CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter some of the early studies on learning strategies in Second Language Acquisition are discussed. After the 1970's there has been considerable growth in research activity in the field of second language learning, in particular in language learning strategies.

According to Cohen (1998) efforts were taken to explore the strategies that learners of a second language deploy either when learning a language or when using a language or both. This effort has stemmed from four often-cited books (Naiman et al 1978, O'Malley and Chamot 1990, Wenden and Rubin 1987, Oxford 1990).

2.2   STRATEGY – AN EXPLANATION

Brown (1987, p79) states

Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. They are contextualized "battle plans" that might vary from moment to moment or day to day or year to year. Strategies vary intraindividually; each of us has a whole host of possible ways to solve a particular problem

and we choose one – or several of those in sequence – for a given problem.

The term 'strategy' is indispensable in any discussion on learning. The learner's mind is not a clean and blank slate on which the teacher writes. The learner has his own preconceived notions and methods of analyzing the instruction in the process of learning. These methods may be used unconsciously by the learner.

According to Willing (1998) learning is more specifically depicted as an active process engaged in by the learners who employ a number of means to achieve the goal. The term 'strategy' in the context of learning refers to what has been mentioned above as means.

Willing also gives an apt metaphor to explain the meaning of the term 'strategy'. In a military context, wherein the idea of a struggle, difficulty or some hindrance to the achievement of a goal is there, an appropriate mode of attack is needed. This metaphor clearly shows the situation which the adult learner faces in the language learning situation. In order to deal with such situation, it is inevitable that any learner will need to use strategies.

2.3   LEARNING STRATEGY

Learning strategy in the research study refers to the strategies which learners use in order to enhance their learning. The research on learning strategies began with the notion that special learner techniques or strategies might assist Second Language Acquisition. Rubin (1975) suggested that the "good language learner" might be doing something special or different that the other learners could learn from. Rubin's work anticipated what cognitive psychologists were realizing independently, that competent individuals are effective because of special ways of processing information.

Rubin also suggested that these strategies are not the preserve of highly capable individuals, but could be learned by others who had not discovered the strategies on their own. This notion contrasts sharply with the idea that effective language learners have good 'aptitude' or 'ear' or 'inherent ability' for language learning.

The literature on learning strategies in Second Language Acquisition emerged from a concern for identifying the characteristics of effective learners. Research efforts concentrating on the "good language learner" (Naiman et al 1978, Rubin 1975) had identified strategies reported by students or observed in language learning situations that appear to contribute to learning. These efforts demonstrated that students do apply learning strategies while learning a second language.

2.4   REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON LEARNING STRATEGIES

For the past twenty-five years learning strategy has been one of the fertile areas of research in language learning. This research has evolved from compiling simple lists of effective strategies (early research) to developing sophisticated methods of data gathering and analysis (later research).

The early research comprises the work of Wong-Fillmore (1979) and a group of Canadian researchers. This research suggested that more effective language learners might differ from less effective learners primarily in the ways that they approach learning.

The later research, applied research on language learning strategies, investigates the feasibility of helping students become more effective language learners by teaching them some of the learning strategies used by an effective language learner.

2.4.1   Wong-Fillmore Study

As cited in Skehan (1989), Wong-Fillmore (1979) studied the interaction of five Mexican children with their American peers for a period of nine months. The interaction resulted in the increase of communicative competence in English in the Mexican children. She identified three social strategies, and five cognitive strategies that the children used during the interaction, as represented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Wong-Fillmore Study

Social Strategies	Cognitive Strategies
S-1 Join a group and act as if you understand what's going on, even if you do not.	C-1 Assume what people are saying is irrelevant to the situation at hand.
S-2 Give the impression with a few well–chosen words that you speak the language.	C-2 Get some expression you understand, start talking.
S-3 Count on your friends for help.	C-3 Look for a recurring part in the formulas that you know.
	C-4 Make the most of what you have got.
	C-5 Work on the big things first. Save the details for later.

Wong-Fillmore, Children's LLS (Skehan 1989, p74).

In the above table the social strategy S1 is linked to the cognitive strategy C1. S2 matches with the rest of the cognitive strategies. This means the combinations of the social and cognitive strategies in the hitherto discussed fashion can be applied for effective language learning. When the cognitive strategies referred here in the table are used the learner actually is able to convey the meaning of whatever he wanted to convey, though not in

structured sentences. From the description of the cognitive strategies in the above table the researcher is able to see that cognitive strategies allow manipulation of the learning material.

2.4.2   The "Toronto" Study

A group of Canadian researchers contributed widely to the study of learning strategies. Rubin (1975), Naiman et al (1978) and Stern (1975) introduced the notion of the Good Language Learner (GLL). According to them, GLLs learn languages in special or different ways by using appropriate strategies. Their investigation of learning strategies in the second language acquisition literature focused on describing strategies used by successful second language learners. This research occurred independently of the cognitive movement that dominated the late 70's and 80's.

Research efforts concentrating on the GLL by Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al (1978) have identified strategies through student report or through observation in language learning situations that appears to contribute to learning. These efforts demonstrate that students do apply learning strategies while learning a second language and these strategies can be described and classified.

Rubin (1987, p22) says that learning strategies "are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly." Rubin's (1975) observation of language learning situations led her to describe "good" language learners in terms of personal characteristics, steps and strategies. Given below are Rubin's "good language learner" characteristics.

1)   Willing and accurate guesser
2)   Strong drive to communicate

3)   Uninhibited

4)   Attends to form

5)   Practices - seeks out conversations

6)   Monitors own speech and the speech of others

7)   Attends to meaning

The "Toronto" study of the good language learners demonstrated that students do apply learning strategies while learning a second language, and that these strategies can be described and classified.

Rubin (1981) proposed a classification scheme that subsumes learning strategies under two primary groupings.

a)   The first primary category consists of strategies that directly affect learning. It includes clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive reasoning, detective reasoning and practice.

b)   The second primary category consists of strategies that contribute indirectly to learning. It includes creating practice opportunities and using production tricks such as communication strategies.

An alternative scheme proposed by Naiman et al (1978) contained five broad categories of learning strategies: an active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring of second language performance.

Stern (1975) identified the following strategies used by GLLs: planning strategy, active strategy, empathic strategy, formal strategy,

experimental strategy, semantic strategy, practice strategy, communication strategy, monitoring strategy and internalization strategy.

Rubin (1981) based her strategies on fairly extensive data collection in varied settings, which included about fifty hours of class room observation, observation of a small group of students working on a strip story, analysis of self reports from a few students instructed to write down what they did to learn a second language and analysis of daily journal entries of two students who were directed to report on strategies after having been given strategy examples.

She has listed strategies like clarification or verification with the peers or the teacher when in doubt, monitoring one's own learning, memorization strategies, guessing or inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning and practice strategies.

Reiss (1985) has listed strategies such as monitoring one's own learning, attention to form and attention to meaning.

Naiman et al (1978) based their classification scheme on interviews with thirty four good language learners and an initial strategy scheme suggested by Stern (1975). They have listed strategies like active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands and monitoring of the performance of the second language.

Though the Toronto study produced different inventories of language learning strategies, the list comprises more or less similar categories divided up in different ways. With this list some basic sets of strategies which the GLL is likely to deploy can be arrived at.

2.4.2.1   The Good Language Learner Studies

Good language learners pay attention to the formal properties of the second language. They see language as a formal system with rules and relationships between language forms and meanings. They compare their second language with their mother-tongue and analyze these formal features. They develop the techniques of practice and memorization. They monitor carefully their own and others' speech as well.

Naiman et al (1978) have discussed about the strategy of translation. Learners often use translation (translating to their mother-tongue) as a learning strategy to comprehend, remember, and use a foreign language. It has been used to facilitate language learning. Naiman et al (1978) aimed to identify strategies used by GLLs and found that one of the strategies often used by GLLs was to refer back to their native language(s) judiciously and make effective cross-lingual comparisons', at different stages of language learning.

The GLLs show active involvement in their language learning. They are clear about their goals. They practice and manage their learning process. Thus Stern (1975) lists 'planning strategy' and 'active strategy' and Naiman et al (1978) talk of 'active task approach'.

The GLLs employ social learning strategies. They seek an opportunity to communicate with the users of the second language. In spite of their limitation in linguistic ability, they use communication strategies. In this regard Rubin (1975) lists 'strong drive to communicate' and 'ready to risk making mistakes'. Stern (1975) lists 'communication strategy' which he defines as willingness to use language in real communication. Naiman et al (1978) talk of realization of language as a means of communication and interaction.

The GLL uses affective strategies, that is, they cope with the emotional and motivational problems of language learning. Rubin (1975) lists 'readiness to risk making mistakes', Naiman et al (1978) talk of 'management of affective demands' etc.

The GLLs also attend to meaning. All the studies discussed so far indicate the use of this strategy – willing to attend to meaning in social context (Rubin 1975), semantic strategy – constant search for meaning (Stern 1975), attention to meaning (Reiss 1985). Naiman et al (1978) reported that GLLs emphasized fluency (attention to meaning) in the early stages and focused on the form later.

Thus the GLLs are able to adapt to the learning situation, exploit their strengths and weaknesses, use a number of language learning strategies and are likely to be interested in the communicative value of language learning (MacIntyre and Noels 1994).

The GLL studies, therefore, have proved fruitful in that they provide rich insights into the kinds of behaviors associated with effective language learning.

2.4.3 Bialystok

Bialystok (1978) makes an attempt to account for the discrepancies in gaining language proficiency. Some individuals are more successful than others in mastering the language skills, some language skills can be picked up very easily by an individual while he may not find the other language skills very easy.

She developed a model of second language learning in order to understand the processes and factors involved in second language learning.

The model provides an account of language learning and identifies the factors relevant to successful second language learning. The model does not describe differences between language learners. It describes the ways in which learners in spite of their biological, social and other limitations learn the language.

In this model, Bialystok (1978, p71) defines learning strategies as "optimal methods for exploiting available information to increase the proficiency of second language learning." In the present model the strategies operate by bringing relevant knowledge that can aid in improving the performance of the language task. However the use of strategies is at the discretion of the learner.

The model is explained using four categories of learning strategies. They are inferencing, monitoring, formal and functional practicing. The model is organized on three levels – the input, knowledge and the output. Each of these is a stage in the language learning process and in the use of a second language. The language must be encountered or experienced (input), the information gained is stored in a form (knowledge) and used to comprehend the language and produce language (output).

This model provides a means of describing some processes that may actually occur during second language learning.

2.4.4   Wenden's Study

Wenden's (1983) research examined the strategies that learners use in order to direct their own learning. Wenden explored self-directed language activities in a variety of social settings. Wenden concluded that the self-directed activities could be characterized by certain questions the learners might pose to themselves that lead to the decisions about language learning practices.

Wenden focused on metacognitive strategies. According to her classification scheme the three metacognitive strategies are (1) knowing about learning (relating to what language and language learning involves), (2) planning (relating to what to learn and how to learn), and (3) self-evaluation (relating to learner's progress in learning and response to the language learning).

According to Wenden (1983) the unsuccessful learners' inability to learn is because they do not have an appropriate repertoire of learning strategies. The other factor which makes a learner unsuccessful is he may not be using the appropriate strategy for the task at hand. For example learning strategies employed by a language learner who wants to appear for a competitive exam could be different from strategies employed to improve his fluency in speaking.

Thus according to Wenden, the identification of the strategy that is needed and the strategy training would lead to better awareness in the effective use of the strategy.

2.4.5   O' Malley and Chamot

O' Malley and Chamot (1990, p1) defined learning strategy as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information." The strategies identified by O' Malley et al (1985) emerged from research in cognitive psychology (Brown et al 1983). They studied the use of twenty six strategies by learners of English as second language. They classified these strategies into three main categories depending on the level or type of processing involved. One of the most important findings is the distinction drawn between metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies.

"Metacognitive" is a term used in information-processing theory to indicate an "executive function". Advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, advance preparation, self-monitoring, delayed production, and self-evaluation and self-reinforcement are classified as metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation of learning after the language activity is completed.

Repetition, resourcing, directed physical response, translation, grouping, note-taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing, and questions for clarification are classified as cognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies are more directly related to individual learning tasks and allow direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials. They involve interacting with the material to be learnt, manipulating the material mentally or physically or applying a specific technique to a learning task.

A third type of learning strategy identified in the literature on cognitive psychology concerns the influence of social and affective processes on learning. Examples of social and affective strategies are co-operative learning, which involves peer interaction to achieve a common goal in learning and asking questions for clarification. Social and affective strategies involve interacting with another person to assist learning or using affective control like rewarding oneself and lowering the anxiety to assist a learning task.

2.4.6 Ellis

Ellis (1986), a researcher in the field of second language acquisition, broadly classifies strategies into three types. They are explained as follows.

1) Production strategies are used to produce language by an attempt to use one's linguistic system efficiently and clearly, with the least effort.

2) Communication strategies are those strategies which a learner uses to deal with problems that arise in any communicative act.

3) Learning strategies includes both the above discussed strategies. Learning strategies are employed by the learner with the intention of developing linguistic as well as sociolinguistic competence in the target language.

2.4.7 Weinstein and Mayer

Weinstein and Mayer (1986) are of the opinion that learning strategies have learning facilitation as a goal and are intentional on the part of the learner. The broad description of learning strategies may include any one of the following,

a) focusing on selected aspects of new information

b) analyzing and monitoring information during acquisition

c) organizing or elaborating on new information during the encoding process

d) evaluating the learning when it is completed

e) assuring oneself that the learning will be successful as way to reduce anxiety.

According to Weinstein and Mayer (1988) learning strategies are the behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process. Weinstein and Mayer discuss the strategies used by the learner involve both mental and behavioral aspects of the individual. The mental activities include the strategies which the reader uses to select and acquire the information from a text. These are termed cognitive strategies.

The other mental activities called metacognitive strategies help a reader in summarizing and interpreting his reading. These strategies help a learner in controlling and monitoring his reading process and in evaluating the outcome.

There is a set of behavioral activities which include the strategies that help a learner to regulate his affected state of mind. These are referred as affective strategies. They affect the motivation of the learners. The other behavioral activities called social strategies involve the learner's interaction with his peers, teachers and other individuals in the society.

2.4.8   Oxford

Oxford (1990, p8) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations." Oxford (1990) provides the most comprehensive classification of learner strategies. Oxford also draws a distinction between direct and indirect strategies.

Direct strategies are those strategies that directly involve the process of second language learning whereas indirect strategies provide indirect support for language learning.

The direct strategies to be applied to the four language skills are memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies (Refer to Figure A8.1, A8.2 and A8.3 in Appendix 8 for specific strategies). Memory strategies such as grouping or using imagery help students store and retrieve new information. Cognitive strategies like practicing, reasoning etc assist the learner to understand and produce the new language while compensation strategies (guessing strategies) facilitate comprehension and language use despite inadequacies in one's knowledge of the language. The purpose of all the three categories of direct strategies is comprehension.

Indirect strategies to be applied to the four language skills are metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies (Refer to Figure A8.4, A8.5 and A8.6 in Appendix 8 for specific strategies). Metacognitive strategies like planning and evaluating help learners control their cognition. Encouraging oneself, and lowering one's anxiety are affective strategies which help to regulate emotions, attitudes and motivations and finally social strategies which include co-operating with others, and asking questions to others help students learn through interaction with their peers. Each of these six strategy groups listed by Oxford (1990) consists of numerous strategies which interact with and support one another to produce learning.

Oxford suggests that all forms of strategies support all other forms of strategies and that the direct and indirect strategies work in tandem. Appropriate use of strategies increases the proficiency level and gives a greater confidence to the learner. Based on her classification scheme Oxford developed the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, popularly known as the SILL, a questionnaire that has been of great help in various research studies carried out to identify language learning strategies.

2.5   OXFORD'S STRATEGIES

According to Oxford (1990) cognitive and compensation strategies are used by learners to confront their learning. Cognitive strategies are used by learners to tackle the language input received from the teacher. Most of these students use the cognitive strategies of memorizing (repeating new words along with their learning) and translating (using first language as a base for thinking, understanding and for producing the second language).

Compensation strategies are used by learners when they perceive language gaps. Learners use strategies like guessing or inferencing the meaning of new words, from the available information and responded to clues or cues in the text and also those provided by the teachers as well as learners. The strategy of elaboration is used to explain the unknown with the help of the known. Apart from these strategies some students use strategies like speaking by answering in English or speaking in English interspersed with words from their mother-tongue for overcoming limitations.

Metacognitive strategies are used by learners to coordinate their learning process. Some students use the strategy of self-management to help themselves in the learning process. Some use the strategy of revising and reviewing to better their writing skills.

Apart from these strategies some use social and affective strategies and seek help from the peers and motivate the self encouraging one to do better by comparing and competing with one's classmates.

The existence of these distinct strategy typologies as discussed by the various writers show that there is a lack of a coherent, uniform and well accepted system for describing and classifying the strategies.

2.6   FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

A closer look at the research survey reveals the following.

1) Language learning strategies have learning facilitation as a goal and are intentional on the part of the learner.

2) Learning strategies are identifiable individual approaches to learning situations. Strategies are employed when there is a problem.

3) Learning strategies are conscious efforts made by the learner. They result in improved proficiency in the language.

4) Learners cope with the difficulties that are presented by language learning by using strategies.

5) It is assumed that successful language learners deploy effective strategies. The basic assumption of strategy research is that once the strategies of good language learners are identified, they can be made available and used by less successful learners to learn a second language successfully.

A review of the available research on strategies suggests that strategies contribute directly or indirectly to learning. It also suggests that language learning strategies are teachable, and therefore, limited English proficiency learners can be trained in the use of strategies to enhance their learning. It is suggested that there is a possible relationship between strategy use and success of second language learning. This led to the offshoot of the research effort in strategy instruction.

Grenfell and Macaro (2007) claims that the strategies learners use are accessible and can be documented. Some learners use strategies but some

use them more successfully than other learners. Strategies can be taught to the learners. Griffiths (2007) indicated that teachers regard strategy use as highly important. According to Griffiths there was a high level of accord between the students reported frequency of strategy use and the strategies which was considered important by the teachers.

2.7   IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING STRATEGY

Learning strategies are important in second language learning and teaching for two major reasons.

The first reason is the examination of strategies used by the second language learners during the language learning process helps us gain an insight into the metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective process involved in language learning.

The second reason which supports research into language learning strategies is that less successful language learners can be taught the use of strategies. The literature pertaining to learning strategies makes it abundantly clear that good/effective learners make use of these strategies to help them in the process of learning.

2.8   LEARNER STRATEGIES VS. LEARNING STRATEGIES

'Learner strategies' is often used interchangeably with 'learning strategies' in the literature to refer to the steps or techniques that learners use to understand and remember new information and skills. But Chamot and O' Malley (1994a) distinguished learner and learning strategies. The former refers to the strategies learners have developed on their own to solve language learning problems and the latter refers to strategies taught explicitly as part of instruction in second language contexts. Thus, learning strategies are always

an explicit process in language learning, whereas, learner strategies may be explicit or implicit depending on the degree of awareness with which the learners deploys them.

Learner strategies, by virtue of being developed by the learner himself, correspond to the learner's style of learning. Learning strategies, on the other hand, are taught by an external agent and so that they may or may not correspond to the learner's style.

Carver (1984) states that learning style relates to learner's style of learning, which is his/her conscious plans and these plans are realized as specific learning strategies. If the learning strategy taught corresponds to the learner's style of learning or if he develops the taught strategy to suit his style, then slowly the learning strategy becomes the learner's strategy.

The potential benefit of learner and learning strategies is in the development of the student's ability to become autonomous or self-regulated learners.

2.9   COMMON FEATURES OF LEARNING STRATEGIES

The literature survey shows us, that all learning strategies have certain features in common.

1) Strategies are specific actions or techniques used to learn a second language.

2) Strategies are observable and unobservable.

3) Strategies are consciously used and unconsciously used.

4) Some strategies are cognitive and some metacognitive.

5) Strategies affect the process of learning directly and indirectly.

6) The use of strategies depends on a number of factors.

7) Strategies are problem-oriented. Learners use them to solve a problem or task.

8) The uses of strategies develop the competence in LSRW skills and improve language proficiency.

9) Strategies are transferable and teachable.

10) All learning strategies are learner generated. They are used by language learners to improve their command of target language, and acquire proficiency in the target language faster and better.

11) All strategies rely on the background knowledge of the learner and his memory skills.

2.10   FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE STRATEGY CHOICE

No two learners necessarily make use of the same set of strategies. This accounts for the varying levels of language proficiency. A number of factors influence the choice of strategies. Many research studies were conducted to see the effect of such factors.

Ellis (1994) lists a range of factors that have been found to affect a learner's choice of strategies.

1) **Individual learner differences:** These include (a) beliefs about language learning, i.e., whether a learner learns a language to use it formally or he learns a language for its functional use, (b) learner factors like age, aptitude, motivation, personality, learning style, etc.

2) **Learner's personal background:** The use of strategies depends on the learner's social background. A professional learner might employ strategies effectively when compared to a first generation learner. Bernstein (1962) has already talked about Codes in which he explains that the use of language depends on the social background of the individual.

3) **Situational and Social factors:** Language learning takes place in a setting which comprises the society the classroom environment, the purpose of the learner, the tasks given to the learner, the language learnt and the status of the language being learnt. All these factors influence the choice of strategies.

The other factors which affect strategy use are

a) **Language being learned**: Chamot and her colleagues (1987) studied that the language being learned has an influence on the strategy that is used. They found that the students of Russian reported greater strategy use than the students of Spanish. Politzer (1983) discovered that the students of Spanish engaged in fewer positive strategies than did the students of the other languages.

b) **Duration:** Duration implies the number of years of language study. Politzer (1983) found that students at higher level use more positive strategies. The use of metacognitive and cognitive strategy varies across course levels. Chamot et al (1987) found that the cognitive strategy use decreased and the metacognitive strategy use increased as the course level increased.

Bialystok (1981) found differences in strategy use as learners advanced in French. Advanced learners used strategies relevant to the language task than did the beginners. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) discovered

that advanced foreign language students who had studied the new language for a minimum of four or five years used more communication-oriented strategies than did less experienced students.

c) **Learner beliefs:** Learner beliefs about learning dictate their approach to learning and the choice of specific learning strategies. Wenden (1987) also found that the learners who emphasized the importance of learning tended to use cognitive properties that helped them to understand and remember specific items of language, while learners who emphasized the importance of using language employed few learning strategies, relying instead on communication strategies.

Bialystok (1981) found that learners of French as second language believed that language learning involves formal as opposed to functional practice and this influenced their choice of strategies.

d) **Gender:** Politzer (1983) reported that females used social learning strategies more often than males. In a study of adult language learners, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) found that females reported significantly greater use of language learning strategies in four categories: general study strategies, functional practice strategies, strategies for communicating meaning, and self-management strategies.

e) **Affective variables:** Several affective variables are important in choice of language learning strategies: attitude, aptitude, motivation, language learning goals, personality traits etc. Bialystok (1981) found that learners' attitude was highly influential in the choice of language learning strategies than aptitude.

Motivation, along with attitudes is the prime determiner in language learning strategy choice (Gardner 1985). Oxford and Nyikos (1989)

found that of all variables measured, motivational level had the most influence on reported use of language learning strategies. Griffiths (2008) discusses the individual learner characteristics like motivation, aptitude, beliefs, style, personality, age, culture and genders of the learners and the language variables such as the functions of the language, grammar, method of learning and teaching, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, writing, use of strategies and strategy instruction as factors that may/may not contribute to learning.

f) **Language tasks:** The use of strategy varies according to the tasks the students are engaged in. To complete a vocabulary task a student needs to use metacognitive strategies of self-monitoring and self-evaluation and the cognitive strategies of resourcing and elaboration. A listening task leads to the use of metacognitive strategies of selective attention and problem identification as well as self-monitoring and to the use of cognitive strategies of note-taking, inferencing and summarizing as well as elaboration.

The study conducted by Abraham and Vann (1987), cited in O'Malley and Chamot (1990), between successful and unsuccessful ESL students resulted in stating that the 'good language learners' were more successful at orchestrating strategies to the task demands than the less successful learners, though the less successful learners did use as many strategies of the same type.

A study conducted by O'Malley et al (1989), cited in O'Malley and Chamot (1990), on listening comprehension by effective and less effective language learners, showed that the inappropriate use of strategies is due to the lack of understanding of task demands and of appropriate strategies to use for the task.

In another study conducted by Chamot et al (1987), Chamot et al (1988a, b), cited in O'Malley and Chamot (1990), it was found that the choice of the strategies by the different types of learners was determined by the type of task.

From all the above studies we can conclude that the difference in strategy use between 'good' and 'bad' language learners need not be only in the number of strategies used but also in the way these strategies are used. In spite of the fact that the choice of strategy depends upon various factors, it has been agreed that all learners make use of direct as well as indirect strategies in any learning condition. The differences lie in,

(a)   whether these strategies are conscious or unconscious

(b)   whether they are suitable to a purpose at hand

(c)   whether the learners are able to link the strategies and orchestrate them in an effective fashion

(d)   the extent to which the learner is aware of the control he can exert over his learning process.

2.11   METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING LEARNING STRATEGIES

The first step as we put strategies into action is to identify and diagnose students' learning strategies for the strategy training to be effective. Learning strategies are identified through various self-report procedures. Though self-report procedures are subject to error, this is the best possible way to identify learning strategies.

Self-reports are conducted through retrospective interviews, stimulated recall interviews, questionnaires, written dairies and journals, and think-aloud protocols concurrent with a learning task. Each of these methods

has limitations, but at present they are the only methods available to generate insights into the unobservable mental learning strategies of learners. As Grenfell and Harris (1999, p54) have pointed out,

> It is not easy to get inside the 'black box' of the human brain and find out what is going on there. We work with what we get, which, despite the limitations, provides food for thought.

In almost all learning contexts, the only way to find out whether students are using learning strategies while engaged in a language task is to ask them because observation does not capture mental processes. Although self-report may be inaccurate if learners do not report truthfully or cannot remember their thinking, it is still the only way available to develop some understanding of learners' mental processing.

a)   **Interviews**

In retrospective interviews, learners are prompted to recall a recently completed learning task and describe what they did to complete it. A stimulated recall interview is completed immediately after the learning task. For this reason it is more likely to accurately reveal students' learning strategies, when compared with retrospective interviews.

b)   **Questionnaires**

The most frequently used method for identifying learners' learning strategies is through questionnaires. Most recent studies have relied on a questionnaire developed by Oxford (1990), the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The SILL is a task independent questionnaire. Most of the descriptive studies have relied on this task independent

questionnaire. This instrument has been used extensively to collect data on large numbers of language learners (Olivares-Cuhat 2002; Wharton 2000).

The SILL is a standardized measure with different versions for students learning English as a second language and students of variety of other languages. As such it can be used to collect and analyze information about large number of students. It has also been used in studies to correlate strategy use with variables such as learning styles, gender, proficiency, level, culture and task (Wharton 2000, Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995).

Some studies have developed questionnaires based on tasks that students have just completed (Chamot and El-Dinary 1999, Fan 2003, Rubin and Thompson 1994). These studies suggest that if a task dependent questionnaire is to be used then the questionnaire should be completed immediately after the language learning task so that students will be more likely to remember and to report accurately.

c)   Think-aloud Protocols

Think-aloud protocols, also known as verbal protocol, can be used for individual interviews in which the learner is given a target language task and asked to describe his thoughts out loud while working on it. The interviewer may either make a record of the thought process or analyze for the evidence of learning strategies. The interviewer may prompt the learner with open-ended questions such as "What are you thinking right now?; Why did you stop and start over again?" while the learner describes his thought process.

d)   Diaries and Journals

Written diaries and journals have also been used to identify language learners' strategies. In these, learners write personal observations about their own learning (Carson and Longhini 2002). Rubin (2003) suggests

using diaries for instructional purposes to help students develop metacognitive awareness of their own learning process and strategies.

2.12   STRATEGY TRAINING

Strategy training is defined as the explicit teaching of how, when and why students should employ second language learning strategies to enhance their efforts at reaching language programme goals. (Cohen 1998, Ellis and Sinclair 1989).

Cohen (1998, p70) notes that 'the ultimate goal of strategy training is to empower students by allowing them to take control of the language learning process.' He outlines the two major objectives of strategy training.

1) to develop the learners' own individualized strategy systems.

2) to promote learner autonomy and learner self-direction and self-evaluation and to encourage learners to take more responsibility for their own language learning.

Second language learners need to be taught to use effective strategies and this requires training in strategy use. Research and theory in second language learning strongly suggest that good language learners use a variety of strategies to assist them in the process of learning a second language and gaining command over language skills.

Successful second language learners not only use task appropriate strategies, but they employ strategies in a flowing sequence that make the parts of the task easier to accomplish. They orchestrate strategies in an effective fashion. The strategies used by the good language learners once identified can be taught to less competent learners to make them good and effective learners. Here comes in the need of strategy training. Strategies

provide a carefully sequenced plan of learner behaviors designed to result in successful learning.

Investigations with language learners show that the most successful learners tend to use strategies that are appropriate to the material, to the task, and to their own goals, need and stage of learning. Proficient learners appear to use a wide range of strategies in a number of situations than do less proficient learners. Instruction in learning strategies empowers the learners to become efficient and effective learners.

Strategy instruction can contribute to the development of learner mastery and autonomy. Training should not only equip the learner with knowledge about a particular strategy, but it should also teach them when to use the strategy and how to monitor its use. Teaching not only the specific strategy but also by teaching how, when and why to use strategy can enhance strategy instruction.

2.12.1   Issues in Conducting Strategy Training

Oxford (1990) says that two issues are to be considered while conducting strategy training.

1) The trainer's knowledge on learning strategies is an important criterion. The more knowledge on language learning strategies, the better a trainer one can be.

2) The trainer's attitude about role changes in the class room. The trainer must understand that learners take more responsibility for their success in the language class room.

2.12.2   The Need and Scope of Strategy Training

There has been a shift in the teacher's role, from someone who controls the class to someone who facilitates the process of learning. With the advent of the Communicative Language Teaching method the learner is at the centre of teaching-learning process. This has created problems in a set up like ours where the teacher is looked upon as a role model. Not all language learners will know how to take a responsible role in their learning. It is the teacher who should train such students. The best strategy training not only teaches language learning strategies but also helps students take more responsibility for their learning.

The language learning strategies which the language learners use are the material for any strategy training program. The learners and teachers need to begin from an awareness of what are strategies and their effective use. Learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to know how to facilitate the process.

It is clear that students can be taught to use better strategies. Better strategies improve language performance. The unsuccessful learners' inability to learn may be because they do not have a repertoire of learning strategies. They are unaware of using an appropriate strategy for a task at hand.

The very act of identifying strategies by the learner would lead to awareness. Identifying strategies helps students develop metacognitive awareness as they describe their own process of thinking.

2.12.3   Consciousness-Raising Factor

Consciousness-raising among students is perhaps the crucial factor in strategy training. Consciousness raising calls for a shift in attitude about the

role of a language learner. Some learners assume the attitude of the passive consumer. He is of the opinion that it is the duty of the teacher to give him everything. If a learner changes his attitude and becomes aware of the learning process, he assumes an active role in achieving success. Learner training involves a shift from the view that the teacher and the method are responsible for the learner's success to one which sees the learner as ultimately responsible for a successful learning experience.

Success is now the product of careful planning and execution of a series of strategies that work for the learner. There may not be a single best way to learn given language material. Awareness on the part of the learner as to what does and does not work for them is the most important thing.

2.13   RESEARCH INTO STRATEGY TRAINING

According to Wenden (1987), the best strategy training is not only to teach learning strategies but also to make the learner take more responsibility for the change of role implied by the use of learning strategies. By altering their beliefs towards the change in role, the learners will be able to take advantage of the strategies they acquire from strategy instruction.

The above discussion on strategies shows that some strategies are observable and some are not. The strategies which are used consciously are easy to observe. Bialystok (1985) states that those strategies, which are under conscious control, are easier to identify, to discuss, to manipulate and to teach.

Further, since learners will vary in the aspects of the learning process which have come under their conscious control, teaching strategies that correspond to the aspects of learning that are conscious are most likely to

be effective. It is in these more conscious areas that the learner is most capable of effecting change and hence of improving.

Oxford (1990) states that informed strategy training involves three procedures:

(a) diagnosing the strategies that the learners already use by a think-aloud procedure,

(b) giving learners a few learning tasks and asking them to brainstorm on the strategies they use,

(c) introducing new strategies and providing plenty of practice.

According to Rabinowitz (1998) the learner should not only be provided with explicit knowledge regarding the strategy but the learner also needs to be provided with metacognitive knowledge concerning the value of the strategy and the context in which it should be used.

2.14   OXFORD'S TYPES OF STRATEGY TRAINING

Oxford (1990) has listed three different ways of teaching language learning strategies. They are awareness training, one-time strategy training, and long-term strategy training. The three types of strategy training are explained below.

(a)   Awareness Training

Awareness training introduces the learner to the concept of learning strategies. It is also known as consciousness-raising or familiarization training. Learners become aware of and familiar with the idea of language learning strategies and the way in which strategies can make them successful language learners.

(b)   **One-time Strategy Training**

One-time strategy training involves learning and practicing one or more strategies with actual language learning tasks. This training gives the learner information on the value of the strategy. One-time strategy training is appropriate for strategies that learners need in particular and can be taught in one or just a few sessions. Oxford opines that one-time strategy training is not as valuable as long-term strategy training.

(c)   **Long-term strategy training**

Long-term strategy training, like one-time strategy training, involves learning and practicing strategies with actual language learning tasks. Learners learn the importance of these strategies, when and how to use them, and how to evaluate the success of the strategy. Long-term strategy training is more prolonged and more effective and covers a greater number of strategies than one time training.

2.15   FRAMEWORKS FOR STRATEGY TRAINING

Researchers in the field of language learning strategies have identified various instructional frameworks for strategy training.

2.15.1   Strategies Based Instruction (SBI) (Cohen 1998)

Strategies-Based Instruction is a learner-centered approach to teaching that extends classroom strategy training to include both implicit and explicit integration of strategies into the course content. In a SBI classroom teachers perform in the following manner. The teachers

         (i)   describe, model and give examples of potentially useful strategies.

(ii) elicit additional examples from students based on their learning experiences.

(iii) lead small group and whole-class discussions about strategies.

(iv) encourage students to experiment with a broad range of strategies and transfer them to new tasks.

(v) integrate strategies both explicitly and implicitly into everyday class materials to provide for contextualized strategy practice.

2.15.2   Pearson and Doles' Instructional Framework

Pearson and Dole (1987) proposed a framework for strategy training. The framework includes explicit modeling and explanation of the benefits of applying a specific strategy, extensive functional practice with the strategy, and an opportunity to transfer the strategy to new learning contexts. The sequence includes the following steps.

(i) Initial modeling of the strategy by the teacher and giving a direct explanation of the strategy's use and importance

(ii) Guided practice with the strategy.

(iii) Independent practice with the strategy.

(iv) Application of the strategy to new tasks.

2.15.3   Oxford's Eight-step Model

Oxford (1990) gives an eight-step model for strategy training. The model assumes that the teacher has already assessed the learners' current learning strategies by any of the methods available. The model is especially applicable for long-term strategy training.

(1) Determine the learners' needs and the time available.

(2) Select strategies well.

(3) Consider integration of strategy training.

(4) Consider motivational issues.

(5) Prepare materials and activities.

(6) Conduct "completely informed training"

(7) Evaluate the strategy training.

(8) Revise the strategy training.

The first five steps involve planning and preparation of strategy training. The last three steps are about conducting, evaluating and revising the training.

2.15.4 Chamot and O'Malley's Framework (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach)

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) developed an instructional framework (CALLA). It is designed to develop the academic language skills of Limited English Proficient students. CALLA lessons include both teacher-directed and learner-centered activities. They specify three types of objectives.

1) Content objectives
2) Language objectives
3) Learning strategy objectives.

Each CALLA lesson is divided into five phases. They are preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and expansion activities. The phases are recursive in that the teacher may wish to go back to earlier phases

in order to clarify or provide additional instruction. The following brief description of each phase indicates how the three objectives can be developed in a CALLA lesson. Chamot and 0'Malley (1994b) in their CALLA handbook recommend that strategy instruction should include language learning strategies.

1) Preparation – The students' awareness is raised and the usefulness of their awareness in language learning situation is discussed with the students.

2) Presentation – In this phase new information is presented. Some students are taught to comprehend the new information. Explicit strategy instruction is given to the students to comprehend the new information.

3) Practice – The language learning strategies are practiced in this phase. This is a learner-centered phase. The teacher acts as a facilitator to help the student assimilate the new information.

4) Evaluation – The students check the level of their strategy use and the resultant performance. Evaluation activities can be individual, co-operative or self-directed.

5) Expansion activities –In the expansion activities of CALLA lesson, any combination of language learning strategies appropriate to the language activities can be practiced.

In a CALLA lesson new learning strategies are introduced and familiar ones are practiced, so that the use of learning strategies to approach all kinds of tasks become an integral part of the class routine instead of a supplementary activity. In this way students have opportunities to practice the

strategies on actual lessons, and the use of the strategies becomes part of the class requirements and a daily topic for discussion. In all these five phases the teacher identifies and assesses the strategies students are already using, then explains the strategy and provides opportunity to practice it.

2.16   EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TRAINING

For the strategy training to be effective three factors are to be considered. They are 1) study the teaching context, 2) focus on language learning strategies in teaching, 3) reflect and encourage learner reflection. Each factor is explained in detail.

1)   Study the teaching context

The second language teachers should study their students, their materials and their own teaching. They must know their students' background, interests, learning style, motivational level, their goals etc. They must analyze the text book to see if it includes language learning strategies or language learning strategy training. They must include language learning strategies in their teaching and in the text book.

2)   Focus on language learning strategies in teaching

After studying the teaching context, second language teachers should focus on specific language learning strategies that are relevant to learners. As Graham (1997, p169) declares, language learning strategies training

> needs to be integrated into students' regular classes if they are going to appreciate their relevance of language learning tasks; students need to constantly monitor and evaluate the strategies they develop and use; they need to be aware of the nature, function and importance of such strategies.

3) **Reflect and encourage learner reflection**

It is useful for teachers to reflect on their own positive and negative experiences in second language learning. As Graham (1997) suggests, when teachers have thought carefully about how they learned a language, what language learning strategies they used for achieving success, they can best transfer it to their students. In addition the student should be encouraged to reflect on his process of learning both during and after the language learning strategy training in the class.

2.17   GOALS OF STRATEGY TRAINING

Cohen (1998) states the goals of strategy training. Strategy training aims to equip the learners with tools to,

(1)   self-diagnose their strength and weaknesses in language learning.

(2)   become aware of what helps them to learn the target language most efficiently.

(3)   develop a broad range of problem-solving skills.

(4)   experiment with familiar and unfamiliar learning strategies

(5)   make decisions about how to approach a language task.

(6)   monitor and self-evaluate their performance.

(7)   transfer successful strategies to new learning contexts.

2.18   KINDS OF STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

The research studies on the different kinds of strategy instruction are discussed in the following section. It throws light on whether instruction

in learning strategies should focus only on learning strategy instruction or should be integrated with class room instruction in the language.

(a)   Separate vs Integrated Instruction

Learning strategies can be taught separately as a course or can be integrated with classroom instruction as part of the curriculum. Chamot and O'Malley (1994a), Chamot et al (1999), Cohen (1998), Grenfell and Harris (1999), Nunan (1997), and Oxford and Leaver (1996) are of the opinion that integrated instruction provides students with opportunity to practice learning strategies with authentic language learning tasks.

However Gu (1996) is of the opinion that strategies learned within a language class are difficult to transfer to other tasks, individual strategies should be planned and taught. Vance (1999), and Weinstein and Mayer (1986) feel that it is easier to plan for one separate strategy course than to integrate it with classroom instruction.

(b)   Direct vs Embedded Instruction

In direct or explicit instruction learners are informed of the value and purpose of strategy training whereas in embedded instruction activities and materials are structured to elicit the use of strategies being taught but learners are not informed of the reason why this approach to learning is being practiced.

Explicit learning strategy instruction essentially involves the development of learners' awareness of the strategies they use, teacher modeling of strategic thinking, student practice with new strategies, student self-evaluation of the strategies used, and practice in transferring strategies to a new task. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have referred to the methodological

issue of whether strategy instruction should be embedded or direct, favoring direct strategy instruction.

Most recent studies have added a metacognitive component to training by informing students about the purpose and the importance of the strategies to be trained and providing instruction on the regulation and monitoring of strategies. The addition of this metacognitive component has been helpful in maintaining strategy use over time and in transferring strategies to new tasks (Brown et al 1986; Palincsar and Brown 1986). However, the transfer of strategies already used to new learning activities requires continued prompts and structured directions until the strategies become autonomous.

An advantage cited for strategy instruction embedded in instructional materials is that little teacher training is required (Jones 1983). As students work on exercises and activities, they learn to use the strategies that are cued by the text book. A criticism of uninformed strategy instruction of this type is that students who are not aware of the strategies they are using do not develop independent learning strategies and have little opportunity of becoming autonomous learners (Wenden 1987).

2.19   THE NEED FOR EXPLICIT STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

Educators can teach students to become more proficient readers by giving them strategy training. This approach is based on the belief that learning will be facilitated by making students aware of the range of strategies from which they can choose during language learning and use. The most efficient way to heighten learner awareness is to provide strategy training – explicit instruction in how to apply language learning strategies. In many instances, teachers guide their students through the use of strategies but fail to

name them, define them, or provide opportunities for students to practice or analyze them.

Duffy (2002, p30) defines "explicit teaching" from a view point that is particularly important for the consideration of the teacher. He states "explicit teaching uses 'strategy' to mean a technique that readers learn to control as a means to better comprehend." In contrast, he points out, the other approaches use 'strategy' to mean a technique the teacher controls to guide students' reading. There is no change in roles of a teacher and a learner, in the other approaches. This change in the roles is a feature of strategy training. Duffy also notes

> explicit teaching is intentional and direct about teaching individual strategies on the assumption that clear and unambivalent information about how strategies work will put struggling readers in a better position to control their own comprehension.

In embedded instruction the teacher guides the students through activities that require the use of a particular strategy, but does not inform the students that they are utilizing the strategy to practice it and generalize it to other uses outside the particular lesson. In direct instruction, however, the teacher informs the students about the anticipated benefits of using the strategy and then gives explicit instruction on how to apply and also transfer the strategy.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) notes that the various research studies indicate that embedded strategy instruction does not lead to transfer, but that direct instruction is linked to the maintenance of the strategies over time and their transfer to new tasks.

The case for direct or explicit instructions of strategies also has support from research on explicit instruction in first language reading conducted in the late 1980's by Duffy and his colleagues. These studies (Duffy et al 1986, Duffy et al 1987) found that explicit instructions of strategies help the learners become aware of strategies and use strategies in their learning.

Mendelsohn's (1994) advice for explicit strategy instruction is to

(i)   define the strategy

(ii)   model how the strategy is used

(iii) guide students in practicing the strategy

(iv)   give appropriate feed back

(v)   provide opportunities for practice

(vi)   help students assess the effectiveness of their strategy use

(vii) have students use the strategy in an authentic task

These instructional models, if taken by the teacher to the class room will allow the students to understand the strategy and how it is used, and provide opportunities to try out strategies in practice situations before using them on authentic language tasks.

2.20   THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

After studying the available research literature the researcher established a framework and a methodology for the research study. A detailed study of the literature helped gain insights into the learning process of successful learners and the value it could have in enhancing the learning of limited proficient students.

Accordingly the research study was planned to investigate the feasibility of helping students become more effective learners by teaching them some of the learning strategies to improve their writing skills. The importance of the writing skill for the students chosen for the study was exemplified in chapter1. It was decided to make the students aware of language learning strategies, which they have hitherto been using and brought with them to the English classroom. For this a questionnaire adapted from Oxford (1990) and modified by the researcher was used.

The aim of the researcher was to begin the study with the students' input. The researcher decided to conduct interviews with the students to identify the strategies the students were using. Out of the identified strategies two strategies were chosen for strategy training. Based on the classification of strategies in the research studies the chosen strategies were classified as metacognitive (strategy of planning) and cognitive (strategy of substitution).

The researcher, after pondering over the kinds and issues of strategy training, arrived at a conclusion that strategy training should probably be integrated with regular instruction in order to demonstrate to students the specific applications of the strategies. Given the current state of knowledge about explicit and integrated learning strategy instruction, it is ideal to opt for explicit instruction and integrate the instruction into regular classroom activities, rather than provide a separate learning strategy course. The explicit development of strategies is considered essential (Anderson 2002, 2005).

It was decided to give direct strategy training, in addition to being embedded, so that students are apprised of the goals of strategy instruction and are aware of the strategies that are taught. The researcher believed that this metacognitive knowledge will facilitate transfer of the strategies to new tasks and will assist students towards more autonomous use of strategies.

The strategy training given to the students was based on Oxford's eight-step model (referred to earlier).

2.21 ROLE OF METACOGNITION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Metacognition plays a major role in language learning and strategy training as it involves learners describing their own process of thinking. Metacognition means the skill to think about thinking. Students who have metacognitive knowledge know what to do when they do not know what to do. The development of students' metacognition is their ability to understand and regulate their own learning. Metacognitive knowledge about strategies is defined as "understanding when and where to apply strategies and the gains produced by strategies when used" (McCormick and Pressley 1997, p95). The use of metacognitive strategies ignites one's thinking and leads to learning in depth and improved performance.

Rather than focus the students' attention solely on learning the language, second language teachers can help students learn to think about what happens during the language learning process, which will lead them to develop stronger learning skills. Metacognition combines various attended thinking and reflective processes. It can be divided into five primary components.

a) Preparing and planning for learning

Preparing and planning are skills that can improve student learning. By engaging in preparation and planning in relation to a language task, students are thinking about what they need to accomplish and how they are going to accomplish it.

b) Selecting and using learning strategies

If the student has the metacognitive ability to select and use particular strategies in a given context for a specific purpose it means he can think and take conscious decisions about the learning process.

c)   Monitoring strategy use

When learners reflect on and monitor their own learning strategies they are able to keep themselves on track to reach their learning goals, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve their learning. After selecting and implementing specific strategies the student needs to periodically check if they are still using the strategies.

d)   Orchestrating various strategies

Second language teachers can help students learn to think about how to link the strategies in the strategy chain and how they orchestrate the various strategies. Knowing how to orchestrate the use of more than one strategy is an important metacognitive skill. The ability to co-ordinate, organize and make associations among the various strategies available is a major distinction between strong and weak second language learners.

e)   Evaluating strategy use and learning

Teachers can help students evaluate their strategy use by asking them to respond thoughtfully to the following questions.

a)   What am I trying to accomplish?
b)   What strategies am I using?
c)   How well am I using them?
d)   What else could I do?

Responding to these four questions allows the student to reflect through the cycle of learning. The whole cycle of learning is evaluated during this stage of metacognition.

2.22   COGNITIVE THEORY

Cognitive theory posits the notion that the learner is actively involved in the learning process. To be an active participant in one's own learning requires metacognition. One of the ways learners become actively involved in controlling their own learning is by using metacognitive knowledge.

Strong metacognitive skills empower second language learners. Brown and Palincsar (1982) referred to the situation in which learners are not provided with a metacognitive knowledge about strategy use and effectiveness (i.e., if they are not provided explicit strategy instruction) as "blind training". Such instruction is sufficient for learners who can infer the significance of the strategies by themselves, but it is not the case with all the learners. Blind training does not result in the maintenance and transfer of strategies.

Strategic learners have metacognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches, a good understanding of what a task entails, and the ability to orchestrate these strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own learning strengths.

Research in metacognitive and cognitive learning strategy suggests that pairing metacognitive strategies with appropriate cognitive strategies can maximize transfer of strategy training to new tasks. Students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to plan their learning, monitor their progress, or review their accomplishments and future learning directions.

2.23   MAINTENANCE AND TRANSFER OF STRATEGY

For strategy instruction to be effective, learners need to maintain and transfer their knowledge on strategies to other tasks. Learners are said to maintain a strategy when they are able to use it in situations that are very similar to the one in which they learnt the strategy (McCormick and Pressley 1997). Learners are said to transfer a strategy when they can apply it to new situation and tasks that are similar to but not identical to the one in which they learned the strategy. The maintenance of the strategy to tasks within the English as a second language classroom is important for learners learning English as a second language. The reason for the inability on the part of the learner to maintain and transfer strategy is that the learner has not developed the necessary metacognitive skills, which give a metacognitive knowledge about the strategy.

When students are given strategy instruction that includes information on the usefulness of the strategy for accomplishing the task, it is more likely that they maintain the strategy than students who are simply told to use the strategy without specific information about its value (Pressley et al 1984). Explicit strategy instruction includes metacognitive knowledge about what the strategy is and what it does. This results in the maintenance and transfer of strategy to other contexts and tasks.

2.24   SUMMARY

The chapter has drawn attention to the importance of looking at how learners go about the process of learning a second language. The researcher has scoured the research literature and has accumulated a cache of relevant studies, which leads to the offshoot of many questions.

1) Do some learners have the 'gift' for learning a language?

2) Do successful language learners learn a language in a different way?

3) If this is the case can the strategies be taught to other less successful learners?

From the available literature it is clear that proficient learners do employ strategies that are different from those used by the less proficient learners.

The literature on language learning strategies, has shown that limited English proficient students can be taught the strategies that good language learners use. This chapter has reviewed the literature on strategies and their use in the teaching and learning of a second language.