

**A Survey Study of Language Learning Strategy Use
in the Iranian EFL Context: Teachers' and
Learners' Views**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the language learning strategy use in the Iranian EFL context. Specifically, it conducted a survey to the language teachers and learners in the capital of one of the largest provinces in Iran. Through administration of Griffiths' (2007) English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI), the study collected comprehensive quantitative data on the importance as well as frequency of the LLS use in the context under investigation.

Regarding the Iranian EFL teachers, the analysis of the related survey data manifested their high awareness of the importance of the strategy use for their language learners. Further, the study revealed statistically insignificant differences either between the female and male teachers' survey reports, or between the more and less experienced teachers' survey responses in terms of the importance of strategy application. As regards the Iranian EFL learners, the analysis of the related survey data indicated that they employed the language learning strategies somewhat frequently. Furthermore, statistically insignificant differences were found either between the female and male learners' survey reports, or between the older and younger learners' survey responses in terms of the frequency of strategy use. However, the analysis revealed that the advanced Iranian learners operated the strategies with higher frequency than their counterparts from the lower English proficiency levels. Moreover, the EFL learners' survey reports overall seemed to indicate a gradual increase in frequency of strategy operation from the Elementary to the Advanced proficiency levels.

Finally, the examination of the Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' survey reports demonstrated incongruence in that the learners did not apply frequently the

language learning strategies that their teachers rated as important in the teaching-learning English. In this regard, the study provided important implications for the English language instruction in the context under investigation as well as made suggestions for prospective research.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategy, Iranian EFL Teachers, Importance of Strategy Use, Iranian EFL Learners, Frequency of Strategy Use

ÖZ

Bu çalışma İranda yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenim ortamında dil öğrenme stratejileri kullanımını araştırmıştır. Özellikle, bu araştırma İran'ın büyük eyaletlerinden birisinde dil öğretmeni ve öğrencileri ile yürütülmüştür. Griffiths'in (2007) ELLSI (English Language Learning Strategy Inventory) envantörü uygulanarak, araştırma İran ortamında dil öğrenme stratejileri kullanımı ile ilgili sıklık ve önem bağlamında kapsamlı nicel veri toplamıştır.

İranlı İngilizce öğretmenleri açısından, istatistiksel analizler katılımcıların dil öğrenme stratejilerinin önemi konusunda yüksek derecede bilinçli olduklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıyeten, bu bağlamda cinsiyet ve mesleki tecrübe faktörleri açısından dil öğretmenleri görüşlerinin karşılaştırmasında istatistiksel farklılıklar tespit edilmemiştir. Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenmekte olan İranlı öğrenciler açısından, analizler katılımcıların dil öğrenme stratejilerini orta sıklık derecesinde kullandıklarını belirlemiştir. Ayrıca, bu bağlamda cinsiyet ve yaş faktörleri açısından dil öğrencileri görüşlerinin karşılaştırmasında istatistiksel farklılıklar tespit edilmemiştir. Fakat, analizler ileri dil yeterlik düzeyindeki İranlı öğrencilerin daha düşük dil yeterlik düzeyindeki öğrencilere karşın dil öğrenme stratejilerini daha sık kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenmekte olan İranlı öğrencilerin dil yeterlik düzeyi temel düzeyden ileri düzeye doğru yükseldikçe, strateji kullanımı sıklığı görüşlerinde artış tespit edilmiştir.

Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşleri karşılaştırmasında uyumsuzluklar göstermiştir; zira öğretmenlerin önemli belirttikleri İngilizce dil öğrenme stratejilerini öğrenciler sıklıkla kullanmadıklarını belirtmiştir. Bu bulgular

öğretim ortamı açısından önemli anlam taşımaktadır ve strateji alanında yapılacak arařtırmalara ışık tutacak öneriler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Dil öğrenme stratejileri, İıranlı İngilizce öğretmenleri, dil öğrenme stratejilerin önemi, Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenmekte olan İıranlı öğrenciler, dil öğrenme stratejileri kullanım sıklığı.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Presentation

This chapter comprises several sections introducing the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study as well as its significance. The final section presents operational definitions of the terms employed in this research.

1.2 Background of the Study

In the past decades, extensive research has been conducted on various aspects of language learning strategies (LLS hereafter). However, the related studies have mostly examined empirical data from language learners, whereas the studies involving language teachers in the EFL context are very limited. It is noteworthy that language teachers do not always have an awareness of LLS use of their learners (O'Malley et al., 1985a), although their awareness is crucial for enhancing their learners' language learning and promoting their success.

So far, the pertinent research has been carried out by second language acquisition scholars as well as cognitive psychologists (Ellis, 1994), and it has shown the importance of the LLS for the language learning process, as well as positive educational outcomes. The early studies on the characteristics of the “good language learner” (Naiman et al., 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975), as well as “unsuccessful language learners” (Porte, 1988; Vann & Abraham, 1990) contributed to the field in terms of strategy use by different learners in different settings. Subsequently, the research to date investigated such major aspects as strategies per se, the influence of

various socio-cultural, instructional, and affective factors on learners' strategy choice, and pedagogical implications/applications for ESL/EFL settings (Tamada, 1997).

Regarding language learning strategies per se, the related studies proposed various definitions such as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (Rubin, 1975, p. 43); "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language" (Tarone, 1980, p. 419); "techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information" (Chamot, 1987, p. 71); "specific action taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). However, the definitions of language learning strategies proposed so far have been problematic as noted by Ellis (1994, pp. 532-533). More recently, Griffiths (2007) has defined strategies as "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning" (p. 91).

As regards strategy classification, it was mostly proposed in terms of strategy impact, direct or indirect, on language learning (O'Malley et al., 1985a; Rubin, 1981). Further, language learning strategies were distinguished as follows: strategies of language use (production and communication strategies), language learning strategies, and skill learning strategies (Tarone, 1988). Strategies were also classified as metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective categories (Chamot, 1987). Furthermore, LLS were grouped as memory, cognitive, compensation direct language learning strategies, and metacognitive, affective and social indirect strategies (Oxford, 1990). However, as observed by Dörnyei and Skehan (2003), the proposed strategy taxonomies have exhibited certain problems.

Regarding the impact of various factors on language learning strategies the pioneering research noted that individual learner differences are influential in strategy use (Naiman et al., 1978; Rubin, 1975). LLSs are considered to be in interaction with various learner characteristics (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Importantly, Wenden (1991) contended that “‘successful’ ... learners have learned how to learn. They have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher. Therefore, they are autonomous.”(p. 15). However, Ellis (1994) cautioned researchers and practitioners that individual learner differences are “potentially infinite” due to multiple “variables relating to the cognitive, affective, and social aspects of a human being” (p. 35).

As regards pedagogical implications/applications of the LLS research to date, due to the contradiction between promising results (Chamot & Rubin, 1994; Cohen, 1998; Wenden, 1991) and unfavorable findings (O’Malley et al., 1985b; Wenden, 1987) “teachability” of LLS (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) has remained a controversial issue. Further, it is held that language learners can employ effective strategies to speed up their target language learning (Cohen, 1984); moreover, they can improve their performance as a result of learner training (O’Malley et al., 1985b). In this regard, some studies explored benefits of learner training (Esch, 1997) and related instructional materials for learner training (Dickinson, 1992; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989) as well as strategy training (O’Malley, 1987; Oxford, 1990; Politzer & McGroarty 1985; Vann & Abraham, 1990; Wenden, 1991) respectively. More recently, Griffiths and Parr (2001) have made an appeal to language educators to develop new instructional resources in accordance with students’ strategy needs. Overall, the

research to date has suggested that effective learning strategy use can enhance learners' language development, and that strategy training can improve their production in the target language (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The language learning strategy related research has predominantly involved language learners (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), and language teachers have been neglected in this regard (Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Griffiths, 2007). It is noteworthy that language teachers' professional practices and related views are crucial in that they can influence the efficacy of teaching as well as learning processes (Griffiths, 2007). Therefore, both teachers' and learners' views are indispensable for understanding of the complexity of the language classroom and deserve serious consideration.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

In light of the scarcity of LLS studies involving both stakeholders, the present research surveyed EFL teachers' and their learners' views on language learning strategy use in the instructional context of one of the south-eastern provinces of Iran, Sistan and Baluchistan. It should be noted that language teachers and learners encounter serious problems in relation to LLS in the context. For the research purposes, the study exploited a novel, English Language Learning Strategy Inventory-ELLSI (Griffiths, 2007) to explore Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' views on importance and frequency of strategy use as well as their views in relation to teachers' and learners' variables, respectively. The survey specifically focused on congruence, or lack of any, between the EFL students' and teachers' survey reports and it considered the following research questions:

- 1) How important do the Iranian English language teachers report the LLS to be for their students?
- 2) How frequently do the EFL students report using language learning strategies?
- 3) Are the Iranian EFL teachers' and students' survey reports congruent?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research can be regarded as significant since the number of the studies on the EFL teachers' and learners' views in relation to language learning strategies is very limited. Further, the present study, dissimilar to the extant research, conducted a survey at several private language institutes in the Iranian provincial context. Significantly, the research obtained survey reports from the Iranian EFL teachers as well as language learners from different proficiency levels. Therefore, it is hoped that the survey results can inform instructional practices in the Iranian and other EFL contexts, as well as contribute to the related field.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The final section presents the operational definitions of the key terms employed across the study:

EFL:

Abbreviation for "English as a Foreign Language".

Foreign language:

"A language which is not the native language of large numbers of people in a particular country or region, is not used as a medium of instruction in schools, and is not widely used as a medium of communication in government, media, etc. Foreign languages are typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language."(Richard and

Schmidt, 2002, p. 206) For example, English is taught in Iran as a foreign language.

Strategy:

“Procedures used in learning and thinking, which operate as a means of achieving a goal. In language learning, learning strategies and communication strategies which language learners make use of in learning and using a language” (Richards et al., 1992, P. 515).

Language learning strategies (LLS):

“Activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning” (Griffiths, 2007, p. 91).

(ELLSI):

Abbreviation for the English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (Griffiths, 2007).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Presentation

This chapter comprises several sections overviewing the early and recent definitions of language learning strategies as well as their classifications. The subsequent section pertains to language learning strategies in relation to individual differences. The final sections are related to strategy use in language learning, and, finally, the studies on LLS use involving teachers and learners.

2.2 Definition of Language Learning Strategy

It should be noted that language learning strategies have been examined extensively by the research on second and foreign language learning. Learning strategy was defined as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help learners comprehend, learn, or retain new information” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 1). Therefore, LLSs can be either visible (behaviors) or invisible (thoughts). Furthermore, language learning strategies have been investigated from different perspectives. On the one hand, within the framework of the cognitive psychological perspective, Rubin (1987) viewed learning strategies as “any set of operations, plans, or routines, used by learners to facilitate the obtaining, retrieval, storage and use of information” (p. 19). On the other hand, from the SLA perspective, Ellis (1994) acknowledged LLSs as “an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language” (p. 530).

One of the earliest definitions of LLSs dates back to Rubin (1975), specifically “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge” (p. 43). In the late 1970s, from the cognitive psychological perspective, Rigney (1978) defined learning strategies as operations to help the learner to acquire, store, retrieve, and use information. In the following decade, Tarone (1983) defined LLSs from the linguistic perspective, and emphasized the key role of LLSs in developing learners’ linguistic competence. In the subsequent study, Rubin (1987) redefined LLSs as “any set of operations, plans, or routines, used by learners to facilitate the obtaining, retrieval, storage and use of information” (p. 19).

In the 1990s O'Malley and Chamot (1990) introduced another definition of LLSs as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p. 1). It is noteworthy that a more comprehensive definition of strategies was proposed by Oxford (1990) as “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques students use—often consciously—to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2” (p. 1). However, the conscious versus unconscious division of LLSs was questioned by Cohen (1998) who regarded strategies as “learning processes which are consciously selected by the learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning of a second or foreign language, through the storage retention, recall, and application of information about that language” (p. 4).

In the following decade, Macaro (2001) proposed that “an interesting practice-related avenue to pursue is whether what we mean by effort when doing a language task simply means the effective development of a range of strategies in a task” (p. 264). Further, Chamot, in agreement with Cohen (1998), highlighted the consciousness aspect of LLSs which are “the conscious thoughts and actions that

learners take in order to achieve a learning goal” (2004, p. 14). More recently, Griffiths (2007) has defined strategies as “activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning” (p. 91).

Overall, language learning strategies have been ascribed multiple and diverse features listed in Table 2.1 (Oxford, 1990).

Table 2.1. Features of Language Learning Strategies

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

It is noteworthy that the pertinent research to date has not yet reached consensus regarding the conscious aspect of LLSs. In this regard, Oxford et al., (2004) noted that most studies have provided somewhat vague definitions of LLSs since cognitive learning process has not been explained explicitly. Moreover, Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) emphasized that theoretically it has not been demonstrated whether strategies are cognitive processes, behavioral actions, or psychological responses. To conclude,

various definitions of LLSs have been introduced by the research to date which can be considered as complementary, and contributing to our understanding of this very significant learner individual difference.

2.3 Classification of Language Learning Strategies

2.3.1 Early Classifications

The pertinent scholarship on LLSs has also provided various classifications of strategies. In this regard, Stern (1975) attempted to distinguish good language learners' strategies from those of unsuccessful learners assuming that the former may have different strategies and abilities than the latter. The scholar classified strategies of good language learners as follows: a) planning strategy, b) active strategy, c) empathic strategy, d) formal strategy, e) experiential strategy, f) semantic strategy, g) practice strategy, h) communication strategy, i) monitoring strategy, and j) internalization strategy. Subsequently, Stern (1992) revised the previously introduced taxonomy and proposed the following classification comprising five categories: 1) management and planning strategies, 2) strategies related to learners' intentions to manage their own learning, 3) cognitive strategies including the steps or operations used in learning or problem solving which need direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials, 4) communicative-experience strategies referring to gesturing, paraphrasing or asking for repetition, and explanation in order to help learners to better express themselves 5) interpersonal strategies including the techniques that learners use to monitor their own development and evaluate their own performance; affective strategies used to create positive affect towards the target language and its speakers.

In the late 1970s, another classification was proposed by Bialystok (1978) who distinguished LLSs into 4 categories: (a) functional practicing, (b) formal practicing

(c) monitoring and (d) inferencing. For Bialystok, both formal practice and functional practice strategies are used in the classroom for language practice, such as oral drills and noting errors, whereas monitoring is basically a production strategy, and it corresponds to inferencing strategy as its comprehension counterpart. Thus, the scholar emphasized the cognitive and metacognitive aspects of language learning in the proposed model; however, the social and affective components were not considered.

In the following decade, Rubin (1981) investigated major cognitive strategies that facilitate language learning process both directly and indirectly. According to Rubin (1981), direct LLSs play a direct role in language learning process, and related 6 language learning strategies include: 1) classification/verification, 2) monitoring, 3) memorization, 4) guessing/inductive inferencing, 5) deductive reasoning, and 6) practice. Whilst indirect LLSs contribute indirectly to language learning, and 2 related strategies were identified as: 1) creating opportunities for practice and 2) using production tricks. Subsequently, Rubin (1987) proposed 3 major strategy categories, specifically cognitive and metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and communication strategies.

Inspired by Rubin's (1981) dichotomy of LLSs, Oxford (1990) also developed a taxonomy based on direct-indirect LLS distinction. Within the taxonomy, the direct strategies comprise memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies; whereas the indirect LLSs comprise metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Oxford (1990) also provided a detailed description of the six LLS subcategories as follows:

1) Memory strategies: Learn a language by using mental linkages (e.g., embedding new vocabulary into a context), images and sounds (e.g., memorizing new words

with sounds), reviewing (e.g., reviewing new information in planned intervals), and action (e.g., acting out a new phrase).

2) Cognitive strategies: Learn language by practicing (e.g., repeating), receiving and sending messages (e.g., quickly getting a new idea), analyzing and reasoning (e.g., analyzing contrastively), and creating structure for input and output (e.g., taking notes).

3) Compensation strategies: Learn language by guessing intelligently (e.g., using clues) and overcoming speaking and writing limitations (e.g., getting help).

4) Metacognitive strategies: Learn language by centering learning (e.g., paying attention only to listening), arranging and planning learning (e.g., setting goals), and evaluating learning (e.g., self-monitoring).

5) Affective strategies: Learn language by lowering anxiety (e.g., using music), encouraging the learner self (e.g., rewarding self), and taking self's emotional temperature (e.g., using a checklist).

6) Social strategies: Learn language by asking questions (e.g., asking for correction), cooperating with others (e.g., working with peers), and empathizing with others (e.g., developing cultural understanding).

It should be noted that Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of LLSs, based on direct-indirect distinction, was dissimilar to the one by Rubin (1981) in that Rubin regarded classification/verification and monitoring strategies as direct strategies, whereas Oxford (1990) referred these strategies to indirect social strategies. Importantly, Oxford (1990) noted that "direct and indirect strategies support each other and the six strategy groups (three direct and three indirect) interact with and help each other" (p. 14).

The direct/indirect dichotomy of LLSs was criticized by Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2001) who argued that, “The reality is that the distinction [direct/indirect classification system] can become blurred and may not be that useful” (p. 9). In this regard, Oxford did not include the direct/indirect categorization into SILL, “Strategy Inventory for Language Learning”, since she contended that the classification was not adequate for data analysis (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002).

2.3.2 Subsequent Classifications

In the late 1980s, yet another classification of LLSs, from the cognitive psychological perspective, was introduced by O’Malley and Chamot and their associates (1985, 1989, and 1990). In this taxonomy (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990), LLSs were distinguished into three general categories:

- 1) Metacognitive strategies: planning (advance organization, organizational planning, selective attention, self-management), monitoring (monitoring comprehension and production), and evaluating (self-assessment);
- 2) Cognitive strategies: Resourcing (finding and using appropriate resources), grouping, note-taking, elaboration of prior knowledge, summarizing, deduction/induction, imagery, auditory representation and making inferences;
- 3) Social/affective strategies: questioning for clarification, cooperation and self-talk.

Examination of O’Malley and Chamot’s (1990) and Oxford’s (1990) taxonomies revealed the following differences. Oxford’s memory and cognitive strategies more or less correspond to O’Malley and Chamot’s cognitive strategies. However, Oxford’s memory strategies do not fall into cognitive strategies because, unlike other cognitive strategies, memory strategies do not serve deep processing of language information (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). Furthermore, Oxford (1990) viewed compensation strategies, which were defined as techniques used by the learner to

search for missing information, as a group of strategies. However, in O'Malley and Chamot's classification (1990), communication strategies are not particularly incorporated into the system. Finally, Oxford distinguished affective strategies from social strategies, while O'Malley and Chamot combined the two categories of strategies into one category of social-affective strategies.

In the middle of the 1990s, based on the learner's mastery of the diverse aspects of the target language, Ellis (1994) identified two types of learning strategies. The first type, focusing on learner's efforts to master the linguistic and sociolinguistic information about the new language, was referred to language learning strategies. The second type, focusing on the learner's attempts to become a skilled speaker, listener, reader, and writer of the target language, was labeled as skill learning strategies.

Subsequently, in the late 1990s, Cohen (1998) defined LLSs as those used for "identifying the material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other material, grouping it for easier learning, having repeated contact with the material, and formally committing the material to memory when it does not seem to be acquired naturally" (p. 5). Accordingly, the scholar classified LLSs into 4 categories as follows: a) retrieval strategies, b) rehearsal strategies, c) cover strategies, and d) communication strategies. Moreover, in this regard, Cohen (1998) provided a detailed description for LLSs as follows:

- 1) Retrieval strategies are used to activate language material from storage through memory searching strategies such as mental linkages or sound association.
- 2) Rehearsal strategies are used for practicing the target language structures and include both language learning and language use strategies.

3) Cover strategies involve creating the impression that learners have control over the material when they do not. Examples of them are simplification, i.e., producing utterances, and complexification, i.e., saying something by means of an elaborate and complex circumlocution, both of which are used to bridge knowledge gaps in the target language.

4) Communication strategies focus on approaches to conveying meaningful and informative messages to the listener or reader. Intralingual strategies are such examples. These include overgeneralizing a grammar rule or vocabulary meaning from one context to another where it does not apply, and negative transfer, i.e., applying the patterns of a native or another language in the target language where those patterns do not apply (Cohen, 1998).

2.3.3 Recent Classifications

More recently, Dörnyei (2005) has categorized LLSs into four main strategies by merging Oxford's (1990) memory strategies into cognitive strategies. He proposed four categories of language learning strategies: 1) cognitive strategies used for the transformation of language information (e.g., repetition, summarizing, and using images), 2) metacognitive strategies used for a learning process (e.g., analyzing, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and organizing), 3) social strategies used for interpersonal behaviors improving the quantity of practice and communication (e.g., cooperation and interaction with native speakers), and 4) affective strategies used for managing the emotion in language learning.

Thus, the research to date has not yet developed a universally accepted LLS taxonomy, rather introduced various related frameworks (Oxford, 1990). In this regard, Ellis (1994) noted that some strategies may be referred to one category or another dependent on what aspect of learning each researcher focused on. One could

divide the strategies into two categories: those more directly related to personal learning and those associated with the learning process. The former are cognitive strategies which require the learner to manage or transform learning materials directly. The latter are metacognitive strategies which include the plan of learning, the process of learning, monitoring, and self-evaluation following completion of learning tasks. Regardless of the controversial views and taxonomies, though, the pertinent scholarship has provided valuable insights into the complex process of target language development.

2.4 Language Learning Strategy in relation to Individual Differences

2.4.1 Learner Factors

2.4.1.1 Gender

Regarding LLSs in relation to gender, several studies have displayed gender differences in LLS use in ESL/EFL contexts. The majority of these studies showed that females reportedly employed L2 strategies considerably more frequently than males (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Politzer, 1983). However, some contradicting results were also reported in that Griffiths (2003) and Nisbet (2003) did not find significant gender differences in LLS use.

In one of the early studies on gender difference in relation to LLSs, Politzer (1983) investigated strategy use of college students in the U.S, and demonstrated that female students employed more social learning strategies than their male counterparts. In this regard, Politzer (1983) noted that since L2 female learners were more involved in social interaction with others in and outside the instructional setting, they applied more LLSs than male learners. Further, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) examined, through SILL administration, LLS operation by university students

at an American university. The related findings showed more social strategy use on the part of the female language learners as compared to their male counterparts, which were accounted for by female learners' strong social orientation and the need for social approval, translated into a strong desire to improve grades at the university (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989).

Furthermore, in a somewhat similar study conducted in a different context, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) explored, through SILL administration, strategy use involving a mixed sample of the Foreign Service Institute, specifically FL learners, FL instructors, as well as professional language trainers. The related results confirmed gender differences in strategy use in that females learners employed "general strategies, authentic language use, searching for and communicating meaning and self-management strategies significantly more often than males" (p. 259).

Subsequently, Bacon and Finneman (1990) investigated the effect of gender on university Spanish learners' through a questionnaire administration. The study findings demonstrated a higher level of motivation as well as LLS use in language learning by females as compared to their male counterparts. Moreover, female learners also reportedly employed compensation strategies most in comparison to other strategies.

They also demonstrated a higher level of social interaction in the target language, whereas their male counterparts preferred employing decoding and analytic strategies (Bacon & Finneman, 1990). More recently, Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) examined LLS operation of ESL students from various linguistic as well as cultural backgrounds, within an intensive English instructional setting. The study results demonstrated that female language learners operated more affective and social

strategies than males which seemed to indicate that females were prone to initiating social relations with others in a more easy and consistent way than males (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006).

However, a number of related studies have reported contradictory results in this regard, without any significant differences in LLS application across genders. For instance, Griffiths (2003) found statistically insignificant differences between international L2 female and male learners' employment of language learning strategies in a private language school in New Zealand. In a similar vein, Nisbet (2003) reported statistically insignificant differences in LLS use on the part of male and female college students in China. Overall, the research to date has not yet provided conclusive evidence on the effect of gender difference on language learning strategy application.

2.4.1.2 Age

Another important individual learner difference in relation to LLS use has been age. In this regard, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) reported that L2 learners of different age groups as well as at different learning stages employed different strategies, with adults operating certain strategies more than their younger counterparts. In the same vein, Ellis (1994) argued that young learners' strategies were rather simple and uncomplicated compared to adult learners' complex, sophisticated, and flexible strategies. Recently, Macaro (2001) contended that adult and advanced level learners have a greater contextual knowledge than young and elementary level learners; hence the former can operate more strategies, in a more flexible fashion.

In an endeavor to discover any relationship between language learners' age and their strategy use, Griffiths (2003) administered Oxford's (1990) SILL to ESL students, across different age groups, in a private language school in New Zealand

and reported that older language learners reportedly operated more diverse LLSs with higher frequency than their counterparts at the elementary level. More recently, Magogwe and Oliver (2007) conducted a cross-sectional study of language learning strategy use involving primary, secondary, and tertiary level students in Botswana. The related findings demonstrated that “particular strategies may be developmentally acquired. For example, both the secondary and tertiary level students preferred metacognitive strategies, whereas the primary school students preferred social strategies. This may occur because students at higher levels of education are more independent learners and metacognitive strategies best match this characteristic” (p. 346). Overall, the relation between LLSs use and age difference has not yet received adequate attention in the related literature; therefore, this issue requires serious consideration.

2.4.1.3 Motivation

Another significant individual difference in relation to LLS use is motivation. The research to date has demonstrated that more motivated learners employ various language learning strategies with higher frequency than less motivated learners (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). Specifically, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) investigated LLS use by American university students in Midwest and demonstrated that their use of formal and functional practice strategies, general study strategies, and interaction-oriented strategies were greatly affected by self-perceptions of motivation. In this regard, it was noted that “the degree of expressed motivation was the most powerful influence on strategy choice” (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989, p.294).

Subsequently, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) reported the strong effect of career choice on language learning strategy operation which may be accounted for by

language learners' underlying motivation. Further, in Japanese as a FL context study, Oxford et al., (1993) explored motivation in relation to strategy use by high school learners. The study findings seemed to indicate that increased strategy use was interrelated with higher degree of instrumental as well as integrative motivation. Furthermore, Nyikos and Oxford (1993) investigated strategy use by tertiary level language learners in the United States. The findings demonstrated that the students striving to attain good grades favored formal, rule related processing strategies and academic study strategies, rather than strategies enhancing skills for authentic and communicative language use. Thus, the research to date showed the link between motivation and particular strategies, and overall strategy use. However, Okada, Oxford and Abo (1996) questioned the direction of the relation, specifically, whether motivation promotes strategy use, or strategy use promotes better language performance, which in turns improves motivation, consequently, leads to increased strategy use. The researchers also noted the necessity of more research on the relation between the phenomena.

Recently, Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) examined motivation, strategy operation, as well as pedagogical preferences of learners from diverse language backgrounds. The study findings seemed to indicate a significant correlation between the general strategy and general motivation, as well as with three motivation factors across and within all five target language groups. Further, Yin and Oxford (2004) explored Chinese university students' strategy operation and reported that such motivational orientations as interest-in-English and interest-in-target culture considerably affect the overall strategy employment in general, and cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies specifically. Furthermore, the relationship of motivational orientation and academic major was greatly influenced by the use of overall strategy

employment, as well as the application of memory, social and affective strategies. Thus, the research to date has emphasized the significance of motivation in selection and employment of LLSs. In this regard, Oxford (1989) stated that “learners might be learning foreign or second languages for different purposes and this could impact their choice of strategies” (p.237).

2.4.2 Social and Situational Factors

2.4.2.1 ESL/EFL Setting

Setting is one of the social/situational factors that can affect LLS use. In this regard, O’Malley and Chamot (1990) noted the significance of distinction between ESL (English as second language) learning and EFL (English as foreign language) learning, which can have an impact on LLS use. In this regard, Ellis (2004) observed that EFL students in Chamot et al.,’s (1987) study employed LLSs different from those employed by ESL students (rehearsal, translation, note-taking, substitution, and contextualization) in O’Malley’s et al.,’s (1987) study. Specifically, “The EFL students also reported relying on cognitive strategies (in relation to metacognitive and socio-affective strategies) to lesser extent than the ESL students” (p. 544). These findings can be accounted for by the adequate exposure of second language learners to the target language, in instructional as well as real-life settings, therefore these language learners employ particular strategies (e.g. socio-affective) more frequently than EFL learners who do not need to use the target language in their daily life and often do not develop or employ a variety of LLS.

In another related study, Kojic-Sabo and Lightbown (1999) also reported major differences in language learning strategy application between language learners in ESL and EFL contexts, respectively. They observed in this regard, that “Given the differences in the learning environments, some strategies seem to "come more

naturally" to ESL students" (p. 189). Further, Gunning (1997) also compared LLS application on the part of primary level ESL learners in Canada and EFL learners in Taiwan and reported a higher frequency of LLS use in the EFL context, however a lower frequency of strategy application in the ESL context. Thus, as indicated by the research to date, context has an important effect on strategy selection and use. In this regard, Oxford and Anderson (1995) noted an "inextricably linked" association between SL/FL language learning and LLS (p.25).

2.4.2.2 Target Language

One of the factors affecting strategy selection and application is the learner's target language. The research to date has demonstrated that extensive strategy use is more frequent in certain languages compared to others. In this regard, Politzer (1983) examined strategy use by undergraduate foreign (French, Spanish and German) language university students in the United States and reported less LLS use on the part of learners of Spanish than learners of French and German.

In another related study, Chamot et al. (1987) examined strategy application of high school learners of Spanish classes in Northern Virginia public and university level learners in the Eastern seaboard region of the United States. The study findings demonstrated more strategy manipulation on the part of the learners of Russian compared to the learners of Spanish, hence suggesting challenges of learning Russian by native English speakers who required more LLS. It should be noted that as suggested by Oxford (1989) the findings of the research to date might be due to the fact it is that more successful students who choose to study less commonly taught foreign languages in the US school system.

2.4.2.3 Task Type

Task type can also have an effect on LLS selection and application. In this regard, L2 learners reportedly operated strategies for vocabulary learning tasks and oral drills highly frequently; conversely, they reportedly apply strategies for listening comprehension, inferencing, making presentation, and engaging in operational communication least frequently (O'Malley et al., 1985a). Further, Chamot et al., (1987) observed a significant impact of tasks on language learners' selection of cognitive as well as metacognitive strategies. Specifically, listening tasks required use of such cognitive strategies as note-taking, elaboration, inferencing, and summarizing, as well as operation of such metacognitive strategies as selective attention, self-monitoring, and problem-identification. Furthermore, vocabulary tasks necessitated employment of the resourcing and elaboration cognitive strategies, and the self-monitoring and evaluation metacognitive strategies.

In another related study, Chamot and Kupper (1989) observed an association between particular strategies/group of strategies with certain language skills. In this regard, L2 writing, similar to L1 writing, is related to the LLSs of planning, self-monitoring, deduction, as well as substitution; whereas L2 speaking necessitates risk-taking, paraphrasing, circumlocution, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation strategies. As regards L2 listening comprehension, it is associated with the LLSs of elaboration, inferencing, selective attention, and self-monitoring, whilst reading comprehension benefits from reading aloud, guessing, deduction, and summarizing strategies. Importantly, classrooms providing integrated skills/tasks instruction can promote language learners' simultaneous application of multiple LLSs. Finally, Cummins (2000) contended that compensatory and affective learning strategies would be beneficial for learners' development of interpersonal communication skills,

specifically “if students are preparing for an examination that focuses on vocabulary and grammar, then memorization strategies can work very well and affective strategies for controlling anxiety can be beneficial” (cited in Chamot, 2004, p.17).

2.5 Language Learning Strategy in Instruction

2.5.1 LLS and Proficiency Levels

Language learners’ proficiency level in the target language is one of the significant factors in strategy employment. The research to date demonstrated that successful language learners reportedly applied LLS with higher frequency (Bialystok, 1981b; Chamot et al., 1988; Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford & Nyikos 1989; Wharton, 2000). In an endeavor to explore the relationship between target language proficiency level and LLS operation, Bialystok (1981b) conducted a study involving Canadian French learners involved 10 and 12, and found that in grade 10 only the strategy of functional practice was related to proficiency, whereas in grade 12 the same strategy as well as formal practice and monitoring were associated with proficiency.

Subsequently, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) reported a positive relation between language learners’ speaking, listening, and reading proficiency and frequency of LLS application. Moreover, extensive strategy use was accompanied by self-perception of higher proficiency. In this regard, Green and Oxford (1995) surveyed L2 university students across different proficiency levels in Puerto Rico. The study findings again demonstrated higher frequency of LLS application by successful learners compared to less successful learners.

In the same vein, Gunning (1997) examined strategy use of fifth-grade Francophone learners of English in Canada. The participants were assigned to high, medium, and low proficiency levels through test administration. Application of an

adapted version of SILL (for young learners) across different proficiency levels revealed considerable differences in LLS use in relation to the learners' proficiency levels, in that diverse LLSs were employed by the more proficient learners with higher frequency compared with the less proficient learners.

In another related study Chamot and El-Dinary (1999) investigated strategy use by elementary level learners of French, Japanese, and Spanish in the U.S. and found a strong relationship between LLS application and proficiency level, specifically more proficient learners reportedly employed more strategies than average or less proficient learners. Moreover, the study also demonstrated differences in the types of strategies used by the participants in that while engaged in a reading task, higher level learners favored complicated LLSs of using background knowledge and making inferences, whereas lower level learners resorted to phonetic decoding strategies. More recently, Griffiths (2003) also explored strategy use by international students, with proficiency levels ranging from the elementary to the advanced levels in New Zealand. Through administration of Oxford's (1990) 50-item version of SILL, she attempted to discover the relationship between course levels and the frequency of strategy use. The study findings demonstrated a strong relationship between the language learners' frequency of strategy application and proficiency levels in that advanced learners reportedly operated LLS with higher frequency than elementary level learners. Overall, the research to date has shown that higher proficiency level learners reportedly employed a variety of strategies in relation to tasks and with higher frequency than lower proficiency level learners.

2.5.2 Learner Training

Learner training in relation to LLS use has extensively been investigated by the research to date (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Cohen & Weaver, 1998; O'Malley &

Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). It should be noted that learner training aids learners in gaining awareness of learning strategies, as well as develop and employ strategies suitable for assigned tasks. Further, strategy training aims at triggering learners' awareness to their full learning capacity, as well as develop their autonomy in order to manage their own learning process through LLS application. In other words, it envisages preparing learners for assuming more responsibilities for their own learning (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989).

In this regard, Oxford (1990) contended that “the general aim of such training are to help make language learning more meaningful, to encourage a collaborative spirit between learners and teacher, to learn about options for language learning, and to learn and practice strategies that facilitate self-reliance. Strategy training should not be abstract and theoretical but should be highly practical and useful for students” (p.201). Importantly, raising learners' awareness of learning strategies will improve learners' motivation and satisfaction, hence enhance their learning.

More recently, Richards et al., (2002) introduced a particular definition of learner training (also called strategy training) as “training in the use of learning strategies in order to improve a learner's effectiveness” (p.516) and identified three main approaches in this regard as follows:

- “Explicit or direct training: learners are given information about the value and purpose of particular strategies, taught how to use them, and how to monitor their own use of the strategies.
- Embedded strategy training: the strategies to be taught are not taught explicitly but are embedded in the regular content of an academic subject area, such as reading, math or science.

- Combination strategy training: explicit strategy training is followed by embedded training” (p. 516).

2.5.3 Teachability of Learning Strategies

Whether or not language learning strategies can be taught has been a controversial issue. On the one hand, Bialystok (1990) argued that “what one must teach students of a language is not strategy but language” (p.147) since LLSs are inherent in learning phenomena, will emerge with time, hence it is not necessary to teach them. On the other hand, it has been argued that LLSs can be subject to training as well as teaching, which will promote language learners’ effective learning. Moreover, particular methodologies have to be compatible with certain strategies. For example, communicative language teaching approach necessitates application of compensation and social strategies; whereas the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods require operation of memory and cognitive strategies. Furthermore, the interlanguage theory necessitates employment of metacognitive and cognitive strategies, whilst suggestopedia requires use of affective strategies (Griffiths & Parr, 2001, p. 249).

The advocates of the second view contended that “strategies can be taught. Students who are taught to use strategies and are provided with sufficient practice in using them will learn more effectively than students who have had no experience with learning strategies. Learning strategies transfer to new tasks.” (Chamot & O’Malley, 1987, p. 240) In this regard, in an attempt to explore the teachability and effectiveness of strategy training, Cohen and Aphek (1980) conducted a study involving twenty-six adult English-speaking learners of Hebrew as L2 who were briefly instructed to memorize L2 vocabulary through mnemonic association. The findings revealed that following training in making associations, the language learners somewhat succeeded in recalling target-language vocabulary learned

through training. However, since the study was limited only to an experimental group, in the absence of a control group the experimental results could not be compared statistically.

Further, Cohen et al., (1996) also examined the outcome of strategy-based instruction in speaking. The study involved intermediate foreign language students at a University in Minnesota. Thirty-two students were assigned to an experimental group to receive instruction whereby strategies were either explicitly or implicitly integrated into the routine activities on the part of the instructors. The participants' performance in three speaking tasks of self-description, story-telling, and city description provided evidence of the success of strategy-integrated instruction, especially in the post-test, in that the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in the last task. As regards vocabulary, the study findings demonstrated higher scores for the experimental group in relation to the first task.

2.5.3.1 Explicit versus Implicit Strategy Training

Richards et al., (2002) identified explicit training as one of the approaches to effective teaching; however no consensus has been reached in the research to date in this regard. Some scholars are in favor of explicit training (Cohen, 1996, Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; O'Malley & Chamot 1990), whereas others advocate implicit incorporation of strategies into language teaching-learning (Wenden, 1987). In this regard, Oxford (1994) expressed advantages of explicit strategy training as follows "Strategy training is best when woven into regular class activities in a normal basis" (p.19).

In a related study O'Malley and Chamot (1990) investigated skill improvement of three groups of language learners, and related their performance to the explicit instruction of metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective strategies. The study

findings demonstrated that the experimental group outperformed the control group. More recently, Chamot (2004) advocated explicit strategy training as follows: “Teachers should opt for explicit instruction and should probably integrate the instruction into their regular course work” (p.19).

2.5.4 Frameworks for Strategy Training

Various frameworks for strategy training as part of instructional syllabus have been proposed by the research to date. Examination of the instructional frameworks reveals certain common characteristics such as emphasis on learners’ awareness raising as well as the role of metacognitive understanding of the significance of LLSs.

One of the earliest frameworks for strategy instruction was proposed by Oxford (1990), who identified 8 steps for language educators to follow in 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 strategy training.
8. Revise strategy training.

In a similar vein, O’Malley and Chamot (1990), through their Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), highlighted 5 global and detailed steps for strategy instruction:

1. Preparation: identify objectives, elicit students’ prior knowledge, develop vocabulary, and provide motivation.

2. Presentation: present new information in varied ways, model processes explicitly, explain learning strategies, and discuss connections to students' prior knowledge.
3. Practice: use hands-on/inquiry-based activities, provide different cooperative learning structures, use authentic content tasks, and ask students to use learning strategies.
4. Evaluation: students reflect on their own learning, evaluate themselves, and assess their own strategy use.
5. Expansion: students apply information to own lives, make connection between language and content, and relate information to first language knowledge, and parents' involvement.

Subsequently, Cohen (1998) assigned 5 different professional roles to language educators for implementation of Styles and Strategies-Based Instruction (SSBI):

1. Teacher as diagnostician: Teacher helps students identify current strategies and learning styles.
2. Teacher as language learner: Teacher shares own learning experiences and thinking processes.
3. Teacher as learner trainer: Teacher trains students how to use learning strategies.
4. Teacher as coordinator: Teacher supervises students' study plans and monitors difficulties.
5. Teacher as coach: Provides ongoing guidance on students' progress.

More recently, Macaro (2001) proposed 'Learner Strategies Training Cycle' whereby through 9 interrelated steps language teachers can deliver strategy training:

1. Raising the awareness of the students;
2. Exploring of possible strategies available;
3. Modeling by teacher and/or other students;

4. Combining strategies for a specific purpose or task;
5. Applying of strategies with scaffolded support;
6. Initial evaluating by students;
7. Gradual removing of scaffolding;
8. Evaluating by students (and teacher);
9. Monitoring strategy use and rewarding effort.

In this regards, McDonough (1999) contended that “Teaching strategies is not universally successful, but the largest research is showing that, in certain circumstances, particularly when incorporated into the teacher’s normal classroom behavior, and thus, involving teacher training as well as learners training, success is demonstrable” (p. 13).

2.6 Studies on LLS Use Involving Language Teachers and Learners

It is noteworthy that the LLS research to date has traditionally involved language learners (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990), and disregarded language teachers’ views related to strategy use (Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Griffiths, 2007). However, teachers as one of the major stakeholders in the language classroom can provide valuable insights into the teaching-learning phenomena, as well as play a significant role in educational outcomes. Therefore, views of both language teachers and learners are crucial for understanding of the language classroom events and in order to address the gap and more research in this direction is required.

In one of the few studies of LLS use in the ESL context in New Zealand Griffiths (2007) involved 34 ESOL instructors as well as 131 students from 14 different backgrounds. For the research purposes, a novel tool, English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI) was developed by the researcher on an individual strategy-related item basis (Griffiths, 2007). Administration of the Teachers’ version

of ELLSI and the Students' Version of ELLSI revealed that the ESOL teachers regarded strategy use as highly important for their international learners. Importantly, the teachers' and learners' survey reports in terms of importance and frequency of strategy use in the context were congruent.

In another related study, Ağazade and Vefalı (2011) explored strategy use through involvement of 257 undergraduate students and 12 instructors in the ELT Department, Education Faculty, at Eastern Mediterranean University through administration of ELLLSI (Griffiths, 2007). The study examined the undergraduates' survey reports on frequency of strategy use in relation to their age, gender, and duration of English language learning experience. Further, it also investigated the ELT teachers' survey reports on importance of LLS use in relation to gender and professional experience. Interestingly, the study findings revealed that the female students employed more strategies than their male counterparts, and that more experienced respondents reportedly applied LLSs more frequently than their less experienced counterparts. Furthermore, the younger students reportedly operated LLS with higher frequency than their older counterparts. As regards the teachers, the male instructors and less experienced instructors ascribed higher importance to LLS than their female and more experienced counterparts.

2.7 Summary

This chapter reviewed the early and contemporary literature and studies on language learning strategies in terms of LLS definitions, classifications as well as the research to date on the language learning strategies in relation to individual learner differences such as gender, age and proficiency level. Furthermore, it also examined the scholarship on LLS in language learning and factors affecting strategy training.

Finally, the chapter reviewed few studies on LLS use involving teachers and learners.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Presentation

This chapter is composed of several sections presenting the methodology of the current study. The first two sections introduce the overall design of the research as well as the research questions to be addressed. The subsequent sections describe the context of the study and the participants. The final sections present the research procedures for data collection and analysis, as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study.

3.2 Overall Research Design

This study aimed at exploring Iranian EFL teachers' as well as their language learners' views on language learning strategy use. The study was designed as a survey which is an established research design in applied linguistics (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001; Oxford, 1990). Survey research is considered to involve interviews and questionnaires (Davies, 2005, p.128). In a survey research the researcher chooses a sample of respondents from a population and applies a standardized questionnaire to obtain quantitative and/or qualitative data on research phenomena under investigation. In this regard, Brown and Rodgers (2002) held that surveys are employed to "...understand better how things are really operating in your own, personal environment-in your classroom or other learning setting-or to describe the abilities, performances, and other characteristics of the learners, teachers, and administrators involved in your professional life" (p.118). Dörnyei (2007) stated that

“The results of a questionnaire survey are typically quantitative, although the instrument may also contain some open-ended questions that will require a qualitative analysis” (p.101).

Survey owns its reputation to the possibilities it provides for investigation in a realistic setting; it allows researchers to collect comprehensive data in a short time span. Moreover, a survey can be designed, or adapted and administered easily, and can be employed to collect data on various phenomena. However, surveys have also exhibited certain drawbacks such as not always accurately reflecting respondents’ beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes.

Given the benefits of survey application, the present study employed one of the most recent survey instruments on language learning strategy use, ELLSI, (English Language Learning Strategy Inventory), (Griffiths, 2007), in 2 versions, for language teachers and learners, respectively. The research, therefore, yielded comprehensive quantitative data which were analyzed through quantitative as well as qualitative research procedures. The study also benefitted from the suitability sampling practice comprising purposefulness in which respondents have to “possess certain key characteristics that are related to the purpose of the investigation” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 99).

3.3 Research Questions

The present study addressed the following research questions:

- 1) How important do the Iranian English language teachers report the LLSs to be for their students?
- 2) How frequently do the EFL students report using language learning strategies?
- 3) Are the Iranian EFL teachers’ and students’ survey reports congruent?

3.4 Context

English as a foreign language (EFL) is taught in state and private educational contexts in Iran. At the secondary level, learners begin to learn English from the second year in junior high school, at the age of 13; they have to complete three hours of formal instruction in English every week. At the tertiary level, students first take three credits of General English; subsequently they must obtain maximum six credits of English for specific purposes (ESP). Further, students enroll in language programs to major in English language teaching, English literature, and English Language Translation. It should be noted that at present, Iranian EFL students do not experience much exposure to the target language outside the classroom. Moreover, very few English programs are broadcast on TV or radio. However, through developments in Internet and CMC tools, as well as an ever-increasing number of private language institutes in Iran, the chances for learning the English language have greatly improved (Talebinezhad & Aliakbari, 2002).

It should be noted that that private English language institutes have become popular, which seems to indicate increased positive attitudes of Iranian EFL learners. More recently, it has been reported that Iranian residents seek for better education and/or occupation opportunities; they have become gradually mobile and have started immigrating to different English speaking countries (Hakimzadeh, 2006). Further, private language institutes have more flexible admission requirements and most provide language instruction from lower to advanced proficiency levels. Furthermore, language institutes offer a comprehensive curriculum and employ qualified and experienced language instructors.

3.4.1 English Language Institutes in Zahedan

This study was conducted in Sistan and Baluchistan, one of the largest provinces in the south-eastern part of Iran. Specifically, the data for the study were collected in the city of Zahedan which is the center of Sistan and Baluchistan province, with a population of about one million, and located close to the borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Zahedan is well-known for its seven universities, the state University of Sistan and Baluchistan being a well-established tertiary institution in Iran. Moreover, the city has about 10 language institutes, with approximately 3000 young as well as adult learners. The teaching staff at the English language institutes are holders of B.A or M.A. degrees in language teaching and certificates in Teacher Training Courses. There are also some language instructors who have not received a formal training instruction but have an adequate command of English. Yet, their familiarity with the language teaching methodology or language acquisition background cannot be considered adequate and this is an issue that warrants serious consideration.

The survey was administered at three different language institutes in Zahedan. These institutes were chosen mostly due to their favorable reputation as well as sufficient numbers of language teachers and learners. Zaban Sara Language Center was established in 1996, and it involves about 350 English language learners and 15 full and part-time teachers. The language courses offered at this language institute are suitable both for young learners and adults. The main course materials are “Connect” series for young learners and “Headway” series for adults; classes are held three days a week, and each class lasts ninety minutes. The teaching staff are mostly holders of degrees in language studies like ELT, Translation, or English

Language Literature. There are also few instructors with majors from other areas, however with an adequate proficiency in English.

Marefat Language Institute was founded in 2001; it comprises about 500 students and 15 full and part-time instructors. The institute employs various instructional resources catering to different language proficiency levels and age groups: “Let’s go” series for young learners, “Interchange” series for teenagers and adults, and “In charge” upon completion of the previous series as well as “Let’s Talk” series for its speaking courses. The institute also offers some preparation courses for proficiency tests like IELTS, TOEFL, and TOLIMO. Classes are held three days a week; the duration of each class is eighty minutes. The teaching staff hold teaching certification in English studies; two instructors are holders of M.A in ELT, others are holders of B.A in English language translation/ literature.

Shokouh Language Academy was established in 1997, and it offers language instruction to about 200 language learners of different age groups. The main course books are “Let’s go” series for young learners and “Headway” series for adolescent and adult learners. The institution has about 10 full and part-time teachers with different educational backgrounds, like M.A, or B.A. in ELT, language translation and literature. It should be noted that few instructors are advanced English learners teaching at lower proficiency levels. Some staff with advanced proficiency level teach learners at lower levels.

3.5 Participants

The researcher initially contacted the administration of all 3 private language institutes, and requested their permission to conduct a survey. This study involved two groups of participants: the first group comprised 298 Iranian EFL learners from three different English language institutes, across various proficiency levels, from the

elementary to the advanced levels. The second group included 31 Iranian language instructors teaching English at three private institutes in Zahedan, Iran. Further, in accordance with the research ethics, all the participants granted their consent to take part in the study (see appendix A). For the sake of confidentiality, all the participants were assigned codes.

3.5.1 Iranian EFL Learners

The first group of the participants comprised 298 EFL learners from three different language institutes in Zahedan, Iran; Marefat Language Institute, Zaban Sara Language Center, and Shokouh Language Academy. The Iranian language learners were placed to their respective proficiency levels by their institutions as follows: 136 elementary, 48 pre-intermediate, 42 intermediate, 38 upper-intermediate, and 36 advanced. Of the total number of the participants, 138 were male and 160 female; their age ranged between 15 and 37 years, with an average of 21 years. Moreover, the Iranian learners reported to have different educational backgrounds, from high school to master levels. Most of the participants also indicated minimum of 1 year of formal English study. Table 3.1 presents the demographic data.

Table 3.1. The Demographic Data on the Iranian EFL Participants

Proficiency Levels	Male	Female	Total
Elementary	62	74	136
Pre-Intermediate	20	28	48
Intermediate	22	20	42
Upper-Intermediate	16	22	38
Advance	18	16	36
Total	138	160	298

3.5.2 Iranian English Language Instructors

The second group of the participants involved 31 Iranian language teachers employed at different language institutes in Zahedan, Iran. Of 31 instructors 14 were male and 17 female, with different educational backgrounds, ranging from M.A. in ELT to B.A. in ELT graduates, as well as students who majored in other areas. The EFL teachers reported an average of three years of teaching experience across different language proficiency levels.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The present study collected data through a background information questionnaire as well as the English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI) designed by Griffiths (2007), in two versions, for language teachers and learners. (See appendix B and C). Recently, it has been reported by Griffiths and Parr (2001) that the English language teacher respondents in their survey experienced difficulties with strategy classification based on Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). In this regard, Griffiths (2007) stated that "a strategy such as looking for opportunities to converse in English, for instance, might be considered metacognitive since it involves self-management, but might also be considered social since, by its nature, it involves interaction with others" (p.93). Such problems like these might confuse language teachers in assessment of their learners' strategy use, therefore, the current study employed Griffiths' novel survey tool (2007). Importantly, as noted by Griffiths "strategy items for the new questionnaire were not grouped, but amalgamated to provide an overall strategy frequency rating and also looked at on an individual item basis" (2007, p.93).

The English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI) comprises 32 strategy related items on a 5-point Likert scale. The Students' Version has been

designed to elicit language learners' reports on frequency of their strategy use, while the Teachers' Version has been developed to obtain language teachers' reports on importance of LLS use for their learners.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Initially, the researcher contacted the management of the three language institutes in Zahedan, Marefat Language Institute, Zaban Sara Language Center, and Shokouh Language Academy to secure their permission for conducting research. The management was also requested to provide information regarding the language learner numbers, their proficiency levels, the number of the language teachers employed at the institutes, as well as time tables.

The data collection was scheduled to be conducted in summer 2012 in Zahedan, Iran. Upon arrival, the researcher submitted a written letter to the management of every language institute requesting their permission to conduct a survey with their language teachers and learners (See appendix D). Subsequently, the researcher requested an appointment with the management and teaching staff in order to familiarize them with the purposes of the study, as well as the English Language Learning Strategy Inventory. It should be noted that both the managers and language instructors were very supportive and cooperative, which enabled the researcher to collect the data in accordance with the previously set timeline. In accordance with the research ethics all the participants were asked whether they were willing to take part in the survey, and they gave their written consent.

According to the initial plan, Marefat Language Institute was the first site for the survey administration. The data were collected in regular English language classes, and both teachers and learners were provided with the necessary information and instructions. Both groups of the respondents were requested to complete the

background information questionnaire and the ELLSI concurrently. Whenever the Iranian EFL learners or teachers requested explanation or clarification, the researcher complied with their requests. The administration procedure lasted approximately twenty minutes for each class, and the researcher spent fifteen days to collect data from all English language classes at Marefat Language Institute.

The next site for data collection was Zaban Sara Language Center. It was also envisaged to administer the survey to the Iranian EFL teachers and learners in regular classes. However, due to the Ramadan month, and the holiday break, the data collection procedure at Zaban Sara lasted for about one month. While collecting the data at the language center, the researcher initiated the procedure at Shokouh Language Academy where the management were requested and granted their consent to change the previous schedule in order to enable the researcher to start collecting data earlier than planned. The survey administration procedure at this institution lasted one week.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

The collected quantitative data were analyzed through application of IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0.0 for Windows (IBM Corp, 2010). In accordance with the research questions, the analysis yielded descriptive statistics (mean, frequencies, and standard deviations) in order to examine the respondents' survey reports. Specifically, the data collected from the Iranian EFL teachers were analyzed in terms of the importance they ascribed to the language learning strategies for their learners. As regards the Iranian EFL learners, their reports were analyzed in terms of the frequency of their LLS use. Moreover, the collected quantitative data were also analyzed through the application of independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA test with the Scheffé method as a post-hoc test. in order to explore the participants' views in

relation to variables and interpreted the results in accordance with the research questions.

3.9 Limitations and Delimitations

The present survey study exhibited certain limitations. First, the participant sample was limited to three language institutes in one of the provinces of Iran. Therefore caution is required prior to generalizing the findings of the survey administration to the EFL instructional contexts in other provinces of Iran, with diverse ethnic, educational, or linguistic milieu. Further, the study applied ELLSI questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert-scale system, so it collected the respondents' self-reports on the assumption that they provided accurate and honest responses.

However, this study also had delimitations in that the ELLSI was a novel survey instrument which proved to be reliable in the related studies conducted in the ESL context (Griffiths, 2007) and EFL context Ağazade and Vefalı (2011). Importantly, ELLSI includes certain strategy items related to recent developments, such as computers or language centers. Moreover, the study involved a statistically adequate number of the Iranian EFL learners across five different proficiency levels (elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced) from three different language institutes in the capital of one of the largest provinces in Iran. Finally, it also involved 30 English language instructors with diverse academic and professional backgrounds. Overall, the student-teacher sample that participated in this study can be considered representative of other EFL instructional contexts in the Iranian provinces.

3.10 Summary

Chapter 3 introduced the research methodology of the current study. It presented the overall design of the study, and the research questions to be investigated. Next,

the chapter described the context as well as the participants of the study. The subsequent sections presented the data collection instruments, as well as the data collection and analysis procedures. The final section in the chapter pertained to the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

4.1 Presentation

This chapter presents the results of the current study. It displays the survey data of the Iranian EFL teachers on the importance of the LLS use for their learners, as well as their relation to the teacher variables. Further, the chapter also displays the survey reports of the Iranian EFL learners on the frequency of the LLS use, as well as their relation to the learner variables. Finally, the chapter presents the comparative statistics in order to reveal congruence between the language teachers' and learners' survey reports.

4.2 Reliability of Survey

The English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI) data were analyzed for reliability in order to determine if the related items were internally consistent. The reliability analysis results of both ELLSI versions indicated the reliability coefficient of .813 for the Teachers' Version and .841 for the Students' Version, respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha values were regarded as acceptable reliability coefficients, however; they were lower than the reported reliability coefficient in Griffiths (2007) (.89 and .87, respectively) and also lower than the one in Ağazade and Vefalı (2011) (.94 and .84, respectively).

4.3 Research Question 1

How important do the Iranian English language teachers report the LLS to be for their students?

The survey data analysis was conducted in terms of the following established means categorization (Griffiths, 2007; Oxford, 1990); accordingly, the mean of 3.5-5 was regarded as high. The analysis of the Iranian EFL teachers' survey data revealed that an overall average level of reported importance was high (M=3.98). Interestingly, the teacher respondents rated 28 items as very important (averaging 3.50 or more), and 4 items as somewhat important (below 3.5). The overall results of the EFL teachers' reported importance of LLS is shown in Table 4.1.

Out of 32 items on the ELLSI the Iranian teachers indicated as the top three very important strategies item 2 (Learning from the teacher, M=4.52), item 4 (Reading books in English, M=4.48) and item 16 (Consciously learning new vocabulary, M=4.39), respectively. The respondents rated as the least important strategies item 11 (Listening to music while studying, M=2.77), item 9 (Using language learning games, M=3.10), and item 23 (Using a library, M=3.29). As regards the Iranian EFL teachers' survey reports in relation to the gender variable, 14 male and 17 female teachers predominantly regarded LLS as very important for their learners. However, the male teachers ascribed a somewhat higher degree of importance to the strategies (M=4.04) than their female counterparts (M=3.92).

Table 4.1. The Iranian EFL Teachers' Survey Reports

Rank	ELLSI	Items	Mean	SD
1 st	2	Learning from the teacher	4.52	.62
2 nd	4	Reading books in English	4.48	.57
3 rd	16	Consciously learning new vocabulary	4.39	.71
4 th	1	Doing homework Reading books in English	4.35	.66
5 th	12	Talking to other students in English	3.35	.83
6 th	25	Listening to native speakers of English	4.36	.66
7 th	17	Keeping a language learning notebook	4.32	.90
8 th	18	Talking to native speakers of English	4.32	.87
9 th	28	Making friends with native speakers	4.32	.79
10 th	26	Learning from mistakes	4.26	.77
11 th	27	Spending a lot of time studying English	4.23	.76
12 th	3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken	4.19	.74
13 th	15	Studying English grammar	4.19	.70
14 th	29	Watching movies in English	4.16	.77
15 th	7	Revising regularly	4.10	.79
16 th	10	Writing letters in English	4.10	1.10
17 th	6	Watching TV in English	4.06	.89
18 th	31	Listening to the radio in English	4.03	.79
19 th	21	Pre-planning language-learning activities	3.97	.79
20 th	19	Taking note of language used in the environment	3.90	.87
21 st	30	Learning about the culture of English speakers	3.90	.94
22 nd	13	Using a dictionary	3.87	.99

Table 4.1 (continued).

23 rd	14	Reading newspapers in English	3.87	1.17
24 th	24	Trying to think in English	3.84	1.12
25 th	32	Writing a diary in English	3.81	1.04
26 th	20	Controlling schedules so that English study is done	3.77	.95
27 th	8	Listening to songs in English	3.71	1.00
28 th	5	Using a computer	3.55	.99
29 th	22	Not worrying about mistakes	3.29	1.27
30 th	23	Using a library	3.29	1.03
31 st	9	Using language learning games	3.10	1.16
32 nd	11	Listening to music while studying	2.77	1.45
Overall average level of importance			3.98	.35

4.3.1 The Importance of LLSs between the Male and Female Iranian EFL

Teachers

In order to find out if there was any statistical difference in the female and male teachers' reports; T-test was applied to the related survey data (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. t-test Comparison Results between Genders for EFL Teachers

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Male	14	4.04	.291	.941	.354
Female	17	3.92	.398		

In this regard, a significance level of 0.05 was established as the confidence level. Since the p-value for the t value was greater than 0.05, this score suggested no statistically significant difference between the female and male teachers' survey reports on the importance of LLSs.

Regarding the top three very important strategies the Iranian male teachers reported item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English, $M=4.64$), item 28 (Making friends with native speakers, $M=4.57$), and item 10 (Writing letters in English, $M=4.50$). On the other hand, the EFL female teachers rated item 16 (Consciously learning new vocabulary, $M=4.71$), as by far the most important strategy, and items 2 (Learning from the teacher, $M=4.59$) and 7 (Revising regularly, $M=4.47$) as very important strategies, respectively. Table 4.3 shows the most important strategies for both male and female teachers.

Table 4.3. The Most Important Strategies for the Male and Female EFL Teachers

Gender	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
Male	1 st	18	Talking to native speakers of English	4.64	.63
	2 nd	28	Making friends with native speakers	4.57	.64
	3 rd	10	Writing letters in English	4.50	.65
Female	1 st	16	Consciously learning new vocabulary	4.71	.47
	2 nd	2	Learning from the teacher	4.59	.61
	3 rd	7	Revising regularly	4.47	.51

Interestingly, concerning the least important strategies, both the Iranian male and female instructors indicated item 11 (Listening to music while studying, $M=3.00$ and $M=2.59$, respectively), and item 9 (Using language learning games, $M=3.07$ and $M=3.12$, respectively) as the least important LLS for their learners. Moreover, the male EFL teachers also reported item 5 (Using a computer, $M=3.36$), whereas the female teachers item 23 (Using a library, $M=3.00$) as the least important strategies for their learners. Table 4.4 shows the least important strategies for both male and female teachers.

Table 4.4. The Least Important Strategies for the Male and Female EFL Teachers

Gender	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
Male	30 th	5	Using a computer	3.36	.92
	31 st	9	Using language learning games	3.07	1.20
	32 nd	11	Listening to music while studying	3.00	1.30
Female	30 th	9	Using language learning games	3.12	1.16
	31 st	23	Using a library	3.00	1.11
	32 nd	11	Listening to music while studying	2.59	1.58

4.3.2 The Importance of LLSs in Relation to Teaching Experience

Regarding the Iranian EFL teachers' survey reports in relation to the length of their professional experience, the analysis of the survey data revealed the following. As the demographic data in chapter 3 illustrated in this regard, the participant teachers of the current study were placed into three main categories as follows: 13 teachers with less than three years of teaching experience, 9 teachers with 3-6 years of professional experience, and 9 teachers with 6 or more years of teaching experience. Interestingly, across three groups the most experienced Iranian teachers ascribed more importance ($M=4.16$) to their learners' LLS use than their less experienced counterparts ($M=3.93$ and $M=3.88$, respectively). ANOVA comparison test was applied to the related survey data to yield the following results (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. ANOVA Results for the EFL Teachers in Terms of Teaching Experience

Group	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
less than 3 years	13	3.88	.441	1.815	.182
3 – 6 years	9	3.93	.225		
six or more years	9	4.16	.217		

Despite the observable differences in the mean scores across the 3 categories, the ANOVA test results indicated no statistically significant difference between the Iranian EFL teachers' survey reports and length of their teaching experience, with the p-value established at significance level of 0.05.

4.4 Research Question 2

How frequently do the Iranian EFL students report using language learning strategies?

The analysis of the Iranian students' survey data was conducted in terms of the same established mean categorization (Oxford, 1990), with average of $M=3.5$ and above considered as high. In this regard, the EFL student participants in this study ($n=298$) reportedly used the language learning strategies somewhat frequently, overall average level of frequency being $M=2.97$. Table 4.6 demonstrates the Iranian learners' survey reports.

The EFL learners indicated 2 out of 32 items as highly frequently employed strategies ($M=3.5$ or above), 28 strategy items as somewhat frequently used strategies ($M=2.5-3.40$), as well as 2 items as infrequently operated strategies ($M=2.4$ or lower). The top three language learning strategies reportedly used very and somewhat frequently were item 2 (Learning from the teacher, $M=3.56$), item 1 (Doing homework, $M=3.55$) and item 5 (Using a computer, $M=3.39$), respectively. Whereas the top three LLSs reportedly employed by the Iranian learners least frequently were item 28 (Making friends with native speakers, $M=2.19$), item 31 (Listening to the radio in English, $M=2.45$), as well as item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English, $M=1.99$).

Table 4.6. The Iranian EFL Students' Survey Reports

Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
1 st	2	Doing homework	3.56	1.00
2 nd	1	Learning from the teacher	3.55	1.05
3 rd	5	Using a computer	3.39	1.24
4 th	13	Using a dictionary	3.37	1.12
5 th	26	Learning from mistakes	3.35	1.13
6 th	8	Listening to songs in English	3.32	1.34
7 th	16	Consciously learning new vocabulary	3.30	1.15
8 th	29	Watching movies in English	3.24	1.19
9 th	7	Revising regularly	3.22	1.17
10 th	20	Controlling schedules so that English study is done	3.22	1.15
11 th	17	Keeping a language learning notebook	3.21	1.22
12 th	24	Trying to think in English	3.21	1.23
13 th	6	Watching TV in English	3.16	1.20
14 th	15	Studying English grammar	3.16	1.08
15 th	22	Not worrying about mistakes	3.16	1.11
16 th	12	Talking to other students in English	3.14	1.14
17 th	4	Reading books in English	3.11	1.16
18 th	21	Pre-planning language-learning activities	3.04	1.06
19 th	25	Listening to native speakers of English	3.02	1.19
20 th	27	Spending a lot of time studying English	2.99	1.07
21 st	3	Learning in an environment where the language is spoken	2.94	1.15
22 nd	19	Taking note of language used in the environment	2.88	1.12
23 rd	30	Learning about the culture of English speakers	2.80	1.16

Table 4.6 (continued).

24 th	23	Using a library	2.60	1.14
25 th	14	Reading newspapers in English	2.58	1.26
26 th	11	Listening to music while studying	2.55	1.15
27 th	32	Writing a diary in English	2.54	1.09
28 th	10	Writing letters in English	2.53	1.25
29 th	9	Using language learning games	2.51	1.29
30 th	31	Listening to the radio in English	2.45	1.19
31 st	28	Making friends with native speakers	2.19	1.36
32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	1.99	1.33
Overall average level of frequency			2.97	.43

4.4.1 Use of LLSs between the Male and Female Iranian EFL Students

Regarding the LLS use in relation to gender, the comparison of the male (n=144) and female (n=154 female) learners' survey reports revealed that the male participants used the strategies somewhat more frequently (M=3.01) than their female counterparts (M=2.94). In order to find a statistically significant difference, if any, between the student participants' survey reports, t-test was applied to the survey data. The related results are shown in Table 4.7:

Table 4.7. t-test Comparison Results between Genders for Iranian EFL Students

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Male	144	3.01	.039	1.281	.201
Female	154	2.94	.032		

However, the t-test results demonstrated p-value of .201, which was greater than the established confidence level of 0.05, hence suggesting no statistically significant

difference in the use of language learning strategies between the male and female Iranian learners.

As regards the comparison of the most and somewhat frequently used LLSs between the genders, the male and female EFL learners reportedly operated similar strategies. Specifically, in this regard both the Iranian male and female learners stated item 2 (Learning from the teacher, M=3.65, M=3.47), item 1 (Doing homework, M=3.51, M=3.59), respectively. However, item 5 (Using a computer, M=3.47) and item 13 (Using a dictionary, M=3.40) were the different strategies reportedly used somewhat frequently by the male and female participants, respectively (see Table 4.8)

Table 4.8. The Most Frequent Strategies Used by the Male and Female EFL Students

Gender	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
Male	1 st	2	Learning from the teacher	3.65	.91
	2 nd	1	Doing homework	3.51	1.01
	3 rd	5	Using a computer	3.47	1.28
Female	1 st	1	Doing homework	3.59	1.08
	2 nd	2	Learning from the teacher	3.47	1.08
	3 rd	13	Using a dictionary	3.40	1.23

Interestingly, regarding the least frequently used strategies, the male and female EFL learners again reportedly employed similar strategies such as item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English, M=2.08, M=1.90) and item 28 (Making friends with native speakers, M=2.29, M=2.10), respectively. However, item 10 (Writing letters in English, M=2.50) and item 9 (Using language learning games, M=2.40) were the different strategies reported among the least frequently used strategies by the male and female participants, respectively (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9. The Least Frequent Strategies Used by the Male and Female EFL Students

Gender	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
Male	30 th	10	Writing letters in English	2.50	1.20
	31 st	28	Making friends with native speakers	2.29	1.47
	32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	2.08	1.41
Female	30 th	9	Using language learning games	2.40	1.20
	31 st	28	Making friends with native speakers	2.10	1.25
	32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	1.90	1.25

4.4.2 Use of LLSs among Different Age Groups of the Iranian EFL Students

As regards the Iranian EFL learners' LLS use in relation to age, the analysis of the survey data revealed the following. As the demographic data in Chapter 3 illustrated the learner participants in this study were categorized into three age groups based on their educational levels as follows: elementary and Junior High School students aged between 7 and 15 (n=66), High School students aged between 16 and 18 (n=96), and University level students aged 19 and more (n=136). In order to find a statistically significant difference, if any, across 3 age groups one-way ANOVA test was applied to the survey data (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10. One-way ANOVA Test Results for 3 Age Groups

Age groups	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
7-15 yrs.	66	2.92	.351	1.210	0.300
16-18 yrs.	96	3.00	.443		
19 & over yrs.	136	3.00	.483		

Interestingly, the mean scores for 2 age groups of the Iranian learners, at the university as well as high school levels, were the same (M=3.00), hence suggesting that they operated the language learning strategies somewhat frequently as well as

more frequently than the secondary school learners (M=2.92). However, the results of ANOVA comparison test indicated P-value of 0.300, higher than the established significance level of 0.05, which seemed to indicate no statistically significant difference of strategy use across different age groups of the EFL learners (see Table 4.11).

Regarding the most and somewhat frequently used strategies across the 3 age groups, all learners reportedly operated item 2 (Learning from the teacher, M=3.34, 4.03, 3.64). However, in this regard the elementary and junior high school Iranian learners also indicated items 13 (Using a dictionary, M=3.29) and item 22 (Not worrying about mistakes, M=3.24). Further, the high school EFL learners (aged between 16 and 18) stated item 1 (Doing homework, M=3.92) and item 26 (Learning from mistakes, M=3.64) among the frequently employed LLSs, whereas the university learners (aged 19 and more) reported item 5 (Using a computer, M=3.51) and item 16 (Consciously learning new vocabulary, M=3.47) among the somewhat frequently operated strategies (see table 4.11).

Table 4.11. The Most Frequently Used LLSs across Different Age Groups

Age	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
7-15 yrs.	1 st	2	Learning from the teacher	3.34	.96
	2 nd	13	Using a dictionary	3.29	1.15
	3 rd	22	Not worrying about mistakes	3.24	1.02
16-18 yrs.	1 st	2	Learning from the teacher	4.03	.96
	2 nd	1	Doing homework	3.92	1.15
	3 rd	26	Learning from mistakes	3.64	1.02
19 & over yrs.	1 st	2	Learning from the teacher	3.64	1.59
	2 nd	5	Using a computer	3.51	1.25
	3 rd	16	Consciously learning new vocabulary	3.47	1.14

Regarding the least frequently used LLSs across the 3 age groups, interestingly, both the elementary and junior high school EFL learners as well as the university students reportedly used item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English, M=1.80, M=2.13, respectively) and item 28 (Making friends with native speakers, M=1.81, M=2.35, respectively). In this regard, the elementary and junior learners also indicated item 31 (Listening to the radio in English, M=2.68), whereas the university students stated item 9 (Using language learning games, M=2.21). It should be noted that the reportedly least frequently strategies on the part of the high school learners were different from those of the other learners, specifically item 14 (Reading newspapers in English, M=2.12), item 11 (Listening to music while studying, M=2.26), and item 10 (Writing letters in English, M=2.26). Table 4.12 represent the the least frequently used strategies across different age groups.

Table 4.12. The Least Frequently Used LLSs across Different Age Groups

Age	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
7-15	30 th	31	Listening to the radio in English	2.68	1.21
	31 st	28	Making friends with native speakers	1.81	1.16
	32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	1.80	1.15
16-18	30 th	10	Writing letters in English	2.26	1.37
	31 st	11	Listening to music while studying	2.26	1.31
	32 nd	14	Reading newspapers in English	2.12	1.23
19 & over	30 th	28	Making friends with native speakers	2.35	1.35
	31 st	9	Using language learning games	2.21	1.18
	32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	2.13	1.34

4.4.3 Use of LLSs across Different Proficiency Levels of the Iranian EFL

Learners

Regarding the Iranian learners' LLS use in relation to the language proficiency level, the analysis of the survey data revealed the following. As the demographic

data in Chapter 3 demonstrated in this regard, the learners participants in this study were placed into their respective proficiency levels as follows: elementary (n=125), pre-intermediate (n=51), intermediate (n=42), upper-intermediate (n=37), and advanced (n=43). In order to find a statistically significant difference, if any, in the survey data across different proficiency levels, ANOVA test was applied to the survey data and the related results are presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13. One-way ANOVA Test Results across Proficiency Levels

Proficiency Level	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Elementary	125	2.84	.44	10.23	0.00
P-Intermediate	51	2.94	.39		
Intermediate	42	3.05	.41		
U-Intermediate	37	2.99	.31		
Advanced	43	3.30	.41		

The ANOVA comparison manifested a p-value of 0.00 which was lower than the established significance level of 0.05. Since the observed value was lower than the established significance level, Post-hoc Scheffe test was applied to identify the groups that caused the variance.

The results of the Post-hoc Test (see Table 4.14) revealed that the advanced level learners used LLSs somewhat more frequently than their counterparts at the elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and upper-intermediate levels. The mean differences across different proficiency levels were as follows: elementary level (.453), pre-intermediate level (.359), intermediate level (.242), and upper-intermediate level (.304), respectively. The test results also seemed to indicate that there was a significant difference between the intermediate and elementary level learners' strategy use (Mean Difference =.211).

Table 4.14 The Post-hoc Test Results for Overall Strategy Use across Proficiency Levels.

(I)Proficiency	(J) Proficiency	Mean Difference	SD Error	P-value
Elementary	Pre-intermediate	-.094	.06	.171
	Intermediate	-.211*	.07	.004
	U-Intermediate	-.148	.07	.056
	Advanced	-.453*	.07	.000
P-intermediate	Elementary	.094	.06	.171
	Intermediate	-.117	.08	.174
	U-Intermediate	-.054	.08	.543
	Advanced	-.359*	.08	.000
Intermediate	Elementary	.211*	.08	.004
	Pre-intermediate	.117	.08	.174
	U-Intermediate	.062	.09	.499
	Advanced	-.242*	.08	.007
U-Intermediate	Elementary	.148	.07	.056
	Pre-intermediate	.054	.08	.543
	Intermediate	-.062	.09	.499
	Advanced	-.304*	.09	.001
Advanced	Elementary	.453*	.07	.000
	Pre-intermediate	.359*	.08	.000
	Intermediate	.242*	.08	.007
	U-Intermediate	.304*	.09	.001

*. The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level.

As regards the most and somewhat frequently used LLSs across different proficiency levels, the analysis of the survey reports demonstrated the following reportedly common strategies (see Table 4.15). In this regard, both the elementary

and pre-intermediate level learners reported item 1 (Doing homework, M=3.65 and M=3.39, respectfully), the same learners as well as, interestingly, the upper-intermediate level learners indicated item 2 (Learning from the teacher, M=3.65, M=3.51, M=3.68), respectively. Further, the pre-intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced level Iranian learners stated item 5 (Using a computer, M=3.53, M=3.46, M=3.98), respectively, and, interestingly, the elementary and advanced level learners reported item 8 (Listening to songs in English, M=3.31, M=3.81), respectively as the frequently employed strategies. Furthermore, the intermediate and upper-intermediate Iranian learners stated item 13 (Using a dictionary, M=3.64, M=3.62) to be frequently operated, respectively. However, the Iranian learners' survey reports across different proficiency levels also revealed differences among the most frequently used strategies.

Table 4.15. The Most Frequently Used LLSs across Different Proficiency Levels

Proficiency Level	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
Elementary	1 st	1	Doing homework	3.65	1.04
	2 nd	2	Learning from the teacher	3.65	1.06
	3 rd	8	Listening to songs in English	3.31	1.39
Pre-Intermediate	1 st	5	Using a computer	3.53	1.27
	2 nd	2	Learning from the teacher	3.51	1.00
	3 rd	1	Doing homework	3.39	1.04
Intermediate	1 st	13	Using a dictionary	3.64	.93
	2 nd	16	Consciously learning new vocabulary	3.60	1.11
	3 rd	4	Reading books in English	3.57	1.14
Upper-Intermediate	1 st	2	Learning from the teacher	3.68	1.02
	2 nd	13	Using a dictionary	3.62	1.14
	3 rd	5	Using a computer	3.46	.86
Advanced	1 st	5	Using a computer	3.98	1.02
	2 nd	25	Listening to native speakers of English	3.84	1.11
	3 rd	8	Listening to songs in English	3.81	.86

Regarding the least frequently employed language learning strategies, the analysis of the survey reports across different proficiency levels revealed the following common strategies (see Table 4.16). The Iranian learners from the elementary, pre-intermediate as well as intermediate levels reported item 31 (Listening to the radio in English, M=2.18, M=2.24, M=2.57), respectively. Further, in this regard, all the EFL learners from all the levels except for the highest, advanced level learners, indicated item 28 (Making friends with native speakers, M=2.03, M=1.75, M=2.10, M=2.16), respectively. Furthermore, the same learners across 5 proficiency levels, except for the advanced level learners, stated item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English, M=1.80, M=1.92, M=1.83, M=1.81), to be least frequently used, respectively.

Table 4.16. The Least Frequently Used LLSs across Different Proficiency Levels

Proficiency Level	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
Elementary	30 th	31	Listening to the radio in English	2.18	1.27
	31 st	28	Making friends with native speakers	2.03	1.37
	32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	1.80	1.19
Pre-Intermediate	30 th	31	Listening to the radio in English	2.24	1.11
	31 st	18	Talking to native speakers of English	1.92	1.33
	32 nd	28	Making friends with native speakers	1.75	1.25
Intermediate	30 th	31	Listening to the radio in English	2.57	1.01
	31 st	28	Making friends with native speakers	2.10	1.26
	32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	1.83	1.12
Upper-Intermediate	30 th	2	Spending a lot of time studying English	2.86	1.00
	31 st	28	Making friends with native speakers	2.16	1.28
	32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	1.81	1.30
Advanced	30 th	23	Using a library	2.86	1.00
	31 st	11	Listening to music while studying	2.72	1.28
	32 nd	10	Writing letters in English	2.42	1.30

Significantly, the highest, advanced level Iranian EFL students reportedly operated least frequently different LLSs as follows: item 10 (Writing letters in English, M=2.44), item 11 (Listening to music while studying, M=2.72), as well as 23 (Using a library, M= 2.86).

4.5 Research Question 3

Are the EFL teachers' and students' survey reports congruent?

In order to find congruence, if any, between the Iranian EFL teachers' and students' survey reports, the related data were compared and revealed lack of congruence between the language teachers' and learners' views, in terms of importance and frequency of strategy use, respectively.

Both the EFL teacher and student respondents stated only one common strategy, item 2 (Learning from the teacher) as important and frequently used LLS. Further, the Iranian teachers rated as the most important strategy item 4 (Reading books in English) and item 16 (Consciously learning new vocabulary), whereas the EFL learners reported item 1 (Doing homework) and item 5 (Using a computer) as the most frequently used LLS.

Table 4.17. Comparative Statistics on the Most Important/Frequent LLSs

Participants	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
Teachers	1 st	2	Learning from the teacher	4.52	.66
	2 nd	4	Reading books in English	4.4	.57
	3 rd	16	vocabulary Conscious learning	4.39	.71
Students	1 st	2	Learning from the teacher	3.56	1.00
	2 nd	1	Doing homework	3.55	1.05
	3 rd	15	Studying English grammar	3.39	1.24

Furthermore, the language teachers ascribed least importance to item 9 (Using language learning games), item 22 (Not worrying about mistakes) and item 23 (Using a library), whereas; the EFL learners reportedly employed least frequently item 18 (Talking to native speakers of English), item 28 (Using a library) and item 31 (Listening to the radio in English). Tables 4.17 and 4.18 present comparative statistics on the most and least important and employed LLS, for the Iranian teachers and learners, respectively. Thus, the examination of the Iranian EFL teachers' and students' survey reports demonstrated that predominantly the strategies that the teachers rated important were not employed frequently by their learners.

Table 4.18. Comparative Statistics on the Least Important/Frequent LLSs

Participants	Rank	ELLSI	Item	Mean	SD
Teachers	30 th	23	Using a library	3.29	1.03
	31 st	22	Not worrying about mistakes	3.29	1.16
	32 nd	9	Using LL games	3.10	1.45
Students	30 th	31	Listening to the radio	2.40	1.19
	31 st	28	Making friends with native speakers	2.19	1.36
	32 nd	18	Talking to native speakers of English	1.99	1.33

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the current study. Specifically, it described the findings related to the reliability of the data collection instrument (ELLSI), the Iranian teachers' survey reports on the importance of the LLS use for their learners in general, as well as in relation to the teachers' gender and teaching experience. Further, the chapter reported the results pertaining to the EFL learners' survey reports on the frequency of strategy use in general, as well as in relation to their gender, age and language proficiency level. Finally, the survey data were compared

in terms of congruence between the Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' survey reports.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Presentation

This chapter presents the major findings, their discussion in relation to the relevant research and studies, as well as a summary of the current study. The following sections pertain to the pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Discussion of the Major Findings

The present study explored the language learning strategy use in the Iranian EFL context. Specifically, it conducted a survey to the language teachers and learners in the capital of one of the largest provinces in Iran. Through administration of Griffith's (2007) English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI), the study collected comprehensive quantitative data on the importance as well as frequency of the LLS use in the context under investigation. Importantly, the study also examined the respondents' survey reports in relation to the teachers' gender and teaching experience, as well as in relation to the learners' gender, age and English language proficiency level. Finally, the study investigated congruence between the Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' views regarding the importance and frequency of the strategy use, respectively.

The major findings of the study are as follows. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the Teachers' version of the ELLSI (.813) as well as of the Students' version (.841) were above the established acceptable standard of .70 and indicated that the

survey data collection instrument was reliable. This finding is in line with the reported reliability results in the related studies by Griffiths (2007) and Ağazade and Vefalı (2011) conducted in an ESL and EFL contexts, respectively.

5.2.1 Research Question 1

How important do the English language teachers report the LLS to be for their students?

Regarding the Iranian EFL teachers' survey reports, the average mean score of their reports, $M=3.98$, seemed to indicate that most of them ascribed high importance to the majority of the LLSs on the ELLSI. Their reports also manifested their high awareness of the importance of the strategy use on the part of their language learners. Specifically, the EFL teachers regarded 28 strategies as very important, whereas 4 as somewhat important. These findings confirm the related results of the teachers' high awareness in the ESL context by Griffiths (2007) as well as in the EFL context by Ağazade and Vefalı (2011).

Further, the Iranian teachers rated as very important for their EFL learners the language learning strategies of *learning from the teacher*, *reading books in English*, and *consciously learning new vocabulary*, whereas as the least important the strategies of *using a library*, *using language learning games*, and *listening to music while studying*. These findings suggested that the Iranian EFL teachers regarded the traditional as well as skills-language component strategies as more important than the resource-related strategies.

Interestingly, as regards the LLS use in relation to the teachers' gender, the male EFL teachers ascribed more importance ($M=4.00$) to the LLS use than their female counterparts ($M=3.92$). These findings are not at variance with the related results in Ağazade and Vefalı (2011). However, in the current study, no statistically significant

difference was found between the related survey reports. Further, the Iranian male and female language teachers' survey responses were not congruent in terms of the most important LLSs such as *talking to native speakers of English*, *making friends with native speakers* and *writing letters in English* reported by the male teachers, whereas *consciously learning new vocabulary*, *learning from the teacher*, and *revising regularly* by the female teachers, respectively. These results may be accounted for by the more active social roles enjoyed by the male in the Iranian culture, as well as the female teachers' more important regard for the traditional, as well as cognitive and metacognitive language learning strategies. However, the survey data revealed a promising congruence in terms of the somewhat important strategies, specifically *using language learning games* as well as *listening to music* which suggested the Iranian EFL teachers' disregard for the certain strategies related to the resources.

Further, more experienced EFL teachers ascribed more importance to the LLS use on the part of their learners than their less experienced counterparts; however the results of ANOVA test did not suggest a statistical difference in this regard. These findings were at variance with the related results by Ağazade and Vefalı (2011) where less experienced teachers ascribed more importance to LLSs.

5.2.2 Research Question 2

How frequently do the Iranian EFL students report using language learning strategies?

As regards the Iranian EFL learners' LLS use, the average mean score of their reports, $M=2.97$, seems to indicate that they used the language learning strategies somewhat frequently. These findings are not in line with the related results in the previous studies where language learners reported a high frequency of strategy use in

English learning (Green & Oxford, 1995; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Phillips, 1991; Politzer, 1983). However, the findings of this study supported the results of the pertinent earlier research conducted among EFL learners (Bremner, 1999; Wharton, 2000).

Specifically, the language learners reportedly operated only 2 strategies very frequently, *learning from the teacher*, *doing homework*, and *using a computer* somewhat frequently. These findings were in line with the related reports from the ESL learners in Griffiths (2007) and from the EFL learners in Ağazade and Vefalı (2011). This may be accounted for by those universal characteristics of learners where the educational cultures seem to be remarkably similar and classroom pedagogy is essentially teacher centered (Tomlinson, 1995, p.139). Further, the EFL learners reportedly employed the remaining strategies on the ELLSI somewhat and least frequently. In this regard, the Iranian learners indicated the strategies of *listening to the radio in English*, *making friends with native speakers*, and *talking to native speakers of English* as the least frequently used learning strategies. This may be due to the current situation in Iran where language learners do not have an exposure to native speakers of English, especially in remote provinces like Sistan and Baluchistan.

Regarding the LLS use in relation to gender, the male EFL learners reportedly operated strategies more frequently than their female counterparts. These findings were consistent with the results of Griffiths (2003) and Nisbet (2003), however, were at variance with those of the previous research (Bacon, 1992; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) which reported more strategy use on the part of the female language learners. As regards the most and least frequently used LLSs, the male and female EFL learners' reports revealed a

promising congruence, 2 common most frequently used LLS being *learning from the teacher* and *doing homework*, and 2 common least frequently used LLS being *talking to native speakers of English* and *making friends with native speakers*. However, the analysis of the male and female learners' survey reports did not demonstrate a statistically significant difference in terms of frequency of strategy use. This finding suggests that regardless of gender, the Iranian EFL learners consider learning English as important for their education (especially at graduate and post graduate levels) as well as their future career.

As regards the LLS use in relation to the learners' age, the older, hence more experienced Iranian learners reportedly employed strategies more frequently than their relatively younger, less experienced counterparts. However, the analysis of the related survey data did not reveal a statistically significant difference in this regard, either. These findings were not in line with the related results of the previous research which reported that adult learners employed more strategies with higher frequency than the younger learners (Brown et al., 1983; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Griffiths, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1989). Interestingly, the Iranian learners across all age categories reportedly operated *learning from the teacher* very frequently, which is a universal strategy applied in diverse educational settings. Further, the Iranian learners across different age groups reportedly employed common as well as diverse LLSs more or less frequently. The recurring finding of 2 strategies *talking to native speakers of English*, and *making friends with native speakers*, reportedly least frequently used by the Iranian learners can be accounted for by the lack of exposure to native speakers of English in today's Iran.

Regarding the LLS use in relation to the English language proficiency level, the survey data revealed that the advanced Iranian learners operated the strategies more frequently than their counterparts from the other levels. This finding supported the results of the previous studies which reported that proficient language learners not only used a greater variety of strategies but also frequently used strategies in combination (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1990). Importantly, the EFL learners' survey reports seemed to indicate a gradual increase in means from the lowest, elementary, to the highest, advanced proficiency levels. This finding is also in line with the results of the pertinent studies reporting a relation between proficiency level and strategy use (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Bialystok, 1981b; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985).

As regards the most and least frequently employed language learning strategies, the elementary and pre-intermediate Iranian language learners reportedly used 2 strategies *Doing homework* and *Learning from the teacher* most frequently, which suggested a congruence in this regard. Interestingly, the highest, advanced level learners reportedly operated *using a computer*, similar to the pre-intermediate learners, as well as *listening to songs in English*, similar to the elementary level learners. Regarding the least frequently operated LLS, interestingly, the lower, elementary and pre-intermediate as well as the intermediate level learner' survey reports seemed to indicate a congruence in that they reportedly used items *talking to native speakers of English*, *making friends with native speakers*, and *listening to the radio in English* least frequently. Surprisingly, the upper-intermediate EFL learners also indicated items 18 and 28 among the least frequently used LLS.

Stern (1975) stated that successful language learners may have diverse skills from those of less successful language learners. In the current study, the analysis of the

survey reports across different proficiency levels revealed that the advanced learners not only reported higher frequency of strategy use but also they applied different strategies than their peers. Unlike other EFL learners the advanced Iranian learners reportedly employed the strategies of *using a computer*, *listening to native speakers of English*, as well as *listening to songs in English* very frequently. This result also suggests more autonomy of the advanced level EFL learners. In this regard Naiman et al., (1978) contended that “good language learners were not only dynamically engaged in their learning practice but were also aware of language as knowledge and means of communication, and, importantly, managed their language learning” (p.14).

5.2.3 Research Question 3

Are the EFL teachers’ and students’ survey reports congruent?

As regards the Iranian EFL teachers’ and learners’ survey reports, the data analysis seemed to indicate that the teachers regarded as highly important (M=3.98) those strategies that their learners employed somewhat frequently (M=2.97). The Iranian teachers regarded 28 strategies as very important and 4 as somewhat important, whereas learners reported only 2 strategies as very frequently used, 28 as somewhat and least frequently used. The strategies of *learning from the teacher* (M=3.56) and *doing homework* (M=3.55) reportedly employed very frequently by the learners were also rated as very important (M= 4.52 and 4.35, respectively) by their teachers. Interestingly, the 2 strategies, that the Iranian learners considered as infrequently used such as *making friends with native speakers* (M=2.19) and *talking to native speakers of English* (M=1.99) were ascribed high importance by the EFL teachers (M=4.32 for both strategies). This lack of congruence seems to indicate that despite the English language teachers’ awareness of the necessity of exposure to the target language the Iranian learners are devoid of the opportunity to benefit from it.

Overall, the respondents' reports revealed a lack of congruence between their views, except the strategies of *learning from the teacher* and *doing homework* which both the Iranian teachers and learners regarded as very important and reportedly used very frequently, respectively. This finding is at variance with the related result by Griffiths (2003) and can be accounted for by the predominantly teacher-centered educational settings, especially in Iranian provinces.

5.3 Summary

The present study explored the language learning strategy use in the Iranian EFL context. Specifically, it conducted a survey with the language teachers and learners in the capital of one of the largest provinces in Iran. Through administration of Griffiths' (2007) English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI), the study collected comprehensive quantitative data on the importance as well as frequency of the LLS use in the context under investigation.

Regarding the Iranian EFL teachers, the analysis of the related survey data manifested their high awareness of the importance of the strategy use for their language learners. Further, no statistically significant difference was found either between the male and female teachers' survey reports, or between the more and less experienced teachers' survey responses in terms of the importance of strategy application. As regards the Iranian EFL learners, the analysis of the related survey data indicated that they employed the language learning strategies somewhat frequently. Furthermore, no statistically significant difference was found either between the male and female learners' survey reports, or between the older and younger learners' survey responses in terms of the frequency of strategy use. However, the analysis revealed that the advanced Iranian learners operated the strategies more frequently than their counterparts from the lower proficiency levels.

Moreover, the EFL learners' survey reports overall seemed to indicate a gradual increase in frequency of strategy operation from the Elementary to the Advanced proficiency levels.

Finally, the examination of the Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' survey reports demonstrated incongruence in that the learners did not apply frequently the language learning strategies that their teachers rated as important in the teaching-learning English. In this regard, the study provided important implications for the English language instruction in the context under investigation as well as made suggestions for prospective research.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

This study contributes to the continuing research on language learning strategies, especially in EFL contexts. Owing to the scarcity of survey studies on the LLS use in the Iranian EFL context, specifically in provinces, involving language teachers and learners, the present research provided comprehensive data on strategy use in general, in relation to the teacher and learner variables, as well as in terms of congruence between the teachers' and learners' views. In this regard, the current study provided insights into the Iranian EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of the strategy use for their learners. Further, it revealed the Iranian learners' inadequate employment and repertoire of the LLSs, especially at the lower proficiency levels. Importantly, it demonstrated a lack of congruence between the Iranian EFL teacher's and learners' survey reports in terms of the importance and frequency of the LLS use in the context.

The findings of the present research, therefore, suggested that the English language institutes in Zahedan should address the lack of congruence between the language teachers' and learners' views, further, reconsider their texts, materials, and

teaching practices on offer. Further, the inadequate use of the LLSs, as well as the limited strategy repertoire of the Iranian learners necessitate instructional focus on development of effective strategies, provision of opportunities for their application in the language classroom, as well as promotion of their use outside the instructional setting. It is hoped that language institutions in Iranian provinces will take into account the findings of this study in order to help their language learners to become aware of the importance of effective strategy use for their language learning, progress and success. In this regard language teachers have two goals: teaching learners “what to learn”, and teaching them “how to learn”; the good language teacher is the one who teaches learners “how to learn, how to remember, how to think, and how to motivate themselves” (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986, p. 315). To conclude, it is important for the teacher to undertake the role of facilitator so as to promote learners’ management of their own learning, so that they can, through manipulation of LLSs, direct their own learning (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989).

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Prospective survey on language learning strategy use in the Iranian EFL context can consider conducting interviews with language teachers and learners in order to obtain qualitative insights into the employment of LLSs in the classrooms. Future research can also consider adopting the naturalistic enquiry approach in that the actual classroom interaction, teaching-learning processes can provide a more comprehensive picture in terms of the LLS use in the instructional setting. Furthermore, prospective research can investigate EFL teachers’ and learners’ views on strategy use in relation to other teacher and learner variables. Moreover, prospective studies can undertake large scale surveys across various provinces in Iran in order to provide insights for improvement of the teaching and learning

English in the EFL context. Finally, future research can also consider exploring language learning strategy use at the post-graduate level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

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

Name & surname:

Signature:

Date:/...../2012

Appendix B: Background and English Language Learning Strategy

Inventory Questionnaire (ELLSI): Teachers' version

Dear Colleague,

Summer 2012

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

Many thanks for your co-operation.

Researcher

Fazl Ahmad Ghanbarzahi

Department of English Language Teaching

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University

Part I: Background Information

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

1. **Nationality:** Iranian _____ other (please specify) _____

2. **Sex:** Male _____ Female _____

3. **Years of teaching experience** (including previous institutions): _____

Part II: The English Language Learning Strategy Inventory

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

(1) *Least important*

(2) *Not important*

(3) *Somewhat important*

(4) *Important*

(5) *Most important*

Statement	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Doing homework					
Learning from the teacher					
Learning in an environment where the language is spoken					
Reading books in English					
Using a computer					
Watching TV in English					
Revising regularly					
Listening to songs in English					
Using language learning games					
Writing letters in English					

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

Statement	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Listening to music while studying					
Talking to other students in English					
Using a dictionary					
Reading newspapers in English					
Studying English grammar					
Consciously learning new vocabulary					
Keeping a language learning notebook					
Talking to native speakers of English					
Taking note of language used in the environment					
Controlling schedules so that English study is done					
Pre-planning language-learning activities					
Not worrying about mistakes					
Using a library					
Trying to think in English					
Listening to native speakers of English					
Learning from mistakes					
Spending a lot of time studying English					
Making friends with native speakers					
Watching movies in English					
Learning about the culture of English speakers					
Listening to the radio in English					
Writing a diary in English					

(Adapted from ELLS I, Griffiths, 2007)

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

Dear Student,

Summer 2012

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

Many thanks for your co-operation.

Researcher
Fazl Ahmad Ghanbarzahi
Department of English Language Teaching
Faculty of Education
Eastern Mediterranean University

Part I: Background Information

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

1. **Nationality:** Iranian _____ other (please specify) _____
2. **Sex:** Male _____ Female _____
3. **Birth Date:** _____
4. **Current Educational Status** _____
5. **Years of English language learning** (including pre-university years): _____

Part II: The English Language Learning Strategy Inventory

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

- (1) *Never or almost never use it*
- (2) *Do not usually use it*
- (3) *Sometimes use it*
- (4) *Usually use it*
- (5) *Always or almost always use it*

Statement	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Doing homework					
Learning from the teacher					
Learning in an environment where the language is spoken					
Reading books in English					
Using a computer					
Watching TV in English					
Revising regularly					
Listening to songs in English					
Using language learning games					
Writing letters in English					

- (1) *Never or almost never use it*
 (2) *Do not usually use it*
 (3) *Sometimes use it*
 (4) *Usually use it*
 (5) *Always or almost always use it*

Statement	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Listening to music while studying					
Talking to other students in English					
Using a dictionary					
Reading newspapers in English					
Studying English grammar					
Consciously learning new vocabulary					
Keeping a language learning notebook					
Talking to native speakers of English					
Taking note of language used in the environment					
Controlling schedules so that English study is done					
Pre-planning language-learning activities					
Not worrying about mistakes					
Using a library					
Trying to think in English					
Listening to native speakers of English					
Learning from mistakes					
Spending a lot of time studying English					
Making friends with native speakers					
Watching movies in English					
Learning about the culture of English speakers					
Listening to the radio in English					
Writing a diary in English					

(Adapted from ELLS I, Griffiths, 2007)

Appendix D: Permission Letters from Three Language Institutes

Date: 21 /Aug/2012

To The Shokooh Language Academy,

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

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

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Regards,

Researcher

Fazl Ahmad Ghanbarzahi

Department of English Language Teaching

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University

Tel: +98 915 541 3540

+90 533 832 8223

E-mail: fghanbarzahi@yahoo.com

105207@emu.edu.tr

Date: 21 /Aug/2012

To The Zaban Sara Language Center,

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

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

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Regards,

Researcher

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105207@emu.edu.tr

Date: 04/July/2012

To The Marefat Language Institute,

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

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

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Regards,

Researcher

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Appendix E: Request and Permission Letters from Dr. Griffiths

1. Request Letter to Dr. Griffiths

On Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 11:25 AM, Fazl Ahmad Ghanbarzehi <fghanbarzehi@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Griffiths,

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

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

Best Regards

Fazl Ahmad Ghanbarzehi
Fghanbarzehi@yahoo.com
+90 533 832 8223

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(Dr) Carol Griffiths

PhD, MA(Applied Linguistics), DipELT,
DipTchg, BA(English/French)

Yeditepe University
Istanbul, Turkey

Phone: 0090 (0)216 3618661 (ah)

NZ contact:

Phone: 0064 8153263

Mobile: 0274815326

2. Permission Letter from Dr. Griffiths

From: Carol Griffiths <carolgriffiths5@gmail.com>
To: Fazl ahmad Ghanbarzahi <fgghanbarzahi@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 9, 2012 4:18 PM
Subject: Re: Permission to use your inventory

Dear Fazl

I am happy for you to use the ELLSI

I would be interested to know what you find

Best wishes

Carol