learning strategies can become automatic. Strategy training and assessment are very important to help learners become more aware of their strategies.

3- Learning strategies help learners to become more self-directed: Since it is impossible for teachers to teach learners everything they need to know, and since it is impossible for teachers to be with their students constantly, it is very important for learners to become independent. It is believed that learning strategies are the best tools to do this and to help them overcome communication problems. Students learning a foreign language face a challenging task, given the length of study required to gain even a moderate degree of proficiency. Successful language learners differ from less successful ones in a number of ways, of which perhaps the most important is the degree to which they are strategic in their approach to the various tasks which comprise language learning.

4-Communicative competence as the main goal: As discussed in detail in (2.4.1), communicative competence is the ability to communicate and it has four elements: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1983). All appropriate language learning strategies are oriented towards the goal of communicative competence. The development of communicative competence requires realistic interaction

among learners in real life situations. **Learning strategies** encourage the learners to participate actively in such situations. For instant, social strategies can help the learners through asking questions for clarification or cooperating with peers. There are some other strategies that are able to develop a specific aspect of the communicative competence such as inferencing or substitution that can powerfully aid strategic competence (see, 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.).

5-Teachability: Unlike most other variables affecting learner's proficiency, learning strategies might be teachable. This emphasizes that students should be encouraged to experiment with a great variety of strategies to apply them to tasks which promote creative, communicative learning. As they move towards language proficiency, language learners develop their own techniques in selecting the most effective strategies for their use.

6- Degree of observability: As was explained in the previous section, learning strategies are not always easily observable to the human eye. It is sometimes difficult for teachers to observe their students' learning strategies, because some strategies are mental processes not necessarily accompanied by behavioural manifestation. This type of nonobservable strategy has been identified through interviews with students, questionnaires, and "think aloud" interviews in which students are asked to describe their thoughts as they work on a language task (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). For instance, monitoring comprehension while listening to a radio is difficult to observe but note-taking in a classroom can be easily observed. Another problem with observing learning strategies is that many strategies are used outside the classroom in informal naturalistic situations unobservable by the teacher.

7- Factors influencing strategy choice: Researchers indicate that good language learners, compared with poor ones, generally use strategies appropriate to their own stage of learning, personality, age, etc. Studies dealing with individual differences in the learning process have focused on such questions as what makes a good language learner and why some students develop proficiency more quickly and easily than others. The potential answers for many researchers may lie in an analysis of the second language learner's strategies and other factors that may affect learner's choice of strategies. Many

factors have been identified as contributing to a learner's self-selection of learning strategies such as motivation. Results of the analysis in this study show that more highly motivated learners use a significantly greater range of appropriate strategies than do less motivated learners.

Many researchers have studied factors related to choice of language learning strategies, as shown in a review by Oxford (1990). These factors include: 1) Language being learned; 2)Level of language learning; 3)degree of metacognitive awareness; 4)sex; 5)affective variables such as attitudes, motivation, and language learning goals; 6)specific personality traits; 7)overall personality type; 8) learning style; 9) career orientation or field of specialization; 10)national origin; 11) aptitude; 12) language teaching methods; 13) task requirements; and 14)type of strategy training. The present research has focused on the correlational relationship between some factors that affect strategy choice and language achievement, which will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

2.3. A Brief overview of studies in learning strategies:

The approaches to learning strategies have been varied. Beginning with the development of invalidated lists derived from informal observations (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975), researchers have gradually employed more effective measures such as retrospective interviews (Naiman et al., 1975; O'Malley et al., 1985; Wenden 1986) and introspective self-reporting surveys that require students to provide immediate oral feedback (Hosenfeld, 1975; O'Malley & Chamot, 1987), to keep diaries (Rubin, 1981) or to complete structured questionnaires (Bialystok, 1981; Oxford, 1981).

One of the major difficulties in performing research with learning strategies in second language acquisition is that until recently there has been no adequate theory to describe the role of cognition in language learning or any theoretical description indicating what influence learning strategies play on memory processes in general. As O'Malley and Chamot (1990:2) stated: "..there was no theory to guide our studies and few empirical investigations into the nature of learning strategies and their influence on second language acquisition. What did

exist were a few descriptive studies of strategies used by effective second language learners".

Efforts to describe both second language acquisition and learning strategies within the cognitive theory proposed by Anderson (1981,1983,1985) have provided the necessary theoretical foundation to guide research in this area. Anderson suggests that language can best be understood as a complex cognitive skill and that mental processes involved in language parallel the processes used with other cognitive skills both in memory representation and in learning. In describing memory processes, Anderson distinguishes between "declarative knowledge", or what we know about, and "procedural knowledge", or what we know how to do. Although Anderson does not explicitly describe learning strategies, a number of mental processes he discusses serve to explain how strategies are represented, how they are learned, and how they influence second language acquisition.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) present an extensive account of a series of studies. They discuss the relationship between second language acquisition and cognitive processes and highlight the beneficial aspects of viewing second language learning from the cognitive perspective, emphasizing that the theory provides a framework within which learning strategies research can be understood. O'Malley et al. (1990) indicate that learning strategies are declarative knowledge that may become procedural knowledge through practice. Learning strategies are conscious and deliberate when they are in the cognitive and associative stages of learning, but in the autonomous stage the strategies are applied automatically or without awareness. As with other complex cognitive skills, the strategies are acquired only with extensive opportunities for practice. Viewing second language acquisition as a cognitive skill offers several advantages for research on language learning strategies. Anderson's model provides a comprehensive theoretical frame work for second language learning and can be adapted to provide a detailed process view of how students acquire and retain a new language. It can also help to identify and describe the existence and use of specific learning strategies for different types of learners at various stages in their

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second language acquisition.

Studies have been carried out in an attempt to identify specific conscious strategies which students use to facilitate their own learning of a second language. As early as 1975, Joan Rubin attempted to find out what successful learners did in the hopes that their strategies might then be taught to less successful learners. In her review of cognitive processes literature, Joan Rubin (1981) suggests that the amount of research devoted to identifying cognitive processes and strategies which might facilitate second language learning has been very limited. Her own work towards this goal has provided an "observation schedule"of possible strategies. This schedule has been modified through observation(using videotapes and/or observer's notes), students' self-reports, and directed diary studies. Rubin found the directed diary studies to be the most productive of the three methods of data collection. She stresses several difficulties with her identification of strategies' procedure: the importance of making notes during or immediately after the class, the time-consuming nature of the process, and the fact that not all students are equally adept at reporting on their own strategies.

Rubin suggested the good language learner is a willing and accurate guesser; has a strong persevering drive to communicate; takes advantage of all practice opportunities; monitors his own speech as well as of others; and pays attention to meaning. Rubin (1987) also identified strategies contributing to language learning success either directly -, e.g.: inductive inferencing, practice, memorization - or indirectly -, e.g. creating practice opportunities, using production tricks.

Naiman et al. initiated a research that focused on personality traits, cognitive styles, and strategies that were critical to successful language learning (Naiman et al, 1978). The initial frame of reference for the strategies was Stern's (1975) list of ten strategies. Naiman et al modified that list on the basis of the views and the statements of the interviewees in their study to form a list of five general strategies and related techniques. According to the list, good language learners:

1- actively involve themselves in the language learning process by identifying and seeking

preferred learning environments and exploring them,

2- develop an awareness of language as a system,

3- develop an awareness of language as a means of communication and interaction,

4- accept and cope with the affective demands of L2,

5- extend and revise L2 system by inferencing and monitoring.

Hosenfeld (1976, 1979, 1981) developed a "thinking aloud technique" to assist in the collection of information about students' strategies. Beginning with a second year class of junior high school students, she made full class observations for several days and then individually interviewed 25 students. During the interview, she conducted a brief training period in the technique and when a student showed sufficient ability to think aloud, Hosenfeld presented foreign language tasks for the student to perform. As the students performed the tasks, they reported their thoughts. She found that students are not usually doing what we assume they are doing and that junior high school students are capable of talking about their own strategies (Hosenfeld, 1976). In a later study, Hosenfeld (1979) continued to use the think aloud technique, this time with college-age beginning Spanish students. Interview sessions were recorded and subsequently analysed qualitatively to describe students' strategies and to examine consistencies and differences between successful and unsuccessful task performers.

Ellen Bialystok (1981) also investigated consciously used strategies in second language learning. In order to consider what learners actually do to facilitate their own learning, she focused on three specific strategies: practising, monitoring and inferencing. Using a questionnaire and achievement tests, she assessed the strategies of both grade 10 and grade 12 French as a second language students. In grade 10, students' overall use of strategies were associated with achievement; in grade 12, the effects of strategy use was more specialized by task. This showed that in at least some types of tests, achievement was positively affected by the use of strategies.

McLaughlin (1983) proposed an information processing approach to second language learning. In this theory, the learner is viewed as an active organizer of incoming information with processing limitations and capabilities. While motivation is considered to be an important element in language learning, the learner's cognitive system is central to processing. Thus, the learner is able to store and retrieve information according to the degree to which the information was processed. Evidence for aspects of the information processing model comes from studies of language processing and memory. One implication of information processing for second language acquisition is that learners actively impose cognitive schemata on incoming data in an effort to organize that data. McLaughlin et al. (1983) proposed that the learner uses a top-down approach (or knowledge-governed system) which makes use of internal schemata as well as a bottom-up approach (or an input- governed system) which processes external input to achieve automaticity. In both cases, cognition is involved, and the degree of cognitive involvement required is set by the task itself.

Politzer's (1983) exploratory study focused on the correlation between self-reported language learning behaviours and achievement in foreign language learning. Undergraduate students of French, Spanish and German were asked to complete a questionnaire about the use of selecting learning behaviours. The main finding was that there is some evidence for a link between certain behaviours and student achievement. Politzer obtained mixed results: behaviours associated with social interaction and generation of input were related to success in Spanish and German but not in French. He explains that, unlike Spanish and German, the French followed a different methodology, which suggests that the relation between learning behaviours and achievement may also depend on the teaching methodology.

Politzer and McGroarty (1985) used a questionnaire to assess several supposedly "good learning behaviours" of Asian and Hispanic students preparing for graduate studies in the United States. Among their findings was the indication that strategy effectiveness may depend on the language task and that behaviours may be culturally specific. McGroarty

(1988), using students of Japanese and Spanish, correlated achievement and proficiency tests with study strategy questionnaires. The overall results indicated that successful language learning was associated with the use of strategies that helped students seek exposure to the language by practising it in class or outside.

Spolsky (1985) proposes a model of second language acquisition based on preference rules. In his view, three types of conditions apply to second language learning, one of which is a necessary condition and the other two of which depend on the learner's preference, which could be cognitive or affective in origin. A necessary condition is one without which learning cannot take place. Examples of necessary conditions in second language learning are target language input, motivation, and practice opportunities. A second type of condition is a gradient condition, in which the greater the degree of the condition's occurrence, the more learning is likely to take place. An example of gradient condition might be the greater or lesser degree to which a learner actively seeks out interactions with native speakers of the target language, or the greater or lesser degree to which a learner can fine-tune a learning strategy to a specific task. The third type of condition is one which typically, but not necessarily always, assists learning. An example of a typicality condition might be that risk-taking, outgoing personalities tend to be good language learners in general, though in some cases quiet and reflective learners can be equally or more effective. Spolsky's model of second language acquisition consists of two clusters of such conditions or factors. The first cluster contains social context conditions, such as the learning setting and opportunities. The second cluster consists of learner factors, such as capability, prior knowledge, and motivation. The learner makes use of these factors to interact with the social context of learning, and this interaction leads to the amount of language learning that takes place. Thus, this model accounts for variability in second language learning outcomes through differing degrees of or preferences for application of gradient and typicality conditions. In Spolsky's model, learning strategies, while not specifically identified as such, would be part of the capabilities and prior learning experiences that the learner brings to the task.

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Andrew Cohen (1983,1984) has carried out numerous studies dealing with different aspects of learning strategies. One of his chief concerns is with the amount and quality of attention which students pay to the actual second language instruction. Initially, Cohen investigated this subject by videotaping class sessions and then replaying the tape for the students. During the replay, the students were asked to tell exactly what they had been thinking at specific times in the tape. More recently, Cohen has studied the introspection of an entire class of students by interrupting the instruction at a given moment and by administering a questionnaire to have students inspect their own mental states. This research has yielded the information that "only about 50% of the students are attending to the content of the lesson" (Cohen, 1983:143) at the moment that the class was interrupted. Additional whole-class introspection has added more specific questions about what students were thinking about in order to evaluate how actively students were actually engaged in processing input. Cohen states that "students of all kinds may benefit from some explicit training in how to use their minds more actively in the second language classroom" (Cohen, 1983:145). Cohen's later research has focused on the collection of learners' reports of their own insights about the learning strategies which they use (Cohen, 1986). The types of data from learner's reports of learning strategies focus on only those strategies of which the learner is conscious (Cohen, 1986). These strategies include:

1. How learners attend to language input.

2. How learners arrive at spoken utterance.

3. How readers process a text.

4. How writers generate a text.

5. How vocabulary is learned initially.

6. How vocabulary is retrieved later.

There are three basic categories of second language learner report data. These are: self-report, self-observation, self-revelation. Self-report is the second language learner's description of strategies that he uses when learning the target language. Self-observation refers to the language learner's analysis of specific strategies related to language learning. Self-revelation signifies the second language learner's report of those processes involved in

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each specific strategy while these are occurring at any given moment. These data remain unedited by specific strategy knowledge. According to Cohen (1986), there are six factors which characterize the data obtained for analysis of strategy. These include the following:

1. The number of participants, or how many students take part in the data collection.

2. The research context, or when, where and how the data are collected.

3. The recency of the event, or the proximity of the verbal report to the actual learning event.

4. The mode of elicitation and response, which explains whether the investigator obtained the report data orally or by written instructions and how the respondents answered.

5. The formality of the elicitation, or the formal structure used by the investigator.

6. The degree of external intervention, or the extent to which the investigator shapes the respondent's report of the strategies used and observed.

Wenden's work (1987) has contributed important insights on self-directed learning. She focused on the metacognitive knowledge, that is, the learners' knowledge about their learning and how they regulate it. Wenden identified five areas of metacognitive knowledge: the language, student proficiency, outcome of student's learning endeavours, the student's role in the language learning process, and how best to approach the task of language learning (Wenden, 1987). Wenden examined how learners regulate their learning by planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning activities. She focused on what learners know about their language strategies and how this influences their choice of strategies. This choice may be dependent upon the student's beliefs of how language is to be learned. They may then prioritize the aspect of language that they want to learn. By choosing and prioritizing, students set their own learning goals. Finally, students may plan what their learning strategies should be and change them if they are not successful.

Oxford (1986,1989,1990) has conducted a series of important studies on language learning strategies. She reports many factor analytic studies which involved the use of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as the main research instrument. The main findings

include the identification of five primary factors that explain the greatest amount of variability among learners: 1- general study habits (self-evaluation, previewing); 2- functional language practice (going to movies, seeking native speakers); 3- searching for and communicating meaning (using body language, analysing words); 4-studying or practising the language independently (practising rules by oneself, using a tape recorder); and 5- memory devices (remembering by location, making associations).

In another factor analytic study (1989), the SILL was used with a background questionnaire on motivation, course level, and previous language learning experience. Five factors were identified: 1- formal, rule-related practice (very popular with students); 2- functional, authentic language practice (rarely used by the students); 3- resourceful, independent language learning techniques (rarely used); 4- general study habits; and 5- elicitation of target language input from other people. (4 and 5 were both fairly popular). Analysis of variance on individuals' factor scores showed that motivation, sex, and self-perceptions of proficiency were the greatest influences on strategy use. Students who were highly motivated and who felt they were good language learners, used more strategies than the others.

Oxford (1990) has synthesized earlier work on good language learning strategies in general and in the relation to each of the four language skills. The resulting strategy system suggests that good language learners use strategies in six broad groups: affective, social, memory, metacognitive, cognitive and compensatory. Good language learners control their emotions and attitudes through affective strategies, such as self-encouragment and anxiety reduction. They work with others to learn the language, using social strategies like asking questions and becoming culturally aware. They use memory strategies, such as imagery and grouping, to get information into memory and to recall it when needed. They manage their own learning process through metacognitive strategies, such as self-evaluating, self-monitoring, and paying attention. They employ the new language directly with cognitive strategies, such as summarizing and practising naturalistically. Finally, they overcome knowledge limitations through compensatory strategies like using synonyms and guessing

meanings intelligently. Beside these studies, Oxford has conducted many others on language learning strategies which will be discussed in the next chapters.

A study conducted by Vann and Abraham (1990) that investigated the problems that may be rooted in inadequate knowledge of the actual strategies used by unsuccessful learners in contrast to what they report doing. The study combines methods to probe the strategies of two unsuccessful learners, both Saudi Arabian women enrolled in an academically oriented intensive English program in Iowa University, as they completed four activities (an interview, a verb exercise, a cloze passage, and a composition). After task requirements were determined, learner strategies were ascertained by analysing think-aloud protocols. These combined analyses offer a detailed and insightful picture of learner strategies, providing counterevidence for the claim that unsuccessful learners are inactive. When viewed through the task-demand model proposed in the study, those unsuccessful learners emerged as active strategy users, though they sometimes applied strategies inappropriately. The model also revealed fundamental differences in the approaches to problem solving used by learners who appear similar on the basis of simple strategy counts.

One of the most insightful strategy-related models of language learning is that of MacIntyre (1994), who highlights the importance of affective factors and links the use of a given language learning strategy with task demands, proficiency, aptitude, attitude, motivation, previous success, anxiety, self-confidence, and goals. In this model, students, influenced by all the variables above, must be aware of the strategy, must have a reason to use it, and must not have a reason not to use it. "This model allows for strategy use to be context-dependent;.. indicates that students who are motivated to use a strategy may fail to do so because of interference from another variable,.....also indicates that future strategy use depends on the consequences or outcomes of prior strategy use and that the judgment of success in meeting the communicative demand will be a key predictor of the continued use of a given strategy" (MacIntyre, 1994:193).

In another study MacIntyre (1996) supports the ability of the social-psychological model to predict strategy use. This model indicates that knowing a strategy well, perceiving it as effective, and considering it to be difficult to use predicts the majority of the variance in strategy use. The study suggests that strategy training that addresses only one variable, may be ineffective if it does not also increase the perception of effectiveness and ease of use. The results also show the important role that social-psychological variables in general, and integrativeness and motivation in particular, play in the use of language learning strategies.

Kaylani (1996) conducted a study on high school seniors in Jordan. The results showed that both gender and motivation were related in complex ways to strategy frequencies. Moreover, language proficiency explained 30% of the total variation in strategy frequency. Frequency of use of metacognitive, cognitive and memory strategies differentiated students based on their proficiency ranking. The major roles played by motivation and gender in strategy use are explained in a sociocultural light in this study. Two motivational orientations were found in male and female students in the sample. The male students were more instrumentally oriented and the reason was because they were under greater pressure than female students to pass the English course in order to gain admission to the university, establish a career for themselves, and thus assume their socialized roles as leaders of the society and caretakers of their families. The female students were less instrumentally oriented than the male students. The results were best interpreted in light of the socially prescribed goal for women in Jordan. A girl in Jordanian society is raised to believe that she is on a continuum that ends in making a family and being a housewife. The results of the study show that the differences in strategy use accounted for by gender are significant.

Pickard (1996) conducted a study that discusses the out-of-class learning strategies of a group of proficient German speakers of English, and attempts to identify and quantify the out-of-class learning strategies employed by these learners during their study of English. The data analysis reveals a wide range of out-of-class strategies employed by subjects. It was concluded that:

1- Subjects made most use of the strategies which they had chosen for their own needs. Strategies imposed by teachers seemed to be given less consideration.

2- The most used strategies are the passive ones of listening and reading, and that the active ones of speaking and writing receive less attention. This was principally due to the fact that availability of speaking opportunities in the foreign language setting was limited.

3- Many of the subjects in the study had recognized weaknesses in their linguistic proficiency, and had taken measures to remedy them by either spending periods of residence abroad or compensatory activities like listening to the radio, watching TV, reading newspapers and novels.

Nunan (1996) conducted a research project involving several groups of first-year undergraduate students at the University of Hong Kong. The main purpose of the strategy training was to experiment with ways of making the students more active participants in their language learning. The training programme was based on a bank of tasks that were divided into four categories: Category one: stimulating a focus on the learning process; two: focusing on the context and environment of the learning process; three: applying strategies for developing the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening; Four: applying strategies for dealing with pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and discourse. The study concluded that the strategy training, plus the systematic provision of opportunities for learners to reflect on the learning process, did lead to greater understanding of the learning process over time. By the end of the course, learners were much more likely to develop strategies for identifying what they want to learn and how they want to learn.

Park (1997) conducted a study that investigated the relationship between language learning strategies and second language proficiency of 332 university students learning English in Korea. The findings of the study are: 1) the relationship between language learning strategies and second language proficiency was linear. ; 2) all six categories of language learning strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social) correlated significantly with the proficiency scores that were determined by the Test of

English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL); 3) cognitive and social strategies were more predictive of proficiency than the other four strategy categories. These findings provide evidence that second language learners need language learning strategies, specifically cognitive and social strategies to facilitate second language acquisition and suggest that language learning strategies be taught in classrooms, focusing on effective strategies that may improve the results of the strategy training.

A study conducted in December 1997 by Lessard -Clouston provides an overview of language learning strategies for second language teachers. In doing so, the first part outlines some background on language learning strategies and summarises key points from the language learning literature. The second part considers some practical issues related to using language learning strategies in the classroom, outlining a three-step approach to implementing language learning strategies training in normal second language courses. The outlines of the three steps approach are: step one: study your teaching context; step two: focus on language learning strategies in your teaching; step three: reflect and encourage learner reflection. "Using language learning strategies and strategies training in the language class not only encourages learners in their language learning but also helps teachers reflect on and improve their teaching" (Lessard-Clouston, 1997:10). The third part of the study discusses some important issues and questions for further language learning strategies research. In the fourth part the study ends by listing helpful contacts and internet sites where readers may access up-to-date information on language learning strategies teaching and research.

A conclusion can be reached from all the above-mentioned studies. All the analysis of recent advances in cognitive psychology has provided a number of directions for second language learning. What these advances suggest is that naturally active, directed learning processes students use can be an asset for instruction if teachers are able to recognize and support effective learning procedures, analyse language learning tasks to identify declarative and procedural requirements, and build a model of instruction in which students are

supported directly in an informed way to apply strategic procedures in their learning. Many studies have shown that strategies can be taught and when applied do improve achievement levels (O'Malley et al., 1990; Oxford, 1990; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). However, little has been done to demonstrate the relationship of individual differences or background variables to strategy choice and level of proficiency. This study has focused on the correlational relationship between background variables in the use of learning strategy and language achievement. The relationship of this study to those previously mentioned is discussed in detail in (3.1).

2.3.1 Results of studies in learning strategies:

There has been an increasing number of studies of learning strategies in cognitive psychology and no small number in second language acquisition. While some of the second language acquisition studies were concerned with definition and classification of strategies (Naiman, Frohlich, and Stern 1978; Oxford 1985; Rubin 1975), other work has been concerned with strategy descriptions with different types of students, contexts, and tasks (O'Malley et al.1985, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1981; Wenden 1987).

The methodology used to collect strategy information from students in these studies has included analysis of oral or written protocols, questionnaires (requesting information on strategies used with specific language tasks), group and individual retrospective interviews (asking questions about language tasks performed in the past), and concurrent interviews or "think aloud" tasks (interrupting students while they are performing a task and asking them to describe what they are thinking). Results from a number of studies suggest the following conclusions(O'Malley and Chamot 1990):

* Learning strategies in second language acquisition do not appear to be any different from learning strategies involved in performing first language receptive and productive tasks.

* Students use strategies with classroom language tasks and with language tasks that occur outside the classroom, such as functional language tasks.

* Students designated by teachers as effective language learners use strategies more

frequently than students designated as less effective language learners, use a greater variety of strategies, and alternate between a top-down and bottom-up approach depending on the task characteristics and difficulty.

* Students use metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies with all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

* The specific strategies students select for a task often depend on the nature of the task demands, as when students select deduction and translation for classroom grammar tasks.

* Certain strategies tend to occur together, such as using previously acquired knowledge to comprehend new information, which co-occurs with inferencing and imagery. These conclusions support some of the theoretical assumptions about strategy use and provide the basis for concluding that mentally active, strategic approaches to learning a second language are part of the regular experience of successful learners.

2.3.2 Students' awareness of their learning strategies:

One of the main goals of many ESL teachers is the raising of students' awareness of the learning strategies that they use. Teachers attempt to sensitize students to their one's strengths and weaknesses in learning a second language. Secondly, ESL teachers encourage students to set personal priorities for concentration based on individual strengths and weaknesses in the target language. Thirdly, many ESL teachers hope to teach second language learners how to take action as they work on preselected priorities in dealing with second language learning.

Once second language learners become aware of possible learning strategies, they choose and develop their personal ones. The three steps from awareness, through priorities, to action allow students to use learning strategies to organize the language learning process. As Griffin(1979) observed: adults are not always aware of the way in which they learn; however, when confronted with the need to make choices and to be responsible for learning, they become capable of creating specific learning strategies.

Students have specific beliefs about how language learning takes place. These directly influence the ways in which they themselves actually learn. Some approach learning a language in the same manner that they would any other subject, such as history or math. They view language as a content course which will provide them with information about the target language. Wenden (1986:9) observed that "students may have definite views about the function of the classroom and of the social environment outside the classroom in language learning". For this reason, they may not always view the environment outside the classroom as a chance to learn about a new second language.

Research has shown that students are able to identify the strategies, or techniques, that they have used in completing the learning tasks. "Effective second language learners are aware of the strategies they use and why they use them, according to diary research and think-aloud studies. Such learners manage to tailor their strategies to the language task and to their own personal needs as learners. Students who are less successful at language learning are likewise able to identify their own strategies; however, they do not know how to choose the appropriate strategies or how to link them together into a useful strategy chain" (Green & Oxford, 1995:262).

Learning strategy research is extensive and has resulted in the development of a variety of systems for categorizing self-selected methods of learning in both academic and social settings (O'Malley, 1985; Oxford, 1986; Rubin, 1975). Ties have been shown to exist between the strategies that the language learner employs either consciously or unconsciously and his personality; age; gender; educational and cultural background; motivation; and level of proficiency. (Bialystok, 1981; O'Malley, Chamot 1990; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1986).

2.4 The relationship of learning strategies and communication strategies:

Learning strategies were defined by many researchers in section (2.2.2). For the purpose of this study they were defined in section (2.2.4).

A communication strategy, on the other hand, has been defined by many researchers as:

> "A systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty" (Corder, 1981:101)
>
> "Communicative strategies are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (Faerch & Kasper,1983:36)
>
> "A mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (Tarone, 1983:2)
>
> ".. all attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication" (Bialystok,1983:102)

Communication strategies are important tools for the learners, and when their use is encouraged inside the classroom, they will help the students achieve more fluency and confidence in themselves. When second language learners are required to utilize communication strategies, these will directly affect learning strategies. Littlewood found that:

> "Second language learners have communicative intentions which they find difficulty in expressing.. the problem may be forestalled by avoiding communication or modifying what he intended to say.. all language is a response to some kind of communication problem" (Littlewood 1984:83).

Learning strategies which second language learners use to overcome problems of wanting to say something in a foreign language without the adequate information to do so are conscious plans for attaining a communication goal (Poulisse, 1989).

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Through many techniques in the research methodology of learning strategies, researchers have found that communication strategy is closely related to the acquisition of important learning strategies (Cohen & Robins, 1976; Tarone, 1977; Glahn, 1980). Research in second language learner's communicative strategies has provided a framework for analysing how learners manage to convey their meaning and messages in spite of their limited knowledge of the target language. At times, second language learners may resort to communication strategies in the learning process. The main feature of communication strategy is that it is used when a second language learner is aware that his current knowledge of the language will not answer the practical question at hand. Once the second language learner is forced to use a communication strategy, he will use one of these eight: (Littlewood, 1984:23):

1- Avoid communication: The language learner simply refuses to speak and uses avoidance as strategy.

2-Adjust the message: The language learner alters the meanings of the message he is trying to communicate.

3-Use paraphrase: The learner uses a description of the word or words whose meaning he wants to communicate.

4-Create new words: The language learner creates a new word or phrase which he hopes will express the desired meaning.

5-Use approximation: The learner employs the strategy of using words which express the meaning as closely as possible.

6-Switch to the first language: The language learner simply resorts to retrieving an appropriate word from his own first language to substitute for the second language word.

7-Use mime or gesture: The language learner decides to rely on a gesture or an imitation of the second language word to convey the desired meaning.

8-Seek help: The second language learner uses a dictionary or asks a bilingual person for the appropriate word or words.

However there is a considerable confusion and overlap between the concepts of communication strategy and learning strategy in the literature on second language learning, but many researchers seem to think that they are strongly related and many others tried to disentangle one from the other.

Selinker tried to distinguish learning strategies from communication strategies: "If they are the result of an identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned, then we are dealing with strategies of second language learning. If they are the result of an identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speakers of the TL, then we are dealing with strategies of second language communication." (Selinker, 1972:216)

Corder(1981) has observed some distinction between communication strategy and learning strategy. According to him, communication strategies are used by the speaker when faced with some difficulty due to his communicative ends outrunning his communicative means, whereas learning strategies contribute to the development of IL systems.

The distinction is further elaborated by Tarone(1981)who thinks that it is theoretically possible to distinguish learning strategy and communication strategy on the basis of motivation: "In theory, while learning strategies and communication strategies may be indistinguishable in some cases in our observation of linguistic behaviour, there does appear to be a difference between the two kinds of strategy, and there do seem to be clear observable bits of behaviour which evidence either one or the other strategy, and not both" (Tarone, 1981:290)

Bialystok tried to make the difference clearer: "One expedient for highlighting their differences is to consider the extent to which the strategy is based on a feature of the learner or a feature of the language. The former results in learning strategy, the latter in communication strategy. Both may be accompanied by varying degree of learning control" (1983:101).

Ellis suggests that "communication strategies differ from learning strategies in that the problem arises as a result of attempts to perform in the second language, and the strategies are needed to meet a pressing communicative need." (1985:181). According to him if learning strategies are the long-term solution to a problem, communication strategies provide the short term answer.

Despite all these views, the relationship of communication strategies and learning strategies remains close but not so clear. Although use of communication strategies may lead to learning, the main purpose for their use is better communication. Many other attempts were made to disentangle learning strategies from communication strategies and what seems to be missing is the notion of strategic competence which is explained in the following section.

2.4.1 Strategic competence and the communicative approach:

Strategic competence refers to the learner's ability to use strategies to solve communication problems. It is considered to be one component of communicative competence, that is, the ability to use language in real life situations (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Despite the fact that the idea of communicative competence was not new, linguists and grammarians agree that it is the major component of a communicative approach to language teaching. Yet different views about the definition of communicative competence still prevail. Some of these views made a contribution to the emergence of the communicative approach.

The communicative approach was developed from Hymes's view of language. In 1972 Hymes attacked Chomsky's theory of competence as knowledge of the language which enables a person to understand and create utterances, or "linguistic competence" as opposed to "linguistic performance", which is the actual use of language in a social context. For Hymes this description is incomplete as it failed to incorporate the sociocultural aspect. As illustrated in table 2, Hymes' competence is the interaction between grammatical and sociolinguistic factors. He argues that being grammatical in a conversation is not enough: the utterance must also be appropriate regarding setting, rules and topics. Rules of

grammar are useless without rules of use. For a person to be competent, Hymes claims that he must acquire both knowledge and the ability for language use with respect to feasibility, possibility, appropriateness and occurrence. His argument can be summarized as follows:

1-Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible. It may be said, then, that something possible within a formal system is grammatical.

2-Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible. This linguistic concern here is with psychological factors: memory limitation and perceptual factors.

3-Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated. Appropriateness suggests the required sense of relation to contextual features. From a grammatical point of view, appropriateness refers to rules of use and speaking.

4-Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed and what its doing entails. "Something may be possible, feasible, appropriate and not occur" (Hymes, 1972:281).

Hymes' view of competence illustrates "the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behaviour"(Hymes, 1972:286).

Widdowson's main contribution to this area is the distinction between use and usage. He thereby agrees with Hymes' view of communicative competence and disagrees with Chomsky's view of performance. For him competence is "knowledge of linguistic items being put into effect as behaviour" (1978:3). As for performance, he proposed a distinction between language usage, which is knowledge of the grammatical rules of the language, and language use, which is the ability to create correct utterances on the basis of that knowledge.

Since acquiring communicative competence entails acquiring the ability to produce various utterances to fulfil different communicative functions in a given social context, further

domains were assumed to be important. To Canale and Swain (1980) strategic competence is one component of a theoretical framework which they proposed for communicative competence, in which four components were identified. The first is grammatical competence, which is a part of performance, refers to knowledge of features and rules of the language; such as pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence formation...etc. The second is sociolinguistic competence which refers to appropriateness; knowledge of when to speak, what to say, and how to say it in a given social context. The third is discourse competence which concerns the combination between grammatical forms and meaning either in written or spoken form. The fourth component of the model is strategic competence, which consists of: "Verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence." (Canale & Swain, 1980:30).

Table 2 "Aspects of Competence"

Linguist	Competence	Performance
Chomsky	Knowledge of grammatical rules	Ability to use that knowledge correctly
Hymes	Communicative competence 1-Grammatical competence 2-Socio-linguistic competence	The actual use of language
Widdowson	Knowledge of language being put into effect as communicative behaviour	1-Usage:Knowledge of grammatical rules. 2-Use:using that knowledge to communicate
Canale and Swain	Communicative competence 1-grammatical competence 2-sociolinguistic comp. 3-Discourse competence 4-strategic competence	Communicative performance is the actual communication

In table (2), which summarizes the different views of each linguist, the strategic component refers to communication strategies, which can be differentiated from learning strategies by the intent of the strategy use. That is, learning strategies have learning as a goal, and communication strategies are directed towards maintaining communication. (Tarone 1981)

It can be seen from the above review that Hymes, Widdowson, Canale and Swain, all disagree with Chomsky's interpretation of competence. They argue that his competence is inadequate for communicative use and it needs to be supplemented by communicative competence. Although their views on "communicative" differ, as shown in the above diagram, there is a general agreement that communicative competence is concerned with the study of how to use the language appropriately to fulfil different needs and functions in a social context.

Communicative competence is considered by many linguists as an important component of the communicative approach which will be discussed in relation to learning strategies in the next section.

2.4.2 The relationship of learning strategies and the communicative approach:

Interest in linguistic knowledge was the aim of many old methods which viewed language as a set of structures and words to be memorized but not to be used for the main purpose of communication. As a result, these methods were able to produce learners who could perform correctly but not communicatively. They were unable to produce learnt utterances in contexts other than those in which they learnt them. The linguists' search for solutions to language learning\ teaching problems led to the emergence of many approaches, the most recent of which is the communicative approach. With the evolution of the communicative approach, a ray of hope was glimpsed in its principles which seemed to fulfil the promise and goals that encouraged learners to be more active.

Unlike other approaches, the communicative approach is not based on a specific theory. It developed from Hymes sociolinguistic hypothesis. The communicative approach aims at developing the ability to use the linguistic system appropriately and effectively, or what Hymes calls "communicative competence", which is the competence of knowing when, how, and what to speak. It holds that "when we acquire the language we do not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences as isolated linguistic units of random

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occurrence, we also learn how to use sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose." (Widdowson, 1978:2).

Hymes's social view of communicative competence as opposed to Chomsky's linguistic competence has found increasing acceptance internationally. For second language teachers who aim to help develop their students' communicative competence and language learning, an understanding of language learning strategies is crucial, as Oxford stated, "language learning strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence" (Oxford, 1990:1).

The communicative approach encourages learners to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to use a wide range of language learning strategies. Lessard-Clouston (1997:3) stated that "within communicative approaches to language teaching a key goal is for the learner to develop communicative competence in the target language, and language learning strategies can help students in doing so".

Many studies emphasize the development of social interaction skills within the communicative approach. The rationale expressed for this focus is the lack of communicative competence developed in previous approaches. Arguing for the superiority of the communicative language approach over other approaches or methods, Nattinger (1984) states:

> "... communicative language approach has the possibility of being less vague than former 'communicative competence' methods, less ethnocentric than many humanistic methods, and less psycholinguistically objectionable than audiolingual ones." (1984:391)

He identifies three main features which characterize this approach:

1- The goal of communicative competence at each level, beginning to advanced;

2- Exercises that develop interaction between learners and their environment; and,

3- A focus on the processes or strategies involved in understanding and communicating

meaning.

Taylor (1983) cites five features of communicative methodology:

1- Students participate in extended discourse;

2- An 'information gap' is provided so that students have a real need to communicate;

3- Students have opportunities to engage in unrehearsed communication;

4- Students participate in goal oriented activities;

5- Students have opportunities to attend to many factors simultaneously during a conversation.

In one of her studies, Oxford discussed the strategies of the good language learner and how the communicative approach facilitates the implementation of these strategies:

> "The principles of the communicative approach to language learning and teaching foster the use of appropriate, positive learning strategies. Communicative principles and learning strategies, in combination, have powerful implications for the language classroom."
> (Oxford, 1989:29)

Oxford visualizes her discussion as a circle. In this circle the principles of the communicative approach imply and actively encourage good language learning strategies. In combination, these principles and their associated strategies imply and foster certain communication-oriented organizational structures and classroom activities. These in turn lead to greater communicative competence, the primary goal of the communicative approach.

Each of the following principles of the communicative approach (Oxford, 1989) will be discussed in relation to learning strategies:

1-The attainment of communicative competence as the main goal: In the communicative approach, all activities are designed and implemented for the purpose of developing the learner's communicative competence. For Canale and Swain (1980,1983), communicative competence includes four elements: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence (See previous section). All appropriate language learning strategies are oriented towards the goal of communicative competence. Some language learning strategies might

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be useful for all elements of communicative competence in general. For instance, some strategies such as self-monitoring, paying attention and self-evaluation could enable learners to focus, plan and evaluate their progress as they move towards communicative competence. Some other strategies might facilitate the development of one specific aspect of communicative competence: grammatical or sociolinguistic, discourse or strategic element. For instance, the strategy of deductive reasoning might strengthen grammatical accuracy. Social strategies, such as asking questions for clarification and cooperation with peers, could powerfully aid sociolinguistic competence. Social strategies, also, encourage a greater amount of communication and thus enhance discourse competence. Compensation strategies, such as inferencing strategy, when the meaning is unknown, and substitution strategy to express the meaning of unknown word by gestures or synonyms, all could have the power to aid strategic competence.

2- Dealing communicatively with errors: In the communicative approach, contrary to other methods, errors are accepted because they represent a natural stage in the learning process and are often used by teachers to assess the learning strategies that operate at a particular time. Self-evaluation and self-monitoring are some of the strategies that could help students learn from their errors.

3-An orientation which integrates the four language skills: In the communicative approach, all four skills of language learning are recognized as contributors to successful communication. The communicative approach calls on the learner to develop these skills. The best way to do so appears to be through active learning, which necessitates the use of language learning strategies. For instant, to develop communicative competence in speaking, social strategies could be used such as asking questions for clarification or substitution strategy. In the skills of reading and listening, learners use a variety of learning strategies such as resourcing to find out the meaning of new words, or inferencing to guess the meaning. Competence in the skill of writing requires for example the use of strategies such as planning and self-evaluation.

4- A focus on meaning, context, and "authentic" language: Meaning is of utmost importance in the communicative approach. Meaning can be expressed through "authentic" language. "Authentic" language is the real vehicle of everyday communication in conversation, radio broadcasts, books, newspapers..etc. Depending on the learners' level of competence or proficiency, teachers sometimes try to slow down or simplify their speech, resulting in a kind of modified authentic language that suits the learners at a certain level and that is especially common at the beginning stages of language learning. Such language is much more realistic and contextualized than traditional language drills. Many strategies, such as practising naturalistically, could aid learners in understanding and producing meaningful messages in the target language. Inferencing strategy might help learners to guess meanings of the new language. In authentic conversation promoted by the communicative approach, learners use a variety of social strategies such as asking questions for clarification of the meaning.

The communicative approach, which involves a clear need to develop and use appropriate language learning strategies, presents the learner with the challenge of achieving a greater degree of self-direction of his learning and might increase the opportunities for developing communicative competence when it is applied together with learning strategies in the classroom as will be seen in the next section.

2.5 Implications of learning strategies with CLT in the classroom:

In the previous section we have seen how the principles of the communicative approach foster the use of appropriate, positive learning strategies. These communicative principles and learning strategies, in combination, might have powerful implications for the language classroom (Oxford, 1989):

1- The role of the learner in the classroom: The role of the learner in this approach is different from that in the traditional classroom. The learners are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but they are to interact with each other and with the teacher through

classroom activities devised to motivate them to contribute in the learning process. Since the essence of the communicative approach presupposes learning by doing, learners will learn how to communicate only by practising communicating. In classes which implement the communicative approach, students are encouraged to do much pairwork and communicative activities. Such changes in the communicative classrooms might force learners to take a large degree of responsibility for their own learning. As learners become more responsible, they would be encouraged to use a greater variety of strategies to enhance their learning. For instance, learners use more social strategies and compensation strategies as they find themselves in situations which require communication.

Learners' characteristics such as motivation, aptitude or effectiveness as a learner, age, sex, prior education and cultural background may play an important role in the receptiveness of students to learning strategy training and in their ability to acquire new learning strategies. Such characteristics explain why some students approach the language learning task in more successful ways than others. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) suggested that strategies of good language learners might be taught to less successful learners to enable them to learn the second language more effectively.

2- The role of the teacher in the classroom: The role of the communicative teacher in the classroom is changed from the traditional view as a figure of authority, instructor or controller to another role as facilitator, adviser, helper or consultant. In order for the teacher to carry out his role successfully, he should be communicatively competent, highly trained and exposed to the theoretical as well as practical bases of second language pedagogy. He should be able to encourage students to be more self directed and use learning strategy. He should create and set up activities in which learners can participate and play an active role. In creating such activities, the teacher should pay equal attention to form and meaning, and take into consideration the differences in linguistic level between the learners and the personal differences concerning age, intelligence and previous experience. He should also adopt task-based techniques geared towards classroom interaction rather than an exercise-

centered technique aimed at mastering the linguistic aspect of the language. Materials might have a vital role in the learning process and the communicative teacher is required to choose materials that promote the exchange of information and discourse about everyday life such as newspapers, maps or magazines. It is important for the teacher to understand that making errors is normal in the process of learning and that emphasizing accuracy is more likely to inhibit learning than to promote it.

In a communicative classroom the teacher is expected to create situations that stimulate learners to communicate and experiment with the language. The teacher should encourage the learners to build up self-confidence in conversing. This happens by convincing them that difficulties in communicating affect everyone and perfection is not necessary in communicating in a second language.

Many researchers suggest that another way of helping the learners might be by encouraging them to use strategies to overcome difficulties in communication (Oxford, 1990; Scarcella, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). The teacher thus, in this approach, should create a rich variety of communication opportunities and foster an environment which naturally encourages students to communicate among themselves using a greater variety of learning strategies. It is important for the teacher to be aware of all the strategies that their students employ as this helps in predicting the consequences of its use in the long run. Teachers may be able to improve the performance of less successful language students by showing them how to use some of the strategic approaches of good language learners.

3- Communicative classroom activities and games: Since the communicative approach aims at using the language for the purpose of communication through activities involving the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, communicative activities and games play an important role in developing the learner's communicative competence. Students are encouraged to participate in such activities regardless of their level and

command of the linguistic patterns. In other words, fluency rather than accuracy is emphasized to allow more communicative learning experiences. Many communicative classroom activities are based on "information gaps" or "opinion gaps", which allow more realistic communication patterns and processes than are found in traditional classrooms. The existence of such gaps in the classroom fosters communication and implies that the learner must be a problem-solver and that requires using different types of learning strategies. Learning strategies help learners participate actively in the activities and games found in the communicative classroom. Social strategies, such as cooperating and asking questions, help elicit information and encourage communication. Substitution strategies help learners overcome inadequate linguistic knowledge by either guessing or finding ways to express themselves in order to communicate.

The most common types of communicative activities and games are: role-play, simulation, problem solving, drama, and interview. The more freedom the students are given in such activities, the more communicative the play will be, the more communicative and learning strategies will be used, and the more the gap between the classroom and the English environment is bridged. It is, therefore, important when constructing such games and activities that their topics should be familiar to students' everyday-life since that is related to their interest and needs. Communicative activities should be able to stimulate the students by providing them with fun and pleasure in their work. Moreover, it expands students' own imagination and develops their creativity in English. Active communicative learning activities call for active language learning strategies which engage students totally in the learning process intellectually, socially, emotionally, and in certain activities even physically (Crookall & Oxford, 1989).

4- Classroom strategy training and communicative activities: Even though the communicative approach implicitly encourages the use of language learning strategies, not every student is aware of the importance of these strategies and their application without additional help and guidance. Therefore, it is important that the teacher should develop the

learners' awareness and use of learning strategies by offering strategy training in the classroom. Strategy training can be linked with learning activities and can be effectively conducted through simulations, games and other communicative activities. Strategy training may be presented so that learners can understand why some strategies are more important than others, how these strategies can be used, how to evaluate their usefulness, and how to transfer them to new learning situations and tasks. Oxford (1990) suggested that language learning strategies can be taught in three different ways: awareness training, one-time training, and long-term strategy training. Awareness training introduces the learners to the concept of learning strategies so that they will be encouraged to expand their knowledge of strategies at a later time. One-time strategy training gives the learner information on the value of the strategy, when it can be used, how to use it, and how to evaluate the success of the strategy. This kind of strategy training is suitable for learners who have a need for specific strategies that can be taught in one or very few sessions. Long-term strategy training involves learning the importance of strategies, when and how to use them. Learners should practice strategies with actual language learning tasks and should be able to monitor and evaluate their own performance.

Oxford (1990) presented an eight-step model for strategy training that starts with assessing strategy needs and ends with evaluation of the training and is especially useful for long-term strategy training in the classroom:

Step one: Determining the learners' needs and the time available: The first step of any training program is considering the needs of the learners and finding out their achievement level. It is important to know what learning strategies they are using, what strategies they need to learn, and if there is a wide gap between the two. Considering the time available for training is very important in designing the activities related.

Step two: Selecting strategies: In selecting strategies, it is important to take into consideration the characteristics and the cultural background of the learners. The trainer should choose strategies that are generally useful for most learners and transferable

to a variety of language situations and tasks.

Step three: Considering integration of strategy training: It is very helpful to integrate strategy training with the tasks, objectives, and materials used in the regular language training program. When strategy training is closely integrated with language learning tasks and activities, learners better understand how the strategies can be used in a significant, meaningful context.

Step four: Considering motivational issues: When learners go through a strategy assessment phase, their interest in strategies is likely to be heightened, and when teachers explain how using good strategies can make language learning easier, students will be more interested in participating in strategy training. Giving the learners the chance to select the language activities or to choose the strategies they will learn can increase their motivation.

Step five: Preparing materials and activities: It is important to choose language activities and materials that are likely to be interesting to the learners. In addition, teachers might develop some handouts on when and how to use the strategies they want to focus on.

Step six: Conducting "completely informed training": As teachers conduct strategy training, they should make a special point to inform the learners as completely as possible about why the strategies are important and how they can be used in new situations. In addition, teachers should provide practice with strategies in several language tasks, and point out how transfer of strategies is possible from task to task. Research shows that strategy training which fully informs the learner, by indicating why the strategy is useful, how it can be transferred to different tasks, and how learners can evaluate the success of the strategy, is more successful than training that does not.

Step seven: Evaluating the strategy training: Teachers' observations during and after the training are useful for evaluating the success of strategy training. Learners' own comments about their strategy use are part of the training itself. These self-assessments provide practice with the strategies of self-monitoring and self-evaluating.

Step eight: Revising the strategy training: Evaluation of the training (step seven) will suggest possible revisions for teachers' material. This leads right back to step one, a reconsideration of the characteristics and needs of the learners.

Wenden (1987), on the other hand, sets a different criteria and guidelines for systematic training in learning strategies:

1- Students should be informed of the value and significance of the strategies that they are trained to use.

2- Teachers should provide training in both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Moreover, training should include awareness raising and training in all the skills.

3- To determine how to integrate learner training with language training, teachers should take into account the following factors: learners' need, autonomy of application, range and specificity.

4- In evaluating learner training it is important to consider the following: learner attitudes, skill acquisition, task improvement, durability, transfer.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990), on the other hand, have set a different scope and sequence frameworks for learning strategy instruction:

1-Preparation: develop student awareness of different strategies through retrospective interviews and think-aloud techniques.

2- Presentation: develop student knowledge about strategies by providing rational for strategy use and describing and naming strategies.

3- Practice: develop student skills in using strategies through cooperative learning tasks and think-aloud while problem solving.

4- Evaluation: develop student ability to evaluate own strategy use through discussing strategy use in class and keeping dialogue journals on strategy use.

5- Expansion: develop transfer of strategies to new tasks by additional practice on similar academic tasks and assignments to encourage use of learning strategies on tasks related to cultural backgrounds of students.

Instructional models in learning strategies together with the communicative approach seem to have the potential, not only for understanding more about the effects of strategy training but also for gaining knowledge about how learning strategies can be embedded in a communicative environment. The communicative approach, which involves a clear need to develop and use appropriate language learning strategies, presents the learner with the challenge of achieving a greater degree of self-direction in his learning and exponentially increases the variety of opportunities available for developing communicative competence (Oxford, 1990).

All previous research on instruction in learning strategies left a number of important questions unanswered. First, no studies in strategies had been done with integrative language skills. Most studies had focused on strategies for vocabulary learning and ignored more complicated language task such as listening and speaking. Second, very few studies had been performed in classroom settings with typical class-size groups. Third, the strategy instruction tended to concentrate on isolated strategies instead of on combinations of strategies such as cognitive with metacognitive strategies. Fourth, there were very few studies of the effects of strategy instruction using an experimental approach that would permit the independent effects of the training to be isolated. And finally, there was little effort to determine if strategies transferred across similar tasks. Most of the instruction had been concentrated on a single set of tasks presented immediately following training.

A learning strategy scope and sequence might be the first step towards developing a curriculum that integrates learning strategies with other objectives of the communicative approach. Research is still needed on the development, implementation and evaluation of such a curriculum, as will be mentioned in (6.5).

2.6. Summary:

The main intention of the present chapter was to review the literature related to the concept of learning strategies. The first section focused on cognitive theory and its relation to second language learning. It also describes the stages of skill acquisition. Section two examines the role of learning strategies in second language learning. In its three subsections, it explores learning strategies' different definitions from researchers' perspectives and gives a special definition that suits the purpose of this study. It explains various classifications, and describes features of language learning strategies. Section three gives a brief overview of studies in learning strategies and their results. The fourth section describes the relationship between learning strategies and communication strategies and shows differences and similarities between them. It also explains the principles of the communicative approach in relation to strategies application. Finally, section five reviews researchers' opinions for systematic training in learning strategies. The next chapter will discuss the different methods of collecting the data.

Chapter Three

The approach to the research

3.0 Introduction:

This study is structured to identify the learning strategies of tertiary level Arabic students as they engage in the complex process of acquiring a second language. It attempted to discover and verify what students had to say about their own learning strategies by having them focus their attention on what occurs in the natural setting of the second language classroom and by having them record, in their own words, their recall of the strategies which they used.

The characteristics that shape the learner along with the interplay between learning strategies and language proficiency will be studied through the use of self-reporting questionnaires and recorded interviews. This chapter outlines the design and methodology of the study and provides a preliminary description of the subjects, and describes the instruments and the procedures to be used in gathering the data. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data and the results will be presented in the following chapters.

3.1 Relationship of the present study to previous studies:

The present study is both an outgrowth of my personal concern about the learning strategies of the Arabic learners of English, and an extension of previous and ongoing research which attempts to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the factors underlying English language proficiency. In addition, due to the urgent need for a change in the current provision, as stated in chapter one, the study attempts to investigate the learning strategies of Saudi students, their individual variables, and their relation to language proficiency. Moreover, in Saudi Arabia, empirical research in this field is not only scarce but is badly needed.

One of the major difficulties in performing research with learning strategies in second language acquisition is that until recently there has been no adequate theory to describe the role of cognition in language learning or any theoretical description indicating what influence learning strategies play on memory processes in general (O'Malley, Chamot, 1987). Efforts to describe both second language acquisition and learning strategies within the cognitive theory proposed by Anderson (1981, 1983, 1985) have provided the necessary theoretical foundation to guide research in this area. Some strategy research, however, in the last few years has been largely independent of any particular cognitive theory. It has developed mainly within the context of education and education-related research, such as classroom research (Allwright, 1991) and interactional research (Wells, 1985).

Strategy research, in the light of this study and some previously mentioned studies, in (2.3), is a typical example of educational research, where research is defined, not by a theory or hypothesis or model, but by the nature of the problems that it is trying to resolve, by the basic research materials that it must deal with, and by its own research motivation and goals. Strategy research is not compelled to seek placement within any existing paradigm, however, it is free to draw inspiration from them, or allows other disciplines to illuminate it for its own goals. The purpose of my strategy research, working from educational perspectives, is not to do the work of cognitive researchers but to find out what works in actual learning situations for actual learners in actual time and space and to find solutions to existing educational problems to help learners to learn better. A Confucian saying quoted by Ellis and Sinclair (1989:2) sums up the main motivation behind all studies in strategy research: "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a life time."

All studies on learning strategies mentioned earlier in the previous chapter fell into one of the following categories: studies to define and classify strategies, studies to describe strategy application with different types of learners or tasks, and studies to validate the influence of strategic processing on learning. The last category was further divided into correlational

studies and experimental training studies (O'Malley, 1990). Many studies related to the third category have investigated the relation between language proficiency and the use of learning strategies (Rubin, 1987; Naiman, 1975; Politzer 1985; O'Malley, 1990; Bialystok, 1981; Oxford, 1990) or the relation between individual variables and language proficiency (Skehan 1989; Oxford, 1989; Politzer, 1983; Gardner, 1985) and very few have investigated the relation between individual variables and the use of learning strategies (Oxford, 1989; Chamot, 1987). However, no study has been done to investigate the correlational relationship between the three, as this study does. One reason for the conflicting findings, in these studies, is that much of the research concerning language learning examines the relations between particular variables in isolation from other factors. In practice, the variables affecting language learning outcomes function together as a system, and such studies necessarily fail to demonstrate the nature and importance of these systemic interrelationships. The purpose of this study, however, was to attempt to investigate the interrelationships of as many learners' variables and strategies as possible and their relationship to achievement. It was also felt that this study in an Arabic context might throw new light on assumptions about language learning derived from research conducted in the west.

This study compares the use of the learning strategies among Arab learners of English as a foreign language and learners of English as a second language in other studies conducted in U.S and Europe. Comparison was made through discussions of different factors that influence the use of learning strategies in many prior studies with this one (chapter 4). In general, the results of this study agreed with the conclusions of some studies notably those of Oxford, 1990; O'Malley, 1990; Politzer, 1985; Rubin, 1987 and Bialystok, 1981 that emphasize the relation between language proficiency and use of learning strategies. Even so, there were areas of difference that seemed to indicate that the findings of this study, based on specific individual variables of Arabic learners affected by their own background factors and culture, do not always coincide with the results of other studies based on different background factors in other contexts. These areas of difference were reflected in

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the different patterns, frequency and kinds of learning strategies used by students due to their different background factors. Oxford (1990:6) stated that "some learning strategies might be easier to use in second language contexts than in foreign language settings, or vice versa. However, most learning strategies can be applied equally well to both situations". In this study, strategies not reported by these Arabic learners of English were eliminated and additional strategies reported were added resulting in the augmented list of strategies shown in table (1) in (2.2.3), that will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

One general finding in this study is that proficiency correlates with the use of learning strategies but in different degrees, due to the different patterns, frequency and kinds of learning strategies used by students according to their own background factors. However, a few results were difficult to explain; that is because there might be some factors other than the ones mentioned here which relate to better performance but which the questionnaire failed to explore. An alternative explanation for better performance is that a learner's strategy selectivity, his careful choice of strategy use, and not the number of strategies that he uses, is an indicator of effective learning. Another explanation may be that any well designed communicative learning activity, not necessarily strategy-oriented activity, will help the learner to learn well, provided that it is able to engage his focused attention and active participation. The communicative task-based learning might be a successful teaching-learning approach. It requires the learner to strategise his learning and demands that the learner participates in a focused and solution-oriented way (see 2.4.1).

3.2 The interrelationship between variables of language learning::

As was discussed before in section (3.1), there were many studies that investigated the relation between language proficiency and the use of learning strategies or the relation between individual variables and language proficiency and very few have investigated the relation between individual variables and the use of learning strategies. However, no study has been done to investigate the relationship between the three. Based on the objective in section (1.1), this study sought to investigate the correlational relationship between language

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proficiency, individual variables and the use of learning strategies. According to the goals of this research, the study tries to answer the main following questions: first, is there a correlation between the learner's use of learning strategies and his learning outcomes? . Second, to what extent do learners' background factors complicate this relationship? . Learners' variables are very important in the learning process because, as figure (1) shows, they affect both the language proficiency and the choice of learning strategies. While they affect the language proficiency directly, they also affect it indirectly through the use of learning strategies.

The diagram consists of three boxes, representing classes of variables in language learning. These may be divided into three variables, and then are subdivided further into many subdivisions. The learning strategies box consists of many strategies that were partially based on O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of psychological functions as cognitive, metacognitive and social affective strategies. The learners' variables box consists of: 1-motivation to learn the language, 2- starting age and length of learning period, 3- live and study in an environment where the English language is spoken, 4- Extra-curricular exposure to English, influence of mother tongue. The learners' proficiency box consists of the learners' scores on four academic performance tests: Reading, writing, listening comprehension and composition. The Arabic students are also affected by their own educational background factors and learning experiences as discussed earlier in chapter one: classrooms, teaching methods, teachers, materials, and exams. Those educational background factors are seen in the background of the figure. The diagram describes the relation between these variables of language learning. The arrows between the boxes indicate the correlational relationship between these variables as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Different methods were used to collect the data for the variables shown in the boxes. The instruments used, take the form of methodological triangulation in the sense that more than

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Classroom

Teaching Methods

Teachers

Materials

Exams

Individual's Variables
- Motivation
- Length of learning English period
- Live & study in an environment where English language is spoken
- Extracurricular exposure to English
- Influence of mother tongue

Learner's Proficiency
Academic tests:
- Reading
- Writing
- Grammar
- Listening

Learner's Strategies
- Cognitive strategies
- Metacognitive strategies
- Social Affective strategies
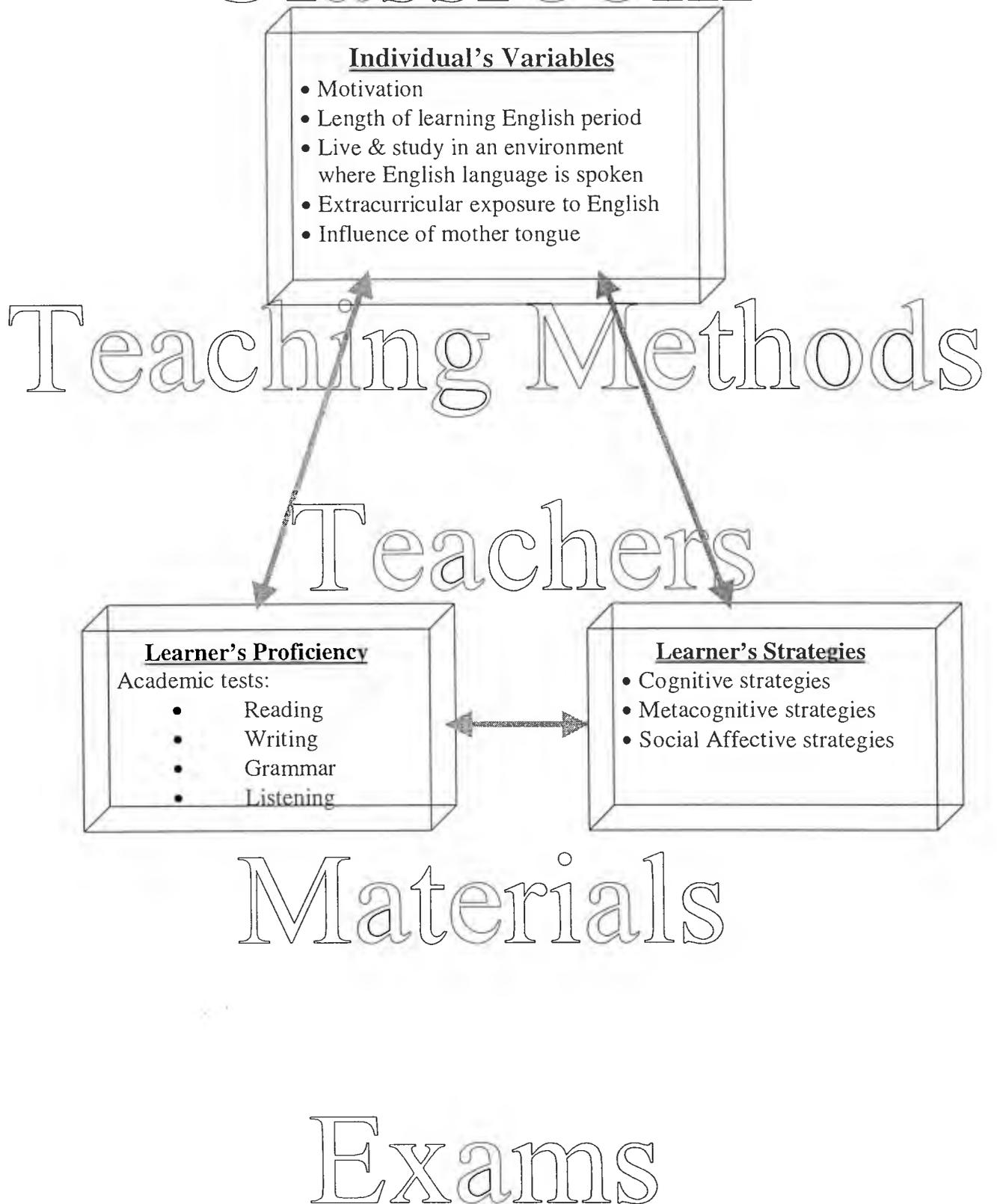
Figure 1 The interrelationship between language learning variables

one method is used in the pursuit of the objectives (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). These were questionnaires and interviews in search of learning strategies and learners' background variables. The data derived from each method will be studied in relation to the subjects' language learning outcomes, where language learning outcomes are defined only in terms of the subjects' test results, which consist of four components, grammar, listening comprehension, reading and writing scores. Each method of investigation is therefore intended to complement the others.

Correlational techniques are used for analysing the data to examine existing relationships between variables. A high positive correlation (+1) obtained between these variables, indicates that there is a close relationship between these variables. This means that the better the learners' background, the more the learning strategies are used by the learner, the better their language proficiency; the worse the learners' background, the less the learners use learning strategies, the poorer their language proficiency. A low correlation (0) between the variables will indicate that these variables are not related to one another. A negative correlation (-1) between these variables will imply that the better the learners' background factors, the less their use of learning strategies, and the lower their language proficiency; or the worse the learners' background, the more their use of learning strategies and the higher their proficiency level. In this case, the variables would be inversely related. Inferences are made according to the level of significance. The significance of the correlation depends on the magnitude of the relationship found and the sample size: the larger the sample size, the lower the correlation required to claim significance. In some situations, achieving only high significance statistically might not be enough to prove a strong relation but the result should be also considered from an educational or a linguistic point of view. In other words, when there were grounds (from other previous studies) for predicting a close relationship between variables, and a relatively significant relationship was obtained, a correlation of 0.45 may not be high at all. However, if the same correlation was obtained when there was no real basis (no previous studies) to predict that there would be a correlation between the variables; obtaining such a correlation may be very significant for exploring new variables

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and new relationships. In this research, we are looking at several new correlational relationships at the same time. The analysis shows that one variable correlates relatively highly with another one when it is examined by itself, its contribution might be much smaller when it is analysed in conjunction with a third variable which turns out to be of greater importance.

Through multiple regression, chi-square and multivariate analyses, significant relationships were identified among background factors, learning strategies and language proficiency. Obtaining a relatively significant correlation, as in this study, will show whether the relationship between the variables is meaningful, but it will not indicate whether one variable caused the other. Some studies have indicated that motivation is the causative variable that leads to language learning success. Other studies have indicated that success in foreign language learning can lead to more motivation, reversing the direction of causation. In this study one can similarly argue that learner strategies do not determine proficiency but are permitted by it. Since the research was cross-sectional, we do not know whether the strategies came first and had brought about the proficiency, or that those who were more proficient, for whatever reason, accordingly had the potential to use strategies. But yet another alternative is that motivation (one of the learner's variables) might cause both language proficiency and the use of learning strategies. It might cause success because those who are motivated to study the language will achieve more highly. It might cause the learner to use more strategies. Only a longitudinal research design, which monitors changes in learners' variables, strategies and proficiency over time in the same group of learners, can address this issue, as will be suggested in (6.5). However, we can look at the relationship between variables, not as one way arrow leading from cause to effect but as an ascending spiral in which active use strategies help students attain higher proficiency, which, in turn, makes it more likely that students will select those active use strategies. A study conducted by Green and Oxford suggested that "the finding of a substantial relationship between greater use of these strategies and higher second language proficiency is not in itself evidence of causality. We believe, however that there is a causal relationship between

strategy use and proficiency level here, and that this relationship is best visualized not as a one-way arrow leading from cause to effect, but rather as an ascending spiral in which active use strategies help students attain higher proficiency, which in turn makes it more likely that students will select these active use strategies" (Green & Oxford, 1995:288).

A good model for predicting the academic success of second language learners did not emerge from the present study nor from some other previous studies. Research is still needed to identify other factors that will yield a better prediction model. Progress in understanding second language learning can be made by identifying more and more variables that are thought to influence language learners, as Seliger (1984:37) contends:

> "The more variables we identify, the more we attempt to explain the recombinations of these variables through the wonders of the computer and multivariate analyses...While many characteristics have been related correlationally to language achievement, we have no mechanism for deciding which of the phenomena described or reported to be carried out by the learner are in fact those that lead to language acquisition".

3.3 The subjects or population of the study:

The subjects of the study were forty students, divided into two classes, in the first year college level studying English as a foreign language in King Faisal University. The researcher was teaching "English structure" to these students throughout the whole academic year. These students comprise the population of the study as they are the only students studying English in the first year college level. The English proficiency levels of these students were varied but all of them had passed the same final exam in the high school before they entered the university. They shared all characteristics except for one; they were all of the same religion, first language and nationality. However, the educational backgrounds of the subjects were varied. While some of them had studied English for six years, for an average of four hours a week, in intermediate and secondary public schools,

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others had studied English for twelve years in private schools or had taken some courses abroad in English speaking countries. The ages of the subjects range between seventeen and twenty years old with an average of eighteen as a standard.

The English material taught through the first academic year had been chosen by a group of teachers and supervisors in the English department and had been in use for several years. All four language skills were practised through many subjects that had been taught such as reading, structure, writing and listening comprehension. The teachers, who taught these subjects, were Arabs and native speakers of English. They use English language only in their instruction.

Evaluation of students' achievement in English language was carried out with the use of series routine of tests: the university entrance examination, midterm examination, and final examination. Students, through self-reported questionnaires and recorded interviews, had given a clear picture of their language learning background and their use of learning strategies. To stimulate their interest, students' attention was drawn to the fact that some changes might be introduced to English language materials so as to suit students' interests and needs, and one way of assessing the success of these attempts was to seek their cooperation. Students responded with great zest feeling that they were being treated as grown ups whose participation is greatly appreciated and whose views, comments and suggestions were sought and taken into account.

3.4 Data collection procedures:

Since learning strategies are mental processes, they are only available for indirect, second hand observation. We can never actually watch the mental operations, but must infer them from other sources of data. Assessing the students' learning clearly requires the use of a range of research instruments. In order to be so informed, we should use a variety of methods to provide different sets of data which can be played against each other in the interpretations of results.

The instruments used in this research take the form of methodological triangulation in the sense that more than one method is used in the pursuit of the objectives (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt "to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data." (Cohen, L. 1989 p.254). Exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the data he is investigating. The advantage of triangulation is to give a clearer picture of the data analysed from multiple perspectives. According to Cohen (1989), Denzin has extended the view of triangulation to take in several other types as well as the multi method kind which he named "methodological triangulation". Denzin identifies two categories of methodological triangulation in his typology: "within methods triangulation" and "between methods triangulation". "Within methods triangulation" concerns the replication of a study as a check on reliability and theory confirmation. "Between methods triangulation", as a check of validity, involves the use of more than one method in the pursuit of a given objective.

Three instruments were employed in this research: self-report questionnaires, recorded interviews, series of tests as measures of achievement in various skills. As was reported by O'Malley (1990, p.88): "the broadest range of coverage for strategy use can be obtained with questionnaires and interviews because of the structure given to the questions, whereas the narrowest range of strategy coverage seems likely to occur with think-aloud procedures, because the data collector is constrained from using prompts for additional strategies by the nature of the approach".

Many difficulties in collecting the data were overcome since the researcher is a lecturer and coordinator in the same department. While the achievement tests were conducted, with different teachers, throughout the whole academic year, the recorded interviews were carried out by the researcher in her office from Feb.15 to April, 15,1994. The self-report questionnaires were administered, two days before the interview, by the researcher during

one session in the classroom. The information obtained by the instruments provides an overview of learners' educational background and learning experiences. The data were used to identify key factors that might contribute to learning strategy choice and language proficiency.

The questionnaire and interview in this study were piloted and revised on a group of students, from the same population, before using it in the main study in order to ensure the relevancy and clarity of the questions, and to obtain information about the time required to answer the questions. " All data-gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable you to remove any items which do not yield usable data" (Bell, 1993:84). In this study, the purpose also of piloting the instruments was to ensure that students would experience no difficulties in completing it by enabling the researcher to remove unsatisfactory material. Many questions about unused strategies were deleted.

Since the subjects were English language students, the language used for data collection is English (see appendices 2, 3). The questions were couched in simple language and students were not asked about each strategy using its technical name such as: "Do you use questioning for clarification strategy?", but rather in simple words like: " Do you ask your teacher, classmates or anybody else for explanation of the material if it is too difficult for you?", and that was a simplified easy question about the "questioning for clarification" strategy that could be understood by these students at such a level.

3.4.1 Self-report Questionnaire:

In second language acquisition research, the use of questionnaires is important to collect data on phenomena which are not easily observed, such as motivation, attitudes and self-concepts. They are also used to obtain background information about the subjects, such as age, number of languages spoken, and previous background in language learning; and to collect data on the processes involved in using language, such as learning strategies.

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Questionnaires have many advantages. They are self-administered and can be given to large numbers of subjects at the same time. They are therefore less time consuming and less expensive. Since the same questionnaire is given to all subjects, the data are more uniform and standard. Since they are usually given to all subjects in the research at exactly the same time, the data are more accurate (Seliger, 1989).

There can also be disadvantages in using questionnaires. If closed questions are chosen, as in this study, the respondent can only select his response from a limited number of alternatives. In this study, the responses of the open interview complement those of the questionnaire giving students more chance to elaborate. As with the interviews, one can never be sure that the responses correspond to what the respondent really thinks or whether he writes what he thinks ought to be the correct answer. The researcher tried, in this study, to make a comparison between the responses of the questionnaire and the interview to find out if the answers were compatible; in which case it would suggest that it was an accurate answer.

Questionnaires are varied in their degree of explicitness. Unstructured questionnaires include open questions to which the subjects will be expected to respond in a descriptive manner. Such questionnaires have a low degree of explicitness. Those of a high degree of explicitness are the structured ones. They ask the subjects to check agreements or disagreements, mark responses, or select a number of alternatives. Therefore, they avoid the problem of obtaining more comprehensive data from certain subjects while getting less systematic information from others. Moreover, the structured questionnaire is systematic and it makes the data analysis easier because it is possible to locate each subject's answer to the same question rather quickly and to organize questions and answers that are similar. Structured questionnaires are considered to be more efficient than open ones. They elicit data in the form of numbers, checks, or rankings and can even be scored by machine.

In this study a whole session was given, before administering the questionnaire, to fully

explain all the questions to the subjects. A self-reporting structured questionnaire (appendix 2) was given to all subjects, in a whole session, to fill in. It covered their linguistic\ educational background and their use of various learning strategies. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. The first one was designed to collect information about the students' learning background and variables that might affect their learning outcomes such as motivation, years of English study, kind of communication in English outside the classroom, living in English speaking country, and purpose for studying English.

The second section was designed to test perceived frequency with which students made use of the various learning strategies classified as metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). The questionnaire items were derived from the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990). Each item, in the questionnaire, consisted of a question with four optional responses. The responses consisted of a four-level scale of agreement with the statement. Each response measures the frequency with which students use certain language learning strategies. The answers to this questionnaire formed the self-assessment aspect of the study and, through several computational analyses, the responses were contrasted with the use of the learning strategies reported during the recorded interview. The purpose of this comparison is to validate the results of the data analysed.

3.4.2 The recorded interviews:

The research interview has been defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation. It involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. "Interaction with the students would improve the chances that the information elicited is accurate and complete" (Gradman 1991,p.40). In this sense it differs from the questionnaire; as Bell (1987:70) says:"A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do. The way which a response is made (the tone of the voice, facial expression, hesitation, etc.) can

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provide information that a written response would conceal".

Learners are interviewed to find out from them information that cannot be directly observed such as thoughts, intentions, and behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the learner's perspective. The assumption is that perspectives are meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit. Effective interviewing should cause both the interviewer and the interviewee to feel that a two-way flow of communication is going on. The interviewer has a responsibility to communicate clearly what information is desired, and why that information is important. Understanding the purpose of the interview will increase the motivation of the student to respond interestingly.

As a distinctive research technique, the interview may serve three purposes. First, it may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives. As Tuckman (1972) indicated, by providing access to what is inside a person's head, it is possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). Second, it may be used to test hypotheses or to suggest new ones, or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships. And third, the interview may be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking. In this connection, Kerlinger (1970) suggests that it might be used to follow up unexpected results, or to validate other methods, or to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do.

In second language learning research, interviews are used to collect data on covert variables such as attitudes and motivation for learning the second language. They can be used as tests for obtaining information about learners' language proficiency. They have also been used recently for identifying strategies which language learners use in the process of producing and learning a second language (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990).

In order to increase the accuracy of data collection, the use of a tape recorder in the interview permits the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee. The interviewer who tries to write down every word will have a difficult time responding appropriately to subjects' needs and cues. As O'Malley and Chamot (1990:93,94) stated, "The primary advantage with interview is the richness of the description obtained of the respondent's use of learning strategies...but one of the major sources of difficulty is in classifying strategies accurately from open-ended responses. We tape-recorded informant responses and wrote complete transcripts to ensure that the classification of strategies is performed with acceptable levels of interrater reliability".

Interviews can be differentiated by their degree of explicitness and structure, ranging from structured interviews to very open ones. The structured interview consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each subject through the same sequence and asking each one the same questions. In semi-open interviews, there are specific questions determined in advance allowing elaboration but within limits. Open interviews provide interviewees with broad freedom of expression and elaboration and often resemble informal talks.

In preparing an interview careful consideration is given to the style e.g. semi-open or semi structured giving some degree of flexibility to the respondent. However the question which is often not addressed is whether during the interview the responses elicited are the actual thoughts of the respondent or not. Nunan (1992) draws attention to the asymmetrical relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

Block (1995) suggests four major constraints operating on interviews as a method of collecting data:
1-The social construction of the interviewer: This comprises four main points from the point of view of the interviewee: 1) Who am I talking to?, 2) Why is he talking to me?, 3) How am I required to express myself?, 4) What is he going to do with what I say? (From

Littlejohn 1988).

2-Power imbalance: This can take two forms: 1) where the interviewee sees the interviewer as superior to him and therefore assumes that his responses should be very clear, "good" answers to be of any value, and 2) where the iterviewee takes control in such a way that the interviewer is unable to stick to his interview plan.

3- Performing: It is possible that during the interview respondents are performing for the researchers rather than merely providing information.

4- Discursive psychology: Individuals have a role to play in giving an account of something and they play that role so that what they say is not so much a window on their mind as a window on how they choose to construct themselves in conversation.

The researcher or the interviewer should take into consideration that the data collected in interviews might not be completely accurate because of the above points.

In this study, the researcher was the teacher as well as the interviewer. Therefore, to make the interview easier for the students, they were told that no grades were involved in the process of answering the questions. To stimulate their interest and to elicit more accurate answers, students' attention was drawn to the fact that some changes might be introduced to English language materials to take into account students' interests and needs and one way of assessing the success of these attempts was to seek their cooperation. A recorded open interview was used in this study in which each student was asked essentially the same questions but with the chance to speak with freedom of expression and elaboration. The interview questions (appendix.3) were written out in advance exactly the way they were to be asked during the interview. The subjects were interviewed from 15 Feb. to 15 April 1994. The interviews took place in the free time between their study sessions in the researcher's office. Each student was interviewed individually and all the interviews were recorded. Since the raw data òf interviews are quotations, the most desirable data to obtain would be full transcription of interviews that can be enormously useful in data analysis. The transcribed data of the interview will be qualitatively analysed in chapter five.

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The interviews were conducted after questionnaires had been distributed and completed. The main purpose of conducting interviews was, firstly to validate what had been said in the questionnaire. A second purpose for conducting interviews was to obtain more in-depth qualitative data about the investigated matter. It has been stated by Seliger and Shohamy (1989) that the interview can probe for information and obtain data that has often not been foreseen. The third was to try to bring new issues to light that the questionnaire did not reveal, by giving the chance for the students to express their needs and views.

The students were asked many open-ended questions to express their views qualitatively about their second language experience, including the time they spent in learning English, and their attitudes towards learning English. The interview consists, also, of many other questions to identify the students' learning strategies. After each interview, the tapes were played back and monitored carefully to transcribe and analyse the information. While listening to the recorded tapes, notes were written down to identify the different strategies used by the subjects. The transcribed data was then compared with the responses of the questionnaire in order to validate the results of the data analysed.

3.4.3 Academic achievement tests:

A test is a procedure used to collect data on learner's ability or knowledge of certain disciplines (Seliger, 1989). In second language learning research, tests are generally used to collect data about the learner's ability in and knowledge of the second language in areas such as grammar, vocabulary, reading, metalinguistic awareness, and general proficiency. Collecting valid language data is a complex and controversial issue since it relates to the problem of:"What does it mean to know a language?". In order to discuss that complex issue, it is important first to distinguish variables from the constructs that they represent. Both variables and constructs vary over time and among individuals. However, a "variable" is essentially what we can observe or quantify of the human characteristics or abilities involved, whereas a "construct" is the actual characteristic or ability that it represents in individuals. The construct "proficiency" in English language is difficult to observe and measure because it is something that goes on inside an individual's head. It could be represented by the variable test scores (what we can observe and measure of a construct in

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a test). However, it is important to say that the scores are not the ability but a reflection of the ability. Cummins found value in the notion of a global-language proficiency factor "which can be assessed by a variety of reading, writing, listening and speaking tests and which is strongly related to general cognitive skills and to academic achievement" (Cummins, 1980:176). This factor Cummins calls cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP).

In this study, evaluation of students' achievement in English language was carried out with the use of a series of tests that are usually given to students throughout the academic year: the midterm and final examination of four subjects: reading, writing, structure, and listening comprehension (appendix.4). While English structure was taught to students by the researcher throughout the academic year, other subjects; reading, writing and listening comprehension, were taught by different teachers. The midterm and the final examinations were used as measures of achievement of "what has been learned from what was taught throughout the academic year" Cohen, A. (1980:9). They were both designed by the same team of teachers. Test items were analysed and revised to meet given standards of quality. Directions for administering, scoring, and interpreting the scores are carefully specified to ensure reliability and validity. Both midterm and final examination consisted of separate tests on four subjects: reading, writing, grammar, and listening comprehension. A variety of techniques have been used in these tests to measure various language skills.

3.5 Data analysis procedures:

The analysis of any type of data relies mainly on the collection procedures used. Exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular "slice of reality he is investigating" (Cohen & Manion, 1980:208). The researcher needs to be confident that the data generated are not simply artifacts of one specific method of collection. And this confidence can only be achieved when different methods of data collection yield substantially the same results. Triangular techniques, as the one used in this study, attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint, and in doing so makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data. Witkin (1984:3) says that quantitative methods of needs

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identification and analysis must be balanced by qualitative procedures that take values into consideration.

In this study quantitative as well as qualitative analyses were used. Caracelli and Greene (1994:196) suggest the use of qualitative and quantitative data. They state that results from one method type are intended to enhance, illustrate, or clarify results from other. While both qualitative and descriptive research are concerned with providing descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally, they approach research from different perspectives.

The descriptive statistical methods provides pictures of the subject in the form of tables, graphs, frequencies, percentages, etc. (Bell, 1987). These types of data can be exposed to any statistical procedures based on what the purpose is (e.g. finding correlation, standard deviation, etc.). The descriptive research begins with preconceived notion or expectation about the second language phenomena to be investigated. In this sense, it may be said that it is hypothesis-testing or deductive. That is the research begins with a question or a theory which narrows the focus of the research and allows the second language phenomena to be investigated systematically (Seliger, 1990).

The qualitative method, on the other hand, has a different aim. It may involve the use of statistics, but its purpose is to draw implications from the data to form a hypothesis. In that sense, qualitative research is hypothesis-generating or heuristic because questions are suggested by the recurring patterns which emerge from the data itself. While qualitative analysis will allow us to study individual performance closely, it may or may not represent the behaviour of other learners and is therefore of questionable value for generalization to language acquisition by others. On the other hand, when our interest is in the normative behaviour of a population, quantification represents a reality for that group. Such a reality may be generalizable to other groups, assuming that sampling procedures are adequate (Shulman, 1981).

In this study, the responses from an open-ended recorded interview were transcribed from the tapes, coded and analysed qualitatively in chapter five. However, any important data discovered, that were not included in the questions, were added later to the rest of the data.

The researcher believed that by doing so she would be able to use the full information from the original data and would not lose aspects that might be relevant and important for valid interpretation of the data.

Data obtained from questionnaires, academic tests and interview are analysed with the aid of descriptive statistics. These can provide information about how often learning strategies occurred by measures of frequency, or discover the relation between various variables such as learners' variables and language proficiency.

Through the use of the computer and with the help of one of the statisticians in the MSC department at the Institute of Education, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used in analysing the data of this research. After the data collection had been administered, the data were transferred to the computer database. Many statistical commands for SPSS were used to analyse the data. Each of these procedures will be explained first briefly. Then each of them will be referred to later while discussing the interpretation of data analysis in the next chapter.

3.5.1 Frequencies:

Frequencies are used to indicate how often a phenomenon occurs and they are based on counting the number of occurrences (Clayton, 1984). The information provided by frequencies is very useful in second language learning research. In this research, frequencies were used to show how often learning strategies were used by different types of language learners (tables 3, 5). They also provided information on the contribution of the learner variables on the strategy use (tables 8, 10..etc). They were reported through tables and graphs.

3.5.2 The Mean:

The mean of a set of scores is defined as the sum of all scores in the set divided by the total number of scores. The formula for the mean is written: $M = \Sigma X/N$.

In this formula, the sigma, means "the sum of". The variable X stands for any score. N, stands for the total number of scores (Cohen, L., 1982). The mean is the measure which is

most frequently used because of its stability in repeated sampling and its use in advanced statistical procedures. It is used in this research to measure the average performance of learner variables on proficiency, and on strategy use (tables 7, 9).

3.5.3 Standard deviation:

Standard deviation is one of the most common variability measures in data analysis. It is the square root of the averaged square distance of the scores from the mean. The formula for computing the standard deviation is: S.D. $= \sqrt{(\Sigma(X - \bar{X}))}N$

Where X=student's score; Σ=sum of; N=number of students; $\bar{X}$=mean; $\sqrt{}$ =square root. (Clayton,1984)

In this research, the standard deviation was used with the mean in measuring the learning strategies of learners with different proficiency levels (table 6) and with learner variables (table 7). It was also used with the mean to measure the effect of the number of years of English study on strategy use (table 9.).

3.5.4 One way analysis of variance ANOVA:

The one way ANOVA is used to compare the means of more than two groups on one variable. The analysis is performed on the variance of the groups, focusing on whether the variability between the different groups is greater than the variability within each of the groups. The F value is the ratio "between" variance, over the "within" variance, as indicated below (Cohen, L., 1982):

F = Between group variance\ within group variance

A significant F will occur when the variability among the groups is greater than the variability within each group.

ANOVA was used in this research to find the significance level of the number of years of English study on learning strategy use between four groups (table 9). It was also used to discover the significance level of proficiency on the strategy use of four groups (table 6.). ANOVA was also used to find the significance level of learner factors on proficiency (table7).

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3.5.5. Correlation coefficient:

Correlation coefficient examines existing relationships between two sets of variables. When a high positive correlation is obtained between two variables, it means that there is a close relationship between the two variables. A low correlation between the variables will mean that these two variables are not related to one another. A negative correlation between variables will imply that they would be inversely related. The results are expressed in a correlation coefficient which ranges from (+1.0), indicating perfect positive correlation, to (-1.0), indicating perfect negative correlation. Regardless of how the correlations are, they do not imply causation. High correlations do not mean that one variable causes the other, but only that the two variables are related. Correlation coefficient was used in this research to show the significance of relations between strategies used by students and language proficiency (table13), and background variables of students with proficiency (table14).

3.6 Summary:

The aim of this chapter was to describe the design and methodology adopted and to give background information to the collecting of the data using the different techniques.

Section one made a comparison between the present study and other studies conducted in the same field. Section two described the relationship between the variables of language learning through a diagram which consists of three boxes representing classes of variables in language learning. Section three focused on the subjects that represent the sample of the study. The instrumentation was the concern of the fourth section. This section described the techniques used for collecting the data during the fieldwork and justification was given for using the chosen techniques. The questionnaire and the interview provide information regarding learners' strategy knowledge and background variables. The four language tests gave information about students' level of achievement. Section five dealt with the techniques used in the data analysis. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse the gathered data. The next chapter will set out to analyse and discuss the collected data, and the research questions will be addressed.

Chapter Four

Interpretation of the results and discussion of the findings

4.0 Introduction:

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the statistical analysis as well as the interpretation of the data. Through this discussion of the analysis, the researcher tries to shed a light on the objectives of this study and answer the questions raised earlier in (1.1).

As stated in the previous chapter, data was collected during the academic year 1993-1994. The information was obtained through questionnaire, interviews, and tests of academic achievement. The subjects are students in the first year college level in King Faisal University (KFU), studying English as a foreign language. They came from different language backgrounds and proficiency levels.

Reporting and discussing research results depends on the specific data analysis technique that was performed. Results obtained from descriptive statistics are discussed in this chapter with the aid of tables, graphs, and charts. Descriptive statistics provide measures of frequency of the learning strategies used, or show the relation between various variables such as proficiency and individual variables through correlation.

Discussion was made to explain the nature of the learning strategies used as well as learner's variables. These will be accompanied by examples and quotation from the actual data. Through the discussions, comparison was made of the learning strategies used by Arab learners of English in this study and learners of English as a second language in other studies conducted in U.S. and Europe. Comparison was also made for different factors that influence the use of learning strategies in many prior studies with this one. Results obtained from qualitative analysis, in the next chapter, are reported through detailed descriptions of the interview data.

The third objective of the study, mentioned in (1.1), is to provide a detailed analysis of the learning strategies used by Arabic learners of English at tertiary level. Through such analysis, an attempt is made to answer the following three research questions. Therefore, these research questions are as useful as a guide to the interpretation of the analysis in this study.

4.1. Range and variety of learning strategies :

The first research question raised in (1.1) was: Is it possible to identify the range and variety of learning strategies used by tertiary learners of English in Saudi Arabia?

Learning strategies are commonly defined as operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information (Oxford, 1990). This definition and many others previously mentioned in (2.2.2), while helpful, do not fully convey the excitement or richness of learning strategies. It was useful to expand this definition to the purpose of this study by adding that: Learning strategies are actions or techniques that are, either observable or unobservable, and might be taught to help learners become more self-directed. They could be employed either consciously or automatically in response to communication problems, and influenced by a variety of factors.

At this stage in the short history of language learning strategy research, there is no complete agreement on exactly what strategies are; how many strategies exist; and how they should be defined and classified."Second language acquisition research cannot reach its greatest effectiveness if researchers continue to use different and conflicting strategy definitions or concepts. A more coherent, more understandable system of second language strategies, if commonly accepted by researchers, would also be useful for teachers and administrators who want to help their students: learn how to learn." Oxford (1993:183).

Classification conflicts are also inevitable. Even individual researchers often classify a particular strategy differently at different times in light of new insights. Despite problems in defining and classifying strategies, research continues to prove that strategies help learners

take control of their learning and become more proficient. The identification and classification of learning strategies are sensitive to a number of factors. These factors are proficiency level (O'Malley, Chamot, 1990); data elicitation techniques (Seliger, Shohamy, 1990); the nature of the task and individual variables such as motivation, age, length of the learning period (Oxford, 1990). The classification of learning strategies can also be influenced and controlled by the researcher's goals and interests. This study used a language learning strategy system that is partially based on O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of psychological functions as cognitive, metacognitive, and social affective strategies. The reason for choosing that system is because it covers a broader range of strategies comparing with other systems. The classification that I have adopted is specific to my experimental framework. It is designed to meet the objectives of this study, the elicitation techniques, and the learning tasks that the subjects were required to acquire in the classroom and these were mainly four:

* Learning how to write accurate compositions.

* learning how to comprehend passages through listening.

* learning grammar.

* learning how to read and understand new vocabulary.

Although the language learning strategies used are partially based on the strategy classification system developed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), the following definitions and illustrations are more specifically related to the context of this study due to some differences. These areas of differences were reflected in the different patterns, frequency and kinds of learning strategies used by students due to their different background factors, as will be discussed later in (4.3). After piloting the questionnaire and the interview on a group of students, as mentioned in (3.5), strategies not reported were eliminated and additional strategies reported were added, resulting in the augmented list of strategies shown in tables (1), (3) which will be discussed individually in detail later with examples of students answers for each strategy. Questionnaires and interviews were the two procedures used in collecting data about the learning strategies of the subjects. It is often the case that "the broadest range of coverage for strategy use can be obtained with

Table (3) Range and variety of learning strategies used
by Saudi students in percentage

	Questionnaire				Interview	
Strategy	1	2	3	4	Use	Not use
1	0	60	40	0	42.5	57.5
2	2.5	55	42.5	0	42.5	57.5
3	17.5	22.5	60	0	82.5	17.5
4	17.5	5	22.5	55	77.5	22.5
5	10.0	60	30	0	30	70
6	17.5	7.5	17.5	57.5	75	25
7	17.5	7.5	20	55	75	25.
8	2.5	37.5	57.5	2.5	52.5	47.5
9	0	35	65	0	67.5	32.5
10	0	30	70	0	70	30
11	5.0	27.5	67.5	0	67.5	32.5
12	10.0	37.5	52.5	0	52.5	47.5
13	0	42.5	55	2.5	62.5	37.5
14	2.5	35	60	2.5	62.5	37.5
15	17.5	2.5	25	55	80	20
16	17.5	5	22.5	55	77.5	22.5
17	0	35	65	0	67.5	32.5
18	5	40	55	0	55	45

1=Never use, 2=Rarely use, 3=Often use, 4=Always use.

Figure (2) Percentage of strategy use
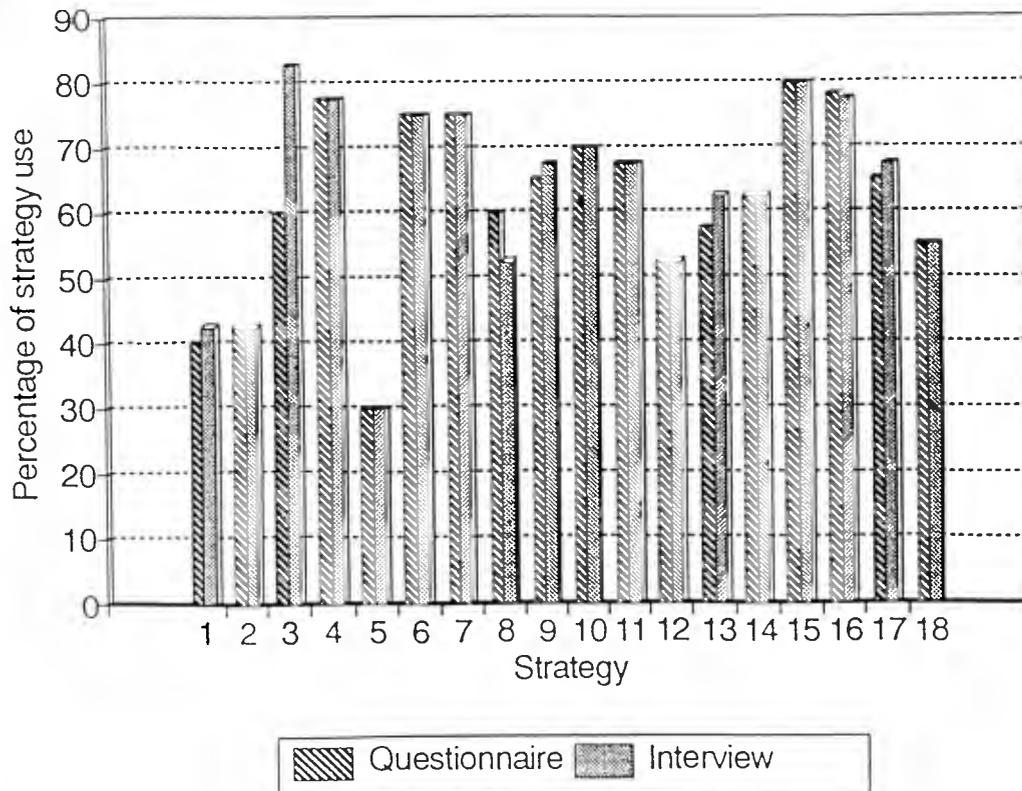
questionnaires and guided interviews because of the structure given to the questions" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990,p.88)

Table (3) summarizes the data obtained by the questionnaire and the interviews on the range and variety of learning strategies used by the subjects. It reported the frequent use of each strategy on a four-point scale. Figure (2) shows clearly that the data obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews show some similarities. These results emphasize the validity of the procedures. Frequency was the only statistical method used in both. The strategies shown in table (3) will be each discussed separately with some quotations from the actual data:

S.1 Questioning for clarification:

Asking questions was used as a strategy by students in order to clarify information about which they were unsure or to help themselves better understand what was being said. Some students reported directing their questions to the teacher of the class, and some others prefer asking their classmates instead. The following is one of the answers of students from the interview:

Student: "I ask my friends for explanation if I don't understand the material."

As shown in table (3), questionnaire results indicated that 60% of the students have rarely used the strategy, while 40% reported using the strategy often. No students reported that they "never" or "always" use the strategy. Interview results show some similarities as 42.5% of the students reported using the strategy, while 57.5% reported that they do not use it. Figure (2) reflects these results and shows that the interview line was a little higher than the questionnaire line on strategy (1) and that reflects the difference in the results between the two.

Table (5) in (4.2) shows the correlation between this strategy and language proficiency. All eight students, whose grades are above 90%, have used clarification strategy. While seven out of fourteen (50%), whose grades were about 80%, have used this strategy. Eleven students, whose grades were about seventy, have not used clarification strategy. One student out of five (20%), whose grades were about sixty, has used the same strategy. This finding indicates that the higher the proficiency, the more frequent use of the strategy.

Tables (8,10,11..etc.,) as will be discussed later in (4.3), show the correlation between this strategy and each individual factor.

S.2- Cooperation:

Some students reported cooperation in the activities of the class by working together as groups to help each other in solving problems, checking learning tasks, pooling information or getting feedback on oral or written performance.

Student: "I work with my friends in cooperation to solve any language problem in class."

I would not wish to repeat the same format for each of the 18 strategies investigated. Therefore I would refer the reader to the same tables used in (S.1) for the statistical data of each strategy.

S.3- Resourcing:

Most students reported using many resources, as a strategy, to help them understand the material. Using resources is the taking advantage of dictionaries, textbooks or notebooks for the purpose of: 1) Looking up words which the students were unsure of; 2) understanding new words; 3) rereading previously covered material; and 4) finding answers to questions.

Student: "If I am unable to identify a word's meaning, I'll look up it in a dictionary."

S.4- Note-taking:

Note-taking is the recording of information for later review or use. Most students who reported using this strategy keep written records of important material in a notebook and most note taking is actually reported to be copying-down of information which has been provided by the teacher and usually written on the chalkboard. However, a few other students reported taking notes as they listened to teacher's explanation or other activities in the classroom.

Student: "I take notes while listening to the teacher to review them later at home."

S.5- Summarizing:

Summarizing is making a shorter version of an oral or written passage. Sometimes summarizing can be more useful and more challenging than taking notes, because it often requires greater condensation of thought. Summarizing can be as simple as just giving a title or writing few words to describe the important information. Summaries can also become more complex as students advance in their knowledge of the language. Some students can write a complete precis summarizing what they have heard, written or read.

Student: "After I finish reading, I make a summary to help me understand the material and remember it."

S.6- Self-Monitoring:

Self-monitoring strategy is used in a variety of ways for both comprehension and production of the language. Students use this strategy to check their comprehension while reading or correcting production while completing the task. Self-monitoring is also important for speaking, but students should not become obsessed with correcting every speech difficulty, because this will kill communication. Teachers can encourage their students in monitoring their writing difficulties by marking the most important writing problems and then asking the students to figure out the correct forms with help from their friends and reference books.

St.:"Sometimes I remember my mistakes and I don't repeat them again."

S.7- Inferencing:

Inferencing is using contextual clues to figure out meanings, to predict outcomes, or to fill in missing information. This strategy is used by students when their knowledge is insufficient to reach a conclusion or when they have exhausted all other ways to find an answer. In some cases, students tried to figure out a new word or grammatical structure by guessing what it could mean. Previously gained knowledge of the target language can provide linguistic clues to the meaning of what is heard or read. Students can actually understand a lot of language through systematic guessing, without necessarily comprehending all the details.

St.: "Perhaps the word "indemnity" means insurance in this sentence."

S.8- Translating:

Translating is the mental changing of a word or phrase from one language to another. Students used their own language as the basis for understanding what they hear or read in English. When working on a language task in English, students think of what they wanted to do in their native language and then translate those thoughts into English. Although in most instances students translate mentally, using what they already know, at certain times some students use resources to assist them. In the classroom, where English only is spoken, some students translate everything they hear and write notes in Arabic instead.

Student: "When I speak sometimes I translate what I think of from Arabic to English."

Student: "In class, it is easier for me to write notes in Arabic."

S.9- Imagery:

Students use this strategy to relate new language information to concepts in memory by means of meaningful visual imagery. Students use these mental images to facilitate their task performance. The image can be a mental representation of the letters of a word, a set of locations for remembering a sequence of words or expressions, or a picture of an object. This strategy can be used to remember abstract words with a visual symbol or a picture of a concrete object. Imagery is used as a daily classroom strategy but it is most frequently used during tests when students tried to recall information by seeing in their minds what they had previously studied.

Student: "I always watch English programmes and films on TV, then I associate words with pictures in my mind."

S.10- Self-management:

Self-management is following specific steps that students believe will assist, facilitate, or enhance task performance. By using self-management strategy, students can understand the conditions that help them successfully accomplish language tasks and control their language performance to maximize use of what is already known. Students apply this strategy to identify their successful learning experiences, organize their study approaches, take

advantage of diverse learning opportunities, and interact with native speakers of English.

St:"While reading, I always put a line under the important information so that I can review them later."

S.11- Planning:

Students use planning strategy to programme ahead of time the steps to be taken for the execution of the task. These steps are: describing the task or situation, determining its requirements, checking one's own linguistic resources, and determining additional language elements or functions necessary for the task or situation.

Student: "First I read the whole passage and then I read the questions and answer them one after the other."

S.12-Reviewing :

This strategy involves previewing the basic principles and material for an upcoming language activity, and linking these with what the learners already know. Students apply this strategy in different ways that includes any of the following: (1) looking over material previously covered to prepare for a new language task, (2) going over in one's mind what was done in class that day, (3) rereading in a textbook what was learned that day, (4) looking over things which one is unsure about, or (5) looking over one's notes.

Student: "I review and prepare the material before attending the class."

S.13- Selective attention:

Selective attention is a strategy which is used to consciously bring oneself into the learning situation. Students decide in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that assist in performance of a task. This strategy focuses the student's attention on the important (relevant to learning) happenings of the classroom and focuses attention away from those happenings which may be distracting the student, thus inhibiting the student's mental presence in the learning situation.

St.: "When I try to answer a question I pay attention to the verb tense used in the question to know what tense I have to use in the answer."

S.14- Deduction:

Deduction strategy is the application of rules to understand or produce language or solve problems. Students consciously apply learned rules or try to make up rules that are based on language analysis. The application of these learned or self-developed rules assists students in understanding language or in performing language activities.

Q.: "correct the following sentences if they are wrong":

Sen.1:I went to the pharmacy for getting medicine.

S.15- Substitution:

In applying substitution strategy, students look for possible alternatives to replace items that are not known in the target language. These alternatives are used to compensate for a lack of appropriate vocabulary or grammatical knowledge. Substitution strategy is used to overcome limitations in language learning. Students sometimes use circumlocution or synonym to substitute a word that has the same meaning. Mime or gestures are used in place of an expression to indicate meaning. Sometimes students might switch to the mother tongue to replace a word that is unknown in the target language.

St.: "If I forget a word in English I try to use other words that have the same meaning to describe it."

S.16- Practising:

Practising could be either repeating and rehearsing or communicating naturalistically in the target language. Repetition is performing a behaviour over and over again. The purpose of repetition is to aid in remembering. Students use either oral or written repetition. Oral repetition is used to remember how to pronounce certain words or phrases in the target language or to help remember the meanings of words. Writing words or phrases over and over again is used to help remember meanings, spellings, or structure rules.

Practising naturalistically is using the language for actual communication. The classroom cannot provide adequate practice opportunities, therefore, some students try to find additional chances to practice the language in natural settings as in participating in a conversation, reading an article in the newspaper, watching a film on TV, or listening to a native speaker.

St: "I try to practice speaking English with native speakers whenever I can"

S.17- Grouping:

Grouping involves classifying or reclassifying what is heard or read into meaningful groups, thus reducing the number of unrelated elements. Students use grouping strategy to search for similarities among the items in a group of words or phrases. This strategy is used as an aid to remembering more than one word or phrase which appears to have certain characteristics in common. In using grouping strategy, students may or may not take into consideration the meaning of the items when they want to label grammatical words as adjectives, adverbs or verbs. Grouping words according to vocabulary make students look for words which have conceptual similarities (e.g. hot, warm, fire) or opposites (e.g. long, short).

Student: "It is easier for me to arrange the words according to their meaning or structure."

S.18- Self-evaluation:

Self-evaluation is revising production when the task is completed or checking one's language knowledge or one's ability to perform a task. Any self-evaluation should take into consideration the surrounding of the learning situation. Students can use self-evaluation by comparing themselves with each other. Diaries or checklists can help students evaluate their progress. As applied to language skills self-evaluation might consist of learners' assessing their proficiency in a variety of ways. For instance, students might estimate whether their reading skills have improved since the last check, or they may record their own speech on a tape recorder and then listen to the recording comparing it with a native speaker. Self-evaluation could be applied together with other strategies like self-monitoring. Students are

advised to use their own errors to identify their areas of weakness and to evaluate the effectiveness of different kinds of practice on their learning. The self-evaluation is not only the evaluation of students' language production but includes evaluation of the learning strategies employed.

St:"I have some problems in learning English, I am very weak in spelling"

All strategies mentioned earlier were used with different degrees of frequency by students with different levels of proficiency. Table (4) in appendix (5), from data of the interview, indicates some similarities. Substitution strategy (S.15) was among the most frequently (80%) used strategies. Note taking strategy (S.4) and practising strategy (S.16) were among the second strategies that were frequently used (77.5%). Self correcting (S.6) and inferencing strategy (S.7) were among the third group of strategies that were frequently used (75%). Summarizing strategy (S.5) was a less frequently used strategy (30%). Clarification (S.1) and cooperation strategy (S.2) were among the second less frequently used strategies (42%).

These results indicate that language learners do use learning strategies but in different frequencies. Although they mirrored the results of other studies mentioned earlier in chapter two, but there are some areas of difference that are reflected in the different patterns, frequency and kinds of learning strategies used by Arabic students due to their different background factors as will be discussed in (4.3).

4.2 The relation between students' strategies and their proficiency:

The second research question in this study, mentioned in (1.1), is to discover whether there are differences in strategy use between successful language learners and less successful ones and to classify the strategies identified into most successful strategies and less successful ones; and to find out the relation between proficiency and these strategies.

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As was discussed earlier in (3.4.3), the construct "language proficiency" is difficult to observe and measure because it is something that goes on inside an individual's head. It could be represented by the variable test scores (what we can observe and measure of a construct in a test). However, it is important to say that the scores are not the ability but a reflection of the ability. Cummins found value in the notion of a global-language proficiency factor "which can be assessed by a variety of reading, writing, listening and speaking tests and which is strongly related to general cognitive skills and to academic achievement" (Cummins, 1980:176). In this study, evaluation of students' achievement in English language was carried out with the use of a series of tests during the academic year 1993-1994. Reading, writing, structure, listening comprehension tests (appendix 4) were used as measures of achievement of " what has been learned from what was taught throughout the academic year" (Cohen, 1980:9). The differences in students' level of language proficiency might be attributed to many factors as will be discussed in the next section. The use of appropriate learning strategies might be one of these factors, as Seliger pointed " It will probably be agreed that behaviours which can be identified as the basis for making inferences about language proficiency are: ability to communicate in the language, use of appropriate registers and appropriate speech acts, and knowing how to use strategies in appropriate contexts." (Seliger, 1990:193)

Research on learning strategies has focused for the most part on describing strategies used by successful language learners. Second language learners who use active and varied strategies to assist their learning tend to be more successful learners than those who do not use strategies or who rely upon simple rote repetition (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Politzer & McGroarty,1985 ; Wenden,1987).

Many studies, as mentioned in the literature review, have supported the effectiveness of using learning strategies. The most general findings are that the use of appropriate language learning strategies leads to improved proficiency (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot,1990).

A second major finding is that successful language learners in general use more and better learning strategies than do poorer learners (Oxford, 1993; Wenden & Rubin 1987). A third finding is that successful language learners are able to use and select strategies that are appropriate to the requirements of the language task (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Appropriate learning strategies help explain the performance of successful language learners; similarly, inappropriate learning strategies aid in understanding the frequent failures of poor language learners and even the occasional weaknesses of good ones. It has been assumed that once the strategies of successful language learners are identified they can be made available and, where useful, used by less successful learners to enable them to learn a second language more effectively (Hosenfeld, 1979; Wenden & Rubin, 1987).

In this study, table (5) and Figure (3) from the data collected from questionnaire, table (5.1, and figure 3.1 in appendix 5) from the data in the interview, show the frequency of strategy use according to five different levels of proficiency in English language. The data on strategy use, as mentioned earlier, was obtained from questionnaires and interviews. The data on learner proficiency was obtained from academic tests. Frequency was used as a statistical analysis procedure in these tables and figures. The data of the tables (5), (5.1) and figures (3), (3.1) collected from questionnaires and interviews show some similarity in results.

Tables (5), (5.1) answer the question raised by the first part of the second research question. They show that successful language students used more strategies than unsuccessful language students who used very few strategies. Figures (3), (3.1) reflect clearly the differences in strategy use between successful language learners (Proficiency > 70) and less successful ones (proficiency < 70). There are two columns for each strategy. One of them represents the proficiency of successful language students (>70) and the other represents

Table (5) Frequency of strategy & Proficiency from questionnaire
(Percentage in brackets)

Strategy	Proficiency				
	50- n=2	60- n=5	70- n=11	80- n=14	90- n=8
s3			11(100.0)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s15			10(90.9)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s4			9(81.8)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s16			9(81.8)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s6			8(72.7)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s7			8(72.7)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s10	1(50.0)	3(60.0)	4(36.4)	12(85.7)	8(100.0)
s17	2(100.0)	5(100.0)	3(27.3)	8(57.1)	8(100.0)
s9			5(45.5)	13(92.9)	8(100.0)
s11	1(50.0)		7(63.6)	11(78.6)	8(100.0)
s14	2(100.0)		5(45.5)	10(71.4)	8(100.0)
s8	2(100.0)	4(80.0)	4(36.4)	6(42.9)	7(87.5)
s12		1(20.0)	3(27.3)	9(64.3)	8(100.0)
s13		4(80.0)	2(18.2)	9(64.3)	8(100.0)
s18		5(100.0)	1(9.1)	8(57.1)	8(100.0)
s2			2(18.2)	7(50.0)	8(100.0)
s1		1(20.0)		7(50.0)	8(100.0)
s5		2(40.0)		2(14.3)	8(100.0)

Figure (3) Percentage of strategy use & proficiency from questionnaire

Figure (3) Percentage of strategy use & proficiency from questionnaire

Proficiency < 70   Proficiency > 70
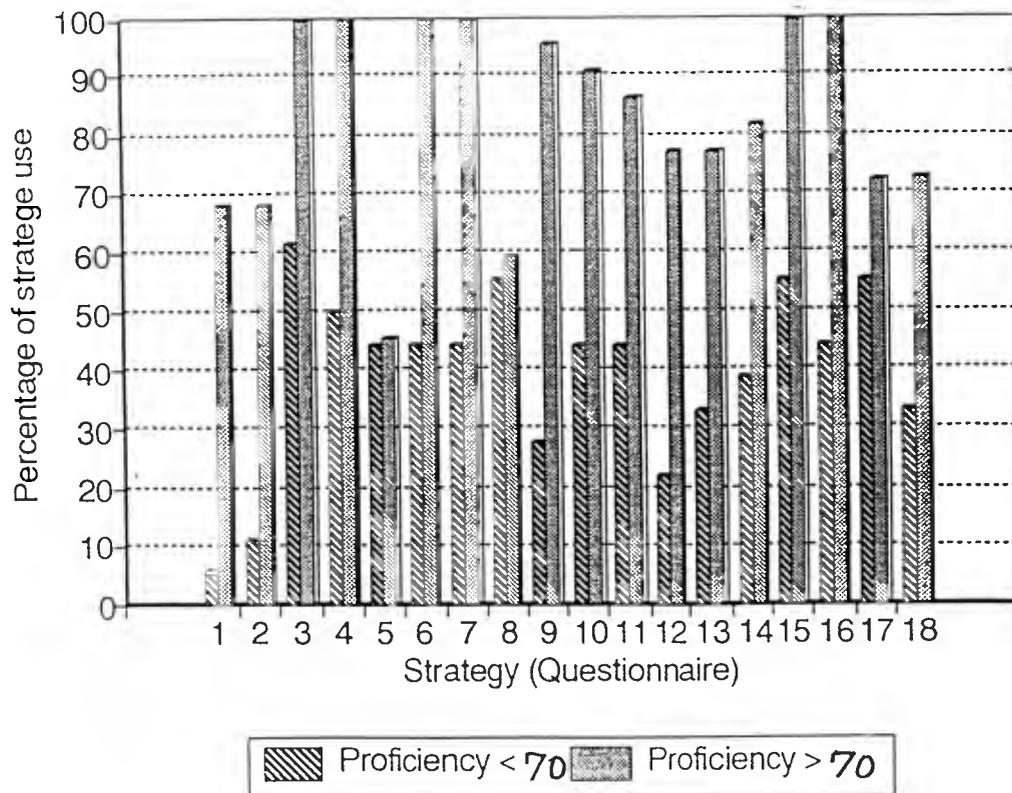
the other group. In figure (3) for example there is a big difference in height between the two columns of the first strategy (questioning for clarification). All other strategies have the columns of successful students' proficiency higher than the columns of the proficiency of other group. Tables (5), (5.1) answer the question raised by the second part of the research question. They show the most successful learning strategies in order. Resourcing (S.3), substitution (S.15), note taking (S.4), practising (S.16), and self monitoring (S.6), were among the most frequently used strategies by most successful language learners. Deduction (S.14) and grouping strategy (S.17) were among the strategies used frequently by unsuccessful language learners.

Table (6) answers the question raised by the third part of the research question, whether there is a relation between proficiency and these strategies. It shows significant results. The higher the proficiency the more frequent use of strategies. On a four-point scale, students who choose "often" and "always" for using strategies are higher in their proficiency than students who use "never" and "rarely". Figure (4) reflects clearly these results. The columns representing "often" and "always" are higher than the other columns. That indicates the higher these columns are, the more frequent use of these strategies, the higher the proficiency. The statistical analysis procedures used were means, standard deviation and ANOVA.

Almost all of these findings show some significance. They reflect the findings of other studies. In general, more successful students used learning strategies more often, with greater variety, and perhaps more appropriately in ways that helped them complete the task successfully. Less successful students, on the other hand, not only had fewer strategy types, but also less frequently used strategies that might be inappropriate to the task or that did not lead to successful completion of the task.

Table (6) Means + SD of proficiency & strategy use
(Number of learners in brackets)

Strategy	Never	Rarely	Often	Always	Significance
1		74.4±9.8 (24)	87.6±7.9 (16)		**
2	73.5±0.0 (1)	73.6±10.2 (22)	87.9±6.3 (17)		**
3	60.7±3.8 (7)		74.5±2.6 (9)	87.1±5.1 (24)	**
4	60.7±3.8 (7)	75.0(±0.7 (2)	74.6±3.1 (9)	88.2±3.7 (22)	**
5	71.1±5.2 (4)	77.7±10.4 (24)	86.4±10.9 (12)		**
6	60.7±3.8 (7)	74.5±3.1 (3)	74.8±3.1 (7)	87.6±4.6 (23)	**
7	60.7±3.8 (7)	77.8±2.0 (3)	73.5±2.2 (8)	88.2±3.7 (22)	**
8	74.3±0.0 (1)	79.3±7.2 (15)	79.5±13.2 (23)		NS
9		67.7±8.2 (14)	86.1±6.0 (26)		**
10		72.6±8.5 (12)	82.7±10.9 (28)		**
11	63.7±0.4 (2)	71.8±10.6 (11)	84.1±8.8 (27)		**
12	65.9±9.2 (4)	74.6±9.8 (15)	85.9±7.9 (21)		**
13		74.4±9.8 (17)	83.4±10.8 (22)	86.5±0.0 (1)	*
14	64.0±0.0 (1)	73.9±9.5 (14)	83.4±10.6 (24)	86.5±0.0 (1)	*
15	60.7±3.8 (7)	78.8±0.0 (1)	74.3±2.6 (10)	88.2±3.7 (22)	**
16	60.7±3.8 (7)	72.6±2.3 (2)	75.1±2.8 (9)	88.2±3.7 (22)	**
17		79.4±6.6 (14)	79.8±13.1 (26)		NS
18	72.6±2.3 (2)	76.3±9.6 (16)	82.7±11.9 (22)		NS

** p<0.01, * p<0.05. NS none significance

Figure (4) Average of Proficiency by strategy use
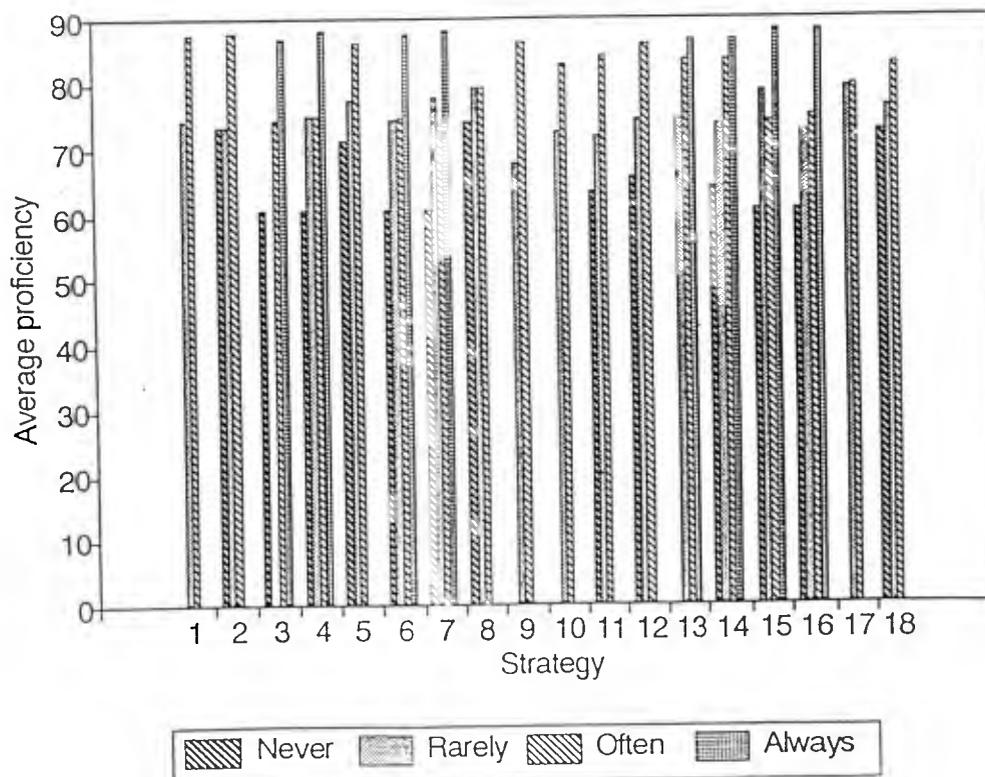
4.3 The relation between individual variables, strategies and proficiency:

The third research question, mentioned earlier in (1.1), was if there are differences in strategy use between students with different individual variables and proficiency levels, and to identify the relation between the three.

Learning a foreign language presupposes a complex of particular characteristics and traits which should qualify the learner's personal targets and influence his approach towards learning (Richards, 1985). Important individual differences exist among second language learners and, as Selinker has written, "A theory of second language learning that does not provide a central place for individual differences among learners cannot be considered acceptable" (Selinker, 1972:213). Recent studies dealing with individual differences in the learning process have focused on such question as what makes a good language learner and why some students develop proficiency more quickly and easily than others (Reiss, 1985; Rubin, 1982; Gardner, 1991; Skehan, 1989; Naiman, 1978). The potential answer for such questions may lie in an analysis of the second language learners' strategies and other variables that may affect a learner's choice of strategies. The investigation of factors which contribute to a learner's self-selection of learning strategies has been a focus of interest for many studies (Oxford, 1993, 1989; Bialystok, 1981, 1978; Politzer, 1983, 1985; Chamot, 1987; Wenden, 1986).

In this study, the subjects came from different language backgrounds with noticeably different levels of English language proficiency. In the light of previous studies, mentioned in (1.5), on the variables that mostly affect Saudi Arabs in learning English, some factors were chosen to be tested in this study. Anticipating the types of factors that might influence the strategy use and English proficiency of Saudi students, a set of questions was used to elicit relevant information. The data obtained through individual interviews and questionnaires revealed a number of variables in the students' language learning background. By measuring the strength of the relationship, through statistical data analysis, between each of these variables; and the students' level of achievement, as determined by their test scores; and the frequency of the language learning strategies used, the researcher sought to identify the nature of the relation between the three.

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Table (7) Proficiency & learners factors

Background factors	n	Mean	S.D.	Significance
Native Arabic speaker No Yes	2 38	79.1 90.6	11.1 5.1	
Years of English study less than 11 years 11 and over years	29 11	75.4 91.0	10.1 2.4	**
Studied English abroad Yes No	9 31	91.2 76.3	3.4 10.3	**
Travelled to English speaking countries Yes No	13 27	90.0 74.7	3.4 10.0	**
Extracurricular exposure to English Yes No	22 18	88.2 69.2	3.7 7.7	**
Motivation to learn English Yes Quite Not so Not	19 13 5 3	88.6 74.0 69 61.6	3.7 9.5 4.69 8.62	**

** p<0.01

Table (7) summarises the relation between the background factors of the students and their language proficiency. Interpretation of the results in this table will be discussed next in each background factor individually. Comparison will also be made between each variable affecting students' strategies from studies conducted in the west with this one.

4.3.1 Motivation:

Several decades of research in sociolinguistics has found motivation to be one of the most important affective variables in language learning (Gardner,1991). According to Gardner (1985) there are two possible motivational orientations: 1) instrumental, for enhancing career or academic prospects, and 2) integrative, for fitting in with native

language speakers. Gardner found that integrative motivation correlates more with successful language learning. A number of researchers disagree with the primacy of integrative motivation in second language learning (Crookes and Schmidt, 1989; Dornyei, 1990; Horwitz, 1990; Au, 1988; Older, 1981; Oxford, 1992; Lukmani,1972). They contend that one particular kind of motivation might not be uniformly superior in terms of ultimate second language performance. In other words, both motivations integrative and instrumental are indispensable for creating fertile conditions for learning English.

The role of motivation in strategy use and language proficiency was the focus of many studies recently. O'Malley et al(1985b) found that students who have experienced success in using learning strategies have developed confidence in their own ability to learn, and are therefore likely to approach new learning tasks with more positive motivation than unsuccessful students who may have developed a negative attitude towards their own ability to learn. In another longitudinal study of learning strategies used by foreign language students, Chamot found that "nomination as a successful language learner appeared to be associated with greater motivation for learning the second language as well as with more frequent and varied use of learning strategy" (O'Malley and Chamot,1990:43).

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) found that of all variables measured, motivation had the most powerful influence on reported use of language learning strategies. They discovered that "not only does high motivation lead to significant use of language learning strategies, but high strategy use leads to high motivation as well" (Oxford and Nyikos,1989:295). It was also found that "use of appropriate strategies leads to enhanced actual and perceived proficiency, which in turn creates high self-esteem, improved motivation, and so on" (Oxford & Nyikos,1989:295). It was concluded that highly motivated learners used strategies significantly more often than did less motivated learners. "It is interesting that more highly motivated students also report knowing more strategies, find them easier to use, and consider them to be more effective than students who are less motivated" (MacIntyre, 1996:383). In another study, Oxford (1993) concluded that "the statistical and

commonsense connection between strategy use and motivation was obvious in our research. The more often the student used a variety of learning strategies, the more motivated he or she became. The cycle probably worked the other way, too, with the more motivated students using even more strategies. Frequency of strategy use was important in this study because it was a significant predictor of language achievement, as was motivation" (Oxford, 1993:21).

A considerable amount of other studies show also that students who are more motivated develop stronger overall second language proficiency (Gardner, 1985 ; Politzer and McGroarty, 1985; Samimy and Tabuse, 1991; Bialystok, 1978).

In many Saudi studies, the role of motivation in English language learning of Saudi students was emphasized. Al-Shammary conducted a study of motivation in the learning of English as a foreign language among intermediate and secondary stage students in Saudi Arabia and concluded that motivation towards learning English is generally favourable, though it fluctuates in degree between intermediate and secondary stages (Al-Shammary, 1984). He also found that motivation reaches its zenith with the second grade students which led him to conclude that the older students grow the more able they become to realize their needs. Nevertheless, Al-Shammary does not differentiate in his study between instrumental and integrative motivation because he believes that: "anyone who wants to integrate himself into a second or a foreign language community or culture, has a utilitarian purpose of some kind for his integration, thus his integrative motivation boils down to a clear utilitarian instrumental purpose of some kind"(Al-Shammary, 1984:43).

Another study of Saudi students' motivation in intermediate and secondary stage by Al-Ahaydib shows "that the students had a very high motivation to learn English when they entered the program but after spending some time their motivation was lessened" (Al-Ahaydib, 1986:122). Features of motivation might be suspended and frustrated in some respects leading to failure to learn, and the successful language learner is always highly motivated and understands the fact that he is learning something which has some relevance to his future (Al-Ahaydib, 1986).

According to Mulla (1979) motivation is strengthened or weakend according to socio-cultural, educational background factors, attitude, and biological variables. If the attitude of the society towards the foreign language and its people is positive then it is more likely to affect indirectly the student's own motivation. It has been stated in many studies that the Saudi society is neither hostile nor biased against English language or people. Thus, motivation of students is reinforced by this factor. The aptitude and attitude of the Saudi students as elaborated by many studies are indicators of positive motivation (Al-Ahaydib, 1986; Al-Shammary, 1984; Mulla, 1979).

In this study, according to the statistical data analysis in table (8), the students were divided into two groups according to their motivation to learn English. There were thirty two students whose answers ranged from "yes" to "quite", and there were eight students whose answers ranged from "not so" to "not". Each of these two groups was divided into two groups according to their use of 18 learning strategies. The first group (use 1=never and use 2=rarely) and the second group (use 3=often and use 4=always) indicate the frequency of learning strategies used according to motivation.

The results show some significance in the differences of using strategies between motivated students and less motivated ones. There were nine strategies that show significance in their relation with motivation. The students who were highly motivated used these strategies more frequently. Among these strategies were clarification, resourcing, self-monitoring, imagery, planning, reviewing, selective attention, and practising. Figure (5) reflects clearly the relation between motivation and the use of strategies. The more frequent use of strategies, the higher the motivation. The statistical procedures used to compute such analysis were frequencies and Chi square test.

The relation between motivation and proficiency is significant as shown in tables (7, 8.1). It indicates that the highly motivated students were higher in their academic scores and less motivated students were low in their scores in English language.

Table (8) Strategy use & Motivation to learn English

(Percentage in brackets)

Strategy	Yes and quite (n=32)		not so and not (n=8)		Significance
	Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	
1	16 (50.0)	16 (50.0)	8 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	*
2	16 (50.0)	16 (50.0)	7 (87.5)	1 (12.5)	NS
3	3 (9.4)	29 (90.6)	4 (50.0)	4 (50.0)	*
4	5 (15.6)	27 (84.4)	4 (50.0)	4 (50.0)	NS
5	22 (68.8)	10 (31.2)	6 (75.0)	2 (25.0)	NS
6	5 (15.6)	27 (84.4)	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	*
7	5 (15.6)	27 (84.4)	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	*
8	2 (6.3)	30 (93.7)	0 (0.0)	8 (100.0)	NS
9	8 (25.0)	24 (75.0)	6 (75.0)	2 (25.0)	*
10	8 (25.0)	24 (75.0)	4 (50.0)	4 (50.0)	NS
11	7 (21.9)	25 (78.1)	6 (75.0)	2 (25.0)	*
12	11 (34.4)	21 (65.6)	8 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	*
13	13 (40.6)	19 (59.4)	4 (50.0)	4 (50.0)	**
14	10 (31.3)	22 (68.7)	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	NS
15	4 (12.5)	28 (87.5)	4 (50.0)	4 (50.0)	NS
16	4 (12.5)	28 (87.5)	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	*
17	11 (34.4)	21 (65.6)	3 (37.5)	5 (62.5)	NS
18	13 (40.6)	19 (59.4)	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	NS

Use 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often, 4 = Always
** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, NS none significance

Figure (5) Percentage of strategy use & motivation to learn English
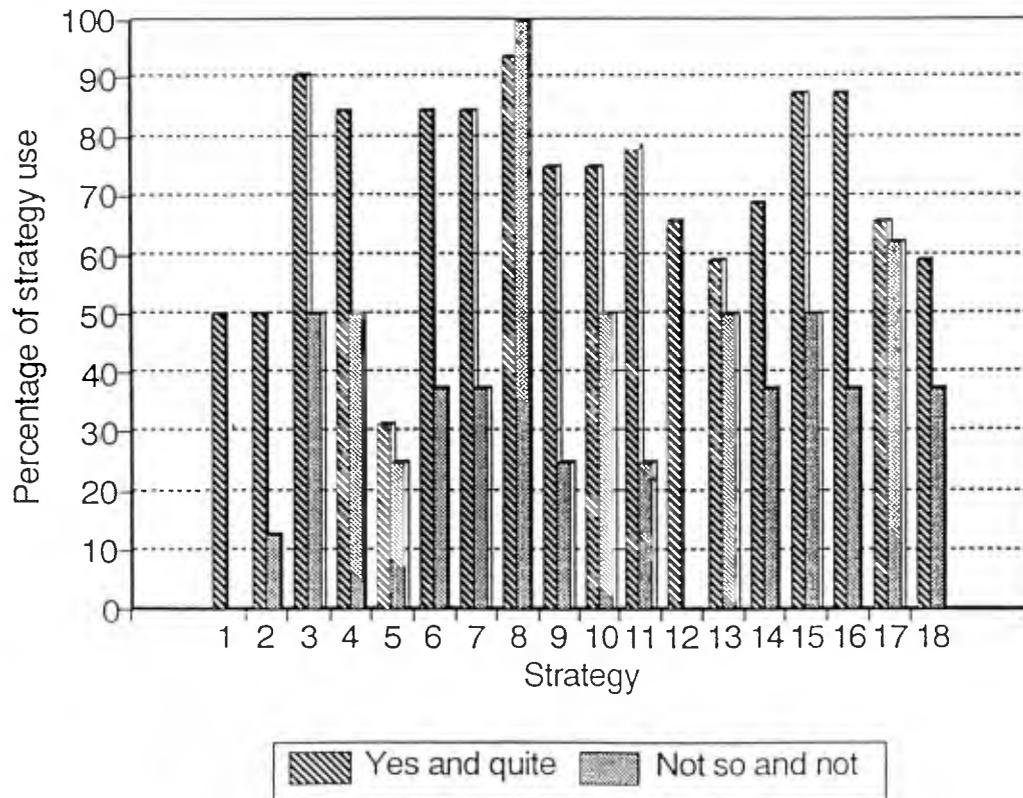
Table (8.1) Motivation to learn English & Proficiency

Motivation	50	60	70	80	90	Total
Very				11(78%)	8(100%)	19
Quite	1(50%)	2(40%)	7(64%)	3(21%)		13
Not so		2(40%)	3(27%)			5
Not	1 (50%)	1(20%)	1(9%)			3

The results in this study mirrored the findings of many other studies in the same field (Oxford, 1993; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; O'Malley et al, 1985b, 1990). It indicates that the students who were highly motivated had used learning strategies more frequently and were more successful on their academic scores.

4.3.2 Starting age and time spend learning English

In this study, the starting age of students for studying English was varied. While some students start learning English at the age of six in private primary schools, other students start at the age of twelve or thirteen in intermediate public schools. While the first group studied English for twelve years, the second group studied for only six years before admission to the university.

Age is the variable that has been most frequently considered in discussions of individual differences in second language acquisition. This is doubtless due in part to the ease with which it can be measured. Unlike all other general factors, it can be easily described reliably and precisely. One of the most obvious potential explanations for the comparative lack of success of second language learners is that second language learners begin acquiring the language at a later age than do first language learners.

Many studies have examined the extent of the correlation between measures of age or length of learning period and measures of proficiency achieved. But very few studies have explored the effect of age on choice of language learning strategies. This study tried to examine the extent of correlation between the three.

Some researchers claim that second language acquisition is the same process and just as

successful whether the learner begins as a child or an adult and that adults are really better learners because they start off faster (Ellis, 1985; Flege, 1987; Snow, 1983; Genesee, 1988). Others think that adults are at a disadvantage only in a few areas, especially phonology (Mclauglin, 1984; Hatch, 1983). However, some others are convinced that younger learners are at an advantage, particularly where ultimate levels of attainment, such as accent-free second language performance, are concerned (Krashen, et al 1979; Harley 1986; Seliger, 1987). The conclusion Krashen et al (1979) drew from the research literature is that: Older is faster but younger is better. But if learners at different ages are matched according to the amount of time they have been exposed to the L2, it is the older learners who reach higher levels of proficiency (Snow, 1987).

The general finding of many studies, is not surprisingly, that the longer the exposure to the second language, the more native like L2 proficiency becomes. Burstall, reviewing the results of the project on the teaching of a second language in the primary school,concludes "the achievement of skill in a foreign language is primarily a function of the amount of time spent studying that language" (Burstall, 1975:17). Thus those children who started L2 in the primary school tended to outperform those who did not start until the secondary school. With the passage of time, the influence of the age of the learner begins to outweight the length of the learning period, at least on listening and reading tests, but less clearly so on speaking and writing tests. This shows that the effects of length of learning period are most strongly felt in productive rather than receptive skills. One obvious difference between the young child and the adult is the way they comprehend the second language.

Older learners can learn about language by consciously studying linguistic rules. In contrast, the language for younger children is a tool for expressing meaning. As Halliday (1973) pointed out, the young child responds not so much to what language is as to what language does. The young child does not know that he is acquiring the language. In contrast, the adult cannot learn a second language automatically and naturally.The critical period hypothesis

states that there is a period when language acquisition takes place naturally and effortlessly. During this period the brain retains plasticity, but with onset of puberty this plasticity begins to disappear (Klein, 1986).

A recent study conducted by Poole (1999), set out to examine the beliefs about learning a foreign language at an early age and to investigate whether " younger is better". It is argued that the literature on age in second language learning does not provide convincing evidence for this belief. Findings from the Scottish National Pilot Scheme are considered of special relevance for the study and form the focus of the debate. It discussed also the findings of two case studies carried out in two primary schools in England where French is taught. Data was collected from classroom observations, interviews and questionnaires. In both schools children seemed to experience similar problems. Data suggested that many children did not find the learning of a foreign language easy and some appeared confused by the iexperience. It also suggested considerable differences both cognitive and affective between individual children. These findings seem in line with findings from other studies that suggest that many of the problems the young children encountered are also shared with older beginning learners of French. The study suggested that children of the same chronological age can vary greatly in the degree of language awareness they have attained, in their application of learning strategies, their previous experiences, their motivation, attentiveness and attitude towards the learning process as well as the language itself, its speakers and its culture.Data from the two case studies indicate that "younger" might not necessarily be "better" for all children in all contexts and under all circumstances. It suggested that learning success and outcomes are likely to be the result of a complex interplay between a host of factors, psychological, cognitive, affective, social, and pedagogical.The study proposed that such variables are crucial and should be taken into consideration in any research concerning the age factor. Poole's study bears out the findings in this study namely that the age factor is merely one among many significant variables.

The controversy persists, however, and various explanations for age differences have been offered, no matter which group of learners, young or old, is claimed to have an advantage. Students of different ages and different stages of L2 learning use different strategies; more sophisticated strategies often are employed by older or more advanced students (Bialystok, 1981; Chamot, O'Malley, 1987; Politzer, 1983).

Politzer (1983) discovered that course level influences second language learning strategies, with higher-level students using more strategies. Chamot et al (1987) found that cognitive strategy use decreased and metacognitive strategy use rose as the foreign language course level increased, but social-affective strategy use remained very low across all course levels. Bialystok (1981) found differences in strategy use as learners advanced in the second language. Formal practice with rules and forms was less and less effective as students advanced. The findings of Oxford and Nyikos (1989) support Bialystok's result. These researchers discovered that second language students who had studied the new language for a minimum of four or five years used strategies significantly more often than did less experienced students.

Based on Genesee (1980), Oxford (1982) reviewed the two main arguments in favour of learning second languages at younger ages. The first in the cognitive-nativist argument is that language learning is an innate ability, one that dissipates with age (Chomsky, 1975). The second is the neurological argument that one's neural plasticity decreases with age, thus affecting language learning ability. After mentioning several empirical studies supporting these arguments, Genesee also notes the opposite: older learners attain higher level of second language learning than their younger counterparts, both in natural and in formal or school settings. Tying together many strands of second language age research, Scarcella and Oxford (1992) argue that older learners have an advantage in terms of rate of acquisition of syntax and morphology; however ultimate fluency and native-like pronunciation in a new language are acquired better among those who start learning it as children.

Table (9) Means + SD of Time spent learning English & Strategy use
(Number of students in brackets)

Strategy	Never	Rarely	Often	Always	Significance
1		6.67±2.27 (24)	9.69±3.38 (16)		**
2	6.00±0.0 (1)	6.00±0.0 (22)	10.41±3.43 (17)	9.12±3.52 (24)	**
3	6.00±0.0 (7)		6.00±0.0 (9)		**
4	6.00±0.0 (7)	6.00(±0.0 (2)	6.00±0.0 (9)	9.41±3.54 (22)	**
5	6.00±0.0 (4)	6.96±2.61 (24)	10.33±3.23 (12)		*
6	6.00±0.0 (7)	6.00±0.00 (3)	6.00±0.0 (7)	9.26±3.53 (23)	*
7	6.00±0.0 (7)	6.00±0.0 (3)	6.00±0.0 (8)	9.61±0.0 (22)	*
8	6.00±0.0 (1)	6.00±0.0 (15)	8.96±3.50 (23)		*
9		6.00±0.0 (14)	8.88±3.48 (26)		*
10		6.58±2.02 (12)	8.43±3.36 (28)		NS
11	6.00±0.0 (2)	6.00±0.0 (11)	8.87±3.46 (27)		*
12	6.00±0.0 (4)	6.00±0.0 (15)	9.57±3.54 (21)		**
13		6.94±2.68 (17)	8.68±3.31 (22)	6.00±0.0 (1)	NS
14	6.00±0.0 (1)	6.50±1.87 (14)	8.83±3.47 (24)	6.00±0.0 (1)	NS
15	6.00±0.0 (7)	6.00±0.0 (1)	6.00±0.0 (10)	9.41±3.54 (22)	**
16	6.00±0.0 (7)	6.00±0.0 (2)	6.00±0.0 (9)	9.41±3.54 (22)	**
17		6.50±1.87 (14)	8.62±3.42 (26)		*
18	6.00±0.0 (2)	6.56±2.25 (16)	9.99±3.38 (22)		*

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, NS none significance

Figure (6) Average years of English study & Strategy use

Never & Rarely   Often & Always
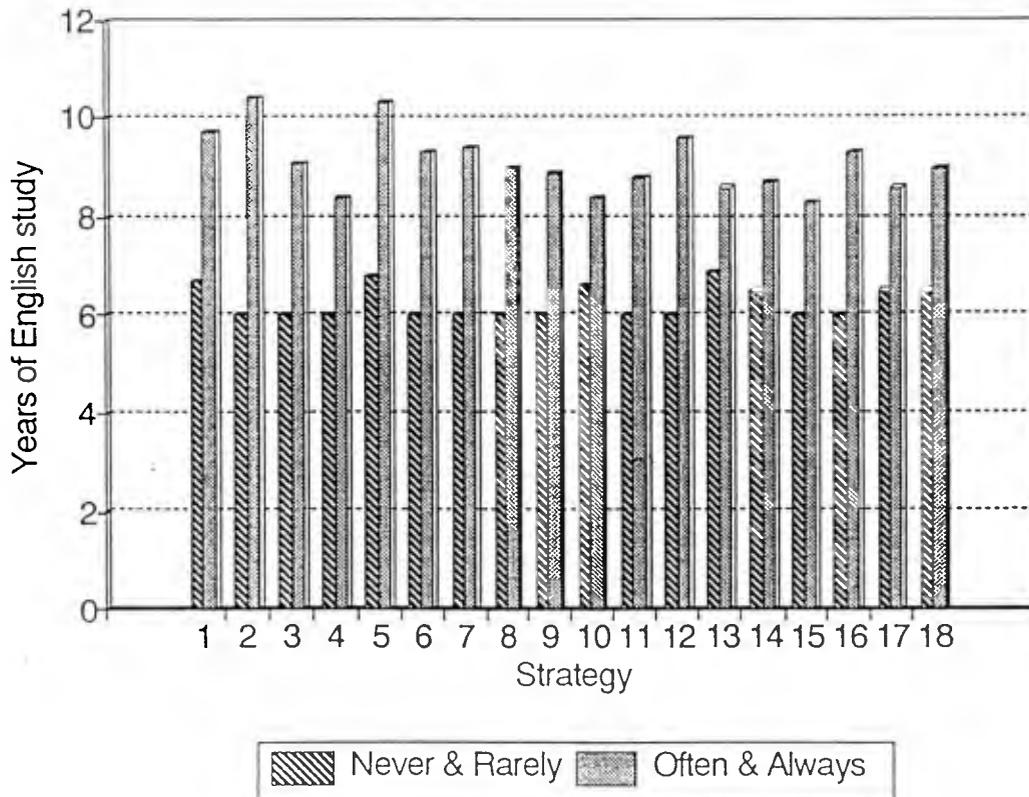
Most of the students, in this study, started learning English at the intermediate level in government schools, except for a few students who started at primary level in private schools. They are adolescents aged between 12 and 14. Students at this stage have hardly any knowledge of English before coming to intermediate school. This late exposure to the target language has its own shortcomings. As suggested by Klein (1986), learners at this stage have lost some of their brain elasticity which enables them to learn a new language easily.

According to data collection only a few students (20%), at age six, have had an experience of English before intermediate level while a great majority (80%), at age twelve, have no background at all in English before hand. Those who are identified to possess some knowledge of English are most likely to have had their information from previous education in private primary schools or had an opportunity to have some English courses abroad. As shown in table (9), and figure (6) and through means, standard deviations and ANOVA, there were some significant results that indicate clearly that students, who started learning English at private primary schools (age 6) with an increased number of years (12 years) of English study, used more strategies than other students who started learning English at intermediate level (age 12) for just 6 years. Table (9) shows that there were only three strategies that do not have any significance. These were self management, selective attention and deduction. Years spent studying the English language had a very highly significant correlation with proficiency as well.

Tables (9.1, and 7) show significant differences in proficiency level between students who had been studying English language since primary level for at least 12 years and students who have studied English for only 6 years at intermediate level.
Table (9.1) shows that successful students whose scores are above 90, have studied English for about twelve years, while all other students whose scores were below ninety have studied English for about six years only. Some students have studied English for six years and have had some summer courses abroad, so the total of years was over seven.

Table 9.1 Years of English study & proficiency

Proficiency	Years	Students	%
50.00	6.0	2	5.0
60.00	6.0	5	12.5
70.00	6.0	11	27.5
80.00	7.5	14	35.0
90.00	12.5	8	20.0

These results reflect similar findings of other studies in the same field on the relation between individual factors and proficiency on one hand and individual factors and strategy use on the other, and it adds to this study more information about the triangular relationship between individual factors, proficiency level and strategy use as will be discussed later in section (4.4).

4.3.3 Influence of Mother tongue:

Unlike speakers of European languages, Arabic learners of English are confronted with additional tasks when they learn English language. They have to learn the writing system of English. The learning process is usually filtered through their first language (L1) experience in reading and writing. Thus, prior knowledge and mastery of L1 sound and writing system interfere in the learning and production of English. Therefore, it is necessary to describe briefly the Arabic language system in order to understand how this system might affect the process of acquiring English.

The language of Arabic culture is the product of its past history, its geographical settings, and its religious influences. It reflects the cultural customs, habits and attitudes of Arabic People. The Arabic writing system is, like many other scripts, alphabetic. The alphabet consists of twenty eight letters. The script is cursive, and there are no separate printed forms of the letters as there is in English. It is written from right to left. The most prominent feature of Arabic script is the manner by which consonants and vowels are graphemically represented. In English, the emphasis in speech is on the use of the lips and the front part

of the mouth, while in Arabic there are seven postvelar sounds that do not exist in English. Differences between English and Arabic exist also in sentence-order, word-order, lexical and grammatical meaning and the stylistic usage. It is beyond the scope of this research to analyse the linguistic problems which the study of English language presents to speakers of Arabic. It is well known that students, whose native language has the same writing system as English such as French and Spanish, do not have the same difficulties that Arabic learners of English encounter.

Strevens (1978) suggests that the extent of learners' command of their mother tongue will affect their progress in the second language. Adding empirical support to Strevens's suggestion is a study conducted by Cummins (1984) which examined the influence of first language on second language development. The development of first language accounted for a highly significant proportion of the variance in the second language, a finding consonant with Cummins' (1978) interdependence hypothesis which predicts that the development of the second language is partially dependent upon the prior level of development of first language. According to Cummins, there is a common underlying proficiency which makes possible the transfer of the skills across the student's two languages.

Politzer and McGroarty (1985) found that national origin (Hispanic vs. Asian) had a strong influence on strategy choice, with Asians exhibiting fewer of the learning strategies of good language learners. Asian students, while reporting fewer strategies in general, outperformed Hispanics in using monitoring strategies. It was therefore suggested that current definitions of good language learning strategies may be ethnocentrically based on Western cultural values.

In a different study, McGroarty (1987) determined strategies used by university level Spanish students in a city heavily influenced by Hispanic culture and language. The preferred strategies indicated that these students fitted the learning (rather than the acquiring) stereotype. They frequently monitored their language use, asked for explanations and confirmation, and often used the dictionary.

In this study all students were Arabic speakers except two. One of them spoke Urdu and the other Farsi. The results of the analysis in table (10) show that being a native Arabic speaker was not a significant factor in the use of strategies. One of the main reasons for that is that the majority of the subjects were Arabic speakers, or perhaps significance was not meaningful with such small sample (two students).

Table (10) Influence of mother tongue & Strategy use

(Percentage in brackets)

Strategy	No (n=2)		Yes (n=38)		Significance
	Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	
1	1	1	23 (60.5)	15 (39.5)	NS
2	0	2	23 (60.5)	15 (39.5)	NS
3	0	2	7 (18.4)	31 (81.6)	NS
4	0	2	9 (23.7)	29 (76.3)	NS
5	1	1	27 (71.0)	11 (29.0)	NS
6	0	2	10 (26.3)	28 (73.7)	NS
7	0	2	10 (26.3)	28 (73.7)	NS
8	0	1	16 (42.1)	22 (57.9)	NS
9	0	2	14 (36.8)	24 (63.2)	NS
10	0	2	12 (31.6)`	26 (68.4)	NS
11	0	2	13 (34.2)	25 (65.8)	NS
12	0	2	19 (50.0)	19 (50.0)	NS
13	1	1	16 (42.1)	22 (57.9)	NS
14	0	2	15 (39.5)	23 (60.5)	NS
15	0	2	8 (21.1)	30 (78.9)	NS
16	0	2	9 (23.7)	29 (76.3)	NS
17	0	2	14 (36.8)	24 (63.2)	NS
18	1	1	17 (44.7)	21 (55.3)	NS

Use 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often, 4 = Always
** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, NS none significance

The statistical analyses used in table (10) were frequencies and Chi squared test. Table (10.1)) shows the relation between mother tongue and proficiency. There was no significance in that relation.

Table (10.1) Mother tongue and proficiency

language	50	60	70	80	90	Total
Arabic	2(100%)	5(100%)	11(100%)	3(93%)	7(87.5%)	38
Others				1(7%)	1(12.5%)	2

4.3.4 Experience of an English language environment:

The extent to which learners feel a need for a foreign language is determined by the society in which they live. In other words, being in the target language country, one could better understand the culture and once that happened, it might assist in understanding the language. The need to communicate in the target language is vital when learners live in a country where that language is used. In addition, living in the target language community provides one with the opportunity to practice.

There has been little research on the influence of staying overseas on the students' foreign language learning, at least in the case of Arabic students. This research has shown, as will be discussed later, that some differences in proficiency level and strategy use do exit between the university students who have stayed abroad and those who have not.

Teichler & Smith (1988) carried out a research on the relationship between study abroad and learning a foreign language in the case of four European countries (France, the FRG, Sweden, and the UK). They looked into the result of Study Abroad Programmes, where students of various majors in each country studied in another country for a few months up to two years. The age range of the participants investigated in the study was from 19 to 25. They identified three areas of outcomes in their study: academic, foreign language, and cultural outcomes. Among the findings, and what is most relevant for the present study, is that the learners changed their attitudes towards learning through the experience of study

abroad; i.e."study abroad sharpens students' awareness of the learning process and increases their motivation to learn"(p.33). Students reported that their academically related listening and reading comprehension improved better with regard to general everyday areas, while they felt that they became more proficient in speaking in daily life than academic situations.

Gardner's (1972) study in North America has similar findings. English speaking learners of French in Montreal, Canada, who realised that French is a widely used and important language in the region tended to have positive attitudes towards the language, which in turn facilitated successful learning.

A large scale-study of 2,700 U.S college seniors majoring in foreign languages found that even a brief time spent abroad where students engaged in social interaction had a substantial positive effect on their foreign language proficiency(Carrol,1967).

Another study was done by Watanabe (1990) to examine the effects of external factors affecting language learning strategies of Japanese college students learning English as a foreign language. The experience of living and studying abroad was found to have a favourable effect, providing students with a good opportunity to develop strategies of learning English through communication. "The students who had stayed overseas were more likely to employ these strategies than those who had not....the overseas experience did increase the frequency of the students' use of the communicative learning strategies" (Watanabe, 1990:45).

According to data collection in this study, some students had the opportunity to travel to an English speaking country with their parents for vocational purposes. This creates a potential motivation to speak English because of the need to communicate with people. A few other students had a chance to study abroad for a year or a few months. Such language learning experiences are generally assumed to powerfully advance a student's proficiency in the language (Rubin & Thompson, 1982; Krashen, 1982; Ellis, 1986). But most students learn the language in the classroom without the occasion to live or study in

Table (11) Studying English Abroad & Strategy use
(Percentage in brackets)

Strategy	Yes (n=9) Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	No (n=31) Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	Significance
1	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	23 (74.2)	8 (25.8)	**
2	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	22 (71.0)	9 (29.0)	**
3	0	9 (100)	7 (22.6)	24 (77.4)	NS
4	0	9 (100)	9 (29.0)	22 (71.0)	NS
5	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	27 (87.1)	4 (12.9)	**
6	0	9 (100)	10 (32.3)	21 (67.7)	NS
7	0	9 (100)	10 (32.3)	21 (67.7)	NS
8	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	15 (48.4)	16 (51.6)	NS
9	0	9 (100)	14 (45.2)	17 (54.8)	*
10	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	11 (35.5)	20 (64.5)	NS
11	0	9 (100)	13 (41.9)	18 (58.1)	*
12	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	18 (58.1)	13 (41.9)	*
13	0	9 (100)	17 (54.8)	14 (45.2)	**
14	0	9 (100)	15 (48.4)	16 (51.6)	*
15	0	9 (100)	8 (25.8)	23 (74.2)	NS
16	0	9 (100)	9 (29.0)	22 (71.0)	NS
17	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	13 (41.9)	18 (58.1)	NS
18	0	9 (100)	18 (58.1)	13 (41.9)	**

Use 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often, 4 = Always
** p<0.01, * p<0.05, NS none significance

Figure (7) Strategy use and studying English abroad
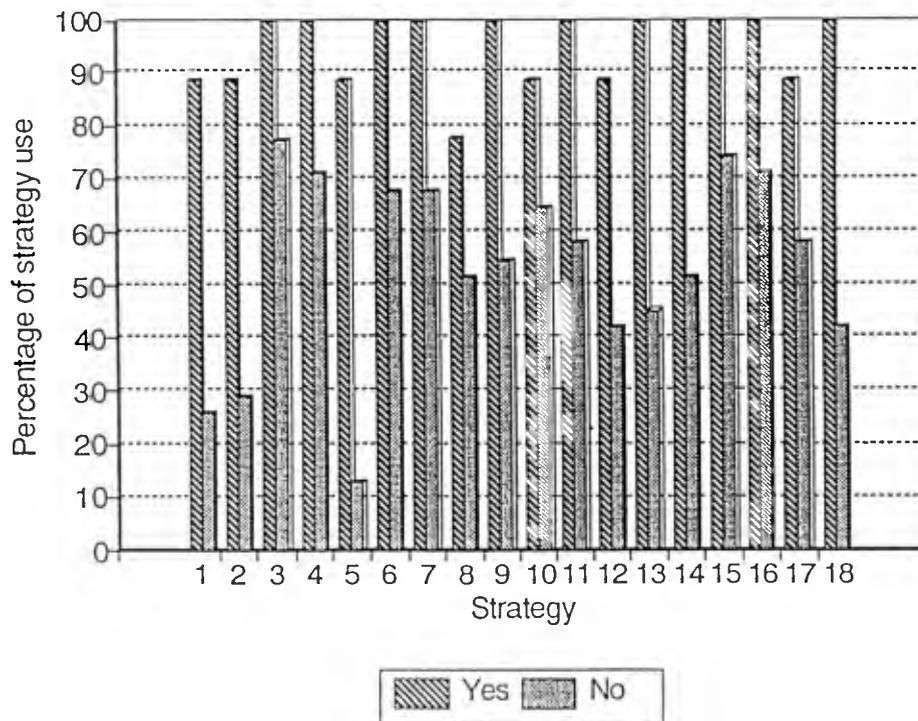
an English speaking country. Are the strategies that these students use different from those used by students who have travelled or studied abroad? The answer to such a question lies in the analysis of the following tables (11), (11.1 in appendix 5) and figures (7), (7.1 in appendix 5).

According to table (11), there were only nine students who had the opportunity to study abroad but with different periods of time ranging from two years to a few months. Results show differences in the use of some strategies between students who studied abroad and others who had not. There was some significance, while almost all students who had studied abroad used almost all strategies, other students did not use all the strategies. Strategies that show significance are clarification, cooperation, summarizing, imagery, reviewing, selective attention, deduction, and self evaluation. Figure (7) reflects clearly the significance of the results and shows the differences between subjects who have studied English abroad and others who have not. Table (11.1) in appendix (5) shows that only thirteen subjects had the opportunity to travel to English speaking countries and develop communicative ability. Those subjects used more strategies than others who did not have the chance to be in a native English speaking country. Figure (7.1) in appendix (5) reflects more clearly the same findings. It shows big differences in strategy use between two groups of subjects. The statistical analysis procedures used to compute this factor were frequencies and Chi square test.

Table (11.2) shows that eight out of nine students, who studied abroad, had over ninety in their academic tests, while the grades of other students, who did not have the chance to study abroad, ranged from fifty to eighty. Table (11.3) in appendix (5) shows that eight out of thirteen students who used to travel to English speaking countries had over ninety 90% in their academic tests results, while grades of the five students left were over eighty. Other students who did not have the chance to travel ranged from fifty to eighty.

These results reflect the findings of other studies that indicate that students who lived or

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studied in English speaking countries are more successful and used more strategies than other students who did not have the chance to live or study abroad.

Table (11.2) Proficiency and studying English abroad

Study abroad	50	60	70	80	90	total
yes				1(7%)	8(100%)	9
No	2(100%)	5(100%)	11(100%	13(93%		31

4.3.5 Extracurricular exposure to English language:

Extracurricular activities are regarded by some writers as part of the curriculum (Saylor et al,1981; Kelley,1987); however, whether they are curricular or extracurricular they are essential in foreign language learning since they complement the classroom activities and give students more chance of freer interaction and exploiting of the language. Prior planning is a necessary condition in carrying out such activities in order to achieve better results. The time might not be so important but adapting such activities to the students' competence, abilities and interests is important. Extracurricular activities vary from encouraging students and supervising the writing of an English wall magazine, proverbs and instructions on boards, to directing and producing plays and dramas in English.

The use of the foreign language outside the classroom is considered, by many researchers, to be one of the important variables in successful language learning. Many studies have been done on the effect of extracurricular exposure to English language on learners' proficiency level. Gradman (1991) designed a study, at Indiana University, to investigate the relationship between the students' language achievement and a number of variables in the students' language learning background, with the purpose of identifying those factors which have the most prominent effect on the learner's English language proficiency. The students came from different language backgrounds. The largest group was Arabic-speaking, followed by Japanese and Spanish.TOEFL scores were used in the study as the criterion of proficiency. The study indicates that the variable which correlates most highly with

proficiency is extracurricular reading, followed by extent of exposure to teachers who are native speakers of English. Reading for personal information or pleasure appears to be a more important means of implicit learning than exposure to English through radio, television or film. Another study by Day (1985) on the use of English away from the classroom, as reported by ESL students, showed that there is a mixed relationship between outside usage of English and accelerated proficiency levels within the classroom setting.

Some researchers in the area of language learning strategies often mention out-of-class strategies in their studies. Bialystok (1978, 1981) highlighted the role of out-of-class strategies in language learning, and identified four types of language learning strategies: formal and functional practising, monitoring, and inferencing. "Functional practice occurs when the language learner increases his opportunity to use the language for communication such as going to movies, reading books, or talking to native speakers" (1981:25). The main aim of the activity is to achieve exposure to meaningful language.

Using Bialystok's model of second language learning, Huang and Van-Naerssen (1987) undertook a research project in China into the role of functional strategies in the successful development of oral communicative abilities. They discovered "that students who were more successful in oral communication reported employing functional practice strategies more frequently than the less successful ones" (1987:290). Examples of functional practice strategies mentioned in the study include activities such as speaking with other students and native speakers, listening and reading for comprehension, attending lectures, watching films and TV programmes, and thinking or talking to oneself, as individual silent practice, in English. Hafiz and Tudor's study (1989) of a group of second language learners of Pakistani origins in the UK showed that the experimental group, which had spent three months reading for pleasure one hour per day, had made significant levels of improvement on all seven language tests.

In order to develop any extracurricular activity, background information should be investigated regarding learners' needs and expectations, interests, and level of proficiency in English. The role that English language plays in the society and the extent to which

students are exposed to English outside classroom should also be studied. The conditions of life which provide opportunities for learners to be exposed to English are to be investigated.

Beside the very few extracurricular activities planned by school, in Saudi Arabia, as extracurricular reading, there are other conditions in which students are exposed to English but without school planning. English language is used in everyday life; at home and at street level. Most families have domestic helpers who come from different foreign countries and use English as a medium of communication. In this way many children are exposed to a certain amount of English at home from a very early age. Similarly at street level, most shops have workers of different nationalities who use English to deal with customers. Alongside the considerable amount of English used at home and in the street, some young people travel with their parents to Europe or the United states on vacation. This creates an opportunity to speak English because of the need to communicate with people outside the country. English language also features in the media. There are special radio and TV channels broadcasting in English offering a wide variety of programmes. There are also English daily newspapers and magazines. All advertisements, names of streets and traffic signs are in English as well as in Arabic.

It can be seen from this that students are exposed to English in their everyday life outside school. Therefore, it can be considered that there are two forms or varieties of English in Saudi Arabia: the formal, curricular, standard English of an essentially written nature that is taught in the schools, and the informal, extracurricular, communicative, oral English that is used outside schools. The two forms are expected or at least assumed to harmonize with each other in fulfilling the desired aims in learning English, but, inevitably, they do not. As far as the school formal English is concerned, teachers acknowledge the needs for English for interaction, and are aware of the existence of the informal variety of English but they are faced with certain requirements which restrict them and do not assist them to bridge the gap between the two. Students, too, fail to make a positive link between school English and

Table (12) Extracurricular exposure to English & Strategy Use

(Percentage in brackets)

Strategy	Yes (n=22) Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	No (n=18) Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	Significance
1	7 (31.8)	15 (68.2)	17 (94.4)	1 (5.6)	**
2	7 (31.8)	15 (68.2)	16 (88.9)	2 (11.1)	**
3	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	7 (38.9)	11 (61.1)	**
4	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	9 (50.0)	9 (50.0)	**
5	12 (54.5)	10 (45.5)	16 (88.9)	2 (11.1)	*
6	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	10 (55.6)	8 (44.4)	**
7	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	10 (55.6)	8 (44.4)	**
8	1 (4.5)	21 (95.5)	1 (5.6)	17 (94.4)	NS
9	1 (4.5)	21 (95.5)	13 (72.2)	5 (27.8)	**
10	2 (9.1)	20 (90.9)	10 (55.6)	8 (44.4)	**
11	3 (13.6)	19 (86.4)	10 (55.6)	8 (44.4)	*
12	5 (22.7)	17 (77.3)	14 (77.8)	4 (22.2)	**
13	5 (22.7)	17 (77.3)	12 (66.7)	6 (33.3)	*
14	4 (18.2)	18 (81.8)	11 (61.2)	7 (38.8)	*
15	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	8 (44.4)	10 (55.6)	**
16	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	9 (50.0)	9 (50.0)	**
17	6 (27.3)	16 (72.7)	8 (44.4)	10 (55.6)	NS
18	6 (27.3)	16 (72.7)	12 (66.7)	6 (33.3)	*

Use 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often, 4 = Always
** p<0.01, * p<0.05, NS none significance

Figure (8) Extracurricular exposure to English & Strategy use
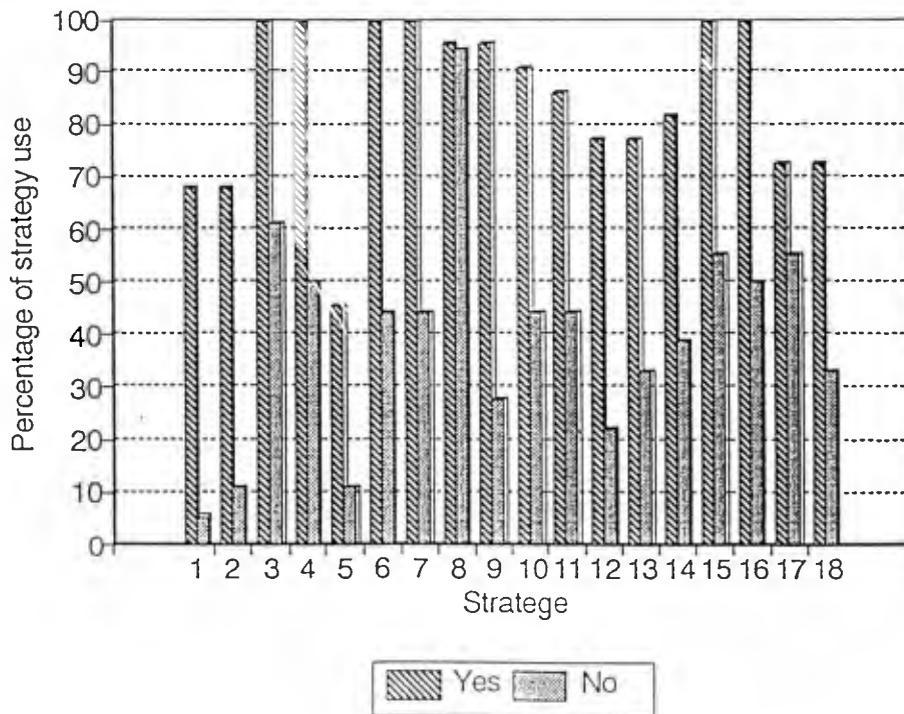
home English. This is the reason behind the many problems that the teachers and students encounter that will be discussed in chapter six.

According to data collected in this study, some students are more exposed to English outside school than others. Students who come from educationally and economically better-off families and from private schools have better access to language materials and facilities than those from less well-off families and from state schools. For example, the former group of learners are in a better position to buy their own books and materials, frequenting cinemas and libraries, listening to TV and radio programmes in English, using the language with native speakers when they spend their vacation abroad, and communicating in English with domestic helpers at home. Table (12) and figure (8) show that subjects who tried to use English outside the class tended to use more language learning strategies. The statistical analysis procedures used to compute this factor were frequencies and Chi square test. Results show some significance in the use of some strategies. Almost all 22 (100%) subjects who were exposed to extracurricular activities have used substitution, practising, inferencing, self-monitoring, note-taking and resourcing strategies. The use of other strategies was less significant in different levels. Translating and grouping strategies were among the least significant ones. Figure (8) reflects clearly the significance of the results and shows the differences between subjects who were exposed to extracurricular activities and those who were not. Those subjects are exposed to English through watching TV, reading English stories, newspapers or practice speaking with native speakers.

Table (12.1) Proficiency and extracurricular activities

proficiency	50	60	70	80	90	total
Yes				14(100%	8(100%	22
No	2(100%)	5(100%)	11(100%			18

Table (12.1) shows that eight out of twenty two students, who use extracurricular activities, had over ninety (90%) in their academic tests, and fourteen students out of the twenty two, who use extracurricular activities, had over eighty (80%) in their academic tests, while

the grades of other students, who did not use extracurricular activities, ranged from fifty to eighty (50%-80%).

These results reflect the findings of some other studies that indicate that students who use extracurricular activities were more successful and used more strategies than other students who did not have the chance to use extracurricular activities.

4.4. Relationship between research variables:

As a conclusion of all the above results in this chapter, and according to the second part of the third objective that is to identify the relation between learning strategies, individual variables and language proficiency, an attempt was made to answer the main following questions: first, is there a correlation between the learner's use of learning strategies and his learning outcomes? Second, to what extent do learners' background factors complicate this relationship?

To answer these questions, a set of correlation tables for learning strategy and background factors were generated to determine the items which had a bearing on language proficiency.

Table (13) Correlation coefficients between Proficiency & Strategy

Strategy	Questionnaire		Interview	
1	0.59	**	0.56	**
2	0.62	**	0.64	**
3	0.91	**	0.79	**
4	0.93	**	0.77	**
5	0.44	**	0.40	*
6	0.91	**	0.78	**
7	0.91	**	0.73	**
8	-0.09	NS	0.02	NS
9	0.80	**	0.73	**
10	0.42	**	0.42	**
11	0.59	**	0.58	**
12	0.64	**	0.60	**
13	0.41	*	0.35	*
14	0.46	**	0.45	**
15	0.92	**	0.76	**
16	0.94	**	0.80	**
17	0.02	NS	-0.05	NS
18	0.31	NS	0.35	*

* P<0.05, ** P<0.01, NS, Not significant.

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According to the data in table (13), most strategies used were significantly correlated with proficiency but in different degrees. Correlation coefficients are used for analysing the data to examine existing relationships between learning strategies and language proficiency. When a high positive correlation (+1) is obtained between the two, it means that there is a close relationship between them. This means that the more the learning strategies are used by the learner, the better their language proficiency. A low correlation (0) between the two will indicate that they are not related to one another. A negative correlation (-1) between these variables will imply that the more the learners' use of learning strategies, the poorer their language proficiency. In this case, the variables would be inversely related. As shown on the table above (13), six cognitive strategies were among the first most significantly correlated strategies with proficiency as they show the highest measures of correlation. S.16 practising measures 0.94, S.4 note taking measures 0.93, S.15 substitution measures 0.92, S.3 resourcing measures 0.91, S.6 self-monitoring measures 0.91, S.7 inferencing measures 0.91.

Three strategies were not correlated significantly with proficiency: S.17 Grouping, S.18 self-evaluation, S.8 translating. The rest of the strategies fell in between with different degrees of correlation. What is important to note here is the way language learning strategies are found to be interconnected to each other in this study, as seen in (appendix 5), and the support they can provide one to the other "a large overlap naturally exists among the strategy groups" (Oxford, 1990:16). Note taking was significantly correlated with self monitoring. Inferencing, substitution and practising were significantly correlated with each other (appendix 5.). This is an important finding, especially when one considers the fact that these strategies were student generated without preteaching. These students could report and in some cases, describe what specific thoughts or behaviours they had used to help themselves learn without any prior learning strategy instruction, as will be seen in the next chapter.

One general finding in this study is that proficiency correlates with the use of learning strategies but in different degrees, due to the different patterns, frequency and kinds of

learning strategies used by students according to their own background factors and culture. However, a very few results were difficult to explain; that is because there might be some factors other than those mentioned here which relate to better performance but which the questionnaire failed to explore. An alternative explanation for better performance is that a learner's strategy selectivity, his careful choice of strategy use, and not the number of strategies he uses, might be an indicator of effective learning. Another explanation may be that any well-designed communicative learning activity, might help the learner to learn well. A caution must also be noted for other variables that may have an influence on learning strategies; as Skehan says "there is always the possibility that the good language learning strategies...are also used by bad language learners, but other reasons cause them to be unsuccessful" (Skehan, 1989: 76). One of these reasons is the background variables of the learners. Background variables are very important in the learning process because, as the figure (1) shows , they affect both the language proficiency and the choice of learning strategies. While they affect the language proficiency directly, they also affect it indirectly through the use of learning strategies.

Table (14) Correlation Coefficient between proficiency & Background Variables

Background factor	Coefficient
Motivation	0.86 **
Extracurricular activities	0.65 **
Length of English learning period	0.62 **
Experience of English language environment	0.57 **
Mother tongue	0.23 NS

*P<0.05, **P<0.0, NS Not Significant

As for background variables, table (14) shows motivation, which measures 0.86, to be the most significantly correlated with the proficiency. This means the more the learner is motivated, the better his proficiency would be. Extracurricular activities 0.65 and length of English learning period 0.62, are among the second rank of significantly correlated variables.

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Mother tongue was the only factor that did not show any significance (4.3.3).

Through the analysis of these tables, the relationship between learner's background and learning strategies was investigated to determine the extent to which the two factors were related to one another and to academic performance.Obtaining a relatively significant correlation, as in this study, will show whether the relationship between the variables is meaningful, but it will not indicate whether one variable caused the other. When considering the association between strategy use and proficiency, it is difficult to tease apart the potential contribution of strategies to proficiency from the effect of proficiency on the choice of strategies. In other words, one may ask: "Does the use of certain strategies lead to (cause) improved ability level or does an elevated level of ability lead to the use of different strategies?". Some studies have indicated that motivation is the causative variable that leads to language learning success. Other studies have indicated that success in foreign language learning can lead to more motivation, reversing the direction of causation.Oxford and Nyikos (1989) integrated their findings into a causal spiral wherein motivation leads to the use of strategies that increases proficiency leading to better motivation, more strategy use, and so on. In another study conducted by Green and Oxford, they stated that:

> *"the finding of a substantial relationship between greater use of these strategies and higher second language proficiency is not in itself evidence of causality. We believe, however that there is a causal relationship between strategy use and proficiency level here, and that this relationship is best visualized not as a one-way arrow leading from cause to effect, but rather as an ascending spiral in which active use strategies help students attain higher proficiency, which in turn makes it more likely that students will select these active use strategies"* (Green & Oxford, 1995:288).

In this study one can similarly argue that learner strategies do not determine proficiency but are permitted by it. Since the research was cross-sectional, we do not know whether the strategies came first and had brought about the proficiency, or that those who were more proficient, for whatever reason, accordingly had the potential to use strategies. But yet another alternative is that motivation (one of the learner's variables) might cause both

language proficiency and the use of learning strategies. It might cause success because those who are motivated to study the language will achieve more highly. It might cause the learner to use more strategies. Only a longitudinal research design which monitors changes in learner's variables, strategies and proficiency over time in the same group of learners can address this issue, as will be suggested in chapter six.

4.5. Summary:

In this chapter, procedures were undertaken in order to answer the research questions. Quantitative techniques were used to analyse the data collected and discuss the results. Section one identified the range and variety of learning strategies used by Saudi students. Section two tried to differentiate between successful language learners and less successful language learners and describe the relation between language proficiency and learning strategies. Section three sought to find the differences in strategy use between students with different individual variables and proficiency levels, and tries to identify the relation between the three. The next chapter will analyse the interview data qualitatively and complement the discussion in this chapter.

Chapter Five

Interview Analysis

5.1. Introduction:

A quantitative representation of the differences in strategy use, as in the last chapter, can offer only a superficial picture of those differences. Such a representation cannot capture how a strategy is used or the particular combinations of strategies deployed by a student. Neither can it capture the effective use of a strategy, such as the accuracy of an inference or an appropriate connection to prior knowledge. Therefore, a qualitative analysis was done, in this chapter, to strengthen the quantitative results, in the last chapter, and to scrutinize interviews for variations in strategy use not discernable through a statistical strategy count. The following discussion will examine students' interviews for a more comprehensive understanding of how different students deal with the interview questions. This qualitative analysis will begin with an examination of strategies as evidenced in students' interviews. Then examples from interviews of successful and less successful students will be compared. These examples illustrate how a qualitative analysis can provide insight into differences between students, not perceptible through a quantitative analysis.

As mentioned earlier, in the last chapter, the cognitive theory provides a framework for understanding the role of learning strategies in second language learning. Within this perspective and within this study, examining the cognitive processes of language learners represents another opportunity to obtain insights into learning mechanisms. As McLaughlin (1990:113) puts it, " The cognitive approach is not seen as competitive to, but as complementary with, linguistic approaches to second language development".

Interest in learning strategies in language learning evolved from the application of principles and findings of contemporary cognitive psychology (McLaughlin 1987). Within this theoretical perspective, learners are seen as reflective, active, and constructive individuals

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who are able to take control of their learning. Therefore, learners are considered capable of altering learning outcomes through the choices they make. They are responsible for adjusting their efforts to the challenges of the academic environment by selecting learning strategies and techniques that are optimally effective in meeting specific task demands.

In order to develop instructional programs and teaching practices that are conducive to the development of effective learning strategies, a necessary, preliminary step is the identification of the strategies used by students and the patterns that account for learners' differential degrees of success. In other words, prior to implementing practices aimed at helping students become more effective learners, it is necessary to find out how they are coping with the demands of specific foreign language tasks and then to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in their approaches (Weinstein and Underwood 1985). Assessment of instructional priorities should be made on the basis of the results of such a preliminary investigation.

Within the current cognitive psychology perspective, learners are perceived as capable of having an active approach to learning by making specific choices and taking different actions to internalize new information. Their efforts are seen as deliberate and goal oriented; they may manipulate the materials in different ways using a variety of different learning tools to cope with learning tasks, as will be seen from the examples of students' interviews. They are considered capable of altering learning outcomes by changing, replacing, or rejecting these actions, techniques or strategies in their efforts to adjust their approach to task demands.

The second objective of this study, in (1.1), is to provide a richer picture of Saudi students by drawing a profile of students from different language proficiency levels and background variables, and analyse their learning strategies. For this purpose, six students from different proficiency levels were chosen to analyse their recorded interview. The qualitative analysis of the interview data, in this chapter, will provide a richer picture against the quantitative analysis from the questionnaire responses in the last chapter.

Some strategies and techniques were gathered from students' direct answers to the questions of the interview and others were gathered indirectly from students response and were

actually activated during performance and this is very interesting because there is more than one strategy employed at the same time as will be seen in the examples given later in this chapter. The data were collected by means of individual recorded interviews. Prior to the selection of the questions and exercises for the interviews, there were meetings between the researcher and the teachers of the group participating in the study. These meetings were necessary for a better understanding of the syllabus, the materials, the methodology and specific types of language activities being used in the course. The textbooks were a good source of information in this respect as were classroom observations.

Meetings with the teachers, examination of the textbooks, and classroom observations revealed that classrooms participating in the study emphasize vocabulary learning, grammar activities, writing and the development of reading comprehension. Accordingly, the interview includes questions about these different types of language activities.

The initial contact with the students was through visits to the classrooms to explain what the research was about, its objectives, how the researcher intended to achieve the objectives, and the importance of the students' role in the study. Students were told that the researcher's aim was to hear the learners' views about how they go about answering questions and handling exercises in English. This information would provide for a better understanding of the learning process, and the insights gained from the research would ultimately be an asset for instructional practices geared towards helping students learn how to learn. It was emphasized that the interviews would be handled as confidential information and that they would not affect the students' grades. Students were asked if they would be interested in participating in the study and whether they would agree to be interviewed individually. Students' response was very encouraging. They showed a great interest in collaborating in the study.

In this chapter, the decision to examine the responses of six students from different proficiency levels was based upon the possibility that strategy use might be associated with levels of proficiency. The attempt made to choose six students from different proficiency levels was based on their teachers' classification of their performance in English. The

teachers were asked to provide a list of the students in their classes specifying how they judged their students in terms of the following scale: (85%- 100%: A-, A+, good language learners), (75%- 84: B-, B+, average language learners), and (50%-74%: C-, C+, below average and poor language learners). The criteria adopted for this categorization were students' scores and their overall performance in class.

The duration of the interviews varied a great deal from student to student. Some students were very quick in their answers, some were slow and took a long time to think, some use short answers, and some asked many times for explanation of the questions.

The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and then analysed for the occurrence of strategies and techniques. The analysis will be presented as a means of comparison among the six students in: 1) their background knowledge and interest in learning English, 2)strategies elicited from direct interview questions, 3) strategies and techniques students use in learning English in and outside class, 4) the strategies they use while handling some exercises in language activities, 5) differences in students' linguistic abilities, 6) the problems students face in learning English and their suggestions about teaching, syllabus or learning English in general.

Each of these points will be analysed separately and illustrated by examples from students' answers given in the interview. The students' answers are preceded by "St:" and "Int:" precedes the interviewer's "the researcher" comments.

5.2. Students' Language Background:

The first part of the discussion consists of a comparison and brief description of the six students in terms of level of academic achievement in English, the years spent learning English, their mother tongue, motivation and interest to learn English, and any experience they had of an English language environment. How each of these categories were defined were explained in more detail in chapter four (4.3).

Najwa (c-), the first student, scores 53% in English exams. Her score was the lowest one in her class. According to the data collected on the background factors, her first language

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is Arabic and she studied English for six years in the public high school before attending the college. She has never travelled or studied in an English-speaking country. She has no interest in learning English. Therefore, she doesn't try to practice English outside college. When she was asked about the reason why she wants to study English, her answer was because she needs it for her future career:

St: ah - it is good - to study English.
Int: Why?
St: ah - it help in future.
Int: how?
St: -- to find - good place to work.

Unlike Najwa, Khalod (A+), whose score in English was 94% had the highest score in class. According to the data collected on the background factors, Khalod considered both English as well as Arabic her first languages. She explained this in her answer to the second question in the interview:

St: ah - I like English - I speak English more than Arabic all the time cause I lived all my life in America - my father was a diplomat there.

Khalod has studied English for about 12 years in the states before attending the college in Saudi Arabia. Her accent sounds like that of a native speaker. When she was asked about her reason for studying the English language, her answer was because she was interested in the language.

Mona (C+) who scored 71% in English, was considered relatively better than Najwa (C-) but still considered one of the below-average students in her class. According to the data collected on the background factors, her first language is Arabic and she studied English for only six years in public high school before attending the college. She has not travelled or studied in an English-speaking country. She is not interested in learning English but she thinks she has to learn the language because it is important for her in the future. She likes to practice the language but she feels embarrassed because she can not speak correctly, therefore, she tries sometimes to practice only with her close friends. When she was asked about the reason why she wants to learn English, her answer was:

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St: I - think it's important - it help to communicate with people - ah to -- understand when I see T.V or read anything.

Int: What else?

St: ah - it also ah -- maybe help to find job.

Reem (A-), who scored 88%, and Khalod (A+), had a lot of things in common. They were even close friends in class. It was noticed, by the researcher, that they speak always English between themselves even on breaks. The only difference is the English accent. Khalod (A+) speaks with a native-like accent, but Reem (A-), although she doesn't have the mother tongue accent, speaks English fluently. According to the data collected on the background factors, Reem's first language is Arabic while Khalod's first language is both Arabic and English. Reem, Like Khalod, studied English for twelve years before attending the college. While both have spent the same number of years in studying English, Reem has spent these years in a private school in Saudi Arabia while Khalod studied in the states. Reem has also taken some English courses abroad during summer when she travels with her family for vacation. She is very interested in English and spoke a lot about the language giving many reasons for studying it:

St: oh - well because it's an international language - ah and we need it to communicate with other people from other countries - ah I mean - to make relationships we have to know English -- I mean English is very important to ah broaden our horizon - ah so that we can read English books- watch English films on T.V.....

Alia (B+) scored 84% in English. According to the data collected on the background factors, Alia's first language is Arabic. She has studied English for twelve years in private high school in Saudi Arabia. Unlike Khalod (A+) and Reem (A-), Alia (B+) did not have any English courses abroad but she has travelled many times to English-speaking countries on vacation with her family. She is very interested in English language. When she was asked about the reason to study English, her answer was:

St: - ah I want to study English - because I like English since I was in high school -- I love this language because I can communicate with other people - ah and that will help me when I go abroad - and nowadays everything is written in English - so we want to know what's happening in the world.

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Nida (B-) scores 78% in her English exams. According to the data collected on the background factors, her first language is Arabic. Unlike Alia (B+), who studied English in private school for twelve years, Nida (B-) studied English for six years only in public high school before attending the college. She has travelled twice to an English-speaking country on vacation but she has not taken any English courses abroad. She tries to practice English sometimes at home with her sisters. Her interest in English is for her future and when she was asked why she studies English, her answer was:

St: -- I like to study English for my future - ah English is the international language in this century -- everything depend on English -- ah it's good language to study for travelling abroad -- ah for reading magazines - ah to make my knowledge extended.

Table (15) Language Background Variables

Name	level	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
Khalod	A+	2	12	1+2	yes	yes
Najwa	C-	1	6	1	No	No
Alia	B+	2	12	1	No\yes	yes
Reem	A-	2	12	1	yes	yes
Mona	C+	1	6	1	No	rare
Nida	B-	1	6	1	No\yes	rare

Table (15) summarizes the similarities and differences between students with different proficiency level. Motivation was referred to by (B1) and as some students, Najwa (C-) and Mona (C+) and Nida (B-) were instrumentally (1) motivated, others are integratively (2) motivated as they were interested in the language itself. Years spent in learning English was referred to by (B2), as some students like Khalod (A+), Alia (B+) and Reem (A-) studied English for 12 years in private schools, others studied only for six years in public high schools. Students' first language was referred to by (B3) and almost all the students have Arabic (1) as their first language, except for Khalod (A+) whose had both English and Arabic (1+2) as her first language. Experience of living in an English environment was referred to by (B4). Some students have taken English courses abroad and others did not

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have that chance but they have spent their vacation in English speaking countries. Some others have had neither a chance to study abroad, nor had they an opportunity to visit an English-speaking country. Practising English outside college was referred to by (B5). There were some students who like to speak English all the time like Khalod (A+) and Reem (A-) and others who tried to practice English from time to time like Alia (B+) and Nida (B-), but some others like Mona (C+) is embarrassed to speak English because she thinks she does not speak correctly. Najwa (C) said that she did not think about practising the language outside the college.

5.3 Strategies elicited from direct interview questions:

One of the questions presented to the students during the interview required them to guess the meaning of the underlined words in some sentences. The purpose of this question was to figure out if students use inferencing strategy to guess the meaning of the underlined words. Many other strategies were used by some students beside the inferencing strategy, as will be shown in the analysis.

The analysis reveals distinct ways in which the students reacted to new vocabulary and deal with it. In attempting to make sense out of the sentence, most of these students exploit the context as a source of clues. Despite the fact that at times the process resulted in inaccuracies or uncertainties, it promoted the learners' active participation and involvement. The students were asked to guess the meaning of the underlined words in the following sentences presented in the interview:

-"Before using a car, indemnity is important against possible damage, accidents or hurt."

-"Nuts and coffee taste better if they are decrepitated, but their colour will look darker"

Some students could guess the right meaning of "indemnity= insurance and decrepitated = roasted" from the general context and others could not. It is assumed that the available information enables students to provide suitable alternatives to replace the needed word but sometimes the process involves risks and leads to an inaccurate response. For instance, contextually inappropriate guesses occurred when students did not adequately connect ideas

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in the sentence or when there were deficits in their vocabulary.

Alia (B+) found no difficulty in inferring the meaning of the word "indemnity" from the sentence. She reported that according to her first impression, "indemnity" would be equivalent to:

S.: ah - when we have new car - we - pay some money to a company ah so that when ah there is damage or accident they can fix it or ah take it back.

In spite of her failure to figure out the exact meaning of "indemnity=insurance", she proceeds trying to give an alternative equivalent. Alia's approach of substituting the underlined word by an expression or phrase that has the same meaning, seems to be successful enough to make her able to understand the whole sentence correctly without being bothered by using the exact needed word. In addition to inferencing, Alia used substitution strategy to help her answering the question.

Reem (A-) tried to guess the meaning of "indemnity" but she is not able to figure it out at first and decided to repeat reading the sentence again slowly trying to figure out the unfamiliar vocabulary from the context. She was successful in employing this process with "indemnity" as she correctly inferred that it must be something like "inspection" or "insurance":

S.: ah - indemnity ah - indemnity would possibly mean either inspection or ah no it is insurance.

In contrast to the approach followed by Alia (B+), and Reem (A-) who benefited from contextual clues to figure out unfamiliar vocabulary, Mona (C+) resorts to the use of translation. The example that follows contains evidence of her tendency to translate:

S.: - ah indemnity ah I think it means - ah Taa'min.

Mona could not figure the equivalent word in English but she was able to infer the word "indemnity" and used the Arabic word "Taa'min" which has the same meaning. Mona applied a successful process using translation with inferencing to enable her to give a correct answer.

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Khalod (A+) kept her interest in finding the meaning of the underlined word from the beginning by looking first at the underlined word and reading it before reading the whole sentence. An action that turned out to be successful as she reported she could understand it at the end of the sentence:

S.: - indemnity means insurance

Following the student's answer above, the researcher asked her how she figured out the answer:

S.: ah I understood it from the sentence.

Some students were able to draw logical inferences on the basis of contextual clues. In the segment quoted below, Nida (B-) was able to figure out the missing word regardless of her difficulty with vocabulary:

S.: - when you buy a car ah you need something to be sure about - ah may be some kind of guarantee. Nida is not familiar with the word "indemnity" but she anticipated that it is "some kind of guarantee" when she focused on the meaning of the other words in the sentence.

A serious problem for the less effective students consisted of looking at the words as self-contained units of meaning and, thus, ignoring important clues beyond the word under focus. The following example was drawn from Najwa "C-":

S.: Indemnity - ah indemnity means ah maybe to test the car - ah no may be take the new car and check it in garage ah -- yes the meaning of indemnity maybe - tagreba.

Najwa was focusing her attention on "indemnity" and repeating it many times with hesitation. She was confused and did not try to reread the sentence to find clues to help her guess the meaning of the word. She used an Arabic word "tagreba" which means "checking". Unlike Mona (C+) who used the right translation, Najwa used the wrong Arabic equivalent for the word "indemnity".

It would be interesting to examine whether these different processes work for these different students. In the examples given above some students were successful in their distinctive ways of dealing with unknown words but it was not always so. The excerpts below show

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that some of these students succeeded in getting the meaning of another unknown word and some were not able to do so:

"Nuts and coffee taste better if they are decrepitated, but their colour will look darker."

Khalod (A+), previously, had been able to figure out "indemnity", the first unfamiliar word, by looking immediately at the word. With the second word she tried to do the same but that process did not seem of any help in figuring out "decrepitated". Therefore, she decided to proceed to the reading and check whether there are clues further in the sentence. This strategy proved successful as she came up with the meaning of the underlined word soon after concluding the reading of the sentence:

S.: ah perhaps ah if they are roasted.

Nida (B-) was not successful that time; she was not entirely satisfied with the answer she came up with. However, she displayed a positive attitude since she did not get bogged down in her difficulty; she preferred to take the risk of an incorrect answer:

S.: ah - this means very strong coffee ah but the colour will look darker ah by increase the coffee it will look darker.

An interesting example of inferencing with substitution was provided by Alia (B+). She did not seem to be troubled by the unfamiliar word and she might not need to know it to be able to understand the sentence:

S.: ah when you put anything ah coffee ah nuts in the oven it will taste better and ah it will become darker.

Alia used the expression "put in the oven" to substitute "roasted" revealing that she had accurately inferred the meaning of "decrepitated".

Najwa (C-) indicated that she found another unfamiliar word "nuts". She reads the sentence and immediately reported that she had not understood it well. Therefore, she went on with reading the sentence and repeating it again asking for clarification of the meaning of "nuts":

S.: ah -- I don't know - nuts ah what is nuts?

Reem (A-) used other words that she knows to figure out the meaning of the unknown word. While reading the sentence, she stopped at two words "taste better", "look darker" and make connection with the unfamiliar word "decrepitated". Being familiar with the vocabulary of these two words helped her to identify the third one:

S.: ah coffee and nuts taste better and look darker ah when you toast it in oven.

Reem's previous knowledge of vocabulary is clearly an important factor influencing her ability to infer the meaning of the new word.

The strategy by itself did not seem to be effective for Mona (c+). After pausing for a long time, she gave up. Mona was unable to infer the meaning of the underlined word. She was confused giving several wrong alternatives to the meaning:

S.: -- ah - may be taste better when we mix ah - ah may be put colour to make darker.

Inferencing was a valuable tool for some students who were able to successfully exploit the context to discover meanings of words and expressions with which they were unfamiliar. The two (A) students were more likely to infer from the context than the (B) students. Although, figures do not show much difference in the use of inferencing between the (A) and (B) students, the qualitative analysis shows a noticeable difference in the way the process was employed.

Inferencing was revealed indirectly through the answers of some students above in guessing the meaning of the underlined words. It was also directly referred to by some students in the answers to the following question:

Int: "if you are unable to identify a word meaning, what would you do?"

Two different strategies were used beside inferencing which are resourcing and clarification. The occurrence of resourcing strategy in the data refers to the use of the dictionary to clarify unfamiliar lexical items and it indicates the student's dependence on the dictionary in coping with new vocabulary. Questioning for clarification, according to the data in this study,

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occurs as students request clarification when in doubt about the meaning of specific words.

As a matter of fact, it was noticed that these three strategies; inferencing, resourcing and questioning for clarification, are so connected with each other and that is what has been seen in the following answers of many students. Most of the students try first to infer the meaning of the word from the context (inferencing) but when they are unable to do so they either ask someone (questioning for clarification) about it or use the dictionary (resourcing).

Nida (B-) used the dictionary only when she was unable to figure out unknown vocabulary. She showed more flexibility in coping with uncertainty related to the meaning of words by either making do with what she could understand or attempting to guess from the context. It is possible that the absence of "questioning for clarification" in her approach was compensated by the use of inferencing as well as resourcing:

S.: When I find an unknown word ah - sometimes I skip the word - ah I know it is wrong but only if I can't guess the meaning ah then if I can't understand the whole sentence I go back to that word and check the meaning in the dictionary.

Nida's explanation implies that it is undesirable to skip unfamiliar words and that the meaning of the word is not as important as the meaning of the sentence as a whole when she stated that if she can understand the sentence without understanding that word she would skip it but if she could not understand the sentence she would go back and check the meaning of the word in the dictionary.

Khalod's (A+) use of the dictionary is a time consuming, frustrating experience. She prefers either to guess the meaning through some contextual clues or asks someone about it but she will refer to the dictionary as her last resort:

S.: ah it's easier and faster for me to guess the meaning from the sentence or ah ask some one about it ah but I'm too lazy to use the dictionary.

Najwa (C-) made a long pause and looked as if she does not understand the question. She asks for the question to be repeated, so I repeated it in simple words:

Int.: I mean if you don't know a word meaning what would you do?

S.: ah - I - I try remember the meaning --

Int.: and if you can't?

S.: ah I ah -- I read the word - ah then I try to understand.

In Najwa's data, there is no evidence of any intention to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar word from the context, to use the dictionary, or to ask someone about the meaning. Even after hearing the question again, her only reaction is to "try to understand".

Unlike Najwa, Mona (C+) seems to rely on the use of the dictionary to look for the meaning of unknown words and seems to be more efficient; for instance, the following excerpt shows that she has another alternative besides the dictionary; asking someone for the clarification of the meaning;

S.: - ah first - I ask my sister or anybody ah or look at it in dictionary.

In contrast to the processes employed by Mona shown above, Alia (B+) uses the dictionary to find the meaning of the unknown word only when she could not infer the meaning:

S.: ah - It depends where I am ah - if I'm at home reading a book and ah there is a difficult word I don't understand ah I pass it ah and try to guess it later - ah but if it's during the class I might ask someone near me or ah write it down and find it in the dictionary later.

Alia's approaches were clever enough to solve any difficulty and that depends on the situation if she is at class or at home. If she is unable to obtain clarification from someone, she would write down the unknown words so that she can look for their meaning later in the dictionary.

Reem (A-) tries to infer the meaning of the word first but sometimes, unwilling to take the risk involved in the process, decides to consult the dictionary to confirm her hunch through a source of information she seems to consider more reliable:

S.: ah If I come across a new word ah I try to guess it first before asking someone about it ah but if the word is important and I want to be sure about the meaning ah I would check it in the dictionary.

Reem resorts to the use of the dictionary only to remove the ambiguity represented by guessing unfamiliar terms.

It seems that resourcing strategy was the last resort for most of the students especially the (A) and (B). They tried first to infer the meaning from contextual clues (inferencing) or ask someone about it (clarification) but if none of these work out, they would use the dictionary (resourcing). Sometimes, resourcing strategy was employed even when the meaning seemed easily retrievable from the context and in situations where the student had already inferred the meaning but insisted on looking up the word to be sure. This attitude suggests that these students tended to avoid ambiguity by looking for the precise meaning of individual words in an official source. By using the dictionary whenever coming across new vocabulary, instead of figuring it out by interacting with the ideas expressed in the text, these students miss the opportunity of getting actively involved with the language. The analysis indicates that the habit prevailed among most of the students in the group, irrespective of level of proficiency.

In her investigation, Hosenfeld (1977) concludes that successful learners also look up words in the dictionary but they do so after other attempts have failed. This appears to be supported in the data, in that both "A" and "B" students had a much higher incidence than "C" students of other processes such as inferencing and substitution in which they actually manipulated the language and thus participated more actively in the decoding of the text. Furthermore, it was noticed from the qualitative analysis that the "A" and some of the "B" students benefitted from resourcing as it was used merely to confirm an inference they had already made.

In their investigation of second language vocabulary learning, Cohen and Aphek (1981) found that whenever some associational pattern was used, the words were retained successfully over time. The action of consulting the dictionary is receptive compared with reconstructing meaning through procedures such as drawing associations or making logical

relationships as in inferencing. These techniques enhance the meaningfulness of the text, making it more learnable and more memorable.

Students were asked, during the interview, about how they could overcome their communication problems. The question was presented to students in such a way:

Int: "If you were facing some problems in expressing yourself in English what do you do to overcome your communication problems?"

Through the question, an attempt was made to figure out the kind of strategies students use to handle any communication problem they face. In general, students' efforts to find solutions for their communication problems were carried out by giving an alternative to the needed word either by substituting it with a simple expression or gesture (substitution strategy) or using the equivalent Arabic word (translation strategy) and if possible, using the bilingual dictionary to provide them with the needed word.

Students' data contains evidence of the frequent use of substitution strategy. It shows how the learners resort to the process in their efforts to find appropriate solutions for their communication problem. Lots of students, regardless of their level of proficiency, rely on substitution when facing any problem in communication. It proved to be a practical technique whenever the students were unable to remember or did not know the specific word needed to complete the sentence. In these cases, the word was often replaced by one the student could come up with or by using synonyms, paraphrases or gestures.

Some students resort to translation to overcome their communication problem and some report an excessive use of the strategy despite teachers' view that translation is an ineffective technique that needs to be replaced by more creative strategies before it becomes a habit.

The instances of resourcing in the data referred exclusively to the use of the dictionary. Evidently, this tendency was a consequence of the students' dependence on translation, an idea that is supported by their preference for a bilingual dictionary "Arabic\English".

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Returning to the native language seems to represent a safe ground to those students who felt very insecure when dealing with the foreign language; apparently, they needed to be reassured through the use of the system they had mastered: the native language. This assumption is based on the fact that some students engaged in translation for no apparent reason.

Experts seem to be unanimous in considering that the first language is a source of information from which hypotheses about the target language are derived since the learners' previous knowledge is brought to bear in the learning process (Seliger 1983; Rubin 1987). Previous knowledge includes knowledge of other languages and in this particular study, the students' previous linguistic knowledge refers to the first language "Arabic" only.

However, experts also warn against the excessive use of such a knowledge. Bialystok (1983:108) considers that "over-reliance on such information is a common hazard in language learning...". Likewise, Seliger (1983:249) writes that the extent to which learners become aware of the separate identities between the first and second language may be a measure of development in the second language.

With some students, the habit of depending excessively on translation conspires against the attainment of their learning goals. By avoiding manipulation of the target language, students miss opportunities for creative language use, a condition necessary for the development of language proficiency.

After all, for these students, the native language is their only previously acquired linguistic knowledge and therefore represents their source for the generation of hypotheses. However, it is desirable that strategies (like translation, resourcing) in the initial stages of learning are gradually replaced by more mature strategies (like inferencing and substitution) that promote active manipulation of and interaction with the target language (Brown et al.1983).

Mona (C+) seems to rely on translation and does not make any attempt to employ any other process when she faces a communication problem. This is what Mona answers:

S.: - ah I read the word and ah -

Int.: while you are speaking not reading you forget one word or two - what would you do?

S.: ah I try to think first what I say ah sometimes I use Arabic word automatically ah if I do not have English word in mind.

Mona reports that she sometimes uses translation when she forgets the needed word in English. Possibly, the native language, Arabic, provides a safer ground that helps Mona to cope with her communication problem.

Unlike Mona, Khalod's (A+) way of counteracting difficulty in communication is to supply an alternative for the missing information:

S.: Ah if there is a certain word I want to use and I can't remember what it was ah I would use synonyms or ah sometimes I use gestures.

Khalod uses her previous knowledge of English vocabulary as an aid in making a choice for an alternative to the word needed in the form of synonyms or gestures (substitution strategy).

The evidence in the data indicates that most students avoid interacting with the English language directly. They try to find solutions in the native language and then translate it into the English language. The use of translation is prevalent among most of them, irrespective of level of proficiency. The following excerpt provides further supporting evidence. This is what Reem, one of the "A-" students said she does while trying to find a solution for her communication problem:

S.: - ah if I have a problem ah I think of the problem carefully and find solution - then I translate to English what I want to say ah - but if there is a word I can't remember I might use other simple words to explain or ah I use gestures.

Reem does not try to use Arabic words but she admits thinking in Arabic to find solution and then translating her ideas from Arabic to English. Substitution is another strategy employed by Reem. She displays a strong tendency towards the use of this process; she does not hesitate to use simple expressions or gestures as alternatives whenever she feels that this

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process will help her get through her difficulty in communication.

The qualitative analysis of the data for translation strategy was sometimes confusing. In some cases it was difficult to tell whether the students were reasoning in their native language, as Reem, or were using Arabic just to find a substitute for the needed word in English as Nida (B-):

S.: ah it depends on the situation ah if I'm speaking to someone understand Arabic ah maybe I use one or two Arabic words to explain no problem ah but if I'm speaking to foreigner ah I try to explain by other simple English words or by my hands and face.

Nida is uncertain about the way she should handle her communication problem. Her doubt refers to whether she should use an equivalent Arabic word or substitute the missing word by a simple expression in English.

Alia (B+) reports that she knows what is missing to complete the sentence. Her first priority is substitution and not translation like Nida and Mona. She will resort to translation only if she does not know the corresponding word in English. Therefore, she decides to use it in Arabic or to resort to the Arabic\English dictionary to look for the English equivalent:

S.: ah if someone doesn't understand me I try to make examples ah I try to explain in other simple words - ah if I know the word in Arabic but I forget it in English I would check it in the dictionary if I have one with me ah and if I don't ah maybe I'll leave it in Arabic.

Qualitative data analyses suggest that less use of translation and resourcing strategies results in greater use of inferencing and substitution strategies and vice versa. Evidence of this idea was found in many students results. Additionally, in connection with reliance on resourcing and translation, it was surprising that the data provided by Najwa (C-) did not show the same trend. .The fact that there was not much use of resourcing and translation was intriguing in Najwa's case because there was not much use of inferencing and substitution either. A plausible explanation was provided by the qualitative analysis which indicated that Najwa did not make serious efforts to find solutions for her problems, preferring to give up

before actually engaging herself in strategic processing:

S.: - ah I read the word then ah I try to understand

Int.: what I meant is while you are talking you forget one word or two, what do you do?

S.: - ah -- I try to remember ah then I say it

In addition to what was noted above, Najwa's negative attitude in the interview, indicated by her answers, resulted in lack of interest and involvement that were crucial factors affecting the quality of her performance.

The data shows that some students display a strong tendency to translate to Arabic while searching for the correct alternative. Evidence in the data indicates that some of them tend to resort to translation without considering other possibilities such as the use of more creative processes of substitution and inferencing. The main reason students resort to translation is that their attempts to find an English counterpart for their answers were commonly difficult and time consuming due to the students' deficient vocabulary in English. Self-monitoring strategy is frequently applied to production as a result of the students' concern about the correction of their answers. It is employed throughout the interview by most students right from the start as they handle questions in the interview. It was also elicited through a direct question presented to students:

Int.: "If you have made a mistake, do you repeat it again? Do you learn from your mistake?" Self-monitoring occurred typically as a result of the students being doubtful about the appropriate words, considering alternative answers, and engaging themselves in efforts to reach a decision for a correct performance.

The data contain evidence of a different modality of self-monitoring that was employed. As the students handle the questions, their concern about the correction of their answers is evident. For instance, Reem (A-) starts having second thoughts about the correction of some words when she had doubts about them:

St: ah - sometimes - when I am not sure about a word - I start thinking that I did something wrong so ah I go back and check it trying to think of the right form.

Some students indicate monitoring auditorily; that is, they judge their answers on the basis of whether the responses sound correct to them. Alia (B+) reveals using her ear to make decisions about the appropriateness of the forms being used:

St.: ah - well - I - sometimes I can recognize the right word from the wrong ah by hearing or pronouncing the two and - I see what sounds better for me ah because I have the feeling that I heard the word before.

Alia's judgement about the adequacy of the use of a particular word, is based on the fact that it sounds familiar to her. She senses that if she uses this word with other words, together, they make up an acceptable sequence in English.

While correcting the mistakes in spelling, Mona (C+) describes how a misspelled word just looks strange to her:

St.: -- ah when I make ah mistake in spelling ah I find the word strange - so I check the spelling again - and I write down the correct word many times ah so that I will never forget it.

Mona resorts to self-monitoring to make sure that the word she has used is really appropriate. Moreover, she seems to be more successful in her efforts as she tries to find solutions in writing the words many times so that she will not forget what these words look like.

Unlike other students, Khalod (A+) gives a short answer confirming with "yes" that she uses the strategy but her data were not rich in terms of strategy use. The reason for this type of result may be explained by the fact that either Khalod might be too efficient to make a mistake and correct it or that the question was not challenging enough to elicit conscious information. Khalod's contribution consisted mostly of self-monitoring that occurred in the form of comments expressing her personal reaction to the question:

St.: ah yes - I do learn from my mistakes ah I'm a very cautious person ah I try always to avoid mistakes in my life.

Khalod's personal reaction did not seem to function as tools used for the purpose of finding solutions to specific problems.

There is no evidence of whether Najwa (C-) understands the question at the beginning; she does not provide any indication of self-monitoring strategy use. In contrast with all others,

Najwa, a student with very low achievement, does not mention any difficulty in correcting her mistakes. It seems that she goes on with her mistakes without noticing that:

St.: - ah -- ah --

Int.: Do you repeat your mistakes?

St.: ah - I don't know - ah maybe no -- ah maybe sometimes

There is no evidence of any attempt to employ the strategy or suggest any kind of solution. Najwa's performance is characterized by uncertainty, slow decision taking and long pauses. As a result of the student's acting very slowly and her performance being characterized by frequent long pauses, the interview had become stressful so we have to jump from one question to the other.

Self-monitoring was employed frequently (75% as in table 4 in appendix 5) as a result of students' concern about the correctness of their answers. The strategy is a process whereby the students examine or correct production during the performance of their assignments, with the purpose of improving the quality of performance. Beside the direct question above that elicits self-monitoring strategy, the researcher has noticed that students constantly monitored their production while answering the questions of the interview as will be illustrated later in the next section.

The strategy of self-monitoring is increasingly higher for(C+) and (B) students, possibly due to the fact that these students were more likely to have problems because of their deficient knowledge of vocabulary and syntax. In fact, there were situations in which the less competent students' persistence in finding solutions resulted in a great deal of self-monitoring. Apart from Khalod (A+) and Najwa (C-), the students make frequent use of self-monitoring. Khalod confirmed using the strategy but the picture was not clear as she was too good to make mistakes to be corrected. Unlike Khalod, Najwa was too poor to correct her mistakes.

Evidence in the data shows that most of the students were alert to their production failure; on these occasions they slowed down the process when they felt they are not sure and it

demanded more concentration. In situations where specific words were identified as incorrect, some students decided to go on and, at times, succeeded in correcting these words. Others, especially some of the less effective (C-) students, either went on without noticing their error or they knew but were unable to correct them. Most of the self-monitoring applied to production fits Bialystok's (1981:26) characterization of self-monitoring as being essentially a formal production strategy in which explicit formal knowledge is brought to the task with the purpose of improving the quality of performance. Most of students' actual corrections were related to language form. It seems plausible to assume that the context of learning played a role in the extensive use of self-monitoring employed. The students' exposure to the language is essentially through explicit instruction, and their decisions seem largely influenced by formal rules as they lack the feedback available in naturalistic contexts. The strong tendency to focus on the accuracy of language forms could also be a habit inculcated by classroom instruction. The fact is that second language students often lack sufficient functional practice to automatize correct language forms and the necessary feedback to confirm or reject their hypotheses. The lack of feedback from other sources may result in the tendency observed in this study for students to be extremely cautious and to over use self-monitoring. These aspects may have influenced the deliberate approach adopted by the students, who are prone to focus primarily on form rather than on content.

Students were asked during the interview about the techniques or study habits they use, which help them learn English. The question was presented to students in this way:
Int.: "Do you try to develop any special techniques or study habits which help you learn English?"
Through the question, an attempt was made to figure out what kind of strategies and study habits students used to help them learn English.

Students' data contains evidence of the frequent use of many strategies such as self-management, practising, and summarizing. It was noticed that some strategies are so

connected to each other and that is what has been seen from the answers of many students. Quantitative analysis shows percentages of strategy use and correlation with proficiency and background factors. Qualitative analyses, on the other hand, show how each strategy was used and the different approaches in strategy use between students.

Self-management strategy was often employed, surfacing as the students take actions they believe to be helpful for a successful performance. The strategy: 1- explicitly stating how one is approaching or handling a specific task. 2- explicitly stating what strategies one decides to use or is using at a certain point during the task.

In general, self-management strategy seemed to be used as a way of coping with difficulty and appeared to be of assistance to students' performance. For instance, the students often decide to overlook a particular unfamiliar word that is not essential to comprehension of the text in favour of expending time and effort on more demanding aspects of the task; self-management also involves the decision to postpone the solution of a problem that needs more concentration. Other self-management behaviours included writing definitions of unknown words in the margins of a text or in a notebook, and deciding to either skip unfamiliar words or look them up in a dictionary.

Practising is another strategy that students employed. It could be either memorizing and repeating or communicating naturalistically in English language.

Successful students tended to create opportunities to practice English as much as possible in certain ways: 1-practice English in authentic situations (this will be dealt within question (7) in the interview): talking to native speakers, watching English films and programmes on TV, and reading English articles in newspapers and magazines.

2- practice memorizing model sentences or classical proverbs and sayings to develop writing skills and conversation (this will be dealt within this section).

Memorization seems to be closely connected with the socio-cultural educational context in which students in Saudi Arabia are embedded. Students need to memorize many vocabulary words and even portions of texts to gain high scores on English examinations because

objective questions and essay questions on those examinations demand memorizing facts and great familiarity with texts.

Students' emphases on memorization and imitation have their origins in their prior educational experiences and their cultural background. Following Arabic models of teaching, Arabic teachers, especially those teaching below the college level, encourage or require students to memorize Arabic classical poems and sayings, believing that it is the best way to develop language skills. Similarly, English teachers, especially those teaching below the college level, require or encourage students to memorize sample sentences and proverbs, believing that memorization and imitation have close connections with developing language skills. What they emphasize is accuracy over fluency; what is most important for them is producing correct sentences.

Summarizing strategy was used in connection with memorizing as most students use summarizing to make shorter versions of oral or written passages to make it easier for them to remember or memorize. Summarizing can be more useful and more challenging than taking notes because it often requires greater condensation of thought.

Students' data indicated that, influenced by a culture of learning emphasizing memorization and imitation, and by a teaching method laying stress on accuracy over fluency, students tend to place priority on accuracy in composing sentences and to employ memorization mainly to gain high scores in examinations. The following segment produced by Nida (B-) contains evidence of this:

St.: ah I think ah to gain high scores in English exam ah the best way is to make a summary of the material and memorize it ah I spend hours writing down sentences which I think is important and likely to show up in exam.

Students focus their attention on the parts of the text that they had not understood well when they first read it. They repeat reading the text in their efforts to make sense out of it. This technique of concentrating attention on and repeating specific segments of the text that

are causing difficulty by rehearsing chunks of language is used by many students. It is illustrated by the following example, drawn from Khalod's (A+) data:

St.: yes ah I try to read important and difficult articles with more concentration ah sometimes one has to read a lot and concentrate ah sometimes I like to make a summary of the main points so that'll be easier for me to remember.

Khalod reports doing what she believes to be a condition for achieving concentration: reading the text as many times as necessary with concentration. Self-management strategy seems to be used here as a way of coping with difficulty and appeared to be of assistance to the student.

Self-management strategy also occurs when the students indicate following procedures they believe will help them perform successfully. For instance, deciding whether or not it is necessary to look for the meaning of unknown words in the dictionary as in Alia's (B+) answers. Alia reports being unfamiliar with some words. However, she reveals what she does know about it. She does not consider its meaning essential. As a matter of fact, Alia displays some skills in making do with the meaning from what is known, ignoring unfamiliar vocabulary items that are not essential for global meaning. The following excerpt contains evidence of Alia's flexibility in dealing with unfamiliar words:

St.: ah in the past when I was learning English I thought that each word has only one meaning ah I didn't know that words can have more than one meaning ah then by the time ah I know that it is important to pay attention to the sentence to know the meaning of the new word ah sometimes I skip the new word when I don't understand it ah may be I can understand it later after reading the whole article ah but if I can't ah I maybe I'll look for it later in the dictionary.

Alia explains that she does not think it is necessary to use the dictionary, once she has grasped the basic idea of the meaning of the word.

As mentioned earlier, emphases in the teaching of Arabic are parallel with those in the teaching of English. Many English teachers encourage or require students to memorize well-put sentences and famous sayings; to read model paragraphs and essays for imitation and reference. They strongly emphasize grammar and correctness and consider expressions of ideas and fluency subordinate to form and accuracy and that will be seen in Mona's answer:

St.: ah yes ah my first concern in the exam is to pay attention to many things like spelling ah grammar ah I try my best to write correct sentences ah I have also the habit of memorizing beautiful sentences ah it helps a lot in writing.

Najwa (C-), as usual, gave very brief answers but she did apply this time self-management strategy in a certain way. The researcher tried many times to encourage her to speak:

St.: Ah -- sometimes - ah I write important word ah --

Int.: Do you mean when you read?

St.: ah yes - when I read - ah - I chose ah I write important word to remember ah or I put line under new word --

Int.: anything else?

St.: No

Self-management strategy was typically found in situations in which the students indicated taking some actions they believed were conducive to a successful performance of the task. Reem (A-) provides another example of self-management which is transcribed next:

St.: ah when I prepare my homework I try to read slowly from beginning to end ah sometimes I make a list of the new words and hang it on the wall so that I always look at it ah I like also to choose some good useful sentences from articles and memorize them to use them later in writing.

In this case, she indicates what she believes to be a condition for her to succeed in accurately understanding the text: to read it very slowly, paying attention to each word and then writing down the new words in a list to remember.

These strategies occur when students indicate that they follow procedures they believe will help them perform their language task successfully. Self-management was one of the most frequent strategies used with an incidence of 70% (as in table 4 in appendix five). It was a result of the learners' following procedures that they considered to be conducive to successful performance.

Quantitative data analyses indicated that as many as 30% of the students employ the summarizing strategy. Memorization as practising strategies was used by 77% of the students in developing language skills. As students tended to be very much concerned with accuracy in their production, they used to memorize sayings and quotable sentences derived

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from classical works to support their argument, to enrich the content of their essays, and, in their view to elevate the quality of their work.

5.4 Strategies used in and outside class:

Students were asked, during the interview, about what they would do in the classroom to help them learn the material. The question was presented in such a way:

Int.: "What do you do in classroom to help you understand the material?"

Through the question an attempt was made to figure out what kind of strategies students use in the classroom to help them learn the material. Students often are given reading comprehension passages in the English class, then they are asked to answer questions about them. Students use different strategies and approaches in the classroom, that help them comprehend the material such as planning strategy, note taking, clarification, cooperation, and reviewing.

Successful students, as the data indicated, used planning strategy to organize their thoughts or make an outline before beginning the language task. Some variation is seen in the students' preliminary steps to the language task. Basically, the difference refers to the procedures they use to help them learn better.

Organizational planning involves: 1- generating a plan for approaching a task before starting it. 2- proposing specific strategies for handling an upcoming task, having a task purpose in mind.

The data indicated that students also use reviewing strategy in class to monitor and revise their written output and to achieve their purposes in producing sentences that are correct, coherent, and clear. The strategy involves previewing the basic principles and materials for an upcoming language activity, and linking these with what the students already know. Students apply this strategy in different ways that includes any of the following: 1- going over in one's mind what was done in class that day. 2- looking over material previously covered to prepare for a new language task. 3- rereading in a textbook what was learned that day. 4- looking over things which one is unsure about. Or 5- looking over one's notes.

Successful students, as the data indicated, often revise what they write. However, some spent more time in revision than others. Their revision efforts indicated their using their monitoring system to see whether their sentences were grammatically and syntactically correct, whether these sentences corresponded to the meaning they intended to convey, and whether they were coherently connected with one another.

Note taking is one of the most frequently used strategies in the class. It is the recording of information for later review or use. Most students who reported using this strategy keep written records of important material in a notebook and most note taking is actually reported to be copying-down of information which has been provided by the teacher and usually written on the blackboard. However, few other students reported taking notes as they listened to teacher's explanation or other activities in the classroom.

Some students reported using cooperation strategy in the activities of the class by working together in groups to help each other in solving problems, checking learning tasks, pooling information or getting feedback on oral or written performance. Students tended to use cooperation together with clarification.

Clarification was used as a strategy by students in class in order to clarify information about which they were unsure or to help them better understand what was being said. Most students tended to ask their classmates, but very few reported they were willing to ask their teacher only if they were not able to clarify the information from other resources.

The results of the qualitative analysis indicated that there are still barriers between students and teachers and the relationships seem to be rather formal, although the distance between teachers and students in modern Saudi Arabia, especially at the college level, is not so wide as it was in the past. The teacher is the superior, the elder deserving respect. The student is the inferior and needs to show his respect and behave in appropriate ways. The former is a knowledge transmitter and an authority in his field. The latter is regarded as receptacle receiving what has been poured into their heads. As a result, there is not much interaction

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between the teacher and students, and students seldom ask the teacher questions in class. (Rogers, C., 1983)

The clarification and the cooperation strategy, used in class mainly as students were asking questions for clarification from their peers, were used as social affective strategies. Outside class, the strategy was used when students ask someone, a friend or a member of the family, for the clarification of a language problem.

The students take different preliminary steps for the reading comprehension text they usually have in class. Except for Khalod (A+), most students start with the text, try to make sense out of it and then proceed to the questions. Khalod indicates that she likes first to read the questions so that when reading the text she can focus her attention on the information requested:

St.: in class ah I pay attention - I take notes - in reading comprehension exercises I like to start with the questions first to have an idea of ah what I'll have to focus on later in the text ah sometimes I revise my answer when I don't feel happy about it ah usually I don't prefer to interrupt the teacher in the middle of the class when I have a question in mind but I'd rather discuss it later with my friends or ask the teacher after class.

Khalod's answer indicates that she uses many strategies in class such as note taking, and reviewing. Although she does not like to interrupt her teacher in the middle of the class to ask questions, she clarifies information with the cooperation of her friends. Khalod indicates her plans for handling the text by reading the questions before handling the text (planning). Her immediate reaction to the task is to direct her attention to the questions and read all of them without attempting to answer; therefore, when she reads the passage she has some idea of the kind of information she will have to provide.

Unlike Khalod (A+), Reem (A-) likes to skim through the text before attempting to complete it. She reads the whole paragraph the first time to obtain a global idea of the text as well as to look for clues that, no doubt, will be helpful in handling the task. Then she goes over the questions before returning to read the text again with more concentration:

St.: in class ah I get used to skimming the text first to have a general idea before reading the questions ah the questions might give me some clues when I read the text again with more concentration ah I like also to take notes when the teacher explains some important points ah to revise them later at home.

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After skimming the text for the general points, Reem starts reading again with the purpose of completing the text at this point. She specifies the reason why she reads the questions soon after reading the text: she believes that the questions may provide additional clues to a better grasp of the text.

Obviously, the approach followed by Khalod and Reem reveals that they are more mature learners who have a greater awareness of the nature of the task and consequently of the conditions leading to a more effective performance.

Unlike Khalod and Reem, Alia (B+) likes to start with the text, tries to make sense out of it and then proceeds to the questions as most of the students do. Alia used to prepare the material before attending the class and that, as she reports, helps her to understand. She adds that when there is a question, in the reading comprehension exercise, which seems difficult for her she would prefer to skip it and go to the next one and then ask someone about it later:

St.: ah I ah try to prepare the material before coming to the class ah and that will help me to understand what the teacher ah is trying to explain - I take many notes of that - but if there is a reading comprehension exercise ah I read the instruction first ah then I read the text and ah if there is difficult question I skip it and go to the next one ah I try to ask my friends about it later ah because I feel I'll waste class precious time if I ask the teacher about it.

Alia prefers to skip the first question when she does not have an answer for it immediately. She prefers to get the easier questions out of the way and then concentrate on the more demanding ones. This behaviour refers to time allocation; that is the student chooses to do all the questions that she can immediately think of an answer for first and then expend the time left on those that demand more concentration. Time also seems to be very important for Alia when she adds that she would ask her friends, and not the teacher, about any difficulty because she thinks she might "waste the class precious time".

Nida's (B-) very first step is to get acquainted with the content of the text; her efforts to decode the text start immediately with the attempts to eliminate comprehension problems right from the start.

St.: - ah I think it is very important to follow the instruction of the teacher before I start with the exercise ah usually I read the text first with concentration - ah check new words ah then try to answer the questions - ah after I finish I review my answers and ah check with my friends that everything is correct.

While reading the text for the first time, Nida goes on identifying unknown words and trying to figure them out; the questions are only dealt with after this process is completed, then she tries to review her answers and check them with her friends.

Mona (C+) indicates that her reaction to the lesson depends on its difficulty. She believes that she needs to read the text twice to grasp the idea as whole to be able to answer the questions:

St.: - ah in class - ah it depend on the lesson - ah if the lesson is easy I can answer questions quickly ah but sometimes the lesson very difficult ah I try to read it again to understand before I ah answer question - ah then I check my answer with my friends if grammar is correct.

Mona indicates deliberately taking an action that she believes is a condition for the successful completion of the task. She then checks with her friends: "if grammar is correct".

Najwa (C-) indicates what she does in class when she has a reading comprehension exercise. She starts with reading the text and after comprehending it, she answers the questions:

St.: -- "ah in class ah - in reading exercise I read first the text ah I try to understand ah then I answer the question- ah -I look to the teacher all the time ah and I write new word in my note book."

Najwa tries to explain what she has in mind with very simple words but the researcher was able to understand what she means: "I look to the teacher all the time" which means that she pays attention to the teacher all the time.

Successful students in this study tended to organize their thoughts or make an outline before beginning their language assignments. Many students reported using planning strategy (67% as in table 4 in appendix 5) but in different ways. Some of the students reported using their own knowledge and experience in organizing and planning any language assignments. Other students reported that they rely on instructions from the textbook or the teachers on how to handle language assignments. Almost all of them stressed the importance of grammar and accuracy.

Because their English teachers believed in the importance of accuracy in any language assignment and evaluated their work based on whether they were able to produce satisfactory answers in exams that contain correct sentences, most students, in carrying out their tasks, spent much effort in revising, paying attention to whether their sentences were grammatically correct, and using reference material for help.

The data collected from interviews revealed that students do not like to ask the teacher questions for several reasons. Students do not want to interrupt their teachers' lectures because they want to show their respect for their teachers and because they do not want to waste other students' precious time; they do not want to give their teachers the impression that they are not satisfied with or do not understand their explanations and lectures, thereby indicating that the teachers are not good lecturers; they are reluctant to ask questions for fear that the teacher may not be able to answer them well, which will cause the teacher to lose face and destroy harmony in the class. Saudi Arabian students value thoughtful questions. Questions are asked after careful deliberation and sound reflection. They are afraid that their teachers and classmates may laugh at them because they have asked a silly question, a question asked without deep thinking, a question too shallow to be worth answering; they are afraid that they may lose face owing to making mistakes, feeling shy and incompetent in asking questions. Therefore, they postpone their questioning and try to solve problems by themselves or with the help of their classmates before turning to their teachers for help in private.

Students were asked, during the interview, about what they do to help them comprehend and remember an oral passage. The question was presented in such a way:
Int.: "What would you do if you want to comprehend and remember an oral passage?"
Through the question an attempt was made to figure out the kind of strategy students use in a listening comprehension task. Without any advance preparation, this type of listening practice of language learning is presented to students, providing that the texts used, have the appropriate features to facilitate comprehension at this level.

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In a listening comprehension task, usually, in college classes in Saudi Arabia, the teacher prepares the students for what they will hear and what they are expected to do. The teacher reads the text slowly to give the students a chance to write some notes. Then students are given a few minutes before reading the text again. While listening, students are told to make predictions and anticipate what they might hear and deliberately focus attention on items in the text that they assumed were helpful in figuring out the right answer.

The data show many strategies students use to help them comprehend the oral passage and remember the important details to be able to answer the questions at the end. Selective attention was the most frequently used strategy in the listening comprehension task. In addition note-taking, summarizing, and grouping, were also used but in different frequencies.

Grouping strategy is classifying or reclassifying language material into meaningful units, either mentally or in writing, to make the material easier to remember by reducing the number of discrete elements. Groups can be based on type of word, topic, numbers, similarities or opposition, the way one feels about something, and so on.

Note taking, as mentioned earlier in the last section, is one of the most frequently used strategies in class. It is the recording of information for later review or use. It is commonly used by students in the listening comprehension texts. Students write their notes while they listen to the teacher reading the text. The written information helps students to remember the important points so that they will be able to answer the questions later.

Summarizing strategy was also used earlier in a different section by many students. In a listening comprehension task, some students use summarizing to make shorter versions of oral passages to make it easier for them to remember.

Another very frequent strategy used in listening comprehension is selective attention which surfaces as the students focus on specific items they believe will help them solve problems they encounter. Selective attention often occurs in connection with note taking as the

students tend to focus their attention on items they identify as obstacles to comprehension. For example, students write down words and expressions to pinpoint items in the text that are important and need to be dealt with. Moreover, the process is also commonly utilized by the students deliberately choosing to focus on specific elements of the language they believe to be important for successful performance. Typically, the elements the students deliberately bear in mind while listening to the text, are those which they think will be useful in answering the questions later on. For this reason, selective attention, note taking, summarizing, and sometimes grouping strategy, often occur together, and that is what will be seen later from students' answers.

The strategies used, in a listening comprehension task, were so connected to each other. The process occurs in such a way: 1- Deciding in advance to focus, while listening, on specific relevant parts of the text which might have some clues; and this will lead to; 2- summarizing the selected main points or relevant parts; and, or, 3- writing down notes of the important items and, or; 4- putting these notes or words in groups. For example, in a listening comprehension passage about the changes in population in Saudi Arabia, the teacher would read the text and the students would listen and concentrate their attention on some items they think are important and might help them in answering the questions later, then they will summarize these important points or take notes and write them in certain groups. For example, writing the years in one group, the changes in number of population in another group, and the other information needed in different groups so it will be easier to students to have the right answer later when answering the questions.

Some students get distracted when encountering an unknown word or phrase and results in an inability to keep up with the speed of the listening task. They typically would stop listening, fail to be aware of their inattention, and not attempt to redirect their attention to the oral text. Consequently, the student has greater difficulty holding meaning in memory and suppressing irrelevant information. This is manifest in incomplete summarization and a disjointed understanding of the text. Other students seemed to be more aware when they

stopped attending and made an effort to redirect their attention to the task. Other factors that detracted from attending to the task included the length and difficulty of a passage; occasional extraneous stimuli, such as other students making noises outside.

Qualitative analysis show that students' answers for this question have more similarities than other questions, perhaps because it was more specific and it is about one activity they use in class.

Khalod's (A+) answer was, as usual, short but concise. She pays attention to anything that might give her clues to be able to answer the questions:

St.: - "ah I'll pay attention to it and perhaps take some notes."

Reem's (A-) answers were more detailed. She thinks it is important to listen carefully to the teacher and follow the instruction. She writes down whatever she thinks is important and puts the words in different groups so that "it will be easier to find the right answer":

Int.: - "ah I listen very carefully to the teacher and follow the instruction ah I write down quickly the important information ah put it in different groups so it'll be easier to find the right answer later."

Alia (B+) indicated that what she does depends on the situation. When she finds the text difficult, she writes notes on it or makes a summary so that she can remember the information and sometimes when the text is so easy she just concentrates:

Int.: "ah - sometimes I take notes or make summary ah and sometimes it is so easy I can remember it when I concentrate."

Nida (B-) starts her answer by repeating the question as if she wants to make sure of it. She uses the same procedures as Khalod, Reem, Alia. She concentrates while listening and writes what she thinks is important to help her answer the questions:

Int.: " - ah to remember an oral passage? ah I try to ah I try to concentrate when I listen so I can remember it later or ah I write some notes especially numbers on the side to help me when I answer the questions."

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Mona's (C+) answer is so similar also to the others but the words she uses in her answer were much simpler:

St.: - "ah an oral passage? ah - I listen to the teacher - ah I write important word ah it help answer questions."

Najwa (C-) seems to have the same answer in her mind but she does not want to make any effort to make it clearer:

St.: -- ah I hear this oral passage ah I write numbers to remember - ah I answer question.

Evidence in the data indicates that there were many similarities in students' answers and as mentioned before the reason might be that the question was more specific and about one activity they use in class. Students focus their attention, while listening, on some items in the text and write them down or summarize them; or put the similar items together in one group, to be able to use them as clues later in answering the questions.

Selective attention was one of the most frequently used strategies (62.5% see table 4 in appendix 5) in the listening comprehension tasks and referred to the act of focusing on language items in the text that assisted students in making their choices to answer questions. Listening comprehension has become the foundation of a number of theories of second language acquisition that focus on different levels of second language proficiency (Krashen et al.1984; Wipf 1984). When applied in instructional settings, these theories suggest that modified teacher input will enhance comprehension, and enhanced comprehension will in turn promote acquisition (Long 1985). The focus in these discussions is exclusively on adaptations of teacher input to enhance comprehension instead of on the ways in which students process the input. In fact, the learner's conscious processing is often de-emphasized during instruction, because language acquisition is believed to be an implicit process (Brown 1984). This exclusive focus on teacher behaviours fails to take into consideration deliberate learner strategies for comprehending language texts, for processing new information, and for learning and retaining concepts related to academic language and content.

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Listening comprehension entails active and conscious processes, in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirements (O'Malley & Chamot 1990). Findings of those studies, mentioned above, on listening comprehension skills and strategies, indicated that instructional approaches that rely exclusively upon teacher input are failing to draw upon what the students can contribute to the learning process. By failing to do so, these approaches reduce the chances of student success and exclude them from opportunities to gain independent control over the learning process (O'Malley & Chamot 1990).

In listening comprehension activities, it is very important that teachers help students direct attention to what is important. Therefore, teaching students what to attend to is critical in easing the process and in giving students confidence. Teachers might encourage directed attention by providing interesting activities and materials, reducing classroom distractions, reminding students to focus, and rewarding them when they do so.

Students were asked, during the interview, about what they do to develop their English outside the classroom. The question was presented in such a way:
Int.: "What do you do to develop English outside the classroom?"
Through the question, an attempt was made to figure out what kind of strategies and learning habits students used to help them learn English. Students' data contains evidence of a variety of practising strategies and imagery strategy.

Imagery is used by students to relate new language information to concepts in memory by means of meaningful visual imagery. Students use these mental images to facilitate their task performance. The image can be a mental representation of the letters of a word, a set of locations for remembering a sequence of words or expressions, or a picture of an object. The strategy can be used to remember abstract words with a visual symbol or a picture of a concrete object. Imagery was used as a daily learning strategy but it is most frequently

used outside the classroom when students tried to recall information by seeing in their minds what they had previously studied and link it with some experience they pass through, like watching a film on TV with some visions that reminded them of some expressions or new words that they studied lately.

As was mentioned earlier in question five in the interview, practising could be either practice memorizing model sentences and classical sayings, and that was dealt within question five, or it could be communicating naturalistically in English. Practising naturalistically is using the language for actual communication. Classrooms cannot provide adequate practice opportunities. Therefore, some students try to find additional chances to practice the language in natural settings as in participating in a conversation, reading an article in the newspaper, watching a film on TV, or speaking to a native speaker.

Studying under the instruction of English teachers employing traditional methods rather than communicative approaches and emphasizing the importance of accuracy and grammar over fluency and being educated within an educational system based on traditional methods, students generally have had little experience speaking English, not to mention interacting with native speakers of English, and are afraid to make mistakes in speaking English. As indicated by the interviews, many students have not had many opportunities to speak English outside the class. Some students have indicated that they felt shy speaking English and were afraid of making mistakes in using English for communication purposes. They expressed a keen desire to improve their speaking ability and indicated their envy of those fluent in speaking English and those not afraid of making errors and willing to take risks in communicating with others in English.

Other students reported that communication breakdown did happen once in a while during their conversing with native speakers. Language proficiency certainly is one factor; however, cultural influences may play some role here. From the Arabic perspective, one should observe and think carefully before responding, show modesty and reservation in expressing

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opinions, and keep silent and listen attentively if unsure about the correct answer and the topic being talked about. These communication habits are deeply rooted in Arabic culture, which lays emphasis on harmonious human relationships, the hierarchy existing in relationships, and harmony-maintaining and face-saving behaviours. However, Arabic communicative style and behaviours, such as hesitations and careful calculations and modesty in expressing one's opinions, may be interpreted as rude, slow, or insincere by native speakers of English, many of whom are not comfortable with silence and hesitations and are quick to express their opinions. Moreover, these harmony-maintaining and face-saving strategies may deter students from taking the initiative to answer and ask questions, from making alternative suggestions to the teacher, from expressing opinions in public, and from taking risks in learning.

Arabic students are educated and socialized to behave modestly and properly according to social practices and social norms. Basically, they are sensitive to harsh words and criticism and often feel shame when they are aware of their mistakes, for making errors indicates lack of intelligence and knowledge and may cause them to lose face. Keeping face is an Arabic obsession and part of Arabic culture. In this cultural context, risk-taking is discouraged and being cautious and prudent is encouraged. Socialized into this face-saving and shame culture, students in Saudi Arabia tend to be afraid of making mistakes, of speaking English in front of native speakers; they are unwilling to start an English conversation for fear that they may make mistakes or behave abnormally and incur laughter and ridicule and lose face. However, many of the successful students in this study sense the importance of spoken English and regret the lack of opportunities to practice speaking English. To improve their speaking skills, many of them, feeling that formal English classes had failed to provide them with much opportunity to practice speaking English, attended special language courses, and sought native language speakers to speak with. They made many efforts to create opportunities to use English for communicative, functional purposes, feeling that it was important for them to improve and sharpen their speaking skills so that they would be qualified for jobs in the future.

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When studying as high school students, proficient students were generally passive learners who studied mainly for the sake of passing examinations. Their becoming more independent thinkers and more aware of the importance of developing their English-speaking skills, took shape in relatively much later stages of school learning; often in their college level, when they are much less obsessed with gaining high scores in examination, more concerned with their future careers, and demonstrate preference for a learning environment and teaching method providing opportunities for students to use English for communicative and functional purposes. In addition, that they created opportunities for themselves to practice English "in natural, realistic situations" (Oxford, 1990:45) and spent extra effort and time in practising English; for instance, reading English for pleasure, listening to English songs and programmes on radio, watching English movies on TV, making conversation with native speakers; distinguishes them from those students who study only for the sake of examinations and from those who are good test takers but incompetent in speaking or writing English.

To overcome their fear of speaking English and to develop their English speaking skills, many successful students as indicated from the data, attended English courses instructed by native speakers of English in language schools or centres abroad. Some reported that they had classmates and friends to practice speaking English with. Some reported that they had the habit of talking to themselves in English.

Khalod (A+), who studied for many years in the states, has indicated that she used to speak English more than Arabic when she was abroad but things are different for her now because she lives in a totally different environment where everybody is using Arabic to communicate and for that reason she has to speak Arabic too:

St.: "nothing in particular - ah I used to speak English most of the time when I was in the states ah but now ah I have to speak Arabic sometimes because everybody here speaks Arabic ah but I use English when I talk to my close friends ah and I like to watch the English channel on TV - ah I also like to read a lot I read books newspapers magazines ah I find it useful ah whenever I read and come across new words I can visualize the spelling of these words in my mind later."

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Reem (A-) emphasizes the importance of practising when she speaks about her experience of having an English course in England. She thinks that practising English in such an environment is more important than studying English in the classroom:

St.: ah - it was really a good experience for me to practice English when I had a summer course last year in England ah it was a good opportunity for me to practice speaking English with other students - and also to use English all the time in shops in restaurants every where ah I think practising English is more important than studying it in classroom ah it makes a big difference.

Alia (B+) is fascinated with English movies on TV and she thinks that watching films, which have no translation, is very useful and it makes her learn new words and remember them later when she associates the word with the image or the picture in her mind:

St.:"ah one of the things I find really useful is watching TV ah I like to watch English films a lot ah sometimes when the movie is not translated to Arabic I try to concentrate ah and I can understand when I look at what they are doing ah this help me learn some new words and I can remember them later when I have the picture in my mind."

Nida (B-) prefers to practice the language with her friends or sister. She does not like to speak with foreigners because she thinks that she should make more effort so that she would not make any mistakes. Nida seems to envy those students who were "lucky" to have the opportunity to study abroad and speaks English very well.

St.: "ah I know it is good to speak English outside class but ah -it is more easy for me to speak English with my friends or sister than when I speak with foreigners ah because I feel that I must pay more attention to words and grammar so that they can understand what I say ah I ah but I know some students ah they are very lucky ah they can speak English very well with foreigners because they study abroad for many years."

Mona (C+) thinks about "good" things that might be useful for her to do outside the classroom to develop her English. Besides reading English magazines, she tries to practice English with her friends. She finds it difficult to speak to foreigners because she is "afraid to say something wrong". She also likes to imitate " the way English people speak":

St.: - I always try to do something good outside classroom to make my English better - ah I read English magazine ah and sometimes I try to speak English with my friends ah and also with foreigners but only one or two short sentences ah if it is more maybe I can't ah I stop talking because I am afraid to say something wrong ah - ah I like the way English people speak ah I mean their accent ah sometimes I talk to myself and try to imitate how they speak.

Najwa's (C-) answers, as usual, were very short and careless possibly because she knows that the interview will not add to her grades. Her answer was general and misleading when she says "I study English" but she does not mention the way she studied English. The researcher asked her again trying to elicit more information but her answer indicated that she did not want to continue:

St.: - outside classroom ah - I study English ah and I ask my sister to help if anything difficult --
Int.: Do you like to watch English films on TV for example?
St.: ah no only Arabic film ah maybe sometimes.

Data analysis show that students have different ways of practising English outside the classroom. For example, one student noted that she had not had much opportunity to speak English, that she was timid in speaking English, and that she admired those who had courage to speak out in English without fear of making mistakes. Other students indicated their concern with accuracy and fear of speaking in English with native speakers. Another student said that she tended to be more afraid of making mistakes and to pay more attention to correctness and grammar in interacting in English with native speakers of English than with Arabic-speaking people.

In general, data indicated that successful students had made efforts to overcome limitations of an educational system based on traditional approaches by creating opportunities for themselves to use English for communicative purposes and by making special efforts to develop their language skills and achieve their goals. Their being self-directed and independent in learning and their being willing to practice and take risks in learning separated them from those students who studied English mainly for the purpose of gaining

good scores on examinations but who were not willing to take risks and face the challenge of more demanding speaking tasks. Successful students' use of a wide range of learning strategies effectively, flexibly, and frequently distinguished them from those who still continued to use strategies that were useful to them in their early stages of learning. The less successful students were unable to adapt themselves to use more effective strategies to meet challenging learning tasks, and remained passive learners deeply constrained and affected by teaching methods they were exposed to from childhood and a learning environment and education system that does not encourage risk-taking and practising in English language environment.

In addition, proficient students tended to practice English language in authentic situations and for functional purposes: reading articles and books of their own choice for pleasure and for developing language skills; initiating a conversation in English; watching English movies and programs on TV; listening to tapes and English programs on the radio; and imitating the way native speakers of English speak English.

It is extremely important for students to regard English as a means of communication, as an international language and not as a subject that they should pass examinations in only. Saudi Arabia, now, provides a learning environment with many of resources that students can have access to such as broadcasting English programmes on the radio, publishing a variety of newspapers and magazines in English, transmitting a special English channel on TV with a variety of English films and programs, and providing language learning materials accompanied with tapes and videotapes in libraries.

Since Saudi Arabia is providing a good learning environment to learn English outside school, students should be encouraged to make the best use of the resources it provides to develop their English skills so that they will be able to use it for communicative purposes.

5.5 Strategies elicited by answering exercises:

Students were presented with some exercises during the interview which are similar to the ones they take in class. Through these exercises an attempt was made to figure out different strategies students use to help them answer these exercises. Questions 14 and 15 in the interview were mainly set to promote students to use deduction strategy and grammatical rules that they had studied recently in class. Question 14 includes some grammatically wrong sentences and students were asked to correct them. The Question was presented in such a way:

Int. Correct the sentence if it is wrong:

1- I went to the pharmacy for getting medicine.

2- You came late to class yesterday, do you?

3- The story was interested.

Question 15 was about filling the blanks with the right words:

Int.: Fill the blanks with the right words:

1- I went to the supermarket ___ some eggs.

A- for B- for buy C- to buying

2- This place is ___ cold for me to live in.

A- enough B- too C- too much D- so.

3- My hair is black ___ my sister's hair is brown

A- and B- also C- but D- too

Most students took a longer time to answer the first question since it needs more thinking of the correct form of the sentence while in the second question they had only to choose the right word from four options.

Deduction occurrence was a result of the students' conscious application of previously acquired knowledge about English language structure to assist them in providing grammatically correct answers. Deduction emerged when the students used their knowledge of the rules of the language to help them make decisions about language forms. The strategy was useful especially in answering exercises as the students consciously applied rules about English grammar in order to provide appropriate forms.

The students' knowledge about the formal properties of the English language often surfaces during performance. Attention is frequently directed to the rule-bound aspects of the language, very likely as a result of the students' context of learning; overall, their knowledge is acquired primarily through classroom instruction. Supporting evidence can be seen in the example that follows. It shows how knowledge about language structure comes into play during the learners' attempts to complete the exercise. The exercise elicited a great deal of deduction due to the nature of the task that lends itself to the use of formal rules. Evidence in the data indicates an overall tendency to apply grammatical rules deliberately.

Khalod and Reem, the two "A" students, display a more sophisticated knowledge about the formal properties of English. However, they have less data than others, perhaps, because they answered the exercises quickly with no difficulty or any comments. While other students' data was richer and with more explanation and comments that show how they think and react to solve language problems.

Khalod (A+) answered all the questions without any hesitation, perhaps, it was too easy for her. Her application to the rule of grammar was automatic as it took her a few seconds to figure the right answer. After reading the first three sentences, Khalod confirmed that they are wrong and give the right correction:

St.: " ah wrong - I went to the pharmacy for medicine"
" wrong - you came late to class yesterday, didn't you"
" - wrong ah the story was interesting"

The illustrations quoted below suggest that Khalod's use of deduction may be processed at a complex level that involves automatic awareness of sentence structure:

St.: "I went to the supermarket for some eggs"
" This place is too cold for me to live in"
"My hair is black but my sister's hair is brown"

Reem (A-) also found the two exercises easy, and answered all of them correctly but she spent a little longer time than Khalod to figure out the right answer, especially in the first

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three sentences:

St.: " - ah it's wrong ah I went to the pharmacy ah for medicine or to get medicine"

" - also wrong ah - you came late to class yesterday didn't you"

" - wrong ah the story is interesting not interested"

In the second question that requires filling the blanks, Reem chose the right word quickly without any hesitation. Her observation illustrates the conscious use of knowledge derived from previously learned grammar rules about the English language. There is no doubt the information she obtains by looking at the formal properties of the language provides her with a head start for the process she will engage in when she next looks at the relationship between the word and its surrounding context:

St: " I went to the supermarket for some eggs"

" this place is too cold for me to live in"

" My hair is black but my sister's hair is brown"

Alia (B+) uses a rule she had previously learned, to make sure she writes the correct answer. Her knowledge of grammar rules plays a crucial role in her search for solutions to correct the sentences. The following example is produced while Alia is trying to correct the sentences:

St.: " - yes it is wrong ah "for" should be followed by a noun "medicine" ah so "I went to the pharmacy for medicine"

" ah - wrong ah the tail question at the end should be the same tense of the sentence and should be negative ah "you came to class yesterday, didn't you"

" - wrong of course ah it should be interesting not interested ah the story was interesting"

Alia deliberately pays attention and gives explanations while she corrects the sentences, perhaps to confirm that she is applying the right rule. She indicates that the word "for", in the first sentence, should be followed by a noun and not a verb. Alia believes that the verb tense of the question, in the second sentence, has to agree with that in the sentence. The strategy in Alia's answers was applied as a result of her concern about the correctness of her answers:

St.: " ah I went to the supermarket for some eggs"

" this place is too cold for me to live in"

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" My hair is black but my sister's hair is brown."

Nida's (B-) data provide a number of examples that illustrate the use of deduction. She indicates some aspects about English language structure that assist her in making her choice and confirms it as syntactically appropriate. The evidence in the data indicates a very analytical approach in which the student examines the questions in detail in order to supply a cohesive answer:

St.:"-- ah it is wrong ah I went to the pharmacy to get medicine or for medicine".

" - wrong ah the question at the end should be also in the past ah you came to class yesterday, didn't you"

" - ah wrong the story was interesting not interested"

Nida gave two alternatives as correct answers for the first sentence. In the second sentence, she explains a grammatical rule indicating that the tale question should be the same tense as the sentence. Nida's knowledge about English grammar allows her to anticipate that the right word, in the third sentence, must be "interesting not interested". Nida, like Reem and Alia, chose the right words in the second question without any hesitation:

St.: "- I went to the supermarket for some eggs"

" - this place is too cold for me to live in"

" - my hair is black but my sister's hair is brown"

Mona's (C+) data indicated her application to previously learned rules of grammar as an aid in finding appropriate answers. The excerpt below was drawn from Mona's data and represents a typical illustration of the students' use of deduction strategy. The process happens while Mona is trying to correct the sentences:

St.: " -- wrong sentence ah I went to the pharmacy ah - maybe to get medicine ah - or to ah for medicine"

" - wrong sentence ah - the verb should be in the past also ah you came late to class yesterday, did you"

"- ah the noun story take interesting not interested"

Mona answers the first and third sentences correctly. While answering the second sentence, Mona looks at the question again and notices that it has "do" as an auxiliary and not "did"; as a result, she concludes that the verb in the question should be in the past and not in the present; however, the process is just partly successful because she changes "do" to "did" thus correcting the verb tense but ignoring the negative agreement associated with the tense

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in the questions. Mona answers the following questions correctly by choosing the right words:

St.: " - I went to the supermarket ah for some eggs"

" - This place is - too cold for me to live in"

" - My hair is black ah but my sister's hair is brown"

Najwa's (C-) application to the strategy was unexpected. Unlike other questions in the interview that shows she does not use strategies as much as other students do, this time she makes a real application to the strategy by answering some of the questions. Perhaps, she was too careless, as stated before, to answer questions about strategy use in general and she might find answering these type of direct questions, as exercises, at this time much easier because she gets used to memorize grammatical rules in class.

St.:" -- ah no ah I went to the pharmacy to buy medicine"

" -- ah you came to class yesterday, do you ah do not you"

" -- ah the story was interesting ah the verb come with "ing" after "was".

Najwa's correction for the first sentence was right but she added the verb "buy" and change the answer from "for medicine" to " to buy medicine" but she gave a correct sentence though it is different from other students'. Najwa's observation, for the second sentence, that the wrong word is "do you" is helpful since it narrows down the possible solutions allowing her to focus on these two words and changing to negative "do not you"; in spite of this, Najwa was unable to change the question to the past and find the right answer. Najwa's answer for the third sentence was right but she made a wrong comment that shows she found the right answer just by chance. Najwa's answers for the multiple choice questions were right except one:

St.: " I went to the supermarket - ah for some eggs"

" this place is - ah too much cold for me to live in"

" my hair is black - ah but my sister's hair is brown"

The data contains a great deal of evidence of the students' awareness of the formal properties of the language which may also be a reflection of the students' context of learning since they are exposed to the foreign language almost exclusively in the classroom. The

frequent use of the process is not surprising considering that grammar tasks lend themselves to the use of knowledge acquired through formal training. The students consciously applied rule-based knowledge to select the right forms required for the blanks. This tendency to use formal rules was consistent with the nature of these learners' instructional context, the classroom. In general, these students' previous language learning experience had been through formal instruction. Furthermore, the nature of the task evidently was another factor influencing strategy choice; grammar exercises lend themselves to this type of approach and promote the use of rule-based knowledge.

Some students adopted an analytical perspective while performing, often indicating how their choices were being channelled, shaped, or regulated by rule-bound knowledge. The strategy was a helpful learning device that narrowed down possible alternatives and assisted the students in the process. The students' analytical approach to the task was evidenced in their habit of looking at the formal properties of English during the performance of the exercise. For instance, the process typically occurred when the students anticipated the grammatical category of the word needed to complete the sentences thus narrowing viable alternatives and enabling them to be more focused.

The students' instructional environment is very likely to be responsible for the tendency to focus on form. Long (1987:136) notes that emphasis on form "is probably a key feature of SL instruction, because of the saliency it brings to targeted features in classroom input...". Most students' concerns with grammar and their placing priority on memorizing rules of grammar and using correct sentences at some sacrifice of expressing ideas and meanings indicate that socio-cultural educational factors such as socialization in a culture of learning emphasizing grammar and correctness and being educated in an educational system founded on a traditional method may play an important part in influencing their strategy use although factors of language proficiency and other background factors as motivation may also play some role here.

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5.6 Differences in students' linguistic abilities

Three questions presented to students in the interview aimed to find differences in students' linguistic abilities and their daily life style and activities that might have an effect on their English language proficiency.

Many differences were found as some students read lots of books and magazines and watched English movies and T.V. programmes, while others spent their leisure time in shopping, visiting friends and doing other activities that do not develop their English language. Some students used to spend their vacation abroad in English speaking countries which gave them more opportunity to practice the language. Some others do not go abroad or spend their vacation in other Arabic countries. Some students tried to practice the language with their friends outside school and others did not.

To give a better picture of the interview data it seems that it is important to look at some linguistic categories as well as the strategies, that students use. These categories can be classified as in table (2) that shows how many times each category was repeated in the answers of each student. The main reason for this linguistic analysis is to make comparison between students in their language as well as looking at strategies used and level of proficiency.

Three questions, in the interview, were used to elicit information from students about their daily life styles and to show the level of language each student uses in answering the questions:

Q.11- Int.: What did you do during your last vacation?

Q.12- Int.: When you are not doing any homework, what do you do in your leisure time?

Q.13- Int.: Can you describe this picture?

The first linguistic characteristic that was the most noticeable for all the students is using "ah" a filled pause marker between sentences and syllables (Crystal & Davy, 19..). The degree of using this category differs from one student to the other. What seems interesting

is that the girls who have higher scores use fewer filled pause markers than the students with lower scores.

The second and the third category "-", "--", represent a shorter and longer empty pause markers or what we can describe as the silent periods between the syllables. These two categories differ from one student to the other. It could be seen that the two most successful students spent less time in responding to questions and therefore showed fewer pause markers than other students.

The fourth category deals with hesitation or repeating the same word many times. There were very few words repeated by students. Some of them repeat the word "I" many times and some repeat other words. It can be seen there are very few differences between students in this regard.

The fifth category was using Arabic words through the interview. Some students switched to Arabic when they have difficulty in explaining a point in English. Code-switching happens when students borrow one or more words from their native language and use them in the middle of an English sentence (Faerch & Phillipson, 1984).

There were some incomplete sentences in the answers of the students and that was represented by the sixth category. Sometimes students are unable to complete their initial sentence pattern, break off and start in a different way "restructuring" (Faerch & Phillipson, 1984).

The different grammatical errors represent the seventh category in students' responses (Norrish, 1983). In this category, there was a big difference in the frequency and type of errors made by each student. It will be discussed later in detail with some examples.

Being native-like in accent was the eighth category that can be recognized. Only one student has an accent that sounds like a native speaker.

Some students used a very simple language in their conversation while others used advanced or complex language that was the ninth category noticed in students' responses, especially in Q.13. Students used different ranges of English and that can be seen in describing the same picture; this is characterized below as: (1) advanced, (2) semi advanced or (3) simple language.

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Table (16) Students' linguistic abilities

Category	A+	A-	B+	B-	C+	C-
1	10	13	21	23	22	17
2	1	3	3	3	4	7
3	10	10	12	8	10	15
4	2	1	1	4	1	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	1
6	1	2	1	1	1	1
7	-	-	2	2	5	6
8	yes	no	no	no	no	no
9	1	1	2	2	3	3

Looking at the categories previously mentioned, Khalod (A+) used fewer filled pause -markers (10) and long (1) and short empty pause markers (10) than other students did:

Int.: What did you do during your last vacation?

St.: - I spent the vacation with my parents in L.A. --

Int.: ok how did you spend your time there?

St.: ah we went swimming ah shopping - I enjoyed it.

Int.: when you are not doing any homework, what do you do in your leisure time?

St.: - ah - I like to read a lot ah I like to read anything that I find interesting - ah I also like - ah I watch American films and ah specially adventure ones.

Int.: Can you describe this picture?

St.: - ah it's three-dimensional type picture - it looks like ah mountain side view - it's sometime in spring cause the flowers are blooming and the sun is rising but - there ah there is still some snow on the mountain.

The first thing that was noticed from Khalod's answers is that she was trying to give very short concise answers. Khalod used to spend her vacation in the States, and that gave her more opportunity to practice English. As she lived in the states for many years, she has an

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American accent that distinguished her from the others. She also likes to read a lot and watch American films. She hesitated seldom and repeated very few words. She repeated the words "I" and "there" twice. No grammatical mistakes were noticed in her answers but she has one incomplete sentence: " ah I also like - ah I watch American films..".

Although she used short and concise answers, the language she used in her description was advanced as she used expressions like "three dimensional", "mountain side view".

Reem's (A-) language was much similar to Khalod's but the only difference was the native-like accent that Khalod has. Reem, compared with other students, used very few filled pause marker (13) and long (3) and short (10) empty pause markers:

Int.: What did you do during your last vacation?
St.: -- ah nothing interesting - ah I stayed at home - I mean ah we used to ah we travel abroad every summer ah but last one my father had to stay for his business -
Int.: When you are not doing any homework, what do you do in your leisure time?
St.: -- ah sometimes I read stories for Agatha Cristie - ah I like to watch T.V series like Dynasty -- ah sometimes I try to ah I like to bake delicious cakes.
Int.: Can you describe this picture?
St.: - ah it's ah it's a beautiful view of nature - ah mountains covered with ice - there is a beautiful lake and there is empty boat in it ah it's a nice view - I wish I were there.

Unlike Khalod, Reem tried to give more details and examples in her answers; eg. Agatha Cristie, Dynasty..etc. She used to spend her vacation abroad but she seems to be very disappointed that she stayed at home last vacation. She spent her time in doing useful things like reading English novels, watching English films..etc. She appreciates beautiful views of nature as she indicated "I wish I were there".

While she was speaking, no grammatical errors were noticed. Reem did not hesitate a lot but she made two incomplete sentences: "I try to ah I like to bake delicious cakes" and "I mean ah we used to ah we travel abroad every summer...".

Unlike Khalod and Reem, Alia (B+) used more filled pause markers (21) and long (3) and short (12) empty pause markers:

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Int.: what did you do during your last vacation?

St.: -- ah last vacation - ah we did not go abroad ah I mean to Europe as usual - ah after exams in summer I applied to the college ah and I patiently was waiting for the results -- ah and I was - ah some of my relatives came from Riyadh and I was so busy with them -

Int.:When you are not doing any homework, what do you do in your leisure time?

St.: - ah swimming - ah drawing - ah I like to watch T.V a lot - ah sometimes I go to visit friends ah I have lots of foreign friends I know them since I was in the private school of Faisalia --

Int.:Can you describe this picture?

St.: - ah greenish ah nice view - ah it contain mountains topped with ice - ah trees ah grass ah a lake in the middle ah a small boat in it - ah it's ah it's nice ah I like to draw it.

Alia did not hesitate a lot and she made one incomplete sentence "ah and I was ah some of my relatives....". Two grammatical mistakes were noticed by Alia. The first error Alia made might be affected by her Arabic language using the adverb after the subject: "I patiently was waiting for the results" and the second one was when she was describing the picture: "it contain mountains ..". Alia seems to practice English with her friends and that might make her language better.

Nida (B-) used many filled pause marker (23) and long (3) and short (8) empty pause markers in her speech:

Int.: what did you do during your last vacation?

St.: -- ah I ah I spent most of it here - ah and ah and we went to Bahrain for a week ah we stayed in my grandmother house - we went to shops - ah we went to cinema - ah we see ah we saw many Arabic and English films and sometimes ''laughing'' cartoons.

Int.:When you are not doing any homework, what do you do in your leisure time?

St.: -- ah I read many books ah books about history ah books that give ah information - ah I like watching T.V ah if I stop watching T.V I have lots of time -

Int.: Can you describe this picture?

St.: -- ah it's rectangular shape - ah there is ah it has lake ah boat in the lake ah mountain ah mountain covered with ice - ah I think it is winter but ah here some flowers! ah it maybe spring.

Nida made a few hesitations as she repeated the following words: I, and, books, mountain. She has made one incomplete sentence: "there is ah it has..". She made two grammatical errors. One of them she corrected it immediately: " we see ah we saw..", " if I stop

watching T.V I have lots of time". Nida made a vocabulary mistake as she used the word " books that give information" not in the right place as she meant probably "general knowledge". The two words have the same meaning in Arabic.

Mona (C+) used more filled pause markers (22) and long (4) and short empty pause markers (10):

Int.: what did you do during your last vacation?
St.: -- ah last summer ah I waited the result to accept me in the college -- ah we travelled to Riyadh ah we stay there only one week - ah we go ah we visited our relatives there ah - ah and we had nice time Int.: When you are not doing any homework, what do you do in your leisure time?
St.: -- ah I ah sometimes I help my mother - ah I work at home ah and after I finish I have rest - ah sometimes I go out with my friends - ah I also like watching T.V -
Int.: Can you describe this picture?
St.: -- ah this picture ah it has many trees - ah and river ah large river ah there is boat in the river ah - there is also mountains - ah it is beautiful - ah it is maybe in Europe.

Mona did not hesitate a lot, or give many incomplete sentences but she had many grammatical errors. She repeated the words "I" twice. She made one incomplete sentence "we go ah we visited". she made many grammatical mistakes; "I waited the result to accept me", "we travelled to Riyadh ah we stay there...", "this picture ah it has many trees ...", "there is also mountains..". In Mona's answer there was no indication for any activity in her daily life that might help her develop her English language.

Najwa (C-) used so many filled pause markers (17) and long (7) and short empty pause markers (15):

Int.:What did you do during your last vacation?
St.: -- ah --
Int.: any vacation that you have recently?
St.: -- ah - when I ah before coming to college in summer time ah I have holiday -- ah I am tired after final exam - ah I need rest ah I go with my family to the beach many times -
Int.: when you are not doing any homework, what do you do in your leisure time ?
St.: - ah I watch film --
Int. Arabic or English?

St.: ah - Arabic - ah - sometimes - ah ah "tareekhi" --

Int.: Can you describe this picture?

St.: -- ah this picture - ah - is a square - ah - there is river inside - ah - and mountain ah and trees - ah nice picture

Najwa did not have any hesitation. The reason for that might be that she used lots of filled and empty pause markers that give her more time to think of what she wants to say. She used one Arabic word "tareekhi" that means "historical" when she was describing the kind of film she likes to watch. She used one incomplete sentence; "when I ah before coming..". Her answers are full of grammatical mistakes; " before coming to college in summer time ah I have holiday..", " I am tired after final exam", "I need rest", "I go with my family to the beach many times", "this picture is a square".

The first thing noticed about Najwa's answer this time is that she has more to say in describing things not related to study habits as other questions in the interview require. The only reason for that might be that she is not interested in anything related to what she has in class.

Data analysis indicates that some linguistic categories correlate with level of proficiency. One of these categories was making grammatical errors, so the higher the proficiency was, the fewer grammatical errors were made, and the fewer filled pause marker were used. While other categories; like hesitation, and making incomplete sentences, show no correlation, perhaps the reason for that was that students with low achievement used short answers and fewer sentences so the total number of hesitation and incomplete sentences will be low as a consequence. The other thing noted in data analysis was that students who use more English outside class; practising their English abroad or watching English programmes, are the students who are high in achievement. These results are similar to the statistical data analysis done on the questionnaire in the last chapter.

5.7. Students' view on English language teaching:

Extra information has appeared from the data that points to some issues that have not been addressed up to now. These findings came out of the recorded open interview and the qualitative data. It was collected to provide further insight into and illustrations of the different problems students face in learning English, their needs, how they think, and their opinions which reflect their awareness and learning context. To stimulate their interest, students' attention was drawn to the fact that some changes might be introduced to English language materials so as to suit students' interests and needs, and one way of assessing the success of these attempts was to seek their cooperation. Students responded with great zest feeling that they were being treated as grown ups whose participation is greatly appreciated and whose views, comments and suggestions were sought and taken into account.

The information collected was analysed by counting frequencies of students' responses and by categorizing them. The interpretation of the findings was partly made possible by the researcher's familiarity with students' learning environment as a consequence of being a lecturer in the same department.

A summary of students' views, complaints and observations regarding English teaching will be presented. These views will be then qualitatively analysed and discussed in order to represent the general views of the students.

1- 29% of the respondents believe that interruption for correction purposes was discouraging for them, and causing them embarrassment and frustration.

2- 38% think that teachers tend to involve bright students most of the time in class activities, do not give equal opportunities to all students, suggesting dividing the class in two according to proficiency level.

3- 58% suggest that English language should be introduced in elementary schools.

4- 21% think that text books are difficult and 23% say that they are boring.

5- 16% preferred the teacher to use Arabic in explaining difficult topics or new vocabulary. 23% needed this occasionally.

6- 22% complain that the teacher gives an unreasonable amount of homework.

7- 78% think that they need language activities to develop their speaking abilities in real life situations.

8- 11% express their inability to use what had been learnt outside classes because they lack good opportunities to practice.

9- 19% believe that exams are boring because they force students to memorise language content often even without understanding.

10- 28% believed that their standard in English would have been improved if English language periods been increased.

11- 23% stated that they approach their teachers only when they have difficulties. 77% would rather keep a distance between themselves and their teachers.

These students' opinions reflect their experiences in their own particular situations and contexts. Such experiences can be a tool for increased self-awareness on the part of the learner and greater understanding of each learner by the teacher. It also means that the learner should be given the freedom and encouragement to initiate talk, not just react and respond to it. "Students' beliefs about their own language learning are crucial because these beliefs directly affect students' motivation to learn a new language and their subsequent use of language learning strategies" (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993:11).

The following are some quotations from students concerning their assumptions about learning and teaching and their expectations of English teachers. All these quotations indicated successful students' beliefs in the functional uses of the English language and in communication and interaction as a major means of achieving proficiency in speaking.

Khalod (A+) suggested dividing the class according to students' proficiency so that "the poor students can cope" and the good students do not feel bored:

Int.: Would you like to give some suggestion about teaching, syllabus or learning English in general?

St.: - ah - as you know that there are some students who are so weak - ah and the teacher tries to repeat the material or gives simple assignment so that the poor student can cope ah also the exams become very

boring ah --

Int.: so what do you suggest for that?

St.: ah I think ah it might be better if they can divide the class and give different material and different exams ah it'll be more interesting

Int.: anything else to add?

St.: ah I think that's all.

Reem (A-) criticizes the way teachers use in teaching English and suggested providing more opportunities to practice English that help the students to communicate in real life situations:

Int.: Would you like to give some suggestion about teaching, syllabus or learning English in general?

St.: - ah yes ah I think ah doing grammar and vocabulary exercises might be useful in passing examinations ah but it isn't useful to develop students' abilities to communicate in English.

Int.: so do you suggest anything?

St.: ah I suggest that we should have some classes for conversation to practice English - ah a lot of girls are good in written English but they can't speak well ah so I mean what's the use of the language if we don't use it.

Alia (B+) indicated that teachers should "make English language very interesting for students". She suggested doing language activities in classroom that might be helpful for them to communicate outside class:

Int.: Would you like to give some suggestion about teaching, syllabus or learning English in general?

St.: - ah ah I think teachers should make English language very interesting for students --

Int.: well - what do you suggest for that?

St.: - ah we need English to communicate outside classroom - ah it can be like a game ah for example ah if we're in hospital how we communicate ah if we're in a shop how we communicate ah this way it will be more useful for us than memorizing rules of grammar and forgetting what we have memorized immediately after exams.

Nida (B-) suggested teaching English in public schools in first level, as in private schools. She thinks that it is unfair when teachers, in the college, compare students who came from private schools and studied English from the first grade, to other students who came from public schools and studied English only in the high school:

Int.: Would you like to give some suggestion about teaching, syllabus or learning English in general?

St.: - ah yes -- ah if they want to develop English teaching in Saudi Arabia ah they should consider teaching early in primary schools ah so it will not become a problem to students when they come to college - it's a real problem ah it's not fair that teachers compare students who come from private schools with students who come from public schools --

Int.: anything to add?

St.: - ah teachers don't improve the conversation ah they only concentrate on teaching many new words - ah the book in context teaches us to read faster but just to learn new words not to speak better - ah I think what is more important is to teach us how to use the language outside classroom to help us in our life in future.

Mona (C-) seems to have very bad experience with teachers whenever they interrupt her and correct her mistakes in front of the class. She compared the system and teaching in college with high school and indicated that there were big differences between the two which confuse the students:

Int.: Would you like to give some suggestion about teaching, syllabus or learning English in general?

St.: -- ah I think teachers should encourage girls and not make them shy from their mistakes - ah when teacher correct your mistakes in front of the class ah you feel very bad ah it is very annoying ah very bad experience - ah they should not do that ah - ah it is not the right way to teach students --

Int.: what else do you suggest?

St.: ah yes - ah when we come to college everything is difficult ah because in high school things is different ah we had very easy programme ah they should develop it make better ah so that students don't become confused when they come to college - ah I was very good in high school and I had high grades but now very upset about this ah because you know ah many students come from private schools and teachers ah you know teachers find them better than students coming from public schools --

Int.: so what do suggest for that?

St.: ah maybe better if they divide class to two ah one for good and one for weak ah because weak students need more practice and more time and when the teacher explain something ah some girls understand and some girls are shy to say they don't ah sometimes I feel shy when I want to say anything or ask infront of good girls --

Najwa (C-) had some complaints about the difficult books and exams and suggested that teachers should use Arabic language sometimes in class to help students understand difficult

material. She shared other students' opinion regarding teaching English at primary level in public schools:

Int.: Would you like to give some suggestions about teaching, syllabus or learning English in general?

St.: - ah - ah English is difficult - ah I mean ah teacher ah teacher better use Arabic to tell meaning for difficult word --

Int.: what else would you like to say?

St.: - ah I - ah English Lesson difficult ah books also difficult ah examination very difficult also

Int.: so what do you suggest?

St.: ah - ah maybe they can change books --

Int.: anything else?

St.: - ah yes ah I ah we better start ah study English in first level ah better when we are small ah we remember more --

5.8 Comments on students' interview:

The researcher constructed different sets of interview questions. The first set focused mainly on students' language experiences and their background knowledge and interest in learning English. The second set was devoted to students' learning strategies, techniques and learning habits. The third set aimed to measure students' linguistic abilities while they describe their life style and language learning opportunities they are exposed to outside class. The fourth set allowed students to give their opinions and complains about the learning situation and English education in Saudi Arabia, and focused on their beliefs about learning English, roles of students and of teachers, and their expectations of English teachers.

In many respects and to a large extent, the results of the qualitative interviews supported and supplemented statistical results in the last chapter. The results of the interviews clearly indicated relationships between individual differences and learning strategies. Therefore, individual differences, such as motivation and English proficiency, should also be taken into consideration in discussing factors affecting learner strategies.

Students' data contains evidence of the frequent use of many strategies such as self-management, practising, and summarizing. It was noticed that some strategies are so

connected to each other and that is what has been seen from the answers of many students. As quantitative analysis shows percentages of strategy use and correlation with proficiency and background factors, qualitative analysis, on the other hand, shows how each strategy was used and the different approaches in strategy use between students.

Data analysis also indicates that some linguistic characteristics correlate with level of proficiency. One of these characteristics was making grammatical errors, so the higher the proficiency was, the fewer grammatical errors were made during the interview, and the fewer filled pause marker were used. While other categories, like hesitation, and making incomplete sentences, show no significant correlation, perhaps the reason for that was that students with low achievement used short answers and fewer sentences so the total number of hesitation and incomplete sentences was low as a consequence. The other thing in data analysis noticed was the students who use more English outside class; practising their English abroad or watching English programmes, are the students who are high in achievement. These results are similar to the statistical data analysis done on questionnaire in the last chapter.

The interviews indicated the predominant use of a traditional method in English teaching in Saudi Arabia. Methods focusing on translating texts and teaching grammar are very much in agreement with an educational system valuing a traditional model of teaching in which the teacher is a performer, lecturer, and knowledge transmitter. Other important factors leading to the dominance of the traditional method in English teaching and the widespread use of it in English classes are joint examinations with their emphasis on objective questions and a social system that emphasizes the importance of entering quality colleges and gaining higher education degrees and that evaluates a person's success based on whether he has higher education degrees, whether he has graduated from prestigious schools or universities, and whether he has gained high scores on examinations. This social system with its emphasis on certain criteria for success may have had its roots in the Arabic traditions.

Many students in this study indicated that under this education system they studied English mainly for the sake of examinations. Teachers, also, especially at secondary school level, tend to teach for examinations. The format of English tests commonly used in high schools corresponds to that of joint examinations; objective questions testing mainly students' knowledge of vocabulary, phrases, syntax, usage, and grammar. It does not test students' writing, speaking, and listening abilities directly. It does not test students' abilities to communicate. This kind of examination encourages students to memorize vocabulary words, sentence patterns and grammatical rules. It does not encourage students to develop communicative skills. Examinations in high schools also contain objective questions and focus on lessons in textbooks published or authorized by the Ministry of Education. They encourage students to memorize details and texts and to do grammar exercises to get high scores on examinations.

An emphasis on accuracy is also reflected in English teaching, which emphasizes grammar. English teachers emphasize the importance of grammar and spend much time providing tips for choosing correct answers without the need to understand the meaning of a question. They teach grammatical points and sentence patterns like formulas, encourage students to memorize beautiful sentences and grammatical rules, and instruct students how to find the right answer, even though they have no idea what the main point is. Instead of providing students with a solid foundation in English and developing their language skills for communicative purposes, they teach for the purpose of answering questions for examinations and focus on teaching students techniques for answering those questions. When a teacher emphasizes accuracy over fluency and evaluates students' work mainly based on whether they have composed correct sentences rather than on whether they have come up with an essay rich in content, students tend to pay great attention to sentence structure, grammar, and word usage. When they have to choose between expressing their ideas and composing correct sentences, they tend to sacrifice meaning to some degree to construct sentences without grammatical mistakes, although some tended to try their best to provide for both meaning and grammar.

The results of the interviews suggested that students in this study tended to employ many strategies in different frequencies. An examination of the strategies shows that these students may have been influenced to a large extent by a learning environment that do not encourage interaction in class, and which emphasize: repetition, memorization, accuracy, grammar and translation. Students are encouraged or required to listen attentively to lectures or lessons and to make notes in their notebook. They are likely to depend on looking up words in a dictionary to develop their vocabulary and to make up for inadequacies in comprehending texts rather than using guessing from contexts effectively. Data analysis indicated that some students use many other strategies included reading an English text and paying attention to certain points (selective attention), checking the meanings of words in a dictionary often (resourcing), writing down definitions of words or in the margins or taking notes, memorizing vocabulary words and sentences, using word-for-word translation when reading an article..etc. Students also tended to employ many other strategies including skimming an article to gain main ideas, using contextual clues to construct meaning, and using prediction and association to anticipate or guess an unknown word.

Lots of students, regardless of their level of proficiency, rely on substitution when facing any problem in communication. It proved to be a practical technique whenever the students were unable to remember or did not know the specific word needed to complete the sentence. In these cases, the word was often replaced by a one the student could come up with or using synonyms, paraphrases or gestures.

It seems that resourcing strategy was the last resort for most of the students especially the (A) and (B). They tried first to infer the meaning from contextual clues (inferencing) or ask someone about it (clarification) but if none of these work out, they would use the dictionary (resourcing).

After all, for these students, the native language is their only previously acquired linguistic

knowledge and therefore represents their source for the generation of hypotheses. However, it is desirable that strategies (like translation, resourcing) in the initial stages of learning are gradually replaced by more mature strategies (like inferencing and substitution) that promote active manipulation of and interaction with the target language (Brown et al.1983). Proficient students, in this study, differ from others in that they use suitable strategies more frequently, more flexibly, and more effectively. Their attempts to gain main ideas of an article by skimming it first and their growing willingness to guess the meaning of a word by its context before checking it in a dictionary indicated their becoming more competent, confident, and independent learners. In comparison with less proficient students, they tended to use strategies more flexibly. For example, proficient students tended to use their knowledge to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word, whereas less proficient students do not use this strategy so often and prefer looking it up in a dictionary.

Data indicated that proficient students had made efforts to overcome limitations of an educational system based on a traditional method by creating opportunities for themselves to use English for communicative purposes and making special efforts to develop their language skills. Their being more self-directed and independent in learning and their being willing to experiment and take risks in learning, separated them from those students who studied English mainly for the purpose of gaining good scores on examinations and contrasted them with a majority of students who were passive, weak in English speaking skills, and afraid of English. Their using a wide range of learning strategies effectively, flexibly, and frequently distinguished them from those who still continued to use strategies that were useful to them in their early stages of learning without being able to adapt themselves to use more effective strategies to meet challenging learning tasks, and who remained passive learners deeply constrained and affected by teaching methods they were exposed to from childhood and a learning environment and education system that does not encourage using English for communication.

Virtually all proficient students in this study were highly motivated to develop their English

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skills, had positive attitudes towards learning English, and generally spent large amounts of time and effort developing their English ability. They had been listening to English programs on the radio; watching English movies; and reading English newspapers and magazines. Some of them had the opportunity to visit English-speaking countries either on vacation or to take language courses.

Students' frequent use of certain strategies suggested that they were very much influenced by the social educational contexts they were embedded in and the traditional teaching method they had been exposed to since the earliest stage of their learning. Educated in the Arabic cultural context and in an education system based on a traditional model of learning and teaching, many successful students clearly expressed their negative attitudes towards the traditional method they were exposed to in their school years, either due to their early exposure to communicative approaches in language schools abroad or their attending language courses to develop their English communicative skills in later stages of learning. Many proficient students in this study stated that what students have studied in formal English classes is often irrelevant to real-life situations. They felt that what they had learned in these courses could seldom be applied to realistic, natural situations. Feeling that formal English education fails to develop students' communication skills, many of them attended language courses abroad to develop their English oral skills, where they had opportunities to interact in English with native speakers of English.

Interaction and communication among students and between students and the teacher seldom take place in English classes. Students generally have little chance to use the English language for communicative purposes. Although more and more English teachers teaching at the college level are experimenting with eclectic or communicative-oriented approaches, many teachers of English in the university still use lecturing as their major teaching method. As a result, generally, little interaction takes place in the English classroom and silence on the part of the students is a very common phenomenon.

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Most students in this study would like to have many opportunities to interact and communicate in English in their college-level courses; they regard the development of speaking skills as important. They prefer an approach emphasizing interaction and communication in English and would like teachers to teach practical, every day English, something they can use in real life situations. On the other hand, other students indicated some of the less positive sides of using different approaches in a class consisting of students with various levels of English and used to traditional approaches. They suggested dividing the class according to students level in English and having different materials and exams.

In general, most students in this study supported, in one way or another, using approaches that would improve their communicative skills in college-level English courses and would like to have many opportunities to use English outside class for communicative purposes. One major reason that they were in favour of a communicative-oriented approach rather than traditional method is that after having been taught by the traditional method for six or twelve years, they were eager to develop their communicative skills; they were eager to use English for more functional purposes. They were thinking of their careers rather than answering questions for examinations. They felt that they needed to be able to speak English satisfactorily to function well in their future careers. Another important factor may have been that many successful students interviewed in this study had gone to language schools abroad to develop their language skills and had some understanding of what an approach emphasizing communication and interaction is like and its usefulness and effectiveness in developing their skills. This awareness may have led these successful students to compare the traditional method with a more communicatively-oriented approach and to realize the weaknesses of the former and the strengths of the latter in developing students' English communicative ability. Many students indicated that since they had spent a lot of time studying grammar rules and vocabulary words and reading articles all these years, they would like to have opportunities, in university, to develop their speaking ability, a skill that they were weak in due to lack of opportunities for interaction and communication in English in class; a weakness often associated with the traditional method.

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Any changes in methods of teaching, syllabus, exams, should be based at least on some of the students' needs and desires, taking into consideration the characteristics of the Saudi learners within a culture which involves many restrictions. The relationship between students' needs, beliefs about language, in a given context, and language learning\teaching condition, raises the interesting question whether a more flexible style of CLT, encouraging strategies use, should be matched to students' preexisting assumptions about language learning, or whether the new method should be more ambitious in seeking to broaden students' understanding of the learning process. This is what will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

5.9 Summary:

The second objective of this study, in (1.1), is to provide a richer picture of Saudi students by drawing a profile of students from different language proficiency levels and background variables, and analyse their learning strategies. For this purpose, six students from different proficiency levels were chosen to analyse their recorded interview. The qualitative analysis of the interview data, in this chapter, provided a richer picture against the quantitative analysis from the questionnaire responses in the last chapter.

The researcher constructed different sets of interview questions. The first set focused mainly on students' language experiences and their background knowledge and interest in learning English. The second set was devoted to students' learning strategies, techniques and learning habits. The third set aimed to measure students' linguistic abilities while they describe their life style and language learning opportunities they are exposed to outside class. The fourth set allowed students to give their opinions and complaints about the learning situation and English education in Saudi Arabia, and focused on their beliefs about learning English, roles of students and of teachers, and their expectations of English teachers. Students' interviews reveal the need for a change in the current system. The next chapter will discuss the findings of the study in relation to the objectives set earlier.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Implications

6.0. Introduction:

In this chapter, we move away from the quantitative and qualitative analysis to discuss the relation between the findings and the objectives set earlier in (1.1). In previous chapters, an attempt was made to answer the question posed earlier, "Is there a correlation between the learner's use of learning strategies and his learning outcomes? And to what extent do learners' background factors complicate this relationship?". In other words, how far are the learner variables and strategies outlined in this study important in the classroom and how is this reflected on students' achievement?. The answers of these questions, discussed earlier, have created the need for a change in the current ELT condition in Saudi Arabia, as will be seen in the following sections of this chapter.

Although the study of learning strategies shows great promise, it is still considered in its infancy and much more empirical investigation needs to be done before we can be certain how it is influential on language learning. Research done in this area is only an attempt to formalize the strategies which good language learners were using and to isolate and identify those strategies so that it might be possible to assist the less able learners by passing to them some of these techniques and strategies (O'Malley 1990; Oxford 1990). Some of these studies have focused on metacognitive strategies (Wenden 1986, 1987; Oxford 1990); some on cognitive strategies (Rubin 1981, Vann & Abraham 1990); some on the relation between the choice of cognitive strategies and language attainment(Politzer & McGroarty 1985; Huang & Van-Naerssen 1987); and some on strategy training (Wenden & Rubin 1987; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990). Although these studies have provided many insights on language learning, no consistent picture has emerged. For example Huang and Van-Naerssen (1987) and Wenden (1986) claimed that less successful learners used fewer strategies, less frequently, compared with more successful learners, while Vann and

Abraham (1990) found in their study that unsuccessful learners were also active strategy users but used the strategy less effectively. Politzer found that the link between the choice of strategies and attainment was rather weak, while Huang and Van-Naerssen (1987) reported that such a relation was strong.

One reason for the conflicting findings, in these studies, is that much of the research concerning language learning examines the relations between particular variables in isolation from other factors. In practice, the variables affecting language learning outcomes function together as a system, and such studies necessarily fail to demonstrate the nature and importance of these systemic interrelationships. The purpose of this study, however, was to attempt to investigate the interrelationships of as many learners' variables and strategies as possible and their relationship to achievement. It was also felt that this study in an Arabic context might throw new light on assumptions about language learning derived from research conducted in the west. The principal purpose of this study was to provide a detailed analysis of the learning strategies used by Saudi Arabian learners at tertiary levels as they learn English as a foreign language. The question was, if effective learning results from selecting certain strategies, which strategies guide the Arabic learners to reach their learning? What are their individual variables and how do they affect the use of strategies and proficiency? . The answers to these questions, which were discussed in chapter four and five, might lead us, as will be discussed later in this chapter, to understand and to try to improve our teaching at the tertiary level classroom where most of us, as teachers, deal with teaching in the traditional teacher-centred manner, ignoring the learner's communicative role and involvement with the process, which is essentially his own.

The research questions of this study, discussed in chapter four, were to see how the use of learning strategies by learners was related to their level of proficiency, to compare the use of the learning strategies among Arabic learners of English and the learners of English as a second language in other studies conducted in U.S. and Europe. Comparison was made through the discussions of different factors that influence the use of learning strategies in

many prior studies with this one. In general, the results of this study agreed with the conclusions of some studies notably those of Oxford, 1990; O'Malley, 1990; Politzer, 1985; Rubin, 1987 and Bialystok, 1981, that emphasize the relation between language proficiency and use of learning strategies. Even so, there were areas of difference that seemed to indicate that the findings of this study, based on specific individual variables of Arabic learners affected by their own background factors, do not always coincide with the results of other studies based on different background factors. These areas of difference were reflected in the different patterns, frequency and kinds of learning strategies used by students due to their different background factors. One general finding in this study is that proficiency correlates with the use of learning strategies but in different degrees, due to the different patterns, frequency and kinds of learning strategies used by students according to their own individual variables. However, a very few results were difficult to explain; that is because there might be some factors other than the ones mentioned here which relate to better performance but which the questionnaire failed to explore. An alternative explanation for better performance is that a learner's strategy selectivity, his careful choice of strategy use, and not the number of strategies that he uses, is an indicator of effective learning. Another explanation may be that any well designed communicative learning activity, not necessarily strategy-oriented activity, will help the learner to learn well, provided that it is able to engage his focused attention and active participation (see 2.4.2). In order to discuss what was mentioned above, a research question was formulated "What type of teaching can be developed that takes into consideration the Saudi Arabian context?". The present study will make an attempt to answer this question in the following sections.

This chapter does not attempt to draw conclusions or to finalize the research which has been undertaken "it is axiomatic that any resulting description should be nonjudgemental in character" (Norrish, 1996:1). The chapter attempts, instead, only to draw attention to some of the possible implications of the findings. It also suggests certain areas of inquiry which might shed light on the nature of the learning process in Saudi Arabia.

6.1 The need for a change:

Taking into consideration:

1-the results of the present study that show the interrelationships of many learners' background variables and strategies to achievement, and this is affected by,

2- the current provision of English teaching, mentioned earlier in chapter one, and that is reflected on,

3-students' needs from interviews in chapter five and,

4- all the social and economic changes in Saudi Arabia, mentioned in chapter one; all these have created the need for a change in the teaching\learning situation in Saudi Arabia.

The above points indicate that English deficiencies of learners in Saudi Arabia result from many factors, and some, as will be seen, would be an obstacle should a more flexible communicative style of ELT, encouraging strategies use, be introduced.

Many educators in the universities and in the field of EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia are not satisfied with students' levels in English language after six years of study in the secondary school. Universities are confronted with the problem when students come for enrolment. These universities blame the ministry of education for not getting the students to the required level in English for university entry. The ministry in turn, blames the colleges of education and the pre-service programmes for not preparing the student teachers adequately for teaching in the schools. Students and parents blame teachers who they feel are not sufficiently qualified to teach them. Teachers in Saudi Arabia blame both the universities, which in their view did not prepare them for teaching the English language properly and the ministry for not giving them training opportunities after they graduate and start in the profession.

Several factors, some of which were mentioned in chapter one, may contribute to the inadequacy of English teaching in Saudi Arabia. Factors such as over-crowded classrooms, over-loaded schedules for teachers, poor textbooks and a shortage of instructional materials and supplies. Traditional methods are used in class and the assessment system does not

measure oral proficiency; a written test is given instead. Furthermore, the opportunity to practice the communicative spoken language is limited.

These deficiencies are rooted in the main factors of the learning process, namely, teachers, materials, teaching methods, condition of classrooms, and testing. Therefore, it is important to investigate the different elements involved in each factor and if any would be an obstacle should a more flexible communicative style of ELT, encouraging strategies use, be introduced.

6.2 Difficulties in considering a new ELT approach that encourages learning strategies use, in Saudi Arabia:

As stated earlier, in (1.1), the fourth objective of this study was to identify the reason behind many problems that teachers and students might encounter in applying a new ELT approach that encourages learning strategies use in Saudi Arabia and to suggest ways to solve these problems. In meeting the first objective with the fourth objective of the study, a gap was revealed between the present provision of English teaching and the needs and wants of the teachers and learners in Saudi Arabia. Given the above and the findings mentioned earlier that there are obvious signs of failure to correlate what is happening in everyday life in Saudi Arabia of informal, communicative English, and what is happening in the classroom with its formal English, a gap appears to emphasize the need for considering a more flexible, communicative style of ELT that encourage the use of strategies as was mentioned earlier (2.4.2) .

Transferring such a new method or syllabus as a whole designed for a particular group of foreign learners in a western context to the Saudi context would, however, face some constraints regarding attitudes of teachers, learners and conditions of the classroom, as Norrish (1996:1) puts it: "..there is a parallel here between this kind of event in everyday life and what happens when teachers suddenly find themselves in different situations, either in different schools or countries new to them, or brought about by changes in educational

policy", and as Rogers (1983:120) puts it in other words: "Teaching and imparting of knowledge make sense in an unchanging environment..But if there is one truth about modern man [sic] it is that he lives in an environment that is continually changing..The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn..how to adapt and change..who has learned that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security". These constraints that face a new ELT method would be an obstacle that discourages the use of strategies. They could be summarized as follows:

1- Many Arabic teachers want teacher training to be language improvement and consider methods to be secondary. Views on what constitutes effective teaching also influenced the impact of methodology training. Many Saudi Arabians believed that if the language teachers know more English, they will teach better. For training, then, foreign teacher trainers may be focused on the technically oriented "how" or methods, whereas the Saudi Arabians are focused on "what" or knowledge of the language. The Arabic teachers just want to do the same job better through their own language improvement, without any particular change in their methodology. It is no surprise, then, that because the expectations of some foreign teacher trainers differ from the felt needs and expectations for language improvement of the Arabic teachers, the result will be rejection of the new method.

2- Even though there is enthusiasm for improvement in English language teaching in Saudi Arabia, acceptance of modern ideas and quick adoption of new materials and methodology, progress in all these aspects has been slow, particularly the development of a consensus as to what should be the ideal methodology, or at least the basic principles guiding the solutions of problems. It is important to look at the conflicts that might arise when educators attempt to implement a more flexible, communicative style of ELT, encouraging strategies use, into the traditional Arabic way of language teaching. The essential characteristics of the Arabic view of language learning are repetition, memorization, habit formation, and the quantitative accumulation of knowledge. These beliefs and strategies reflect the experiences of older Arabic educators who learned and taught classical Arabic. In essence, memorization, repetition, and habit formation are conditions for the mastery of

form, which eventually, it was thought, led to the understanding and creative use of the language. When people studied the Arabic classics, they were not expected to understand what they memorized, but later, when they were older, they understood what they memorized. Language is viewed as knowledge (an end) and learning is mastery or acquisition of this knowledge, then errors are viewed as inadequate memorization, inadequate study, or bad habits. On the other hand, any communicative style of ELT, encouraging strategies use, views learning as a skill development rather than a knowledge receiving process. It is believed that students learn through using and experimenting with English, which is viewed as a means for communication. Errors are tolerated because they are viewed as indicators of development. The view that grammatical mistakes do not matter as long as the students can get their message across may encourage some students to make more grammatical errors. If the new ELT method is implemented in a traditional classroom, the Arabic teachers and students must make a conceptual shift as to what English means and also how to study and learn it. It will not be easy, then, to convince all teachers to accept the new ELT method and learning strategies principles and throw away their traditional techniques. For them, it would be a problem, since they will have had limited experience of the use of authentic English in an appropriate cultural and social context, and a challenge because they will feel less at ease than with the traditional method.

3- In Saudi Arabia, the primary role of the teacher, whose authority comes from holding all the knowledge, is to transmit that knowledge to the students. Influenced by the Arabic tradition, the language teacher has the sole authority in the classroom and therefore should not be questioned, interrupted or challenged. On the other hand, with the new method, the teacher takes on a helper rather than a knower role. Because the focus is on the students' development, the teacher's job is to provide the conditions for this process, set it going, observe it, try to understand it, give guidance, analyse and evaluate it. This helper role implies a different set of skills rather than a knower role. Moreover, heavy demands are placed on teachers in terms of lesson preparation, selecting materials, and the assessment of learners progress.

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4- The new ELT encourages students to use strategies and assumes the student is willing to be an active participant, whereas the traditional approach allows for seemingly passive receiver behaviour. With the new method, much more responsibility is given to the student for his own learning. Arabic institutions and teachers, however, tend to assume almost full responsibility for the learning that occurs. Furthermore, the students following a new ELT should be able to actively and appropriately use a variety of learning strategies in their attempt to communicate.

In Saudi Arabia, students are required to be able to memorize English and answer discrete point grammatical questions, as creative use is believed to come later. They are used to the traditional way of teaching, and are thus attached to books and to the teacher. The relationship and the attitude of the Arabic student towards his teacher is one of respect, obedience, and reliance, a reliance that is often dependence. If strategic behaviours are required, the student will, in turn, need to redefine some of these attitudes. For example, behaviour attached to the concept of respect and saving face prevents students from questioning their teachers (questioning for clarification strategy). Questions imply that teachers have failed in their duty to impart knowledge clearly. Because asking questions, as strategy, in the new ELT is encouraged, the students will not only have to redefine their concept of respect, but also participate differently in their learning experience. Arabic students may, therefore, reject the new unfamiliar ideas of the new method.

5- Saudi Classrooms are not designed for a new method that encourages the use of strategies. Seats are set in rows where students all face in one direction towards the blackboard. Cooperative group work (cooperation strategy) cannot be carried out efficiently because the arrangement of seats does not allow students to face each other and does not allow the teacher to move around to monitor interaction in classroom activities. Moreover, carrying out some activities in such a classroom may result in noise which affects the neighbouring classes and interferes with their lessons. Some schools do not have audiovisual equipment such as overhead projectors, video- recorders and players, and

language labs that are used to support strategic techniques.

6- In a class of thirty or more students, the teacher has very little time to spare for every individual. Consequently, some slow learners would feel completely lost especially in group work when they become involved in interactive activities where performance is assessed as a collective effort.

7- The time given by the ministry to cover English classes is very short for the application of some activities that encourages learning strategies use.

8- For many teachers in the Arabic context, the aim is to provide the grammatical and vocabulary knowledge so that the students can successfully pass the many exams they must take in their academic career. These examinations and other curriculum decisions are not in the teacher's domain. The Ministry of Education defines the aims, objectives, and linguistics criteria for each level of schooling; prescribes or recommends the textbooks; determines the time allocation and teaching methodology; and tightly controls the secondary and university entrance exams. Because of the restrictive relationship between the curriculum and examination criteria, teachers have believed that their traditional method successfully prepared students for the exams. Students also felt this contextual constraint and thus pressured their teachers to teach for the examinations. The new ELT method aims to encourage students to use learning strategies successfully. Arabic teachers have had experience evaluating grammatical competence; however, because of their own limitations, they might not be able to properly evaluate the strategic elements inherent in the new ELT method.

Taking into consideration these constraints will be crucial in assessing which features of the new method could be relevant to the Saudi context. It is wrong to assume that students will develop second language acquisition skills in a classroom where they are not encouraged to use learning strategies. It is doubtful, also, that the shift towards a new ELT syllabus, in association with learning strategies, would bring about the desired aims of teaching in Saudi

schools since the constraints mentioned earlier are difficult to overcome, and since the majority of English teachers in Saudi schools are neither trained for new pedagogies nor aware of the necessity to encourage students to use strategies. But at the end, one could argue that foreign language teachers in other countries once taught in the traditional way and have changed their roles, so Arabic teachers might be able to change their teaching behaviour and roles, taken into consideration the apparent need for that change (see Holliday's quote in 6.3.).

Given the above difficulties of applying a new method in teaching English, a conclusion was reached that importing a new syllabus designed, for instance, for foreign students learning in Britain, is unlikely to be successful in a Saudi context, given the current problems revealed earlier, and as Norrish (1996:2,3) puts it: "What works well in one situation may not do so in another...any treatment of curriculum reform must necessarily entail considering the methods by which that curriculum was delivered.".

In an attempt to answer a research question raised earlier " what type of teaching can be developed that takes into consideration the Saudi context", we will view, in the next section, the different perspectives of researchers in different contexts in this field and compare it to the Saudi context in this study to find a culturally appropriate methodology that may be more effective in promoting learners' autonomy and strategy use.

6.3 Developing an approach to encourage Saudi learners' autonomy and strategy use:

Taking into consideration all the weaknesses of the traditional method and the difficulties of applying a new method in Saudi Arabia, it seems neither the traditional method alone nor the exclusive use of the new method is sufficient to accomplish what is needed. So it would be better to adopt a gradual change rather than a sudden change; to use the traditional method with the complement of the new method in order to meet the previous needs. Reaching such a conclusion takes us to another question:" How culturally appropriate is the

new method to language teaching in Saudi Arabia?" This section questions the universal relevance of the new method in view of the cultural conflicts arising from the introduction of a predominantly Western language teaching approach to Saudi Arabian culture. The central argument is that, for the new method to be made suitable for Saudi Arabian conditions, it needs to be culturally acceptable as Holliday (1994:1) stated that " any methodology in English language should be appropriate to the social context within which it is to be used".

Teaching English in Saudi schools is mainly for academic purposes or general communication. Such communication may take its location both in Saudi Arabia (shops, restaurants, companies..etc.) and abroad in a foreign country. The foreign country could be USA, Britain or Australia, but it also could be Pakistan, Nigeria, Italy or Japan. Such countries have not only different cultures but sometimes contradictory cultures. The Saudi culture, as referred to above, is Islamic. The culture of Saudi Arabia is the instructions of Islam which fluctuate between permissions and prohibitions. Although other cultures of Pakistan, Malaysia and Nigeria share with Saudi Arabia its Islamic culture yet Saudi culture is still considered the prototypical Islamic culture. Therefore, when a Saudi student communicates in English he should take into consideration dealing with a vast range of cultures: some of them are close to his own culture, others are diverse; some are permitted by his culture, but many attributes of other cultures are prohibited.

Partly due to the long history of cultural traditions in Saudi Arabia, partly due to the special religious status of the people in that part of the world, the Arabic people, generally speaking, are quite reserved and introverted. These strong cultural factors shape attitudes students have towards English as a foreign language. Economic and social pressures on students to get a good job drive the intense competition for admissions to universities. The key to university admissions in Saudi Arabia is passing the high school final exam. Therefore, English is seen as one of the barriers to success among students. Teachers have a very powerful effect on students. They are seen by society as having the fate of the next

generation in their hands. Trust and respect of teachers in Saudi Arabia can be related to the value of Islamic society places on learning in general. From experience I have found that Arabic students may accept the different roles and methods from foreign teachers more easily than from Arabic teachers. It appears that in the classroom, Saudi teachers should act as Arabic and foreigners should act as foreign. Students tend to believe that cultural identity, "we are Arabic" and cultural context, "we are in Saudi Arabia" determine the appropriateness of the teacher behaviours. It appears, then, that the change is not only concerned with roles in the classroom, but also roles in the culture as a whole.

Students expect the teacher to structure the learning situation for them, telling them what to learn and how to learn. This traditional method is well known as the spoon-feeding education system in which students are fed with piles of notes and textbooks (Nunan, 1996). Students only care about getting results good enough to enter a university. They gradually become examination oriented. Eventually fewer and fewer students care about acquiring the language for communication which would appear to be today's main aim of learning English.

The social value of a given foreign language is vital. The extent to which learners feel a need for the language is determined by the society in which they live. If there is no established function of the language in the society, learners are less likely to be keen on learning it. In Saudi Arabia, some learners may be aware that the language will be useful sometime in the future, others have no awareness at all (see students' interviews in chapter five). It is hardly surprising that many question the possibility of ever using the language for communication.

After all, learning a foreign language is supposed to meet social and career needs. In Saudi Arabia, there is a great demand for foreign language teachers. All the universities, colleges, technical schools have a shortage of foreign language teachers. The training of a large number of qualified teachers is necessary to raise the quality of foreign language teaching. Secondly, as a developing country, there is a huge demand for translators of science and

technology. With the policy of opening up Saudi Arabia to the outside world, tourism and foreign trade are developing rapidly. This results in a demand for guides and foreign trade personnel. Of these, the demands for foreign language teachers and translators of science and technology take up the greatest proportion. A qualified teacher is not only required to be competent in the four skills, i.e.listening, writing, speaking, reading; more importantly, he is also required to have a firm and comprehensive grasp of the grammatical structures of the language, so as to be able to pass on the knowledge to students, to explain the difficult grammatical points, to answer students' questions and to encourage them to use learning strategies. However, "the nature of what eventually takes place in the classroom involves the teacher's ability to both filter the method to make it appropriate to the local cultural norms, and to redefine the teacher-student relationship in keeping with the cultural norms embedded in the method itself" (Ellis, G. 1996:213).

Despite the availability of different ELT syllabuses, resulting course materials are generally geared to a particular cultural context. The absence of a general application of any ELT methodology, which could accommodate the different needs of any group of learners of any culture, limits the room for adopting a new ELT methodology in Saudi Arabia. " Authentic native-speaker discourse in London or New York might be quite inappropriate for speakers of English in other parts of the world; what is authentic in one context might need to be made appropriate to another" (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996:199).

Interest in an appropriate rather than culturally authentic English language pedagogy also stems from the realization that the teaching methodologies and materials developed in Europe or USA could not be used in the way they were intended by their original authors once they reached other countries like China or Malaysia. Widdowson (1994:387) clearly states the consequences for English Language teaching: instead of a pedagogy of the authentic which inappropriately privileges native-speaker use and imposes its norms at the global level, he suggests a pedagogy of the appropriate, which revises the authentic and adapts it to local conditions.

Appropriate language teaching is made to serve individual and social needs in local areas. What is authentic in these local areas is not necessarily the material presented in the text, but the interactions between classroom participants as Allwright (1988:51) stated:

> " ..that method probably doesn't really matter very much...but that what happens in the classroom still must matter. All the research so far described has involved the implicit assumptions that what is really happening in the classroom is simply that some particular method or technique is being used, and that more or less efficient learning might be taking place accordingly. It is however clear that much more than this is happening. People are interacting in a multiplicity of complex ways... We need studies of what actually happens, not of what recognisable teaching methods, strategies or techniques are employed by the teacher, but of what really happens between teacher and class".

What is suggested here is that research needs to take account of interaction in classroom rather than looking at specific methodologies. This research into some of the strategies employed by Saudi Arabian students is a move in this direction.

Values and beliefs in a learning context influence every aspect of educational practice, including the aims of the learners, the methods and consequently the strategies used. Much of the published work on learning strategies is "based on research carried out in ESL programs in North American university settings. It seems questionable that the list of learning strategies generated on the basis of such studies can apply to second language learners with different educational and social backgrounds" (LoCastro,1994:409). What learners do in one learning environment to learn is not the same as or very similar to what learners do in other environment. Studies have shown that "students in many second language situations (where there is constant exposure to the new language and a strong communicative demand from the environment) make greater use of language learning strategies than students in foreign language situations (where there is limited exposure and limited communicative demand)." (Green & Oxford,1995:266). That means neither the

classification of the learning strategies nor the different kinds of learning strategies are the most appropriate for what learners do to learn languages in different environments. The related challenge, then, is how to integrate language learning strategies into our foreign language curriculum, especially in places like Saudi Arabia where learner-centred approaches or materials may not be implemented very easily.

This study compares the use of the learning strategies among Arab learners of English and learners of English as a second language in other studies conducted in U.S and Europe. Comparison was made through the discussions of different factors that influence the use of learning strategies in many prior studies with this one. In general, the results of this study agreed with the conclusions of some studies notably those of Oxford,1990; O'Malley, 1990; Politzer, 1985; Rubin, 1987 and Bialystok, 1981 that emphasize the relation between language proficiency and use of learning strategies. Even so, there were areas of difference that seemed to indicate that the findings of this study, based on specific individual variables of Arabic learners affected by their own background factors and culture, do not always coincide with the results of other studies based on different background factors in other cultural contexts. These areas of difference were reflected in the different patterns, frequency and kinds of learning strategies used by students due to their different background factors. Using texts, which incorporate learning strategies training, remains difficult in a foreign language context when the strategies are mainly related to second language ones. How then may foreign language teachers best include language learning strategies and strategy training in the curriculum of their regular everyday language classes?. Clearly the question calls for more research on language learning strategies in different learning environments. Ethnographic research should precede the development of any quantitative research instrument that may be used in the collection of further data on learning strategies in different learning contexts. Only then we can begin to build a solid collection of studies of the learning strategies of different populations of learners.

From the reasons mentioned above, we can see that the traditional method seems to have a justified place in the foreign language classroom in Saudi Arabia while the exclusive application of a more flexible communicative style of ELT, complemented by learning strategies, might be unsuitable alone as the main approach in foreign language teaching in Saudi Arabia. Generally speaking, one method usually develops in order to remedy the perceived weaknesses of the previous one. On the one hand, although weaknesses of the previous one may be overcome, on the other hand, by putting too much stress on certain points it inevitably neglects the other points, which will become new weaknesses. Therefore, the best way for us is to draw strengths from each method; the traditional and the new method, taking into consideration the peculiarities of the Arabic culture, the learning behaviours of the Arabic students, and current social needs, and develop an eclectic method which suits our purposes.

6.4 The challenges to consider:

Challenges are natural to any endeavour and therefore they are discussed not as constraints but as features that we need to recognise in the overall scheme of affairs.

In light of the conclusions in this study, it might be wise to reconsider some needs with regard to the findings. The study has revealed several interesting and useful needs that had been suggested by students, teachers and the researcher, which might contribute to language learning in general and Saudi learning and teaching in particular. The following steps may be taken into consideration, regarding learners' needs, teachers, and teaching methods and materials:

6.4.1 Needs concerning Saudi learners:

The questionnaire and the interview in this study reveal many different opinions and suggestions of the students that reflects their needs and interests:

1- As in more interactive approaches, the learner is the prime figure in the whole learning process, it is very important to conduct free sessions to discuss various views held by the learners regarding their needs and interests in materials used, techniques adopted and even

treatment of learner-teacher interaction..

2- Motivation, as the study revealed, is considered to be the most highly correlated variable with learners' proficiency. The important role of motivation in learners' strategy use was also the focus of many studies mentioned earlier (4.3.1) so it is important to take this into consideration and try to apply different techniques in class to encourage students' motivation. Socializing the environment of the classroom is one of the main sources of developing learners' motivation where socialization is considered as the backbone of communication. Efforts should be made by the teacher to maintain a friendly class-environment and to encourage students to be engaged in a wide range of communicative activities as well as learning strategies. Feedback should be used to provoke students' performance in order to get the message across and consequently initiate his motivation to react positively by going on in communication. Aspects of English language culture are another source of motivation which bring students into contact with language. The teacher can tell students about big cities like London, New York, their people, interesting places, famous areas and common traditions in them. Pictures and films could be used to show attractive places to stimulate students to learn English with its culture.

3- A crucial step towards speeding up the acquisition of English is the introduction of English in primary schools. The results of this study (4.3.2) show that starting age of learning English is an important variable in the learning process. Early exposure to the language and the length of the learning period is highly correlated with proficiency and learning strategies.

4- Extracurricular activities should be treated as an important variable in the learning process (4.3.5). They can be used as a motivational factor to equip students with the necessary language to communicate outside the classroom environment. The involvement of students in such voluntary tasks as writing articles in school newspapers, wall magazines, watching TV, and listening to radio, would improve their language and their skill to use the language in authentic situations.

5- Overseas experience seems to increase the student's ability to use the language communicatively. As has already been stated earlier (4.3.4.), students who lived or studied in an environment where the English language is spoken, have a better opportunity to practice the language when the need to communicate is vital. Travelling to English speaking countries should be encouraged either to study or on vacation in order to develop learner's communicative ability to use the language in a natural authentic setting.

6.4.2 Needs concerning teachers:

1- In order to accomplish any major changes in the quality of teaching in Saudi Arabia, to meet determined economic, cultural and individual needs, attention must be paid to the teachers as they are the key factor in the teaching and learning process. They must be supplied with: knowledge related to general education; techniques for teaching language skills and learning strategies; knowledge related to linguistics; skills and practice related to more flexible LT approaches; knowledge to produce and use the teaching aids effectively; and knowledge about the cultural context of the language. In order to supply the teachers with such knowledge, the Ministry of Education should provide training programmes which are staffed by foreign trainers to conduct programmes that incorporate more interactive approaches, materials testing, and development.

2- Teachers should make themselves aware of a wide variety of learning strategies and techniques of language learning. As Graham (1997:170) suggests " those teachers who have thought carefully about how they learned a language, about which strategies are most appropriate for which tasks, are more likely to be successful in developing strategic competence in their students". They also should help their students to understand the concept of strategy and to recognize that some strategies are more appropriate, effective and successful than others. Then with the cooperation of the better language learners, they can perhaps help less able students to increase their level of competency as mentioned earlier in (4.1.2). The teacher should be aware of several individual variables, that this study had identified, which correlate positively with language learning strategies.

3- In their interaction with students in class, teachers should be aware of the individual variables as well as the socioeconomic and cultural background of their students. Rural area students might be more sensitive to what is said by the teacher and more conservative about their Bedouin traditions than their counterparts from urban areas. Non-Saudi teachers are advised to be aware of such differences and should be provided with an orientation on Saudi culture and traditions.

4- Adequate training for new ELT should be more frequently available to teachers through in-service training courses. Teachers need to understand their new participatory role. In the new ELT, teachers are expected to assume more than one responsibility; knowledge possessor, organizer and guide. They are also expected to create situations that stimulate learners to communicate; implement some communicative activities that would give the students opportunities to interact in English and use a variety of learning strategies.

5- The teachers would have more chance of doing their job better if the heavy load of classes they carry were reduced, giving them the opportunity and time to attend in service courses.

6.4.3 Needs in teaching and learning materials:

1- English language teaching in Saudi schools might be improved if the current syllabus could be changed into a more flexible style of ELT, encouraging learners' autonomy and strategies use. The need for this change is essential, in which language form and function should receive equal attention. The new syllabus should encourage the learners to use the language communicatively, and urge them to learn for themselves through various learning strategies. In other words students should learn to use strategies and also use strategies to learn more. As stated previously, the research results show a positive correlation between level of proficiency and the use of a variety of learning strategies, which suggests that students with high level of proficiency reported using more and different strategies than did students with low level of proficiency. It could therefore be proposed that much more attention should be paid to help students to understand the concept of strategy,

recognize that some strategies may be more effective and successful than others, and to employ these strategies in appropriate situations. As Graham (1997:169) suggested "language learning strategies training needs to be integrated into students' regular classes if they are going to appreciate their relevance for language learning tasks; students need to constantly monitor and evaluate the strategies they develop and use; and they need to be aware of the nature, function and importance of such strategies". Therefore, more emphasis should be placed on learner training in language learning strategies. Its importance lies in the fact that if we can isolate and identify those strategies which the good language learner uses, then it may be possible to assist the less able learners by passing on to them the strategies which their more successful classmates utilize (Oxford 1990; O'Malley & Chamot 1990).

2- The time allocated for English classes, which is four periods a week, is not enough to implement the new syllabus. More time should be allowed to cover the syllabus and to allow teachers to apply some communicative activities that would give the students opportunities to interact and use variety of learning strategies.

3- The English classroom should be specially designed for communicative activities that might lead to greater strategies use. It should be equipped with recorders, video, charts, cassettes and wall sheets, etc. The seats of the classrooms have to be flexible so as to allow any kind of arrangement required by the situations for communicative activities, and easy movement of the teacher among them for orienting instruction. With proper timetabling these classrooms could be assigned for all English periods in the day. Such rooms would be attractive for both teachers and students since they would feel that they were in the environment of the foreign language.

4- If learners are tested in a given way then the teaching method should go in line with the same testing syllabus. Within the new method the aim is not to test the accuracy of learners' linguistic knowledge alone but to assess the degree to which they can use what they have learnt in real communicative settings. Mistakes should be tolerated and seen as an indication

that students are learning (Corder, 1981). It is not desirable to interrupt an utterance for the sake of correction as this is absolutely detrimental when learners are doing their best to finish an utterance or accomplish a task (Norrish,1983). Moreover, frequent correction is not favoured as a large amount will eventually discourage learners' use of some strategies such as self-monitoring.

5- Instructional materials ought to be varied, interesting, challenging, and relevant to students' interests in order to increase learners' autonomy and strategies use. The content and the methodology of the new syllabus should be based on the students' needs and desires taking into consideration the characteristics of the Saudi learners within a culture which involves many restrictions.

6-. Extracurricular activities should be used to equip the students with the necessary language to communicate outside the classroom environment. The involvement of students in such activities as writing English expressions on wall magazines, acting English plays on stage, listening to radio and watching television programmes, might improve their language and their skills of using the language in authentic situations. Extracurricular activities and living or studying in an English language environment are two important variables that show significant correlation with language proficiency and learning strategies, as stated earlier in this research.

The researcher believes that the above suggestions are feasible and most of them could be attainable. It is hoped that the needs mentioned and the suggestions made will persuade policy makers in the Ministry of Education to think about implementing a more flexile communicative style of ELT, encouraging learning strategies use, that might elevate the standard of English among students, reflecting more recent expectations.

The researcher also believes that the implementation of those changes would not happen overnight. It may take time but would hopefully lead to the desired ends. However, if any of the factors, referred to above, conspire to prevent these changes, then at the very least, teachers should be persuaded to implement communicative activities together with

appropriate learning strategies in order to encourage learners to interact in class and to be more successful communicators. Such a response would motivate teachers to implement the new method and would gradually increase the level of competence among learners. Students' academic achievements would, in turn, improve, as would reports on the teachers. Such good results are expected to encourage educationalists and education policy makers to recognize the necessity of taking into consideration the above suggestions to bring about greater achievements.

Having considered the shortcomings of teaching English in Saudi Arabia, it could be argued that any new treatment is bound to have side-effects. However, it should not be forgotten that a given method which has proved to be popular in western contexts does not necessarily mean that it is suitable for the Saudi Arabian context (see Holliday's and Kramsch's quotes in 6.3). Learning theories, on which teaching methods are based are only assumptions and propositions which, in turn, do not guarantee successful application. A theory could be logically acceptable but not feasible in practice. If one is to define the best method, it would be an eclectic one which sets out to capitalise on the best elements taken from various methods, provided that their success in a given context is based on some evidence. This emphasizes what was concluded from the previous section that neither the traditional method with its shortcomings, nor the exclusive use of the new method, with the constraints mentioned earlier, will be perfect for the current situation in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the best way might be to draw strengths from each method and develop an eclectic method that might meet the previous needs (see Ellis's quote in 6.3). Norrish indicates teachers are able to generate their own theory and thereby develop a quality of professional flexibility given the appropriate flexible contexts (Norrish, 1996). Therefore the researcher, in the next section, suggests that more studies should be done in this field.

6.5 Suggestions for further research:

It must be stressed that this study is a preliminary investigation of the learning strategies of Saudi Arabian students and their background variables. Recommendations for further research include specific suggestions regarding the improvement and refinement of this

study and general suggestions for other topics of research that have grown out of the findings of this research:

1- The unfocused nature of the current study gave students an opportunity to report any and all strategies which they were aware of using to facilitate their learning of English. There is a need for more intensive and thorough investigations of specific individual strategies learners use for specific tasks.

2- The current study has focused on the learning strategies of students at the tertiary level. Future research should be conducted to study similarly the strategies of students at other levels of language learning.

3- The current research has focused on the relationship between learning strategies and language achievement. As stated earlier, it was found that there is a significant correlation between the two. Further study should explore the causal relationship or the effectiveness of learning strategies on language achievement. Both how students' achievement is affected by their use of strategies and vice versa, are important questions to be resolved in future research of this type. Without having this information, our research in language learning strategies will remain inadequate and our knowledge and understanding of students' learning processes will remain incomplete. Only a longitudinal study could address this issue. Groups of students could be observed over a longer period of time and compared for their rate of learning along with their use of various strategies.

4- A follow-up project to this study would be to design specific instructional materials for teaching students how to use the learning strategies through different communicative activities. The materials should be studied for their effectiveness in improving the rate of learning in Saudi Arabia.

5- The current study shows a significant correlation between learning strategies and a number of other individual variables. Similar studies should be conducted to focus on the

causal relationship or the effectiveness of different language learning strategies on specific factors like: motivation, extracurricular activities, and mother tongue. In addition, an interesting longitudinal study might be an investigation of the effect of the number of years that students spent in studying English on the use of learning strategies. The effectiveness of strategy use should be investigated over a period of time to determine if there is a move by students towards more mature strategy use or whether they continue to use the same strategies. In order to measure the effectiveness of strategies, it seems reasonable to assume that such research would include some training for students in the language learning strategies.

6- Determining the effectiveness of different strategies for a specific task has the greatest potential for assisting students to find strategies which allow them to be more successful language learners. Although attempts at determining strategies which successful language learners used have provided the field with some data in this regard, much more work is necessary before we can say that we know enough about learning strategies to recommend to our students what will work for a given task. Therefore, the list of strategies that successful students used in this study should not be viewed as a definitive or comprehensive list, but as the beginning of a list to be completed and modified by further research.

7- Further research has to be done on the methodology to be used for continued language learning strategies research. In this study, three different methods were used as triangulation method: Questionnaire, recorded interviews, and achievement tests of language learning. In order to have statistically significant number of strategies, a more detailed study would have to be based on a very large amount of data recorded with sophisticated high fidelity equipment, preferably on a videotape so that nonverbal information too can be incorporated.

8- An increasing number of Saudi Arabian educators have been exposed to language learning theories, methodological approaches, and so on through training courses in Saudi Arabia and through graduate studies abroad. This provides the opportunity for significant

research on a culturally appropriate teaching curriculum. The greatest gap now confronting English language educators in Saudi Arabia appears to be the absence of applied research to inform policy makers in the Ministry of Education of the necessity to change the current curriculum, as Cumming (1987:216) stated " the result is that there is virtually no empirical data now available to assess which innovations have been effective or ineffective, to guide future developments with confidence, or even to support theorizing which might justify current practices". Through more research and experience, Saudi Arabian educators will be able to determine which aspects of the ELT approaches are appropriate to be adapted or adopted to suit their teaching and learning culture.

It is hoped that this study will contribute in diagnosing the weaknesses and suggesting implications for the language teaching\learning in Saudi Arabia. It is also hoped that the current study has given enough reasons to convince the policy makers for the urgent need to implement the changes mentioned earlier.

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Appendix One

MAP OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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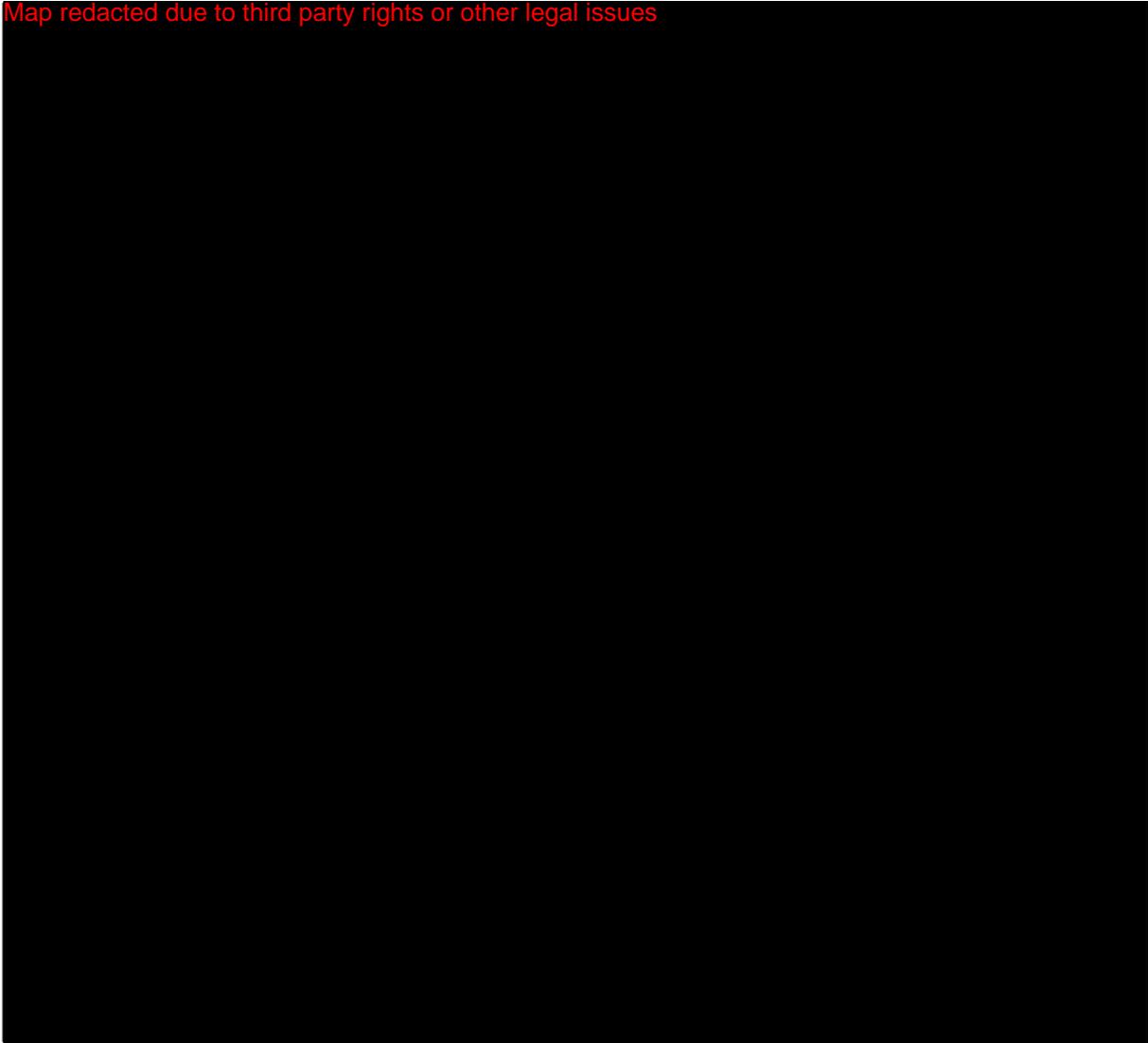
Appendix Two

Subjects' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about how, as a student of English, go about learning that language. Below are two sections. In section one you are kindly asked to give some information about your language background and learning. In section two you are requested to give information regarding how you learn English.

==

Name_____ Group_____

==

Section One: Language Background

Please circle or fill what is appropriate:

1- Mother tongue   1- Arabic_____

2- Other (specify)_____

2- How many years have you studied English? _____ years

3- Have you ever studied English outside of Saudi Arabia?

1- Yes   2- No

If "Yes", for how long? _____ years, _____ months.

4- Have you ever travelled to an English speaking country?

1- Yes   2- No

If "Yes", for how long have you stayed?

_____ years, _____ months.

5- Do you try to learn or use English outside of college?

1- Yes   2- No

6- Are you interested in learning English?

1- Very,   2- quite,   3- not so,   4- not at all

7- How do you rate your overall standard in English as compared with the proficiency of other students in your class?

1- Very good,   2- Good,   3- Average,   4- poor

8- Why do you want to study English? please choose one:

   1- Interested in the language.

   2- Required for your study.

   3- Need it for future career.

4- Need it for travel.

5- Other_____

Section Two : Language Experience

Please circle the appropriate answer:

1- Do you ask your teacher, classmates, or anybody else for explanation or clarification of the material, if it is too difficult for you?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

2- Do you work with your classmates in cooperation to solve learning problems, pass information and check notes?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

3- How often do you use a dictionary when you come across a difficult word?

1-Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

4- Do you take notes to remember the important information?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

5- Do you make a summary to help you understand the new information?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

6- Do you try to correct yourself when you notice that you have made a mistake?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

7- Do you guess the meaning of new words from the rest of the sentence in which they are used?

1- Never   2-Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

8- Do you think about differences between English and your native language and, as a result, avoid making mistakes?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

9- When memorizing words or phrases, do you generally associate them with actions or pictures in your memory?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

10- Do you try to develop any special techniques or study habits which help you learn English?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

11- Do you plan for the organization of a written or spoken task before doing it?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

12- Do you make a general preview of the subject before attending the class?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

13- Do you focus on specific items, if you are asked to, while listening?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

14- Do you apply grammar rules to identify the form of unknown words, or solve language problems?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

15- Do you use synonyms, paraphrases and gestures to subsitute the meaning of unknown words?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

16- Do you practice repeating the names of items or objects to be remembered?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

17- Do you try to classify words, terminology, or concepts according to their semantic or syntactic attributes?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

18- Do you evaluate yourself and measure your progress in English language from time to time?

1- Never   2- Rarely   3- Often   4- Always

Appendix Three

Students' Interviews

Question-1- What is your name, group and ID number?

Question-2- Why do you want to study English if English were not taught as a part of the college syllabus?

Question-3- Do you have problems in learning English? Are these problems in written or oral English?

Question-4- If you were facing some problems in expressing yourself in English what do you do to overcome your communication problems?

Question-5- Do you try to develop any special techniques or study habits which help you learn English ?

Question-6- What do you do in classroom to help you understand the material?

Question-7- What do you do to develop English outside the classroom?

Question-8- If you are unable to identify a words meaning, what would you do?

Question-9- Would you read these sentences, then guess the meaning of the underlined words?

- Before using a new car, indemnity is important against possible damage, accidents or hurt.

- Nuts and coffee taste better if they are decrepitated , but their colour will look darker.

Question-10- What would you do if you want to comprehend and remember an oral passage?

Question-11- What did you do during your last vacation?

Question-12- When you are not doing any homework, what do you do in your leisure time?

Question-13- Can you describe this picture?

Question-14- Correct the sentence if it is wrong:

- I went to the pharmacy for getting medicine.

- You came late to class yesterday, do you?

- The story was interested.

Question-15- Fill in the blanks with the right words:

- I went to the supermarket_____some eggs.

A- for   B- for buy   C- to buying   D- buy

- This place is _____ cold for me to live in.

A- enough   B- too   C- too much   D- so

- My hair is black _____my sister's hair is brown

A- and   B- also   C- but   D- too

Question-16- If you have done a mistake, do you repeat it again? Do you learn from your mistake?

Question-17- Would you like to give some suggestion about teaching, syllabus, or learning English in general?

Appendix Four

Name _____

ID # _____

FINAL EXAMINATION : STRUCTURE   ENG. 001

Time : 2 Hours

PART - I : Questions :

Change the following sentences into questions. The underlined words
or phrases must be the answers.   (10 Points)

1. I borrowed Salma's book.

   _____

2. I saw a car near our school.

   _____

3. Ahmad can answer your question.

   _____

4. We will meet them at your office.

   _____

PART - II : Verb Tenses :

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verbs in parentheses.
                                                    (14 Pts)
1. I (live) _____ in Dammam from 1980 to 1985.

2. Until now no one (succeed) _____ in (solve)_____
   this problem.

3. They (meet) _____ their friend while they (go)_____
   to school yesterday.

4. When we (arrive) _____ at the airport tomorrow, our

   friends (wait) _____ for us.

5. If you (go) _____ tomorrow, I am sure you (able) _____
   to see nim there.

6. The children (play) _____ on the grass right now.

7. He promised (give) _____ me an answer soon.

8. A year ago, I (meet) _____ a friend who I (not, see) _____ for two years.

9. As soon as the rain stops, I (leave) _____.

PART - III :   Prepositions :

Supply the appropriate prepositions in the blanks below.

(5 Points)

1. I am not familiar _____ this book.

2. Most people don't approve _____ smoking.

3. Water consists _____ hydrogen and oxygen.

4. I arrived _____ the hospital very early yesterday.

5. Students sometimes argue _____ their grades.

6. Why are you angry _____ me?

7. My friend responded _____ my call.

8. We are all praying _____ him.

9. Why are you staring _____ me?

PART - IV : Passive Forms :

Change the following sentences from the active to the passive.

(16 Points)

1. Salem is helping the students.

_____

2. Ahmad asked me a question.

_____

3. We will invite them to dinner.

_____

4. We are going to visit them tomorrow.

_____

5. I have told him to come early.

   _____

6. He told me to come early.

   _____

7. He reminded me not to say a word.

   _____

8. They expect her to pass the exam.

   _____

PART - V :

Read the paragraph below and fill in the blanks with words
from the following list.

                                        (8 points)

from	very	that
usually	at	my
the	and	myself
also	by	to
at	between	always
with	and	before
in	off	on

I _____ go to work _____ subway. I get
to work _____ 8:00 a.m. Before I start _____ job, I put
_____ my uniform and look at _____ in the mirror _____
make sure _____ I look neat. _____ 8:30 in the morning, I
go _____ duty. I _____ eat lunch _____ one. _____ 4:30
in _____ afternoon, I go _____ duty. I enjoy my job
_____ much.

PART - VI : Gerunds and Infinitives :

Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of words in parentheses.

(10 Points)

1. Ahmad got tired and stopped (work) _____.

2. When we were in the city, we went (shop) _____.

3. Salma wanted (shop) _____ at the most expensive store.

4. I enjoy (take) _____ a long walk after dinner.

5. Salem wants (take) _____ his finals in July.

6. Would you mind (open) _____ the door?

7. Would you mind if I (close) _____ the door?

8. My teacher told me (work) _____ hard.

9. My father warned me (not, drive) _____ fast.

10. My teacher told me (come) _____ early.

PART - VII :

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the list. Some of the words can be used more than once.

(10 Points)

ENOUGH   SINCE   VERY   FOR   TOO   TO

1. This ring is _____ expensive. I can't buy it.

2. I have _____ money to buy a new car.

3. Salma is _____ highly qualified _____ this job.

4. They don't have time _____ to attend the lecture.

5. It isn't good _____ for me.

6. I haven't seen him _____ two weeks.

7. They have been here _____ 1968.

8. He told me not _____ wait _____ him.

PART - VIII :

(A) Combine the two sentences, using the second sentence as an adjective clause.

(6 Points)

1. Water is a liquid. It consists of hydrogen and oxygen.

_____

2. The students are there. Their car was stolen yesterday.

_____

3. The tape is a ribbin of plastic. It is coated with powdered iron.

_____

_____

4. An object accelerates. It falls freely.

_____

5. Big machines are called dynamos. They generate electricity.

_____

_____

6. The scientist does a lot of research. We met her yesterday.

_____

_____

(B) Combine the following sentences using sentence (b) as an adjective clause.

(10 points)

1. (a) The man is working in this office.
    (b) I told you about him.

_____

_____

2. (a) The teacher can help you.
    (b) He lives very close to you.

_____

_____

3. (a) Did you hear about the storm?
    (b) We may have it tomorrow.

    _____

    _____

4. (a) I spoke to a woman.
    (b) She works at the reception desk.

    _____

    _____

5. (a) I went to the doctor to get some medicine.
    (b) The medicine will make me feel better.

    _____

    _____

PART - IX : Modal Auxiliaries :

(A) Fill in the blanks with suitable modals.

                                                    (11 Points)

1. You _____ study hard in order to get high grades.

2. I _____ see you next week when you come to my office.

3. It is time for my lecture. I _____ go now.

4. I didn't have any money. I _____ cash a check.

5. My friend _____ speak three languages.

(B) Fill in the blanks with MADE, HAD, GOT OR LET.

1. They _____ me pay for the broken window.

2. The mother _____ her daughter help her do the dishes.

3. I _____ my work done in only two hours.

4. I _____ mechanic repair my car.

5. Please _____ me help you solve this problem.

6. The good news _____ me feel very happy.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION : STRUCTURE   ENG. 001

TIME :   2 Hours

PART - I : Tenses

Put the verbs in parentheses in the correct tenses.

(22 Points)

1. My son (not start) _____ work yet. He's still at
    High School. How long he (be) _____ at school? He (be)_____
    at High School for six years; before that he (spend)_____
    five years at the Primary School in Windmill Street.

2. Old Ben (sell) _____ newspapers just inside the station
    entrance and my father always (buy) _____ his evening
    papers from him.

3. For years I (do) _____ all my washing by hand; then
    last year I (buy) _____ a washing machine.

4. He (climb) _____ the step ladder when the door
    bell (ring) _____ again.

5. My neighbour (tell) _____ me last night that he
    (leave) _____ the town to go to the village.

6. They (build) _____ that bridge when I (be) _____
    here last year. They (finish, not) _____ it yet.

7. What your uncle (do) _____ now? He still (teach)_____
    in his old school.

8. When I (finish) _____ this work I (get) _____
    into the bath and soak for one hour.

9. Give this letter to your teacher as soon as you(arrive)_____
    at school.

10. While I (come) _____ to work this morning I (see) _____
    the woman I (see) _____ on T.V. yesterday.

PART - II : Put in a/an/the / or Ø where necessary.   (8 Points)

1. There was _____ knock on _____ door. I opened
    it and found _____ small dark man in _____ check
    overcoat and a soft hat.

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2. We can go by _____ car if you wash _____ car first.
    We can't go to _____ Mrs. Smith's in _____ car
    all covered with _____ mud.

3. It was _____ windy morning but they hired _____ boat
    and went for a sail on _____ Nile. In _____ afternoon
    _____ wind increased and they soon found themselves in
    trouble.

4. He was _____ very tall man with _____ dark hair
    and _____ small beard but I couldn't see his eyes
    because he was wearing _____ dark glasses.

                                              (½ point each)

PART - III:

Give the suitable forms of the words in brackets.

                                              (10 Points)

1. The (result) _____ of the experiments have been
    carefully analyzed.

2. Each of the (student) _____ has a job to do.

3. Eight hours of sleep (be) _____ more than enough.

4. The teacher has given us a lot of (homework) _____.

5. The Chinese (have) _____ a sense of humor.

6. Chinese (be) _____ a difficult language.

7. How much (time)_____ do you spend on your assignment?

8. There (be) _____ many good stories in that book.

9. The United States (offer) _____ many opportunities to
    immigrants.

10. All of the (student) _____ got high grades.

PART - IV :

(A) Fill in the blanks with (other, another, others, the other, the others).

(6 points)

1. I have a car in Dammam and _____ in Riyadh. The one in Dammam is a Datsun and _____ is a Range Rover.

2. A kilo of flour is not enough for the cake. Could you buy me _____ kilo, please?

3. Some girls go home by bus _____ go by private cars.

4. Those two ladies are twins. The tall one is a doctor, _____ is a lecturer. They have three brothers, one is a businessman _____ are engineers.

(B) Rewrite the sentences below using the underlined word(s) as noun modifiers.

(8 points)

(a) I bought a new rack. It is for clothes.
(b) She made three holes. They are for the buttons.
(c) That is the refinery. It refines oil.
(d) She has a large garden. She grows roses in it.
(e) I had a holiday. It was for a month.
(f) The couple have a son. He is five years old.
(g) I need a ruler to take these measurements. It must be twenty four inches long.
(h) He ran the race in ten seconds. The race was a hundred meters long.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

(e) _____

(f) _____

(g) _____

(h) _____

PART - V :

(A) Fill in the blanks with (many or much).

(5 points)

1. There isn't _____ water in this well.

2. How _____ deer did you see in the forest?

3. He did not sell _____ equipment so he lost his job.

4. I don't have _____ information on this subject.

5. My brother met _____ gentlemen while he was at the
   university.

(B) Fill in the blanks with (few, a few, little, or a little).

(6 points)

1. He looks _____ tired.

2. _____ educated people use slang.

3. _____ people can live alone at the top of a mountain.

4. As he was always travelling abroad, he had _____ contact
   with his friends.

5. Our stores are empty. We need _____ of everything.

6. She is a very popular teacher, you always see her with _____
   students around her.

PART - VI :

(A) Change the following sentences into questions to which the
    underlined word(s) are the answers.

(10 points)

1. Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in the Alps.

   _____

2. He went to the library because he was late for the lecture.

   _____

3. This hotel is the best in the area.

   _____

4. Those books on the table are mine.

   _____

5. An insect bit the little child.

   _____

6. He took his children to the park.

_____

7. He plays the piano very well.

_____

8. I borrowed ten riyals from him.

_____

9. He goes home everyday at noon.

_____

10. The dress is blue and the coat is red.

_____

(B) Add tag questions to the sentences below.

(5 points)

1. This is not his pen.

_____

2. You had a good time.

_____

3. She has been writing a letter.

_____

4. The students will not study during the vacation.

_____

5. The result pleased the student.

_____

6. Shut the door.

_____

7. They must come back tomorrow.

_____

8. You had better go home now.

_____

9. They didn't have to go out to the market today.

_____

10. He used to play football.

_____

Paper and Its Uses

How much paper do you use every year? Probably you can't answer the question quickly. In 1900 the world's use of paper was about one kilogram for each person in a year. Now some countries use as much as 50 kilograms of paper for each person in a year. The amount of paper a country uses shows how far advanced the country is, some people say. It is difficult to say whether this is true: different people mean different things by the word 'advanced'. But countries like the United States, Britain, Japan, Germany and Sweden certainly use more paper than other countries.

Paper, like many other things that we use today, was first made in China. In Egypt and the West, paper was not very commonly used before the year 1400. The Egyptians wrote on papyrus; Europeans used parchment for many hundreds of years. Parchment was very strong; it was made from the skin of certain young animals. We have learnt some of the most important facts of European history from records that were kept on parchment.

The Chinese first made paper about 2,000 years ago. China still has pieces of paper which were made as long ago as that. But Chinese paper was not made from the wood of trees. It was made from the hair-like parts of certain plants.

Paper was not made in southern Europe until about the year 1100. Scandinavia — which now makes a great deal of the world's paper— did not begin to make it until 1500. It was a German, named Schaeffer, who found out that one could make the best paper from trees. After that, the forest countries of Canada, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the United States became the most important in paper making. Today in Finland, which makes the best paper in the world, the paper industry is the biggest in the land. Now paper-making machines are very big, and they make paper very fast. The biggest machines can make a piece of paper 300 meters long and six meters wide in one minutes.

When we think of paper, we think of newspapers, books, letters, envelopes, and writing paper. But there are many other uses. Only half of the paper that is made is used for books and newspapers, etc.

Paper is very good for keeping you warm. Houses are often insulated with paper. You have perhaps seen homeless people asleep on a large number of newspapers. They are insulating themselves against the cold. In Finland, where in winter it is sometimes — 40° Centigrade, the farmers wear paper boots in the snow. Nothing could be warmer.

Each year, more and more things are made of paper. We have had paper cups, plates, and dishes for a long time. But now we hear that chairs, tables, and even beds can be made of paper. With paper boots and shoes, you can wear paper hats, paper dresses, and paper raincoats. When you have used them once, you throw them away and buy new ones.

The latest in paper seems to be paper houses. These are not small houses for children to play in, but real, big houses for people to live in. You can put one up yourself in a few hours, and you can use it for about five years.

People have made paper boats, but they have not yet made paper planes or cars. Just wait — they probably will.

Ultrasonics - the science that studies high frequency
sounds - is one of the newest and most exciting techniques, or
methods of the space age. Ultra means "beyond what is usual or
reasonable;" sonic means "sound or sound waves." Sounds of this
kind are produced by changing electrical beats into mechanical
ones. These sounds, however, cannot be detected, or heard, by
the human ear because of their high-frequency. In other words,
as the frequency of sound increases, the perception of that
sound, i.e., the ability to hear it, decreases. Some uses that
scientists have found for ultra-sonic technology are the
detection and location of submarines by the Navy, and the detection
of large schools of fish by commercial fishermen. In addition,
many other uses have been found for ultrasonics.

In particular, medical science has benefited from ultrasonic
technology because ultrasonic waves can penetrate (pass through)
the human body, i.e., the flesh and the bones, without harming
the patient. The result of the ultrasonic method is a quick and
painless diagnosis by the doctor who is treating the illness. At
Chicago State Mental Hospital the ultrasonic process helps phy-
sicians and psychiatrists to make quick diagnoses. In contrast
to the ten minutes that the X-ray process takes, the ultra-
sonic process sends out echo patterns that can be read within
ten seconds. Unlike X-rays, the ultrasonic process is not dangerous,
and therefore it can be given to a patient repeatedly. Doctors
use ultrasonic devices to detect fetal (unborn babies) heart-beats,
to sterilize instruments, to clean teeth, and to detect blood
clots.

Furthermore, ultrasonics contributes to industrial technology.
Many technological processes have been improved. Others have been
changed completely. For example, cleaning processes, vegetable
and fruit cultivation, mechanical dishwashers, burglar-alarm
systems, and air purifiers have all been revolutionized by this
new science. There are now approximately fifty American companies
in the ultrasonics field. One authority estimates that ultrasonics
is a $50 million business annually, and that by 1973 the annual
profit from ultrasonics will be $160 million.

Within a very short time ultrasonics will be as important
to human life as the telephone is today.

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FINAL EXAMINATION : READING

TIME : 2 Hours

Questions - Passage # 1 :

Read   passage # 1 and circle the letter of the correct answer.
                                                    (2 ½ Pts each)
1.   The first country that made and used paper was
          a. Egypt.
          b. The United States.
          c. Canada.
          d. China.

2.   Paper can be used
          a. for insulation.
          b. for writing.
          c. as shoes and boots.
          d. all of the above (a,b,c).

3.   Paper was made about _____ years ago.
          a. 1200
          b. 2000
          c. 4000
          d. 1100

4.   The finest kind of paper is made in
          a. GErmany.
          b. Sweden.
          c. Norway.
          d. Finland.

5.   Countries that consume more paper than others are said to be
          a. developing.
          b. more advanced.
          c. backward.
          d. (b) and (c).

6.   Before the year 1400, papyrus and parchment were used by
          a. most countries.
          b. Egyptians and Europeans.
          c. the Japanese.
          d. all of the above.

7.   In some countries paper is used in large amounts. Each
     individual uses today fifty times more paper than he used
     _____ years ago.
                    a. 50
                    b. 200
                    c. about 100
                    d. 20

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8. In the future we may _____ in Saudi Arabia.
    a. have cars made of paper.
    b. use paper to build houses.
    c. don't use paper at all.
    d. (a) and (b).

9. The article suggests that
    a. paper is important.
    b. paper is essential for civilized survival.
    c. we can not live without paper.
    d. all of the above.

10. The man who discovered that the best paper could be made of trees is
    a. Adam Smith.
    b. Jack Anderson.
    c. Schaeffer.
    d. Wilson.

11. Canada, Sweden, Norway, Finland and the United States became the most important in paper making because they_____
    a. have many forests.
    b. have cheap workers.
    c. were the first countries to make paper.
    d. have technology.

Questions - Passage # 2 :

R e a d Passage # 2 and circle the letter of the correct answer.
(2½ Pts each)

1. The writer says that ultrasonics helps in
    a. making telephones useful.
    b. sending men to the moon.
    c. making medicines quickly.
    d. many areas of technology.

2. "Schools of fish" means
    a. schools for educating young fish.
    b. a large number of fish swimming together.
    c. a college or a university giving courses about fishing.
    d. fishermen's boats.

3. The passage states that ultrasonic waves
    a. are useful only to Chicago State Mental Hospital.
    b. do not hurt the human body.
    c. will be useful to humans only after research is done on them.
    d. will not help medical science in the future.

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4. Ultrasonic sounds cannot be heard by humans because they____
    a. can pass harmlessly through flesh and bone.
    b. must be seen instead of heard.
    c. have a high frequency.
    d. travel under water.

5. "Detect" means to _____
    a. be used by scientists.
    b. help companies in the field.
    c. discover and find.
    d. send out.

6. One meaning of ultrasonics is
    a. a process used by Navies and fishermen only.
    b. sound waves beyond human hearing.
    c. devices used to measure things.
    d. a larger alarm system.

7. In paragraph (3) the term "contributes to" means
    a. pays $50 or $160 annually.
    b. becomes important.
    c. is used in fifty companies.
    d. helps to develop.

8. The writer says that the ultrasonic process differs from X-ray in that
    a. ultrasonics needs ten minutes but X-rays need ten seconds
    b. X-rays are not as dangerous as ultrasonics.
    c. ultrasonics takes less time and is less dangerous.
    d. ultrasonics will be more important to humans than the telephone.

9. In paragraph (3) the word "approximately" means
    a. more than
    b. similarly
    c. about
    d. completely.

VOCABULARY :

(A) Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the list. Use a word only once.
                                      (15 Points)

amplified	emerged	partial	threatening
annoyance	entire	porous	transplant
carried out	exposed	reverse	trapped
coated	inhibits	roamed	suffered
condenses	interval	burst	
deprived	involved	sealed	

1. The police _____ off the area where the crime took place. No one was allowed to get in.

2. Your suggestion provides only a _____ solution to the problem. The full solution is still far away.

3. You have pumped enough air into the tube, pumping in more air will cause it to _____.

4. When water vapour meets a cold surface, it _____.

5. The accident was not serious. The driver _____ only two broken fingers.

6. There is usually a ten minute _____ between classes.

7. I took the _____ amount of money for myself. I didn't give my brother any.

8. Four doctors were _____ in preparing the medical report; all of them took active part in it.

9. Water pipes are _____ with a thin layer of metal that fights rust.

10. The noise coming from the neighbourhood caused me a great deal of _____, I couldn't concentrate on my work.

(B) Multiple Choice :

Circle the letter of the best answer.

(20 Pts)

1. Some _____ , such as proteins, possess hundreds of atoms of several elements in their molecules.
   - a. elements
   - b. compounds
   - c. atoms
   - a. sonics

2. A liquid turns into a gas in a _____ known as vaporization.
   - a. substance
   - b. process
   - c. product
   - a. type

3. Oxygen is _____ to life, it is needed by the body cells of all animals.
   - a. powerful
   - o. vital
   - c. capable
   - a. active

4. Copper Sulphate is _____ of three elements.
   - a. used
   - b. consisted
   - c. obtained
   - a. composed

5. Industrial _____ is one of the sources of pollution.
   - a. amplitude
   - o. waste
   - c. pollen
   - a. transplant

6. Walls need to be properly _____ so as not to allow heat or cold to pass through.
   - a. demonstrated
   - b. insulated
   - c. substituted
   - a. produced

7. A _____ helps to speed up a chemical change.
      a. chemist   b. reaction
      c. catalyst   d. radical

8. In the process of refrigeration a cooling _____ is required.
      a. agent   b. product
      c. compressor   d. conductor

9. I will be glad to _____ you to my house when we move in.
      a. invite   b. provide
      c. share   d. destroy

10. Exterior electrical wires are usually _____ high in the air.
      a. decomposed   b. attracted
      c. contained   d. suspended

11. The room was so dark that nothing was _____ inside.
      a. lateral   b. similar
      c. visible   d. soluble

12. Smoke from factories _____ into the atmosphere.
      a. produces   b. disperses
      c. reproduces   d. dissolves

13. According to the _____ of gravity objects of high density fall faster than those of low density.
      a. principles   b. functions
      c. results   d. levels

14. Ali is very strong; he has the _____ to lift 200 kilograms.
      a. necessity   b. velocity
      c. density   d. ability

15. The exam is four weeks away; there is _____ time for you to study
      a. effective   b. sufficient
      c. continuous   d. wide

16. When we filter water, we remove the _____.
      a. impurities   b. qualities
      c. contents   d. solvents

17. Farmland which is not producing much needs to be _____.
      a. magnetized   b. neutralized
      c. fertilized   d. vaporized

18. The articles in this magazine cover a wide _____ of subjects. There are articles on science, history, geography, mechanics,
      a. change   b. range
      c. internal   d. title

19. _____ animals appear only at night.
      a. External   b. Artificial
      c. Gravitational   d. Nocturnal

20. Smoking has its bad _____; it can damage one's health.
      a. contexts   b. projects
      c. effects   d. reasons

(C) Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word from the list.

(16 Points)

avoid	dwellings	obvious	therapy
behave	emerged	originated	trapped
benefit	express	permanent	
combine	evaporated	persuaded	
conserve	extended	press	
consider	gills	released	
density	lack of	seeped	
diet	mobility	symptoms	

1. You should _____ taking different medications at the same time without consulting a doctor.

2. You should _____ the different alternatives before making the decisions.

3. Water _____ through the hole in the boat which then began to sink.

4. The perfume _____ because the bottle had been left open.

5. A child usually begins to get her _____ teeth at the age of eight.

6. You must attend all classes in order to get the full _____ of the course.

7. Your vacation has been _____ for another 2 weeks.

8. Because of the _____ sleep most of the students could not concentrate.

9. All the new _____ in the area were built by that company.

10. She lost the _____ of arm after the accident.

11. They _____ the teacher to change the date of the examination.

12. It is _____ from the results that the students have been working very hard.

13. Could you tell me how these stories _____? Who started them.

14. You can _____ heat by having your house properly insulated.

15. After the accident she had to have physical _____ to recover the use of her legs.

16. Children should _____ properly all the time.

17. The _____ of chicken pox are a fever, running
    nose and spots.

18. He couldn't _____ himself well enough to be
    understood since French was new to him.

19. To bake the cake you should _____ all the
    ingredients together and blend them well.

20. The prisoner was _____ after being in jail
    for two years.

Scientists now generally agree that the continents are not standing still, but are moving across the surface of the earth. This is called the theory of continental drift because the continents are drifting, i.e., moving slowly with no specific destination.

The idea is not new. Scientists first began to think about continental drift more than 200 years ago. They saw that the shape of the west coast of Africa was very similar to the shape of the east coast of South America. "Is it very possible," they asked, "that these two continents could have been together sometime in the past? Is it possible that they were once one continent and that they were separated somehow?"

"It is not possible," most scientists said. "It is not possible to move a continent 3,000 miles." Very few people believed in continental drift. "To move a continent," they said, "is as impossible as going to the moon."

For a long time the theory of continental drift wasn't thought about seriously because there was no proof. There was only the fact that the west coast of Africa looked like the east coast of South America. But during the last 50 years new evidence has been found which has made scientists think more seriously about this theory. The most important work was the exploration of the "Mid-Atlantic Rift." A 'rift' is an opening or a crack. Scientists discovered that there is an enormous rift in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. It goes along the floor of the ocean from Iceland in the north to Antarctica in the south. But the shape of the rift made scientists curious about continental drift. The shape of the rift is the same as the shape of the coasts of Africa and South America.

Other rifts were then discovered: one in the Pacific Ocean along the west coast of North America, one along the east coast of Africa, one along the western shores of the Pacific Ocean, and several other smaller ones. They found that the Atlantic Ocean is growing three inches per year because of the rift. These discoveries led to the theory of 'continental plates.' A plate is a flat surface that something can sit on. The continents are sitting on huge plates of rock. These plates are being pushed around the surface of the earth by the rifts. When one plate moves beneath the other, two things can happen: either one plate moves beneath the other, or one plate begins to fold. When the former happens, there is a very deep hole where one plate goes down beneath another. In these areas there are many earthquakes. When the latter happens, mountains are made. As Africa moves into the Mediterranean Sea and Europe, for example, the Alps were made. The Himalaya mountains are being made because India is moving north into Asia.

This is now the theory of continental drift: new rock comes up through the rifts like a volcano. The old rock is pushed away so the rifts cause the plates to move. The continents are sitting on the plates. The plates move; therefore the continents move too. The plates run into each other and this causes holes, or 'trenches,' and mountains to form. Finally, earthquakes are the result of one plate moving beneath another.

By the time the United States landed three men on the moon in 1969, many scientists believed in continental drift. "If we can go to the moon," one man said, "then continents can move."

Even when he was a teenager, Humphry Davy was interested in science, especially chemistry. He enjoyed experimenting with things at home, but he was a serious experimenter. He studied Lavoisier's Elements of Chemistry very carefully, which taught him about recent discoveries.

Davy became a lecturer at the Royal Institution at London when he was only twenty-two years old. For twelve years he remained at the Institution, amazing the scientific world with his discoveries. He seemed to be able to do anything. However complicated a chemical mystery was, people believed Davy could make it understandable.

One morning when an audience had come together in the lecture hall, they noticed Davy and his assistant preparing a box-like device on the table. Suddenly, the assistant touched something and the audience was surprised by a chain of white light that came from the box and crackled brightly in the air. Davy stood near the column of light and watched it closely. "This is the light from electricity," he announced. He reached under the table and brought out a small magnet which he placed near the crackling stream of light. The light curved. Wherever he placed the magnet, the light bent toward it. In this way, Davy produced the electric arc light for the first time in history. Today this is a common sight because of Edison's invention of the electric light bulb, but on that day it was amazing.

Davy was fascinated by his invention, which he called the electric battery. To learn the effect of electricity on the human body, he attached the battery to different parts of his own body. When his toungue was attached to it, a sour taste filled his mouth. When his eye was attached, he saw a flash of light.

One day he sent electricity through two glasses of water. Immediately bubbles of two different gases began to form and the water began to disappear. "Lavoisier was right," Davy told his audience. "Water is a compound of two gases--hydrogen and oxygen. The electricity has separated the liquid into its two parts."

Davy decided that if electricity could separate water into its simple elements, it could do the same to other substances. He knew that most materials are like water; that is, they include several elements combined together. For his next demonstration, he used potash. He melted the potash in a spoon, and connected the spoon to his battery. Instantly a beautiful sight appeared. A bright light was seen at one end of the spoon, and from another place a column of fire rose. As Davy watched, the liquid potash began to boil, and tiny droplets appeared in the spoon. He called this new element potassium. A few days later, he discovered sodium in the same way and soon he had added four more to the list of elements.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION : READING   ENG. 001

                              TIME : 2 Hours

I. QUESTIONS FOR PASSAGE # 1 :

Read passage No. 1 carefully and then answer the following
questions. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

                                              (20 Points)

1. A good title for this passage is ____.
        a. A Theory of Continental Drift
        b. The Coast of North America
        c. Africa 200 Years Ago
        d. Plates and Rifts

2. Scientists have been discovering evidence for continental
    drift since ____.

        a. the late 1700's
        b. around 1900
        c. the 1950's
        d. 1969

3. When one continental plate moves beneath another ____.
        a. a hole or trench is formed
        b. mountains are formed
        c. rifts are formed
        d. continents are formed

4. Scientists first thought of the theory of continental drift
    because ____.
        a. of the shapes of Africa and South America
        b. mountains were being made
        c. of the shape of the Mid-Atlantic Rift
        d. the continents were moving

5. Earthquakes are most frequent ____.
        a. near mountains
        b. in Africa and Europe
        c. where one plate goes beneath another
        d. along rifts

6. A rift is ____.
        a. a hole
        b. a hill
        c. a movement
        d. a crack

7. The plates move because ____.
        a. of the rifts
        b. of volcanoes
        c. of trenches
        d. the continents are moving

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8. According to the theory of continental drift ___.

    a. Africa and South America were never together
    b. Africa and South America were once together
    c. Africa and Europe were once togetner
    d. Europe and South America were once together

9. A trench is ___.

    a. a hole
    b. a crack
    c. an earthquake
    d. a rock

10. What can be said about the size of the Atlantic Ocean 50 years from now?

    a. It will be about 3 inches smaller than it is now.
    b. It will be 3,000 miles across.
    c. It will be about 150 inches larger than it is now.
    d. It will be about 15 inches wider than it is now.

QUESTIONS FOR PASSAGE # 2 :

Read passage No. 2 carefully and then answer the following questions. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

(20 Points)

1. How old was Davy when he left the Royal Institution?

    a. 22 years old.
    b. 34 years old.
    c. 12 years old.
    d. We do not know from the information in the passage.

2. What happened when Davy sent electricity through potash?

    a. There was light and fire.
    b. Tiny droplets became visible.
    c. The potash boiled.
    d. All of these.

3. When Davy was at the Royal Institution, he ___.

    a. gave interesting demonstrations
    b. invented the electric light bulb
    c. wrote Elements of Chemistry
    d. none of these

4. The passage tells us that Lavoisier ___.

    a. believed that water is a compound of two gases
    b. was the inventor of chemistry
    c. worked with Davy on chemical experiments
    d. proved that electricity can separate water

5. Most materials are like water because they _____.

   a. are liquids
   b. are simple substances
   c. contain more than one element
   d. were discovered by Lavoisier

6. The main idea of the first paragraph is that Davy _____.

   a. was a teenager
   b. began experimenting when he was young
   c. was well-educated
   d. specialized in chemistry

7. The main idea of the second paragraph is that _____.

   a. Davy made important discoveries at the Royal Institution
   b. Davy was able to do anything
   c. the Royal Institution is in London
   d. chemical mysteries can be very complicated

8. A magnet is a piece of equipment that can cause light to _____.

   a. bend
   b. curve
   c. crackle
   d. both (a) and (b)

9. Potash is _____.

   a. another name for potassium
   b. a simple element
   c. a substance containing potassium
   d. eaten with a spoon

10. To announce in paragraph 3 means to _____.

   a. notice
   b. say
   c. place
   d. invent

II. VOCABULARY (In Context)

(A) Use the given list of words to fill in each blank with a
    suitable word.

dwellings	pave	temporary	mobility	products
displayed	lack	rural	compete	consumes
squeeze	obvious	schedule	inventions	events
disasters	upset	absorb	recycled	prehistoric
flood	culture	curious	expand	vertical

(20 Pts)

1. Eskimos live in _____ called igloos.

2. When builders or engineers _____ a road, they
   usually cover it with stones, concrete, and asphalt.

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3. Living in the hostel is a _____ situation.
   Students will go home.

4. A vaccum cleaner _____ more energy than an iron.

5. The _____ manufactured in factories are quickly
   replacing hand made items.

6. Just as sportmen _____ to win matches, companies
   do so as well, to sell more products.

7. People who live in houses that are situated in _____
   areas benefit from fresh and unpolluted air.

8. His _____ of money forced him to ask the bank
   for a loan.

9. Buyers are attracted towards merchandise that are _____
   in a colorful and attractive way.

10. The lift holds 10 people, but we can _____ one
    more in if the person is thin.

11. It was _____ that the little boy had been crying
    because there were tears in his eyes.

12. I have no free time because my _____ is full. I
    work, take care of my family and study at school.

13. The light bulb was one of Thomas Edison's _____.

14. Special _____ or happenings are reported in the
    news everyday.

15. Many _____ are caused by earthquakes and floods.

16. The sweets that the little girl had eaten _____
    her stomach.

17. Plants growing in the ground _____ water,
    minerals and nutrients through their roots.

18. Pepsi and Mirinda bottles are _____. They are
    returned to the factory to be used again.

19. Dinasours roamed the earth during _____ times.

20. His _____ was affected for a long time after his
    leg was injured in the car accident.

(20 points)

(B) Use the given list of words to fill in each blank with a suitable word.

accelerated	identical	interpret	reflects
attracted	inverted	calculate	sufficient
available	lateral	affect	simultaneously
crest	frequency	medium	transmitted
diverging	considerably	merely	phenomenon
varieties	exhausted	strike	source

1. The invention of the computer has _____ the growth of industries.

2. Most of the books we need for the course are _____ in the library on the campus.

3. Do you have _____ money for all the things you need to buy or shall I give you some more?

4. Those unidentical twins have very _____ interests as well. One is active and loves sports, the other just loves to sit and read.

5. Those commas that are used to separate words that are spoken from the unspoken ones are called _____ commas because they are upside down.

6. _____ photographs are not accepted for passports. The picture should show the front view.

7. The way people behave usually _____ the way they have been raised.

8. My sister has just had a set of _____ twins. Everything about them is exactly the same.

9. I think that a volcano is the most frightening natural _____.

10. The mountain climber waved his flag when he got to the _____ of the mountain.

11. What is the _____ of your uncle's visits to your town?

12. Information on weather patterns is received and _____ all over the world by means of satellite.

13. I _____ told him to go to bed. I said nothing else to make him cry.

14. Her work has improved _____ since she came
     here, because she has been working very hard.

15. I'm afraid I cannot tell you the _____ of my
     information. I can't say who told me.

16. The two problems must be solved _____. You
     can't do one before the other.

17. I need someone to _____ those figures for me
     because I don't understand them.

18. The _____ of instruction in most colleges
     in the Kingdom is English.

19. The new working hours do not _____ doctors
     in any way. They will continue to work as they have always
     done.

20. I must _____ how much money I need for my
     travel before I go to the bank.

                                        (20 Points)

(C) Multiple Choise:

Circle the letter of the most suitable word.

1. Children are usually _____ and want answers to their
    many questions.
                    a. serious
                    b. suburban
                    c. crowded
                    d. impressed

2. Scientists use special apparatus to _____ samples and
    find out their composition.
                    a. analyze
                    b. limit
                    c. extend
                    d. glimpse

3. Most students come from _____ areas such as Riyadh and
    Jeddah.
                    a. tedious
                    b. continent
                    c. urban
                    d. physical

4. He was so angry that he could not think in a _____ way.
                    a. spherical
                    b. lateral
                    c. vertical
                    d. rational

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5. I _____ Sarah 10 Riyals which I took from her yesterday, for my lunch.
   a. borrow
   b. owe
   c. loan
   d. fee

6. The _____ Earth is the only place which life as we know it exists.
   a. plane
   b. planet
   c. sphere
   d. plant

7. The treasure was buried deep _____.
   a. abroad
   b. well
   c. underground
   d. planet

8. I cannot _____ that 300 SR dress because I only have 200 SR.
   a. abroad   b. avoid
   c. absorb   d. afford

9. Some _____ of oranges have no seeds in them. Those kinds are usually very juicy.
   a. vibration   b. varieties
   c. verbal   d. frequency

10. Telescopes are used to _____ objects which are far away so that they can be seen clearly.
    a. magnify   b. reflect
    c. medium   d. disturb

11. Many people were _____ on the site of the fire. They came from all over to help put it out.
    a. diverging   b. reflecting
    c. converging   d. striking

12. It is unsafe to stand under a tree when it is raining because lightening tends to _____ trees.
    a. reflect   b. strike
    c. attract   d. distract

13. The mechanic says he will take _____ one hour to fix the car.
    a. approximately b. considerably
    c. simultaneously d. frequency

14. Water is the _____ by which many diseases are carried from one place to another.
    a. source   b. variety
    c. crest   d. medium

15. What is the _____ mark for this examination?
    a. maximum   b. modify
    c. considerable   d. magnify

16. The students tried to _____ the teacher to postpone the date of the exam to a later one.

        a. complete
        b. persuade
        c. expand
        d. consider

17. The telephone is a fast way of _____ with someone.

        a. communication
        b. communicating
        c. communicate
        d. deal

18. The men were very _____ after travelling all day in the hot sun.

        a. inverted
        b. exhausted
        c. combined
        d. existed

19. The brothers are only brothers in name. They have nothing _____ .

        a. commonly
        b. merely
        c. in common
        d. simultaneously

20. He has to _____ his eating habits if he wants to lose weight.

        a. attract
        b. magnify
        c. modify
        d. assimilate

(10 points)

FINAL EXAMINATION : WRITING   ENGLISH 001

TIME : 1½ Hours

Write a composition on ONE of the following topics. Your composition should have at least four paragraphs (200-250 words).

Topic # 1 :

    A letter to a person you admire. Say who you are

    and why you are writing the letter.

Topic # 2 :

    An interesting place you often visited when you

    were young.

    Describe the place in detail; why was it interesting

    to visit?

Topic # 3 :

    Someone wants to know how food can be kept in good

    condition for a long time. Tell him/her how this

    can be correctly done.

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DEPT. OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
(ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER)
KING FAISAL UNIVERSITY
DAMMAM

NAME _____

ID# _____

WRITING 001

Write a composition of about 150- 200 words . Choose only one of the
following topics :

١) Write about a person you like most . Give a physical description
and discuss her/ his personality traits . conclude with your friend's
future plans .

O R

B) Write a narrative composition on how you spent your last Friday
organize your composition in a chronological order .

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NAME _____

ID # _____

FINAL EXAMINATION : LISTENING COMPREHENSION

TIME : 1½ Hours

PART - I :

(A) Directions : Write the number that you hear in each of
the blank spaces below. Use figures, not words. Each sentence
will be read two times.

1. Cairo has a population of _____.

2. Mary's birthday is on the _____ of January.

3. The temperature is _____ degrees centigrade.

4. Arabic is spoken by _____ people.

5. He lives on the _____ floor.

6. More than _____ books were in the library.

7. Time, a weekly magazine, sells _____ per issue.

8. It took her _____ minutes to finish the work.

9. Huda got _____ on her last exam.

10. The government spent more than _____ S.R.
to develop the roads in Dammam.

(B) Directions : Write the following abbreviations. Use capital
letters and periods where necessary.

1. _____   6. _____

2. _____   7. _____

3. _____   8. _____

4. _____   9. _____

5. _____   10. _____

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PART - II :

(A) Directions : Circle the letter of the best answer after you hear the instrument.

1. _____

     a. speed
     b. direction
     c. temperature

2. _____

     a. weight
     b. depth
     c. minutes

3. _____

     a. angular distance
     b. speed
     c. depth

4. _____

     a. weight
     b. humidity
     c. temperature

5. _____

     a. heat
     b. weight
     c. distance

6. _____

     a. distance
     b. angle
     c. altitude

7. _____

     a. hurricanes
     b. earthquakes
     c. floods

8. _____

     a. altitude
     b. longtitude
     c. lantitude

9. _____

     a. angle
     b. latitude
     c. speed

10. _____

     a. brain waves
     b. lungs
     c. heart beats

(B) Directions : Look at the calendar below, then listen to the questions and write short answers in the spaces provided. Each question will be read twice. Write your answers like the way shown in the example.

       EXAMPLE :   TODAY IS JANUARY 7, 1992.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DEC.31	1	2	3	4	5	6
(7)	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	FEB 1	2	3

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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PART - III :

(A) Directions : Write the time phrases that you hear in the
    blanks in the sentences below. Use words not figures.
    Each sentence will be read twice.

1. The students have a lunch break from ___ ___ to _____.

2. The plane will arrive at ___ ____ ___ ____

3. Plato was born at the end of the ____ ____ _____

4. At K.F.U. _____ of the first year students are
   medical students.

5. They came back from the party at ___ _____ _____.

6. He arrived at __ _____ __ _____.

7. The flight lasted _____ _____.

8. The class actually begins at ___ _____ _____ ___ _____.

9. The meeting atarts at _____ _____.

10. The student was _____ _____ late.

(B) Directions: Look at the two clocks below, then listen to the
    questions and write short answers in the spaces provided. Use
    figures not words. Each question will be read two times.

CLOCK "A"   CLOCK "B"

1. _____   4. _____

2. _____   5. _____

3. _____
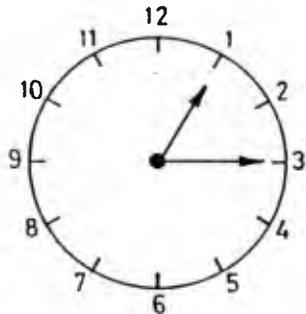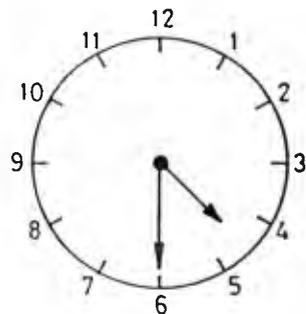
PART - IV:

Directions:

The instructions will be read only ONCE. Listen carefully.

     This is a bar graph showing the amount of money made by a company over the ten-year period from 1970 to 1980. Write the figures as you are instructed in order to complete the information on the graph.

Income
in
billions
of
Saudi
Riyals

1970 _____   _____   _____   _____   1980
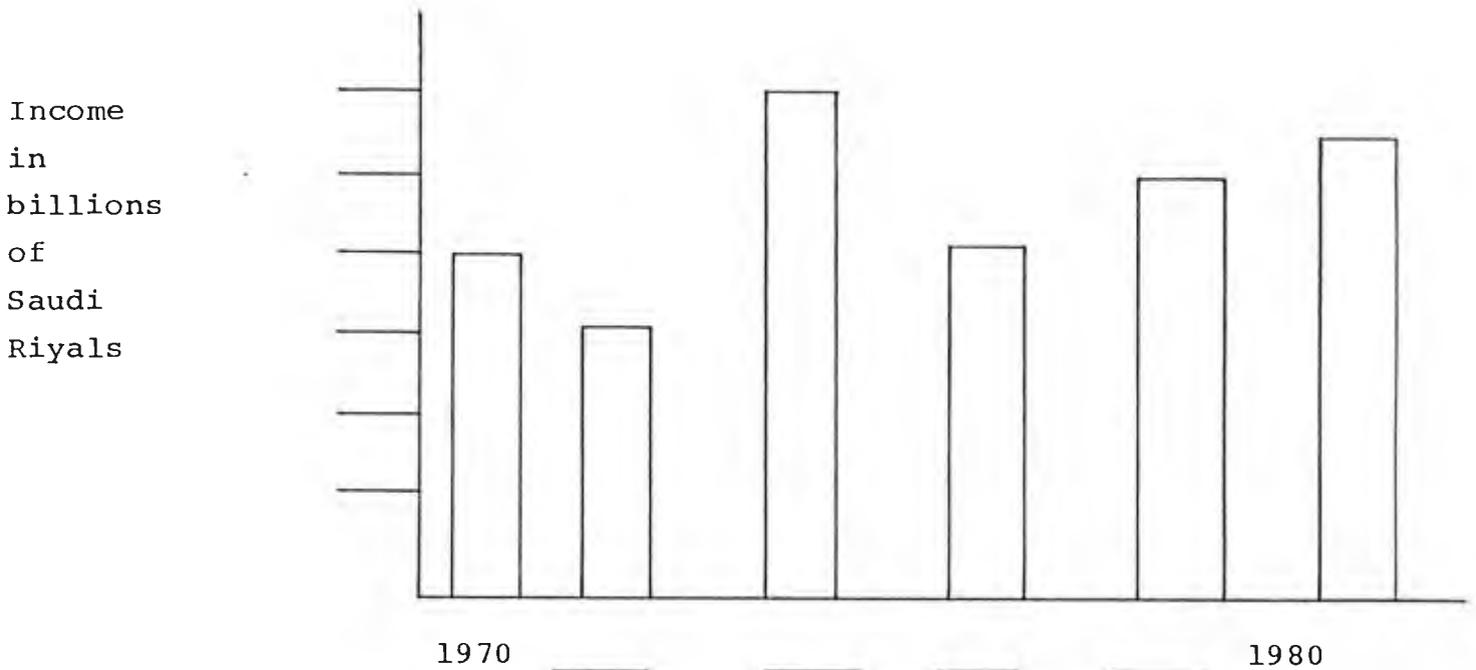
    Now write short answers to the questions you will hear.

1. _____   2. _____   3. _____

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PART - V :
(A) Directions :   In this part you will hear some short situations
and then be asked some questions. Circle the letter of the
correct answer. The situations and the questions will be read
two times.

1.   a. Northeast   b. Northwest   c. Southwest

2.   a. 10 a.m.   b. 11 a.m.   c. 11 p.m.

3.   a. March   b. June   c. September

4.   a. Wednesday   b. Monday   c. Friday

5.   a. 1977   b. 1974   c. 1976

(B) Directions: Listen carefully to each sentence and then write
it down in the space provided. Each sentence will be read two times.

    1.

    2.

    3.

    4.

    5.

PART - VI :
Directions: Listen very carefully as a short passage is read.
Take notes in the space below. Then answer the questions. The
passage and questions will be read two times.

Space for Passage Notes

Space for Passage Notes

Questions:

Q

1. _____

   _____

2. _____

   _____

3. _____

   _____

4. _____

   _____

5. _____

   _____

Appendix Five

-Table 4-

Frequency of Strategies Use

From interview

Strategy	Used %	Not used %
1.Clarification	42.5	57.5
2.Cooperation	42.5	57.5
3.Resourcing	82.5	17.5
4.Note taking	77.5	22.5
5.Summarizing	30	70
6.Self-monitoring	75	25
7.Inferencing	75	25
8.Translating	52.5	47.5
9.Imagery	67.5	32.5
10.Self-managment	70	30
11.Planning	67.5	32.5
12.Reviewing.	52.5	47.5
13.Sel.attention	62.5	37.5
14.Deduction	62.5	37.5
15.Substitution	80	20
16.Practicing	77.5	22.5
17.Grouping	67.5	32.5
18Self-evaluation	55	45

Correlation coefficients between strategy uses

```
40 observations
            S1         S2         S3         S4         S5
S1      1.0000
S2      0.3411     1.0000
S3      0.4129     0.4591     1.0000
S4      0.4786     0.4765     0.9643     1.0000
S5      0.4933     0.3714     0.2247     0.2875     1.0000
S6      0.4695     0.4674     0.9460     0.9618     0.2459
S7      0.4906     0.5274     0.9378     0.9713     0.2913
S8      0.0761     0.1384    -0.1340    -0.1649     0.0621
S9      0.3852     0.5451     0.7303     0.7466     0.3320
S10     0.3118     0.3850     0.2942     0.3282     0.3091
S11     0.3530     0.4817     0.6121     0.6216     0.0721
S12     0.3215     0.3621     0.4973     0.5458     0.2250
S13     0.4170     0.3793     0.2087     0.2629     0.4023
S14     0.2648     0.1606     0.4567     0.4686     0.2882
S15     0.4666     0.5077     0.9721     0.9706     0.2465
S16     0.4786     0.4765     0.9643     0.9609     0.2875
S17     0.2782    -0.0389    -0.2120    -0.0881     0.4193
S18     0.4313     0.3139     0.0380     0.0748     0.4226


            S6         S7         S8         S9         S10
S6      1.0000
S7      0.9529     1.0000
S8     -0.1941    -0.1791     1.0000
S9      0.6414     0.6756    -0.0781     1.0000
S10     0.3693     0.3099     0.0000     0.3203     1.0000
S11     0.6098     0.6376    -0.0322     0.4306     0.0472
S12     0.5029     0.4875     0.0280     0.6251     0.3355
S13     0.2579     0.2434     0.1384     0.2336     0.2229
S14     0.4597     0.4487    -0.1611     0.5212     0.1415
S15     0.9521     0.9817    -0.1503     0.7259     0.2983
S16     0.9426     0.9520    -0.0989     0.7466     0.3765
S17    -0.0409    -0.1031     0.0781    -0.0989     0.3203
S18     0.0734     0.0923     0.2520     0.2658     0.2766


            S11        S12        S13        S14        S15
S11     1.0000
S12     0.2837     1.0000
S13     0.0803     0.1950     1.0000
S14     0.3271     0.3486     0.0803     1.0000
S15     0.6056     0.5051     0.2414     0.4893     1.0000
S16     0.5833     0.5790     0.2629     0.4686     0.9706
S17    -0.1133     0.1533    -0.0584     0.0680    -0.1668
S18    -0.1096     0.4120     0.6278     0.1096     0.0947


            S16        S17        S18
S16     1.0000
S17    -0.1345     1.0000
S18     0.1869     0.0886     1.0000
```

Table (5.1) Frequency of strategy use & Proficiency from interview (percentage in brackets)

Strategy	Proficiency				
	50- n=2	60- n=5	70- n=11	80- n=14	90- n=8
s3			11(100.0)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s15			10(90.9)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s4			9(81.8)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s16			9(81.8)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s6			8(72.7)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s7			8(72.7)	14(100.0)	8(100.0)
s10	1(50.0)	3(60.0)	4(36.4)	12(85.7)	8(100.0)
s9		1(20.0)	5(45.5)	13(92.9)	8(100.0)
s17	2(100.0)	5(100.0)	4(36.4)	9(64.3)	7(87.5)
s11	1(50.0)		7(63.6)	11(78.6)	8(100.0)
s14	2(100.0)		5(45.5)	10(71.4)	8(100.0)
s13		4(80.0)	4(36.4)	9(64.3)	8(100.0)
s18		4(80.0)	2(18.2)	8(57.1)	8(100.0)
s12		1(20.0)	3(27.3)	9(64.3)	8(100.0)
s8		4(80.0)	2(18.2)	6(42.9)	7(87.5)
s2			2(18.2)	7(50.0)	8(100.0)
s1		1(20.0)	1(9.1)	7(50.0)	8(100.0)
s5		2(40.0)		2(14.3)	8(100.0)

## Figure (3.1) Percentage of strategy use & proficiency from interview

Proficiency >70   Proficiency <70
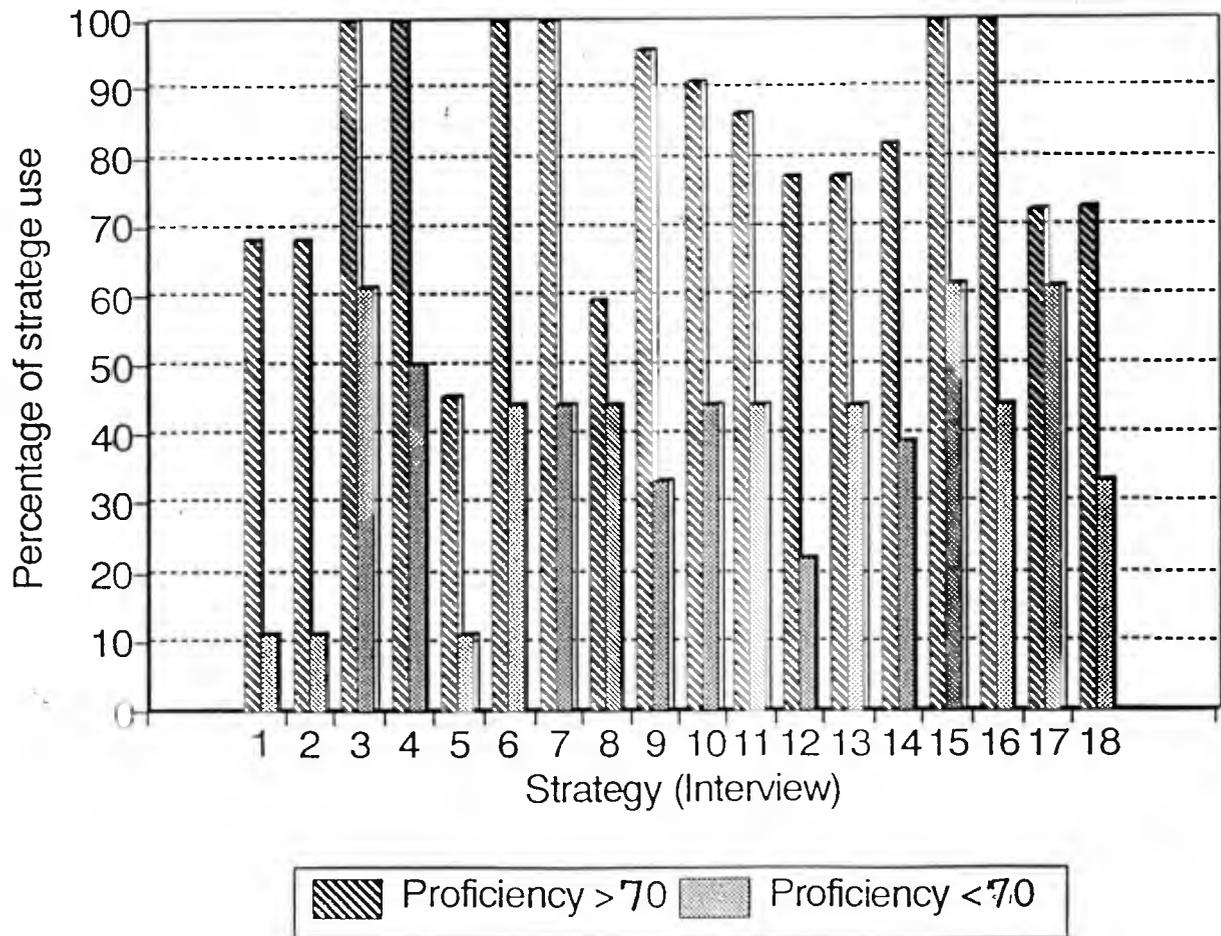
Table (11.1) Strategy use & living in an English language environment
(Percentage in brackets)

	Yes (n=13)		No (n=27)		
Strategy	Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	Uses 1 & 2	Uses 3 & 4	Significance
1	4 (30.8)	9 (69.2)	20 (74.1)	7 (25.9)	*
2	1 (7.7)	12 (92.3)	22 (81.5)	5 (18.5)	**
3	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	7 (25.9)	20 (74.1)	NS
4	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	9 (33.3)	18 (66.6)	*
5	5 (38.5)	8 (61.5)	23 (85.2)	4 (14.8)	**
6	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	10 (37.0)	17 (63.0)	*
7	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	10 (37.0)	17 (63.0)	*
8	2 (15.4)	10 (76.9)	14 (51.8)	13 (48.1)	NS
9	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	14 (51.9)	13 (48.1)	**
10	2 (15.4)	11 (84.6)	10 (37.0)	17 (63.0)	NS
11	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	13 (48.1)	14 (51.8)	**
12	1 (7.7)	12 (92.3)	18 (66.7)	9 (33.3)	**
13	2 (15.4)	11 (84.6)	15 (55.6)	12 (44.4)	*
14	1 (7.7)	12 (92.3)	14 (51.9)	13 (48.1)	*
15	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	8 (29.6)	19 (70.4)	NS
16	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	9 (33.3)	18 (66.6)	*
17	3 (23.1)	10 (76.9)	11 (40.7)	16 (59.3)	NS
18	1 (7.7)	12 (92.3)	17 (63.0)	10 (37.0)	**

Use 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often, 4 = Always
** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, NS none significance

Figure (7.1) Percentage of strategy use & living in an English language environment
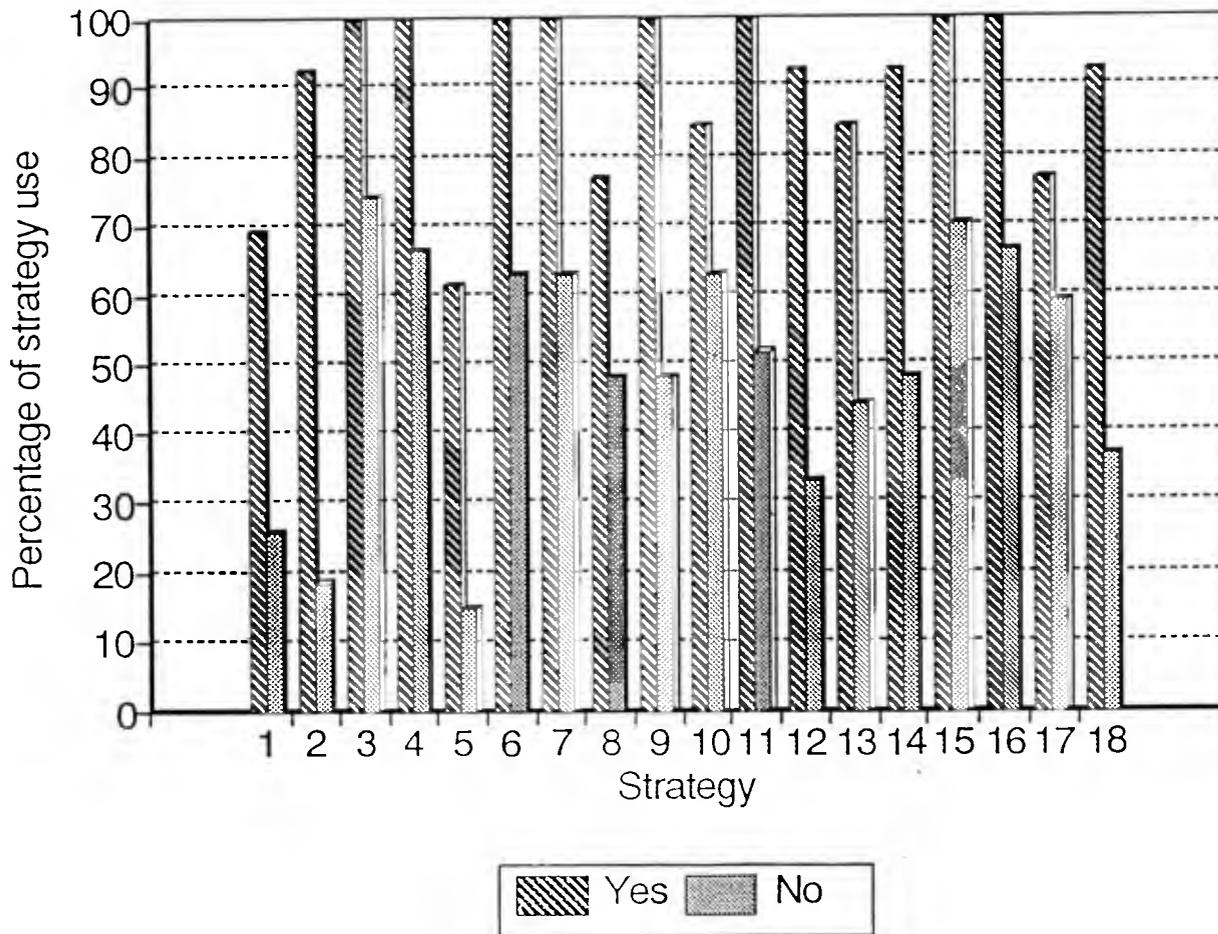
Appendix Six

The Scores of Proficiency

ID	STRUC	WRIT	READ	LISTN	AVERAGE
1	84	77	81	91	83.25
2	64	65	75	79	70.75
3	74	71	76	80	75.25
4	80	56	35	71	60.50
5	77	67	79	71	73.50
6	88	80	92	91	87.75
7	68	67	68	85	72.00
8	91	83	94	96	91.00
9	83	78	90	81	83.00
10	90	68	98	92	92.00
11	83	82	96	92	88.25
12	70	61	60	65	64.00
13	94	91	97	90	93.00
14	60	50	52	53	53.75
15	78	66	65	86	78.75
16	75	63	90	84	75.50
17	83	76	92	82	83.25
18	83	74	84	89	82.50
19	84	81	91	92	87.00
20	64	61	58	62	61.25
21	80	72	79	67	74.50
22	94	84	95	92	91.25
23	88	84	85	89	86.50
24	82	96	88	83	84.75
25	51	51	60	59	57.75
26	76	74	81	77	77.00
27	82	74	80	80	79.00
28	90	89	87	88	88.50
29	91	91	89	90	87.75
30	73	72	77	75	74.25
31	93	91	92	93	92.25
32	95	92	96	94	94.25
33	63	65	64	64	64.00
34	93	80	91	88	88.00
35	87	85	87	89	87.00
36	87	75	88	87	84.25
37	71	73	68	72	71.00
38	90	85	90	96	91.50
39	93	90	94	95	93.00
40	65	53	62	64	63.50

40 observations
Correlations

	Q3S18	Q4S8	Q4S15	Q5S5	Q5S10
Q3S18	1.0000				
Q4S8	0.3472	1.0000			
Q4S15	0.0503	-0.2253	1.0000		
Q5S5	0.3728	0.1857	0.0546	1.0000	
Q5S10	0.0658	0.0328	0.0818	0.3095	1.0000
Q5S11	0.1234	0.0882	0.4537	0.1048	0.0116
Q6S1	0.3710	0.2101	0.3034	0.4304	0.3421
Q6S2	0.3710	0.3114	0.4299	0.3200	0.3421
Q6S4	-0.0060	-0.2727	0.7783	0.0915	0.1698
Q6S12	0.3472	0.1980	0.2753	0.2950	0.3605
Q7S9	0.3380	-0.0187	0.4537	0.3378	0.2446
Q7S16	0.1143	-0.1529	0.7783	0.0915	0.3005
Q8S3	-0.0198	-0.3063	0.9211	0.0144	0.1292
Q9S7	0.0580	-0.2023	0.8660	0.1260	0.1260
Q10S13	0.4411	0.1939	0.1291	0.3944	0.1690
Q14S14	0.1297	-0.0129	0.3873	0.2817	0.1690
Q15S17	-0.0912	0.1951	-0.3469	0.3378	0.3611
Q16S6	0.0580	-0.2023	0.7217	0.1260	0.3780

	Q5S11	Q6S1	Q6S2	Q6S4	Q6S12
Q5S11	1.0000				
Q6S1	0.3806	1.0000			
Q6S2	0.4886	0.3862	1.0000		
Q6S4	0.5209	0.2210	0.3421	1.0000	
Q6S12	0.1951	0.2101	0.5140	0.3267	1.0000
Q7S9	0.3162	0.2726	0.4886	0.5209	0.6226
Q7S16	0.3931	0.3421	0.3421	0.7133	0.4466
Q8S3	0.5233	0.2629	0.3960	0.8549	0.3524
Q9S7	0.5855	0.3796	0.4964	0.7950	0.2601
Q10S13	0.1240	0.3526	0.2481	0.2010	-0.0129
Q14S14	0.2343	0.2481	0.1436	0.3246	0.2973
Q15S17	-0.1396	0.0567	-0.0513	-0.1182	0.0882
Q16S6	0.4623	0.3796	0.3796	0.7350	0.2601

	Q7S9	Q7S16	Q8S3	Q9S7	Q10S13
Q7S9	1.0000				
Q7S16	0.5209	1.0000			
Q8S3	0.5233	0.8548	1.0000		
Q9S7	0.3390	0.6567	0.7977	1.0000	
Q10S13	0.1240	0.0773	0.0510	0.1491	1.0000
Q14S14	0.4548	0.3246	0.3228	0.2683	-0.0667
Q15S17	-0.1396	-0.2461	-0.3196	-0.1541	0.0138
Q16S6	0.3390	0.7950	0.7977	0.7333	0.2683

	Q14S14	Q15S17	Q16S6
Q14S14	1.0000		
Q15S17	0.1240	1.0000	
Q16S6	0.2683	-0.0308	1.0000

logo