

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In order to provide a background of related theories and research for this study, the first section of this review presents the reasons for learning a second language. The second section is on the language education policy in both the National Primary Schools and National-type Primary Schools and the Secondary Schools in Malaysia. The third section is on the role of English Language as a second language in schools. The fourth section is on some of the theories involved in learning a second language. The final section is on the strategies used by the learners when learning English.

2.1 REASONS FOR LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

Learning is an active process. Language learning in general is a conscious process and is the result of either a formal language situation or a self-study progress. First and second language acquisition are generally believed to be similar. The term "acquisition" refers to acquiring language through exposure of the language which is mainly through the learner's interaction with others and his or her language environment. The term "learning" on the other hand refers to consciously learning the language. The rules, system and lexis of second language are unconsciously learnt and internalised. It is widely believed that people are born with many of the underpinnings that permit them to quickly understand speech, one of the earliest skills in language learning (Chomsky, 1965; McNeill, 1970; Miller, 1981). For a child, the mother tongue is usually the first language he encounters when interacting with his

mother or caregiver. This process continues until the child goes to a nursery, kindergarten or primary school where he or she is then exposed to formal language learning in either the first language or the second language.

Learners learn a second language for various reasons. Some learners, especially adult learners, learn a second language like English either due to self-motivation or self-awareness of the importance of the language as an international language, or for economic and political reasons, as something worthwhile educationally or for personal gains. For children, they learn a second language because it is part of the education policy or they are forced by their parents to do so. Many parents want their children to learn English as a means of communication or as a worthwhile future investment. With these stated reasons in mind, it is without doubt that teachers see young learners bringing with them different abilities, experiences and preferences into the classroom. These learners also have their own strategies for different areas and purposes in learning. Teachers, therefore, need to incorporate a variety of learning experiences to accommodate all these differences in learners to facilitate them in their learning.

2.2 LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY IN MALAYSIA

Language planning and policy can also have an impact on the second language acquisition and proficiency levels. Language policy is defined as the "set of statements, objectives and/or commands explicitly and implicitly decreed by some agency, organisation, or other body with respect to the oversight which that agency has jurisdiction" (Judd, 1992:169). According to Cooper (1989:169), language planning is the "deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to

acquisition, structure or functional allocation of their language codes". To understand language policy decision making, Cooper (1989:88) suggests a framework that asks "who makes that decision, why, how, under what conditions, and with what effect?" The status of the language policy is of importance to the curriculum, teacher training, instructional approaches and examination policy.

The Malaysian education system is very much examination-oriented, thus, tasks that learners may conveniently reject demand cognitive and metacognitive attentions as they rather learn through authoritarian approach depending on memory strategy, (Willing, 1988:159). It is usually seen that our learners' proficiency level is low and they may not be able to handle discussion or be trained to use strategies effectively though they may be highly motivated. Even with competence in the first language, a learner whose second language proficiency is low may find it difficult to utilise strategies to help him or her successfully learn the second language. According to Skehan, "what is relevant are strategies which varies from situation to situation", (Cooper, 1989:96). For example, to obtain the meaning of words in a passage during an examination, the learner can employ the compensation strategy of guessing intelligently the meaning of words in context whereas during daily lessons, he can attempt to guess intelligently or look up the word in a dictionary or use the social strategy of asking their peers or teachers.

Malaysia's National Education Policy of 1966 places English as 'the second most important language' as it is second only to the national language and is "to be taught as an effective second language in Malaysian schools" (Asmah, 1987:158). Gaudart (1987) noted that the national education system is a catalyst for the learning of English. In National-type Primary schools, Chinese and Tamil medium instructions

are still available but Malay and English are compulsory subjects. In the National Schools and National Primary Schools (formerly English medium), the medium of instruction is Bahasa Melayu, with English as a compulsory subject. According to Gaudart (1987:535), for about 70% of Malaysian school children, Bahasa Melayu is the sole medium of instruction, with English as a compulsory second language.

The implementation of the National Language Policy meant that the English-medium schools were phased out. In 1983, all these schools were fully converted into National Schools with Bahasa Melayu as the medium of instruction. This changing role of English in the Malaysian Education Policy has brought about a dilemma among the politicians and language planners. The consensus of these people as in Ozog's study (1990:313) found that "if English is important, then their people must have access to it" but if this is admitted, it would undermine the status of the national language. Nik Safiah (1987) in a paper presented at a colloquium is quoted in detail.

"Malay faces stiff competition from English. While policy is to use the national language in all official instances, in many important domains of language ... English is still the preferred language. Such being the case, Malay cannot remain forever a language of basic communication. It has to become a language by means of which complex ideas and feelings are communicated effectively and beautifully; ... a language of science and technology and a language of high culture."

(Nik Safiah, 1987)

This linguistic conflict towards the importance of English and its role in the Malaysian society has brought about some changes and one of them is the English Language syllabus. The Integrated Primary School Curriculum or Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah (KBSR) English Language Programme introduced in 1982 replaced the 'old' structural English Language syllabus. This was followed by the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum or Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Menengah (KBSM) English Language programme introduced in 1988, which consists of one syllabus for

the lower secondary school and another for the upper secondary school. The lower secondary English Language syllabus is an extension of the primary school syllabus. The lower secondary school syllabus emphasised the learning of grammar structures and the syllabus items are taught in context. The KBSM English Language programme seems to suggest that a teacher's input forms a part of the student's personal development (Krashen's views) and the use of English in student-centred classroom activities (Allwright's views) can satisfactorily exist side by side with work which concentrates on conscious learning where new language is introduced (Chomsky's views) and practised (Skinner's views). Therefore, this programme which is an integrated skill-based syllabus, prescribes an integrated method of language teaching. All these are geared towards the learners' performance in their examination. Moreover, the teachers may also lack the knowledge and skills in the teaching of learning strategies so the learning of these strategies by the learners is minimal.

According to Malaysia's education system, after 6 years of primary education, the students are allowed to continue their education in secondary schools. This is because students are entitled to at least 11 years of education, that is 6 years in the primary school and 5 years in the secondary school. Since the 1950s, students who are enrolled in the Malay-medium or English-medium schools are automatically 'promoted' to Form 1 in the secondary schools regardless of their educational achievement at the end of Standard 6. This ruling still applies to students who study in the National Primary Schools today.

This ruling, however, does not apply to students from the Chinese-medium and Tamil-medium Primary schools. Since the 1950s, all students after 6 years in the Chinese-medium and Tamil-medium Primary schools had to go to Remove Classes

before proceeding to Form 1 in the secondary schools regardless of their academic achievement. In the early 1990s, after the implementation of the KBSR, students from the Chinese-medium and Tamil-medium Primary schools who scored A's in their Bahasa Melayu for Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) or Primary School Assessment could proceed to Form 1, thus skipping a year in the Remove Class. Then in the late 1990s, this ruling for students from the Chinese-medium and Tamil-medium Primary schools was further relaxed by allowing students who scored a minimum of C in their Bahasa Melayu to proceed to Form 1. Only those who did not meet the stipulated minimum requirement had to go to the Remove Class. This was done as the students are considered to be competent enough to continue their studies in the secondary schools where all the subjects except English Language are in Bahasa Melayu.

2.3 THE ROLE OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS

The English Language has a special place in the world today. It has become an international language; both in the sense that it is now the native language of people from several continents while many others have learnt to speak it as a second language. According to Graddol (1997) the status of English as an international language has helped create the image for the increasing number of English Language learners as "consumers of a highly valued commodity" cited by Gimenez (2001:296). Gimenez further explains that the values of acquiring English are "in the ability to access material things, the possibility it offers for creating acceptance of, and respect for the world's diversity".¹ She also points out that English allows us to "advance towards global exchange and solidarity among the institutions of civil society, extending bonds between citizens far and wide across the globe". (op.cit: 296-297)

However, there are many people in this world today who are bilingual rather than monolingual. These bilingual speakers are those who know a second language like English after their own mother tongue such as French, German, Japanese, Italian, Korean, Mandarin or Tamil. The number of bilingual speakers in the world is increasing daily but there is also an increasing number of people who are multilingual too. Malaysia falls into the category of one of these multilingual speaking countries in the world.

Malaysians are made up of three main ethnic groups, namely Malays and other Bumiputra (the aborigines like Dayaks, Kadazans, Muruts, Ibans and Bajaus) (60%), Chinese (30.9%), Indians (8.4%), Eurasians and Others (0.65%). Besides Bahasa Melayu as the national and official language, there are about 100 languages in use like English, Chinese and its dialects, Tamil and other Indian dialects and native languages like Kadazan and Iban. Since the mother tongue is the child's first language, the other language(s) that he picks up will be his second and third language. The first language in Malaysia is either Bahasa Melayu among most Malay children; Malayalam/ Urdu/ Tamil/ other Indian dialects among Indian children; and Cantonese/ Hokkien/ Hakka/ other Chinese dialects among Chinese children. The first language is dependent on the ethnic background of the children's families. The second language can be Bahasa Melayu for the non-Malay children, English Language for all the three major races, Mandarin for the Chinese and Tamil for the Indians. This stand depends once again on the child's ethnic background or the place he receives his formal education. In this multi-racial country, more and more people are taught and have the knowledge of at least two languages once they reach school-going age. Those who have studied in the National-type Primary Schools are taught Chinese or Tamil, Bahasa Melayu and English Language. This is so that they can communicate with the people around

them. Today, it is not uncommon to hear Malaysians speaking more than three languages.

The three major races in Malaysia learn English because English is its second language while it is an international language globally. English is essential since it is the language of business, technology and administration. It is also the lingua franca between the different ethnic groups and serves to unify the nation because it is not associated with any one ethnic group. This statement is applicable to Malaysia with its three major ethnic groups before Bahasa Melayu became the national and official language.

There is a shift now in the reasons for learning the English Language in Malaysia as compared with those of 50 years ago. Nowadays, these learners learn English for a variety of reasons as mentioned in Section 2.1 so it is difficult to cater to all their needs. In countries with a history of close contact with and influence from English speaking countries, English Language often has a role in the national life of the people of these countries. For example Malaysia, which was colonized by the British, saw English Language having a continuing role in national life and official institutions. Thus, English Language has an established place in schools, often becoming a medium of education at a secondary or late primary stage. At present in Malaysia, both at the primary and secondary levels of education, students study at least two languages. Although English is the second language, in areas outside the big cities and in rural areas, it may not be widely used outside the school and is more of a foreign language to many people.

The importance of English in Malaysia is seen in the two reports that follow. The Star (21/6/2001:4) reported that Syed Aziz from Pontian, Johore, a finance graduate from a local university has been unemployed for almost a year because of his poor command of English. He realised that his jobless status was due to him being not conversant in English during interviews. He agreed that the Malay communities are cynical about the English Language and Malays are of the opinion that if one tries to speak in English, they are said to be trying to show off.

The Star (18/6/2001:6) highlighted the importance of English, which is said to be "the ticket to a larger world". One of the two students interviewed at the British Council Language Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Mr Kim Kee Joon, 29, of South Korea reported that knowledge of English has taken him around Southeast Asia and introduced him to new people and places. He reiterated that during his six months backpacking through Thailand, Myanmar, Brunei, Cambodia, Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia, he has communicated with fellow travellers and strangers in English. Mr Kim feels that one's incompetence in the language will cause one to be handicapped and he cites examples of missing out on all the interesting places suggested by people or on important news reported in the mass media.

The second student, Ms Jóanne Siaw Ching Yean, 26, of Ipoh, Perak, said that her dream of a degree in business and information management at the University of Auckland will come true if she does well in the International English Language Testing System. Joanne, from a Chinese-medium school, felt that proficiency in English would definitely boost the chances of getting a better job including those with international connections.

The examples above show that English Language is now an important international language for all who do not have English as their mother tongue. It also shows that many Malaysians are aware that most people all over the world are bilinguals, with English being used widely as a second language. In the home front, prior to the 1970s, English was the medium of instruction in most Malaysian schools. Then followed a period where English was described as a strong second language as the medium of instruction was now Bahasa Melayu, the country's national language. However, according to Datuk Abdul Aziz Ismail's forward in the Compendium Volume 1 (1990:i)

"in reality, English was a more of a compulsory foreign language in all primary and secondary schools."

Since the mid-1990s, there is renewed interest in the English Language as a second language due to the country's aspiration of becoming an industrial country and attaining the status of a developed nation as well as succeeding in all the other objectives of Vision 2020. In order to achieve Vision 2020, one of the requirements is to have a good educational system besides political and economic stability. Malaysia has one of the best educational systems in the Third World and new standards must be set for new results among the next generation. This means that all Malaysian, should play their part fully in the achievement of the national goal through a correct mix of "professionals, sub-professionals, craftsmen and artisans" who are competent in science and technology, the arts and social science. (<http://www.jaring.my/isis/mbc/2020.htm>)

Since this is an era of globalisation and IT, Malaysia would stand to lose if her people do not maintain certain levels of proficiency. To show the importance of the English Language, Malaysia's former Prime Minister, Datuk Seri (now Tun) Dr Mahathir

Mohamad has stated that English would be used to teach technical subjects such as engineering and computer science in the local universities. (New Straits Times, 1/3/95) This is because English has been identified as one of the most important instruments for human resource development and access to knowledge, skills and technological capabilities is strategic to the country's march towards a high level of industrialisation. According to Dr Mahathir, the government's decision to reinstate English as a medium of instruction for technical subjects in institutions of higher learning should not be seen as a threat to the status of Bahasa Melayu but in fact will benefit the national language in the long run. This is because once Malaysia emerges as a successful nation; the language will also be successful and will gain respect internationally. In view of this changing role of English in institutions of higher learning, all school-going students need to learn this language including those in this study since schools are where they receive the foundation to the language.

The former Prime Minister also noted a poor command of the English Language among young Malaysian diplomats who had failed to rise to the occasion once too often (New Straits Times, 21/8/94). Since the students today are the future leaders of tomorrow, this problem should be addressed as soon as possible. Another aim of the government, which necessitates higher proficiency in English, is its aim to make Malaysia the hub of educational excellence in the Southeast Asia region.

However, the pressure to check the decline of the level of English proficiency among Malaysians regardless of their educational level has been more acute recently. This is seen in the call by the Prime Minister himself to the nation to "work on our proficiency level and not let it slip any further" as reported by Leanne Goh (Sunday Star, 7/1/2001:2) titled *How bad is our English?* This call came when the country

found itself handicapped in a wired world, thanks to globalisation as the country cannot survive in isolation while holding on to the mantra of 'nationalism' at the expense of English as a second language.

In a report of a discussion conducted by The Star Education division (Sunday Star Education, 14/1/2001:2-3) titled *Why is English proficiency 'declining' and what can be done about it?* a panel of academics and educators, namely Dr Hannah Pillay, Mr N. Siva Subramaniam, Prof. Dr Ong Kok Hai and Dr Tunku Mohani Tunku Mohtar, and an IT industry manager, Ms Salwana Ali, gave these replies when asked, "Is there a decline?"

Dr Hannah Pillay, the principal of SM Methodist Teluk Datuk, Banting, Selangor and a former teacher trainer said that Malaysians were doing relatively well in view of the 175 – 200 minutes per week allocated to the teaching of English in secondary schools. Ms Salwana Ali, manager of the Microsoft Knowledge Capital Centre Sdn Bhd, from a commercial perspective said, "English is absolutely vital". Her view was supported by Prof. Dr Ong Kok Hai, Dean of Students of International Medical University and co-founders of the Medical School at University Sains Malaysia who pointed out that Malaysians had to view English from the context of "where we are now and where we, as a nation, want to go" and Dr Tunku Mohani Tunku Mohtar, Head of the TESL programme in University Malaya and committee member of the Malaysian English Language Teaching Association (MELTA) felt that "we do not need the same standard of English (as in the 1960s) in certain sectors since our needs today are different from that of the 1960s". However, all their views were disputed by Mr N. Siva Subramaniam, former secretary-general of the National Union of the Teaching

Profession (NUTP) who thought that there was "a serious decline in English not only in schools but in other sectors as well" – from the bottom level right up to the top.

To another question *'Are teachers proficient?* in the same discussion, Dr Tunku Mohani said that many of the TESL-trained teachers had a good command of English. Dr Tunku Mohani's views were refuted by Dr Hannah and Mr Siva who felt that the proficiency levels of English Language teachers now was declining especially at the primary level where some teachers taught English in a third language. Dr Hannah also cited cases where it was common to see, during the English class in a primary classroom, "one word uttered in English and the rest of the explanation in Bahasa Malaysia". This scenario was also evident in the secondary classrooms and not in line with the intended outcomes of the KBSM English Language Programme.

The policy makers in Malaysia had prepared the Integrated Secondary School Syllabus (KBSM) English Language Programme Form 1 – 5 (1987) which stated that "English is taken as the second language and is taught as such in all government-aided schools in the country". The importance of English in Malaysia stated in the syllabus shows:

"Its position is that of a second language. It is a means of communication in certain everyday activities and certain job situations. It is an important language to enable Malaysia to engage meaningfully in local and international trade and commerce. It also provides an additional means of access to academic, professional and recreational materials."

(KBSM Syllabus Bahasa Inggeris, 1987:1)

This means that in Malaysia, for the Malays, English is generally accepted as the second language, whereas for the Chinese and Indians, it may either be their second or third language depending upon their exposure to both languages. For some, English

is their first language as it is widely used in the home, in school or in their working place. For others, it is only their second or third language; brought into use only when the situation requires it and especially in school.

Among the Chinese, many speak more than one language, for example one dialect and Mandarin. They in turn raised their children to be conversant in at least one other language (either English and/or Malay) besides their first language, as seen in a higher enrolment of Chinese in national schools since 1980s. When the Malays and Indians see the benefits of being bilingual or multilingual, they too join this trend as seen since the 1990s. They perceive that by being conversant in more than one language, it is an added advantage for the children's future need.

Many studies have been carried out on the influence of other languages like Chinese, Tamil, Mexican, Spanish or French in the learning of English Language among students of other races and age groups (e.g. Wong-Fillmore, 1976; Crismore, A., Karen Ngeok, Y.H. and Soo, K.S., 1996). Wong-Fillmore cited by Skehan (1989) found that Mexican children in English-speaking school in California used social and cognitive strategies when interacting with Native American children thus improving their English Language proficiency. In Malaysia, Crismore, Karen Ngeok and Soo (1996) studied the learning attitude of both Malaysian University students and university teachers towards English. Chow (2001) found that Malay and Chinese undergraduates had a favourable attitude towards English. At school level, a study by Yong (2001) found that Bahasa Melayu interfered with the English Language as a second language among students of two National Primary Schools. Another study by Rahimabe (2002) on the English Language proficiency of rural Form Four Malay learners found that they were motivated but lacked in their proficiency level. In view

of the limited number of studies, the researcher hopes that the findings of this study will benefit or assist other teachers in helping their students especially the Malays in acquiring the English Language and in upgrading the level of the English Language in Malaysia. Since this study is on the Malays where English is generally their second language after Bahasa Melayu, let us now move on to the theories in second language learning.

2.4 THEORIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Second language learning is believed to be both a conscious and unconscious activity and is, therefore, sometimes contrasted with first language learning. First and second language acquisition are generally believed to be similar. Second language acquisition is not a uniform and predictable phenomena as there are many ways in which learners acquire this knowledge of the second language. (Ellis, 1985:4) "Second language acquisition" refers to the subconscious or conscious processes by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in "natural or tutored settings" (Ellis, 1985:6). Many second language researchers believe that there are differences in the acquisition of a second language by both the adults and the children. Krashen (1982) claims that language acquisition is a subconscious process whereas language learning is a conscious process and is the result of either a formal language learning situation or a self-study programme. Krashen (1982) also elaborates that children's acquisition of a second language is basically effortless and subconscious whereas adults use conscious means in learning a second language.

According to Pressley (1983), children are not capable of deriving inferences from input. In view of this, it is necessary to help these immature minds by presenting

materials that are more concrete and more likely to trigger their schemata by using pictures that provide visual interpretations to make it concrete. (Hasinah and Syaharom, 1998:13-29). Therefore, the role of the language teachers is crucial in helping these immature minds develop into mature minds. Teachers should be aware of the strategies used by the children in their learning since they have used them when learning their mother tongue. Teachers can help the children build up their strategies or teach them strategies appropriate to the tasks concerned.

The current trend in second language research is on information processing and cognitive theories. Numerous studies have been undertaken to monitor how second language learners monitor the active process of learning (O'Malley et. al., 1985; Cohen, 1987; Brown, et. al., 1983). Some learning processes are referred to as language learning strategies, where its use is a cognitive factor as the learners regulate learning when they process information. (See Section 2.5.1)

2.5 STRATEGIES USED BY LEARNERS WHEN LEARNING ENGLISH

According to Brown et. al.(1983), strategies or the deliberate plans and routines used in learning, remembering and problem solving are the primary determinant of learning outcomes. (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990:104) We know that learners use different strategies according to their needs and environment when learning English. In this study on second language learning among Malays, the two strategies used by the learners are mostly language learning strategies and code switching as elaborated in Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.

2.5.1 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

From studies of first language learning, it is clear that children guided by their parents develop strategies like repetition, reinforcement or imitation that promote acquisition of the first language. This leads to children applying some if not all of these strategies when learning the second language as discussed below.

Research into learning strategy is based on the assumption that strategies begin as declarative knowledge that can become procedures with practice before proceeding through the cognitive, associative and autonomous stages of learning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990:85). Interest in learning strategies is due largely to increased attention to the learner and to learner-centred institutional models of learning. In the early days of language study, it was accepted that language was learned mainly by "imitation" and "repetition" but more recent theory by Chomsky and others argued that it is actually the "innate mechanisms that are the main source of learning" (Tough, 1991:223). Studies of both first and second language learning have shown that the very first attempts to produce speech are through imitation of single words and these are repeated when the meaning comes through. When the child learns the first language, he often imitates the utterances and repeats short phrases attached to particular kinds of situation called 'formulaic speech'. Through frequent imitation, these phrases are learned and reused after some time by the child who has developed his own intuitive application of rules.

Some studies of young children learning a second language showed the use of the strategies of imitation, repetition and formulaic speech. (Brown, D., 1994; Ellis, R., 1997b; Cohen, A.D., 1990; Lightbrown, P.M. and N. Spada, 1993) Another strategy

used is called "incorporation" whereby the children learn to put learned components (either a word or a short phrase used by an adult) together to express meaning. Here they incorporate an element heard in the present situation into an already established phrase or imitate an utterance used by an adult (Ellis, 1997a; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). In this way, the children have moved towards recognising rules that underlie the language used.

There are literally hundreds of different strategies but they are actually interrelated language learning strategies (LLS). Research into language learning strategies began in the 1960s. Some of the more recent research on LLS are by Ellis, 1994; 1997b; Oxford, 1989; Chamot, 1987 and O'Malley and Chamot, 1990. Ellis (1997a) states that learning strategies are approaches or techniques that students employ when they attempt to learn a second language. Oxford (1989) defines LLS as behaviours or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable. A language learning strategy according to Ellis (1994) is an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language. By attempting to develop these competences, learners need some techniques or approaches for different purposes. Learning strategies can also be behavioural, for instance, by repeating aloud new words; or mentally, for instance, by utilising context to infer meaning of new words (Ellis, 1997b). O'Malley and Chamot (1990:1) define them as the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) provide three categories of learning strategies, namely *metacognitive strategies*, *cognitive strategies* and *social/affective strategies*. The first strategy, that is *metacognitive strategies* refer to the use of knowledge about cognitive

processes and comprise an attempt to regulate language learning involving planning, monitoring and evaluating. According to Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986) cited by O'Malley and Chamot (1990:44), metacognitive strategies are applicable to a variety of learning tasks. Since metacognitive strategies are higher order skills, it entails the process of selective attention for special aspects of a learning task, planning the organisation of discourse, monitoring or reviewing attention to the task and finally evaluating or checking the completed task. *Metacognitive strategies* are those involving thoughts about the learning process or the regulation of learning, entailing the use of planning, monitoring or evaluating of a learning activity (Oxford 1990:9). According to Brown and Palinscar, 1982 and Brown et.al., 1983, 'metacognition' has been used to refer to knowledge about cognition or the regulation of cognition (cited by O'Malley and Chamot, 1990:99).

The second strategy is *cognitive strategies*, which refer to the operations or steps used in problem solving involving direct analysis, transformation or synthesis of learning materials. In other words, cognitive strategies work on incoming information and manipulating it to enhance learning. Weinstein and Mayer (1986) cited by O'Malley and Chamot (1990:44-45) suggest that cognitive strategies be grouped under three broad groups: rehearsal, organisation and elaboration, which encompass inferencing, summarising, deduction, imagery and transfer. Cohen (1990:9) defines *cognitive strategies* as those involving the direct application of a strategy to the information to be learned. O'Malley and Chamot (1990:99) describe *cognitive strategies* as specific to distinct learning activities, which usually include using operations or steps in learning, or problem solving that requires direct analyses, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials.

The third strategy is *social or affective strategies*, which refer to the ways in which learners select to interact with other language communicators. O'Malley and Chamot (1990:45) state that social or affective strategies involve either interaction with another person for a wide variety of tasks, which may entail the process of co-operation with peers, questioning for clarification and self talk to reduce anxiety about a task.

Oxford (1990) believes that learners will become aware and be able to evaluate the practice for themselves and emerge with better strategies. Since LLS are flexible, they cater to the individual learner's choice, combination and sequence of strategies in predictable ways. To further elucidate learning strategies, Oxford (1990) divided strategies into two classes. The first is **Direct Strategies** for dealing with the new language, which is composed of *memory strategies* for remembering and retrieving new information, *cognitive strategies* for understanding and producing the language, and *compensation strategies* for using the language despite knowledge gaps. The second is **Indirect Strategies**, which are for general management of learning, which is made up of metacognitive strategies for co-ordinating the learning process, affective strategies for regulating emotion and *social strategies* for learning with others. The Direct and Indirect Strategies and their sub-categories are as follows:

Direct Strategies

1. **Memory strategies**
 - creating mental linkage
 - applying images and sounds
 - reviewing well
 - employing action

2. **Cognitive strategies**
 - practising
 - receiving and sending messages
 - analysing and reasoning
 - creating structure for input and output
3. **Compensation strategies**
 - guessing intelligently
 - overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

Indirect Strategies

1. **Metacognitive strategies**
 - centring your learning
 - arranging and planning your learning
 - evaluating your learning
2. **Affective strategies**
 - lowering your anxiety
 - encouraging yourself
 - taking your emotional temperature
3. **Social strategies**
 - asking questions
 - co-operating with others
 - empathising with others

(Adapted from Oxford, 1990:17)

According to Oxford (1990), most LLS take place mentally and cannot be observed. For instance, guessing intelligently, associating, elaborating or using imagery are 'invisible' or 'mentalistic' strategies. However, co-operating with peers, asking for clarification or verification and overcoming limitation in speaking through gestures or mimes are activities that are directly observable and can yield information on how students go about learning language.

There are other related studies on LLS carried out by many researchers on both the adults and children. The following are some of the most discussed studies in the literature of LLS among children. In 1976, Wong-Fillmore conducted a 9-month study of five Mexican children (aged 5–7) attending English-speaking school in California. She paired them with native American children, observed and recorded their interactions. She found that the children's English Language proficiency developed greatly through three social strategies and five cognitive strategies (Skehan, 1989:74). This study is important as it was based on children's language learning and the importance of social strategies.

Chesterfield and Chesterfield (1985) observed fourteen Spanish children in bilingual classrooms. They conducted three observations at three points during the learners' first year of schooling. The study provided a cross-sectional and longitudinal data allowing inferences about changes over time to be made on the basis of variations in performance at a single time. They observed a systematic emergence of strategies as reported in a later study by O'Malley et. al. cited by Skehan (1989:93)

Oxford (1990) synthesised the various studies and identified some of the features of LLS used by good language learners. She believes that problem orientation is seen as a tool to solve problems, to accomplish a task, to meet an objective or to attain a goal. LLS are also action based and related to problem orientation. Students take notes, plan a language task, self-evaluate and guess intelligently which motivation and aptitude then influence. LLS are involvement beyond cognition. Students use other strategy repertoire like metacognitive functions of planning, evaluating and analysing, and arranging one's own language. It also involves emotional (affective), social and other functions as well. The use of strategies can be direct or indirect and implied

consciousness and intentionally. Therefore LLS are conscious learning efforts by the students, but after much practice, these may become unconscious or automatic.

From some of the related literature of the different LLS mentioned above, it showed that many researches had been carried out on the good strategies used by good language learners. There was also a need to study and compare the strategies used by the more and less successful learners.

In 1971, Rubin conducted a research focused on the learning strategies used by successful learners. According to Rubin, learners' psychological characteristics, communication strategies, social strategies and cognitive strategies determine the strategy used by the learners (Wenden and Rubin, 1987:20). Research by Naiman, et.al. (1978) cited by Skehan (1989:76) identified 5 sets of strategies used by good language learners, namely,

1. Active task approach
2. Realisation of language as a system
3. Realisation of language as a means of communication and interaction
4. Management of affective demands
5. Monitoring of second language performance.

Lennon (1989) in his study on four Germans exposed to advanced English as a second language found that among the strategies used were awareness of their progression, performance, state of competence, and gaps in their knowledge mostly in their communicating and learning aspects. Reiss (1985) in his study on elementary and intermediate learners found that some of them were good in language learning since the strategies they used were monitoring, and attention to form and meaning, being

active and conscious in the learning process. For the less successful which are the silent learners, they however experimented and practised the language silently while listening to other learners.

Related studies on LLS in Malaysia are relatively few and focus mostly on adults. Yeoh (1992) cited by Rosna and Sharifa (1994:1-21) in his study on Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) undergraduates found that UUM undergraduates used metacognitive strategies at a high level since they were instrumentally motivated towards earning good grades. Yeoh also found that Malay students appeared to use affective strategies more than the Chinese and Indian students. In addition, the female students used affective strategies more frequently than the male students do.

Anbalagan's (1997) study on the strategy used among high and low achieving monolingual and multilingual students in Malaysia, found that the monolingual students used more strategies than multilingual students in all the strategies set except cognitive strategies. The other study by Ruslizah (1998) on the learning strategies of high and low achievers of English as a second language found that the high achievers used more strategies as compared to the low achievers.

The studies above show that the average proficiency and low proficiency learners do not employ LLS mentioned by Ellis and O'Malley and Chamot. Weinstein and Mayer (in O'Malley et.al., 1985b) believe that learning strategies have learning facilitation as a goal and are intentional on the part of the learner. Thus, strategies may have an affective or conceptual basis and may influence the learning of simple or complex tasks. In this research, the respondents mostly adopt LLS mentioned by Chamot (1987) when learning English.

From the literature review mentioned above, evidence has shown that appropriate use of LLS would result in improved second language acquisition and skills of the learners. In this study, the researcher will use the Direct and Indirect Strategies by Oxford (1990), as a framework to study the respondents' strategies in the learning of English. However, there is another strategy which teachers and learners use in the teaching and learning of English as a second language called code switching, which is discussed in Section 2.5.2.

2.5.2 CODE SWITCHING

There is a general pattern of code switching among Malaysians, who are involved in two or more languages at a time. A number of Malays usually code switch between Bahasa Melayu and English but the non-Malays usually code switch between two or more languages like their native language (Mandarin/Tamil) with Bahasa Melayu and English.

In most government departments, Bahasa Melayu is used at all levels among the Malays to signal identification with the group. The non-Malays use Bahasa Melayu as a more deliberate gesture of goodwill and accommodation in recognition of its status as a National Language and the native language of the majority group. This situation is also seen among school-going children through their observation of things around them. To them the L1 has a necessary and facilitating role in the L2 classroom. Its use in the classroom has provided them a sense of security and validates the learners' lived experiences, thus allowing them to express themselves and willingly experiment and take risks in English. Some of the reasons why and when the mother tongue may be used by the teachers are:

1. When it is more important for the learners to understand a concept than to explain the concept
2. To establish rapport with learners and as a model speaker of both languages
3. To introduce humour that can be appreciated by the learners

According to Brown (1994), children generally do not have problems with code switching regardless of the separate contexts for language use. According to Morais (1990:2), the term “code-switching” refers to the “use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation”. This means that it involves the changes in the language, style and dialect during a conversation. Since code switching is situational and interactive, generally the need to code-switch arises when it is to aid understanding of intended messages in interpersonal communication.

Another definition according to Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985) is that 'code switching' is

...a change by a speaker (or writer) from one language or language variety to another one....(It) can take place in a conversation when one speaker uses one language and the other speaker answers in a different language. A person may start speaking one language and then change to another one in the middle of their speech, or sometimes even in the middle of a sentence.

(Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, 1985: 43)

According to Romaine (1989:122-123), there are three types of code-switching namely *tag switching*, *inter-sentential switching* and *intra-sentential switching*. *Tag switching* involves the insertion of a tag like “you know” in the utterance. *Inter-sentential switching* involves a switch of a clause or sentence to another language during a speech for e.g. “I go to the shopping centre with my mother untuk membeli-belah.” *Intra-sentential switching* involves the greatest syntactic risks like “What’s so

funny? Come on. Otherwise, kamu kena tangkap oleh polis.” All these three types of code switching are evident in our community today among both the adults and the school children.

From the brief explanation about code switching, many educationists conclude that the L1 may be very carefully and consciously used by the teachers and never to the learners to facilitate in the learning of the L2. According to them, for the learners' piece of writing, code switching is not acceptable but in pronunciation, only some acceptable standard should be used. This is to ensure that the pieces of writing or speech produced by the learners are acceptable as English work and can be understood by as many readers and listeners as possible.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the reasons learners learn a second language followed by the language education policy of Malaysia from the 1950s till today. Next, the role of English Language as a second language in Malaysian schools was reviewed followed by some theories in second language learning. Finally, the strategies used by learners when learning English globally and in Malaysia either by LLS or code switching were reviewed. All these reviews were related to this study as the respondents were found to acquire the second language through the various theories as mentioned in Section 2.4. The strategies used when learning English in Section 2.5 and the language education policy of Malaysia in Section 2.2 would be reflected in the findings in Chapter 4.