GENERAL CONCLUSION

The purpose of these brief concluding remarks is to put the work into its proper perspective. Since the research work aimed to find out the role of translation within a learning strategy framework, the description of the background of language learning strategies in general was considered necessary. It also entailed the proper establishment of translation as a learning strategy within a well developed taxonomy of language learning strategies. Being a nascent field, strategy research is still grappling with the problems of definition and classification. Evidently, a need was felt to reconsider the existing classification schemes and an attempt was made to present a revised taxonomy based on earlier work. In the process, translation or use of L1 in the learning of L2 emerged as a substrategy or tactic within the important macrostrategy of elaboration. Elaboration, along with selection/deletion (another macrostrategy) was found and demonstrated to govern all cognitive processing of information. In fact, elaboration is already recognized as one of the most potent strategies in cognitive psychology, of which L1 use is a specific manifestation. This presents L1 use as one of the fundamental strategies of learning, a point which was not clear from earlier taxonomies.
Presenting a revised taxonomy and proposing translation as one of the important and basic strategies within it, was the first focal point of this study. The second was the empirical study which provides evidence for what was theoretically posited earlier through a revised taxonomy. Use of the mother tongue has had an almost ubiquitous presence ever since the teaching of foreign and second language began. It continued to be prevalent till almost the middle of the present century, before the advent of the Audiolingual Method. During the hey-day of Contrastive Analysis it acquired a prominent status; albeit, mostly a negative one, and was widely condemned as the root of "interference". Subsequently, it disappeared from the scene along with CA for a short time. Contrastive Analysis re-emerged, however, in the 1980s; this time with a different orientation, with an emphasis on the facilitative role of L1. Around the same time, the positive role of the L1 began to be acknowledged widely by ESL practitioners, and various informal experiments were enthusiastically carried out to test the efficacy of L1-based strategies.

However, little empirical evidence came along to corroborate these theoretical postulates. There were but a few findings which showed a preference on the part of early level learners to use L1-based strategies (O'Malley et al. 1985a, 1985b; Del Mar et al. 1982). Only a single study was found (Kobayashi and Rinnert 1992) to have shown that L1-
based strategies are specifically beneficial for beginning level students. Hence, there was an urgent need to validate this fact through empirical research.

The present study has corroborated the findings of the above studies and has also extended them to an extent by demonstrating that L1-based strategies reduce the heterogeneity of proficiency levels in an ESL classroom, and hence, can ensure more effective teaching. It has also demonstrated that the use of translation strategies is definitely beneficial for the teaching of lexis and phrasal expressions; but it did not prove to be the same for grammar, indicating the need for further research in the use of translation with grammar and other tasks. The significance of the study lies in the fact that what was theoretically proposed earlier in the work as a potent strategy through a revised strategy classification, was also empirically proved to be so.

Though the study recommends use of translation and other L1-based strategies in the teaching of ESL, it would like to reiterate its caution regarding a very judicious and limited use of L1 in the classroom. The decision to use L1-strategies should rest in the hands of experts, both at the level of classroom presentation as well as curriculum design.
Finally, the approach must be understood to be in keeping with current theoretical viewpoints; since, based on his own research and that of his fellow-workers, Cummins (1984) has proposed that transfer of knowledge and skills from L1 to L2 takes place at all levels in academic settings. This underscores the importance of employing L1-based strategies in the teaching of ESL especially in a country like India, where English is chiefly taught as a medium of instruction for academic disciplines, rather than for oral interaction.