CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Overview

This chapter presents a discussion of the results of the study in relation to previous studies of the same nature and draws conclusion from the study undertaken. The study specified the English language learning strategies used by female EFL undergraduate students. It also investigated the relationship of language learning strategies with two variables: major field of study and performance level in the English language, and these will be discussed in detail below. Finally, the study yielded information about strategies used in each of the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

As such the findings provided answers to research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 and are divided into the following four components:

1. Description of the EFL learning strategies.

2. The influence of major field of study on the choice of language learning strategies.

3. The influence of the performance level in the English language on the choice of language learning strategies.

4. The language learning strategies associated with the four language skills.

5.1 Description of the EFL Learning Strategies Used by Female Undergraduates

Research Question 1: Of the fifty learning strategies outlined under the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990), which are the main strategies used by female EFL undergraduates?

EFL students employed a variety of language learning strategies with some strategies utilized more frequently than others. That variety of language learning strategies has been specified and is divided under the following three headings:

1. At the individual level.

2. At the category level.

3. Overall strategy use.

5.1.1 At the Individual Level

The data obtained from the SILL and interviews indicated that language learning, according to EFL students depends mostly upon meta-cognitive strategies. Students take responsibility for their learning themselves. They may have an urgent need in learning English as it is necessary for their career. They plan their learning activity in advance, manipulate the incoming information in a way that enhances learning, and check how well they learn by self evaluation.

This is in line with Krashen's theory of learning as a conscious process, whereby the EFL learners in this study showed that they depend on conscious attention to the learning process. They listen to people speaking English, learn from their mistakes and seize every opportunity to use the language. On the other hand, in support of the behaviouristic approach, which emphasizes that language learning is a process of habit formation and repetition, EFL students indicated that they practise the language through repetition and imitation of native speakers' speech. Furthermore, EFL students develop comprehension by using skimming and scanning strategies. They rely on their first language to understand the second language, look for words in their first language that are similar to new words in English, and divide long words into parts they understand. However, according to the proponents of the Direct Method, using an approach which

makes few references to students' native language is preferable; the use of mother tongue prevents the learner from thinking in English and spoils the students' fluency of speech. The EFL undergraduates are communicative learners in that they like to learn the language by watching English shows spoken in English.

Furthermore, language learning, according to EFL students depends upon mental effort by the learner. The data revealed that EFL students remember words by connecting the sound of a new English word to an image or picture of the word, or by remembering their locations on the page or on the board. They are able to recall the word by seeing it and often reflecting their first encounter with it. Consequently, EFL students must have written directions if they are to function well in the classroom.

Compensation and affective strategies received equal attention by the EFL learners. They use compensation strategies to overcome obstacles to communication. They use an alternative form of expression for the intended meaning. They rely on the second language resources to get the meaning across without falling back on the first language. They make intelligent guesses and finally, they use gestures if they could not think of a word during a conversation. The EFL learners are aware of the importance of using affective strategies in the process of language learning. They manage their emotions by lowering their anxiety through using physical relaxation techniques. Also EFL students keep their spirits up as they try to comprehend and produce the language by taking risks wisely even if they are afraid of making mistakes.

 Finally, as the EFL learners are motivated to learn a second language, they use the social strategy of learning through communication and social interaction with others by asking others to slow down or repeat something when they do not understand it.

The findings support the results of the study conducted by Green and Oxford (1995) which state that female undergraduates use the following strategies significantly:

1. Review English lessons often. (Memory)

2. Connect words and locations. (Memory)

3. Skim, and then read carefully. (Cognitive)

4. Seek first language words similar to second language words.(Cognitive)

5. Make summaries of information. (Cognitive)

6. Use gestures when stuck for a word. (Compensation)

7. Try to find out about language learning. (Meta-cognitive)

8. Think about their progress in learning.(Meta-cognitive)

9. Notice when they are tense or nervous. (Affective)

10. Ask other person to slow down or repeat. (Social)

Likewise the findings of the present study also support Ehrman and Oxford (1989) results. They reported that females showed a significant advantage for four sets of strategies:

1. General strategies: previewing lessons, skimming the reading passage before reading in detail, and checking one's own performance.

2. Authentic language use: seeking native speakers with whom to talk.

3. Searching for and communicating meaning: guessing when complete information is not available and finding alternative ways to express meaning.

4. Self-management strategies: correcting own written errors, encouraging oneself, considering one's own progress, planning for future language tasks and identifying goals.

On the other hand, results of the present study contradict the findings presented by Green and Oxford (1995) which say that female undergraduates use the following strategies at a high level "Use flashcards to remember new words", "Give self reward for doing well", "Ask to be corrected when talking" and "Ask for help from English speakers". The present study showed that these strategies were used at a medium or low level by the female EFL undergraduates. This might be due to the seriousness of Saudi female students in learning a new language; they may feel that using flashcards is a waste of time. They also do not ask to be corrected when talking maybe because they feel that they are not fluent in speaking English due to the EFL environment, or they may feel that error correction interferes with communication. The idea of giving oneself a reward for doing well was not considered by the students. However, it could have a positive impact on the course of their language learning (Oxford, 1990). Thus, a lot of attention should be paid to encourage Saudi female students to learn English with a sense of fun and to practise speaking English more. Furthermore, the strategy of "Watch TV shows spoken in English" which was used least often by females according to Green and Oxford (1995) was used at a high level in the present study. An explanation to this result maybe because of the local customs in Saudi Arabia as most Saudis, especially the females, spend their leisure time at home. Consequently, females have a good opportunity of watching TV shows spoken in English which may help in being successful learners (Green and Oxford, 1995).

Furthermore, the findings do not support the results presented by Ehrman and Oxford (1989) which say that EFL students use the following strategies significantly: "Initiating conversations in the new language", and "Reading authentic, natural texts". The findings of the present study seem realistic, as Saudi students face difficulty in speaking fluently, as well as in reading authentic text; therefore, they usually do not initiate

conversations in English, and prefer to read simplified versions of the story rather than to read the original genuine material. Again, extra effort is needed to improve the students' ability to read authentic texts that could develop their communicative competence.

In general, the most frequent individual strategies used were cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, followed by compensation and affective strategies, then, memory strategies and finally social strategies. The strategies used at a low level were memory and affective ones. It is clear that EFL students in this study realize how essential it is to practise. They prefer to learn by reasoning and analyzing. They supervise and manage their language learning; they control their own cognition by planning what they want to do, by checking how the planning is going and then by evaluating how it went. These findings contradict results reported by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) which indicate that foreign language students at all levels reported using far more cognitive strategies than meta-cognitive ones. The results of the present study also contradict the findings of Touba (1992) cited in Oxford (1996) who illustrates that EFL learners reported far more meta-cognitive and memory strategies than cognitive ones. The results support the findings of a study conducted on ESL students by Oxford, Talbott and Halleck (1990) which state that ESL students use social, meta-cognitive, cognitive and compensation strategies highly. Furthermore, the findings of the present study support the findings of Ai (1996) who states that the most common strategies used by ESL students were cognitive ones, but they differ in the use of meta-cognitive strategies as ESL students used them least often, whereas, EFL students used them most frequently. Finally, the findings of the present study support Mingyuan's (2000) finding on ESL students that says memory strategies were used least often. In general, it is apparent that cognitive

and meta-cognitive strategies are typically found to be the most popular strategies with EFL language learners.

5.1.2 At the Category Level

The data revealed that EFL students used the meta-cognitive strategy category at a high level. This indicated that EFL students learn best by "Organizing and evaluating their learning" all of the rest of categories received nearly equal attention. Thus, EFL students are able to use greater meta-cognitive control over their learning. They are very organized. They set realistic goals for themselves and make plans for their learning in terms of time and materials.

The above findings contradict the findings of Yang (1996). She investigated the learning strategies of 68 EFL undergraduates and found that students commonly used the compensation strategy category most often, followed by affective, then meta-cognitive and finally the memory strategy category received the least attention. It is realistic to find EFL students using a lot of compensation strategies to overcome the breakdown in communication due to their limited exposure to the English language, but at the same time, as the EFL students in the present study are very motivated to learn the English language; this motivation encourages them to use a lot of meta-cognitive strategies to plan and organize their learning well.

Finally, Kaylani (1996) added that male students used fewer categories of strategies than females. However, the present study is unable to further comment on this since its sample is confined to females only. Thus a further research is suggested on this area.

5.1.3 Overall Strategy Use

The female EFL undergraduate students in the present study reported medium overall strategy use. Therefore, there is an urgent need to implement a learning strategy instruction that has a powerful impact on language learning. Students should be informed about the ways of using strategies in several language tasks and how to transfer strategies from task to task.

5.2 The Influence of Major Field of Study on the Choice of Language Learning Strategies

Research Question 2: Does the female EFL undergraduates' major field of study influence their choice of language learning strategies?

5.2.1 At the Individual Level

Analysis of the responses in the SILL and the interviews was able to specify the English language learning strategies used by the female EFL undergraduates in the four major fields of study: Medicine, English language, Biology, and Computer Science.

The findings showed that students in all major fields of study mentioned use the following strategies at a high level. However, Biology majors reported using them less frequently than the others but still they are used at a high level.

1. They connect the sound with an image or picture. (Memory)

2. They connect the words and locations. (Memory)

3. They repeat the new words several times. (Cognitive)

4. They skim, and then read carefully. (Cognitive)

5. They find words in the first language that are similar to new words in English. (Cognitive)

6. They divide long words into parts they understand. (Cognitive)

7. They use words or phrases that have the same meanings. (Compensation)

8. They learn from their mistakes. (Meta-cognitive)

9. They pay attention to English speech. (Meta-cognitive)

10. They think of their progress in learning English. (Meta-cognitive)

11. They share their feelings about language learning with peers.(Affective)

12. They ask other people to slow down or repeat. (Social)

Results also showed that the most frequent individual strategies that were used by Medical and English majors were "I try to find out how to be a better learner of English", "I pay attention when someone is speaking English" and "I think about my progress in learning English". Although Biology majors reported using the first two strategies that were employed by Medical and English majors; "I try to find out how to be a better learner of English" and "I pay attention when someone is speaking English", less frequently, they still however used them at a high level. On the other hand, Computer Science majors used only the strategy of "I pay attention when someone is speaking English" most frequently. In other words, the Medical and English majors know well how to regulate their learning by planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning activities. These findings are convincing to the researcher as both of the Medical and English majors may be accustomed to employing these strategies in their study, as they take extensive theoretical courses that require a great deal of planning and preparation, while Computer Science students take many practical courses that need less planning and preparation. Thus it is easy for Medical majors to transfer the use of meta-cognitive strategies to learning English.

On the other hand, the findings showed that the students in all major fields of study reported low use of the strategy "I use flashcards to remember new English words". Perhaps students may feel that using flashcards is only suitable for children, but Oxford (1990) discusses their positive impact on language learning.

Furthermore, English majors reported the least frequently used strategies of "I use rhymes to remember new English words", "I physically act out new English words", and "I write down my feelings in a language learning diary". In other words, English majors learn new vocabulary by "Repetition". They generally do not like to learn by having fun such as using rhymes or physically acting out new English words. However, a pleasant environment can reduce anxiety and thus leads to second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

Furthermore, as the medium of instruction in the Biology Department is Arabic, students are not so motivated to learn English or make an effort to use it outside the classroom. They generally do not read English for pleasure or practise the English language. They are not anxious to know about the culture of English speakers, or write their feelings in a language learning diary. Although, writing notes, messages or reports in English and making summaries are very important in the development of writing skill, Biology majors reported using these strategies at a low level.

Similarly, Computer Science students used some strategies at a low level. The researcher believes that the low level in the use of some strategies could be attributed to the students' busy timetable and the length of time students spend in front of the computer. They generally do not use fun in memorizing new English words such as using rhymes or physically acting out new English words rather, they use association

and repetition. They do not like to write their feelings in a language learning diary rather, they discuss their feelings with their friends. They do not read for pleasure in English and do not even like to know about the culture of English speakers. They do not have the courage to start a conversation in English and they are not encouraged to find patterns in English. Finally, if they are stuck with some words, they generally do not make up words rather, they use a word that means the same.

In general, besides the qualitative differences in the use of individual strategies with regard to major field of study, there were significant quantitative differences. Medical students reported the use of 8 (16%) strategies more frequently than the students in all the other majors. On the other hand, they reported the use of 25 (50%) strategies more frequently than Biology students and 11 (22%) strategies more often than Computer Science students and only 1 (2%) strategy was used more frequently than English majors.

Also, English Language students showed some significant variation in the use of individual strategies and major field of study. They reported the use of 17 (34%) strategies more frequently than the Biology and 7 (14%) strategies more often than the Computer Science and only 1 (2%) strategy was used more frequently than Medical majors.

Similarly, to a certain extent, Biology and Computer Science students reported some variation in the use of strategies and major field of study. Biology students used 6 (12%) strategies more frequently than Computer Science students and vice versa. They both used one strategy more often than English majors and finally Biology students reported the use of 1 (2%) strategy more frequently than Medical students.

5.2.2 At the Category Level

Medical majors reported the highest use of the meta-cognitive strategy category, followed by the cognitive one, then, the memory, affective and social strategy categories which received equal attention and finally the compensating strategy category that was used least often. These results revealed that Medical students tend to learn English through focusing, planning and evaluating their learning. They are motivated as they have urgent needs in English because of professional reasons. They consider practising, analysing, reasoning and summarizing as essential in learning English. They strive to reach acceptable proficiency. Medical students are used to employ memory strategies to remember a large amount of new terminologies necessary for their career as doctors; consequently, transferring the use of these strategies in learning English is easy for them. They are good learners. They do not find a need to use compensating strategies to overcome limitations in the comprehension or production of the English language.

Similarly, English majors used the meta-cognitive strategy category most often, followed by the cognitive, then the compensating, next both the affective and social strategy categories, which received equal attention and finally, the memory strategy category that was used least often. Like Medical students, English majors know well how to organize their learning and evaluate it. They learn by practising. They tend to reason out the new language. They construct a formal model in their minds based on analysis and comparison; they create general rules and revise those rules when new information is available. This process of generating rules is extremely valuable. Although memory strategies can be powerful contributions to language learning, English Language students rarely reported using these strategies; it might be that students are unaware of how often they actually employ memory strategies.

On the other hand, Biology students used the compensating strategy category most often, followed by the meta-cognitive, then the cognitive, next both the memory and social strategy categories which received equal attention and finally the affective strategy category that was used least often. The extensive use of the compensation strategy category by Biology students is due to the low scoring required in the enrolment in the Biology Department. So, students usually are somehow not so successful in English language learning. The affective factors related to foreign language learning are emotions, self-esteem, empathy, anxiety, attitude and motivation. These affective factors are one of the most important influences on students' language learning success or failure. The limited use of the affective strategy category by Biology students is likely due to the fact that the language of instruction in this department is Arabic. Biology students are therefore not so motivated to learn the English language.

Finally, Computer Science students used the meta-cognitive strategy category most frequently, followed by the cognitive, social and compensating strategy categories that received equal attention, then the affective strategy category and finally the memory strategy category that was used least frequently. The findings revealed that Computer Science students learn by organizing, evaluating and planning their learning. They are similar to the Medical and English majors in that they all consider cognitive strategies as essential in learning a new language. Again, the memory strategy category is rarely used. It might be that Computer Science students simply do not use memory strategies very much in their study as most of them are literate in using computer and most of the computer terminologies are known to them. Thus, it is not easy for them to start using these memory strategies in learning English.

In sum, there were some differences in the use of strategy categories and major field of study. Although, Medical, English and Computer Science majors reported the highest use of the meta-cognitive strategy category, Biology majors reported the use of the compensating strategy category as highest. Both Medical and English Language students used the cognitive strategy categories "Using all your mental processes" and the meta-cognitive strategy category of "Organizing and evaluating your learning" more than students in the other major fields of study. The use of more cognitive and meta-cognitive strategy categories by the Medical and English majors may show that students in these departments are responsible for their learning, they are aware of the importance of self organization, deep processing, forming and revising the internal models in order to receive and produce the language. Furthermore, Medical students used the memory strategy category "Remembering more effectively" more than the students in all the other major fields of study. Also, they used the social strategy category "Learning with others" more than Biology students. Finally, Biology students used the compensation strategy category "Compensating for missing knowledge" more than Computer Science students.

These findings appear to be in accordance with Dai (1989) results as there are some variation in the use of the meta-cognitive strategy category between English majors and other major fields of study such as Computer Science and Biology majors.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with the results of Touba (1992) who provided evidence that English majors used meta-cognitive strategies most frequently, but they differed in the use of memory and cognitive strategies as some used them most frequently and others used them least often. An explanation might be that students are unaware of how often they actually do employ these strategies.

5.2.3 Overall Strategy Use

Medical students reported the highest overall strategy use, followed by English majors, and the least frequently overall strategy use was reported by Computer Science and Biology majors. The findings indicated that Medical students develop many strategies to a high level themselves in order to cope with their studies. As Medical students were the best in learning the English language in the University, one of the factors that may have a positive impact on the course of the students' language learning behaviour is perhaps using this large number of strategies. On the other hand, Biology and Computer Science students reported the least frequent use of strategies. It might be that studying in the Biology and Computer Science Departments do not require operating many strategies such as studying in the Medical or the English language Departments. Thus students cannot transfer the use of strategies to learning English as they are not accustomed to using them in their study. In general, training students to employ a wide range of strategies may help them become more conscious of strategy use and more adept at employing appropriate strategies.

5.3 The Influence of Performance Level on the Choice of Language Learning Strategies

Research Question 3: Does the female EFL undergraduates' performance level in the English language influence their choice of language learning strategies?

Two types of analyses were used to determine the relationship between the use of language learning strategies and language performance:

1. The influence of year level on the choice of language learning strategies.

2. The influence of achievement level on the choice of language learning strategies.

5.3.1 The Influence of Year Level on the Choice of Language Learning Strategies

5.3.1.1 At the Individual Level

The findings obtained from the SILL and interviews indicated that both first and second year undergraduate students used the following strategies at a high frequency level:

1. Connect the sound with an image or picture. (Memory)

2. Connect words and locations. (Memory)

3. Repeat new words several times. (Cognitive)

4. Imitate native speakers' speech. (Cognitive)

5. Skim before reading carefully. (Cognitive)

6. Connect new words in second language with similar words in the first language. (Cognitive)

7. Divide long words into parts that they understand. (Cognitive)

8. Use gestures when stuck for a word. (Compensation)

9. Make up new words that have the same meaning. (Compensation)

10. Learn from their mistakes. (Meta-cognitive)

11. Pay attention to English speech. (Meta-cognitive)

12. Think of their progress in learning English. (Meta-cognitive)

13. Have clear goals for improving English skills. (Meta-cognitive)

14. Relax when they are afraid of using English. (Affective)

15. Encourage themselves to speak English. (Affective)

16. Share their feelings about language learning with their friends. (Affective)

17. Ask other person to slow down or repeat. (Social)

Thus, results showed that both first and second year students are visually oriented as they make mental images to help them remember words or help them connect words with locations. They can recall the word when they see it and always think back to the first encounter with it. With reference to the behaviouristic learning theory, the findings indicated that both first and second year students learn the language through a process of repetition; thus using the pattern drill activity is required. In order to become proficient speakers of the English language, the students try to speak like native speakers. In reading and listening comprehension, both first and second year students tend to get the idea quickly by taking the top-down approach. Getting the general message before going into all the details is an important strategy to develop comprehension (Jordan, 1997). In addition, the students always look for Arabic equivalents when they learn new English words. However, using an approach that makes few references to their native language is perhaps more preferable. Both first and second year students try to compensate for limitations in speaking by using gestures; they enjoy face to face communication to help them get their message across. This indicated that the students' vocabulary should be enhanced so that they do not have to resort to the use of gestures too much. They also make up words to overcome limitations in speaking and writing. Making up words indicates that the students are capable of developing a strategy to get their message across even at the risk of making errors. This strategy is used to keep the flow of the conversation going rather than hesitating while looking for the right words and thus slowing down communication.

Both first and second year students showed that they are meta-cognitive strategy users. They take responsibility for their learning themselves because they may have urgent needs in learning English, due to the demands of their profession. So they organize and plan their learning by paying attention and delaying speech production to focus on

listening. They set goals and objectives for improving their English skills. Both first and second year students know how to control their emotions and attitudes about language learning. They lower their anxiety through using physical relaxation techniques. They encourage themselves to speak English even when they are afraid of making mistakes. The first and second year students are aware of their feelings and discuss them with other students. However, the use of all of these affective strategies could have a positive impact on the course of their language learning. Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Finally, cooperating with other people is essential in language learning, both first and second year students never hesitate to ask their teacher to slow down or repeat when they do not understand. This social strategy is very helpful to the students in getting closer to the intended meaning and thus aids comprehension; it also indicates interest and involvement (Oxford, 1990).

On the other hand, second year students used other strategies at a high level:

1. Connect new knowledge with previous one. (Memory)

2. Connect a word with a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.(Memory)

3. Learn by watching TV shows spoken in English. (Cognitive)

4. Try to find patterns in English. (Cognitive)

5. Use their English in different ways. (Cognitive)

6. Make guesses.(Compensation)

7. Make up words.(Compensation)

In other words, second year students interact with the material to be learned by manipulating it mentally. They make relationship between what they already know and new things in English. They also make mental images to help them remember words.

They invest their free time by using a useful strategy to develop both comprehension and productions, such as watching English films. Analyzing and reasoning strategies are used by second year students. They feel secure when certain patterns can be found. Second year students are aware of how important it is to use the English language. They appreciate such type of activities. Finally, second year students use the strategy of guessing intelligently in reading and listening. The use of this strategy is probably more effective in understanding the meaning of any message. In order to overcome limitations in speaking and writing, second year students make up words to get their message across. They feel it is more important to keep the flow of conversation going rather than to hesitate while looking for the right words.

The above findings support the results of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) in stating that intermediate level students relied most on inferencing; on the other hand, they differ in reporting that students at the beginner level relied most on repetition. According to the findings of the present study, both first and second year students used repetition at a high level. Although the strategy of repetition might not sound creative, it can still be used in innovative ways with other tactics such as clustering and concept maps and can always include some degree of meaningful understanding.

Results showed that first year EFL students used cognitive strategies most, followed by meta-cognitive, next, affective, then compensation as well as memory and finally social. On the other hand, second year EFL students reported the highest use of cognitive strategies, followed by compensation, as well as meta-cognitive, next memory then affective and finally, the least frequently used strategies were the social ones.

In general, most of the strategies used by both levels were the cognitive ones. These findings were supported by O'Malley et al. (1985). On the other hand, the least frequently used strategies were the social ones and these findings again were supported by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Furthermore, EFL second year students reported greater use of cognitive, compensation, and memory strategies than first year students. These findings contradict O'Malley et al.'s (1985) who provided evidence that intermediate level students use meta-cognitive strategies more than beginner level students. This difference in the findings of the present study and O'Malley et al.'s in the use of meta-cognitive strategies can be attributed to the increased motivation to learn English nowadays. This motivation encourages both first and second year students, in the present study, to plan, monitor and evaluate language learning in order to become successful learners.

5.3.1.2 At the Category Level

The data obtained from the SILL reported that both first and second year EFL students used the meta-cognitive strategy category at a high level. This indicated that both first and second year students take responsibilities for their learning themselves. They are responsible for much of the planning, organizing and evaluating of their learning process. They use meta-cognitive strategies effectively and independently because they know that these strategies play an essential role in the process of their learning. Furthermore, second year students used another strategy category at a high level which was "Compensating for missing knowledge". This might be due to the great exposure to the English language. Students compensate for limitations in speaking and writing by developing certain strategies to get their message across.

In general, second year students used the strategy categories more frequently than first year students, and this finding is supported by Green and Oxford (1995) who provided evidence that pre-basic students used compensation, meta-cognitive, and social strategy groups less than intermediate or basic students.

5.3.1.3 Overall Strategy Use

The findings reported that there were no differences in the overall strategy use between first and second year EFL students; both used the overall strategy at a medium level. This indicated that there is a need to raise the students' awareness of the use of different strategies and train them to be independent learners.

5.3.2 The Influence of Achievement Level on the Choice of Language Learning Strategies

5.3.2.1 At the Individual Level

In examining the relationship between the use of language learning strategies and students' achievement level, results indicated that there were some significant differences at the individual item level.

Students with "Excellent" grade reported the use of the following strategies at a high level:

1. Connect the sound with an image or picture. (Memory)

2. Connect words and locations. (Memory)

3. Try to talk like native speakers. (Cognitive)

4. Skim before reading carefully. (Cognitive)

5. Divide long words into parts they understand. (Cognitive)

6. Try not to translate word-for-word. (Cognitive)

7. Make guesses. (Compensation)

8. Use gestures when stuck for a word. (Compensation)

9. Make up new words. (Compensation)

10. Use other words that mean the same. (Compensation)

11. Learn from their mistakes. (Meta-cognitive)

12. Pay attention to English speech. (Meta-cognitive)

13. Think about their progress in learning English. (Meta-cognitive)

14. Share their feelings with their friends about learning English. (Affective)

15. Ask other persons to slow down or repeat. (Social)

In other words, students in the higher proficiency group use different strategies than those in the lower proficiency one. They find that certain strategies are not helpful in learning English. In order to facilitate storage and retrieval of information, students with "Excellent" grade divide long words into parts they understand. They generate images and connect them to a sound or connect words and locations. They believe that they should speak like native speakers to be efficient learners. In learning reading and listening, students with "Excellent" grade use the top down approach which focuses on getting a general idea of the material first before going into the details. They skim quickly over the topic heading, look at the pictures, or diagrams, see whether there are questions or a summary at the end. They try not to translate word for word. Maybe they know that this strategy does not prepare them to use English for communication. Students with "Excellent" grade might know that practising a language is vital in learning any foreign language. Although, they were not so fluent, they used the language. They overcome limitations in speaking and writing by using gestures, making up new words and using words that mean the same. They make intelligent guesses by

using context clues, such as using the knowledge of word formation and looking at the surrounding context. Students with "Excellent" grade do not panic and get depressed when making mistakes. Rather, they know well how to use these mistakes to do better in language learning. In support of Krashen's view of learning as a conscious process, the EFL students in this study proved that they centre their learning by paying attention to English speech. They accurately evaluate their progress and find out how to improve their language learning. They can take their emotional temperature towards learning English and discuss their feelings with their friends. Expressing students' feelings about language learning can help in encouraging the students who have negative attitudes which may impede language learning progress. Finally, students with "Excellent" grade are very attentive; they do not like to miss any information. They ask others to slow down or repeat to make sure that something has been rightly understood. Thus, the achievement of the students can be enhanced by the development of a strategic awareness. The notion of awareness raising is important and deserves further attention.

On the other hand students with "Very Good" grade reported the use of the same strategies used by excellent students at a high level except the following strategies, which were used at a medium level by students with "Very Good" grade:

1. Use gestures when stuck for a word. (Compensation)
2. Make up new words. (Compensation)

Students with "Very Good" grade should develop the strategies that help them get their messages across even at the risk of making up words to keep the flow of conversations going.

Furthermore, they used another strategy at a high level which is "look for words in the first language that are similar to the new words in the second language". This supports the theory of "interference" which states that students use previously acquired knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task, but in order to get an "Excellent" grade, students should make less references to their native language.

Finally, students with "Good" grade reported the use of the same strategies used by students with "Excellent" grade except the following:

1. Try to talk like native speakers. (Cognitive)

2. Make guesses. (Compensation)

Pearson (1988) reaches the same point when he states that poor language learners do not speak English unless it was unavoidable and they do not guess or work out meaning or general rules.

These results indicated that practising the language by talking like native speakers and guessing intelligently are very important strategies used in learning a foreign language. Students should be encouraged to make guesses by learning the most common word stems, prefixes and suffixes that help them analyze the meaning of many words. Students should know how to guess the meaning by looking carefully at the surrounding context.

On the other hand, students with "Good" grade used other strategies at a high level such as:

1. Act out new English words physically. (Memory)

2. Repeat new words several times.(Cognitive)

3. Look for words in the first language that means the same in the second language. (Cognitive)

4. Relax whenever they feel afraid of using English.(Affective)

5. Ask for help from English speakers.(Social)

In other words, students with "Good" grade are Kinesthetic; they find the strategy of physically acting out new words as a useful way to aid their learning. Although, using this strategy makes them laugh, they use it with some physical expressions. As English teaching focuses on rote memorization, students with "Good" grade consider repetition as a primary strategy to learn. They know how to control their emotions by using physical relaxation techniques which is an efficient strategy in the process of language learning. Because of their lack of familiarity with the new linguistic system, however, students rely extensively on their native language for supports. Finally, among the social strategies, students with "Good" grade used only one strategy which was asking for help from English speakers. Students should be encouraged to use other social strategies to become better language learners.

Other finding indicated that there was another difference in the use of strategies and achievement level. Students with "Excellent" grade used the strategy "I write notes, messages, letters or reports in English" more than students with "Very Good" and "Good" grades. In other words, writing notes, messages, and reports in English was a primary study strategy for students with "Excellent" grade. Students used writing notes to help them recall and summarize information. It is an active process where students have to be alert to the pattern of thought, its direction and its development, and they should distinguish between what is important and what is not. This active involvement in the learning process makes writing notes difficult and valuable.

5.3.2.2 At the Category Level

The findings indicated that students with "Excellent" grade used the compensation strategy category most followed by the meta-cognitive, then the cognitive, next the social, followed by the memory and finally, the affective strategy category that received the least attention.

On the other hand, students with "Very Good" grade reported the use of the meta-cognitive strategy category most frequently, followed by the compensation, then the cognitive, next, the memory and social strategy categories that received equal attention and finally the affective strategy category that received the least attention.

Finally, students with "Good" grade used the compensation strategy category most often, followed by the meta-cognitive, then the social, affective and memory strategy category that received equal attention and finally the cognitive strategy category which was used least often.

In general, the compensation and meta-cognitive strategy categories were popular among students with different grades. It is natural for EFL students to make greater use of compensation strategies as these can allow them to guess the meaning of what they have heard or read or allow them to get the message across despite their limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. The extensive use of the meta-cognitive strategy category indicated that students know well how to control and direct their cognitive process by arranging the physical environment to make learning easier.

5.3.2.3 Overall Strategy Use

The findings indicated that there were no differences in the overall strategy use in relation to proficiency level. In general, students with all grades mentioned used overall strategy at a medium level.

These findings contradict the results of Mingyuan (2000) who states that the more students use all the strategies, the more progress they make in their language proficiency. These results might be attributed to the students' lack of appropriate training in using language learning strategies, or to the education system which encourages cooperation in learning. As a result, students may not exert enough effort in employing learning strategies to compete with their peers. Another possible explanation is the large classes that give very limited opportunities to students to use learning strategies.

5.4 The Language Learning Strategies Associated With Each of the Four Language Skills

Research Question 4: Which English language learning strategies used by the female EFL undergraduates are associated with each of the four language skills?

In order to identify the language learning strategies that are applied to the four language skills, observation of nine lessons of female EFL undergraduates was used to collect the data and the SILL and interviews were used to triangulate it. Results reported that there were some specific strategies used with each skill as follows:

5.4.1 Listening Strategies in Foreign Language Acquisition

EFL students used the following variety of listening strategies:

1. The cognitive strategy of "Creating structure for input and output" was used by summarizing information students hear in English, analyzing expressions and reasoning.

2. The meta-cognitive strategy of "Centring learning" was used by paying attention.

3. The compensation strategy of "Guessing intelligently" was used by using linguistic and other clues to understand unfamiliar English words, and to know what the other person will say next in English.

4. The social strategy of "Asking questions" was used by asking for clarification or verification.

5.4.2 Speaking Strategies in Foreign Language Acquisition

EFL students used the following variety of speaking strategies:

1. The cognitive strategy of "Practising" in English was used by recognizing, using formulas and patterns and by repeating.

2. The meta-cognitive strategy of "Centring learning" was used by paying attention.

3. The compensation strategy of "Overcoming limitations in speaking" was employed by using gestures, coining words and using a circumlocution or synonym.

4. The social strategies of "Asking questions" and "Cooperating with others" were used by asking for clarification or verification, and by cooperating with peers.

5. The memory strategy of "Creating mental linkages" was used by associating and elaborating.

The above speaking strategies were mentioned in the list presented by O'Malley et al. (1988) to describe the language learning strategies that are associated with different speaking tasks. It was observed that EFL students used all of the compensation strategies to speak, and this is due to the limited amount of exposure to the English language. Furthermore, students rarely start a conversation; a possible explanation to this is that developing speaking readiness may take time.

5.4.3 Writing Strategies in Foreign Language Acquisition

EFL students used the following variety of writing strategies:

1. The cognitive strategy of "Practising" was used by writing guided paragraphs, notes, or reports in English.

2. The meta-cognitive strategies of "Evaluating learning" and "Centring learning" were used by self evaluating and paying attention.

3. The compensation strategy of "Overcoming limitations in writing" was used by coining words and using a circumlocution or synonym.

4. The social strategies of "Asking questions" and "Cooperating with others" were used by asking questions for clarification and cooperating with proficient users of the new language.

5. The memory strategy of "Creating mental linkage" was used by associating and elaborating.

It is apparent that students' application of writing strategies was limited; they never used the strategies of note taking and summarizing. Furthermore, as the students

followed the product approach in learning writing, they were required to write sentences from linked substitution tables or fill in gaps in a text in which all the decisions about choice of content and organization have been made by the textbook writer. So, practising writing is limited to producing a paragraph.

5.4.4 Reading Strategies in Foreign Language Acquisition

EFL students used the following variety of reading strategies:

1. The cognitive strategy of "Practicing" was used by repeating, getting the idea quickly by skimming and scanning, creating structure for input and output by summarizing and finally cognitive strategies were used by analysing expressions.

2. The meta-cognitive strategy of "Centring learning" was used by paying attention.

3. The compensation strategy of "Guessing intelligently" was used by using linguistic and other clues.

4. The social strategies of "Asking questions" and "Cooperating with others" were used by asking questions for clarification or verification and by cooperating with peers.

5. The memory strategy of "Creating mental linkages" was used by placing new words into a context" and reviewing well.

The findings indicated that EFL students did not use some important reading strategies presented by Jordan (1997) such as the following:

1. Drawing inferences and conclusions.

2. Understanding graphic presentation.

3. Understanding text organization and linguistic aspect.

In sum, there seem to be some specific strategies used by the EFL learners with some language skills and some general strategies used with all the four language skills.

The strategy of "Centring students' learning" was used with the four language skills by paying attention directly or selectively, previewing the basic principles for an upcoming activity and linking these with what the learners already know. Furthermore, the EFL learners used the strategy of "Asking questions" with all the four language skills to make sure that something has been rightly understood. The strategy of "Overcoming limitation" was used by the EFL learners with all the four language skills but extensively with speaking skill by guessing intelligently, coining words, using mime or gestures. On the other hand, the EFL learners used the strategy of "Evaluating learning" through self monitoring and self evaluation to promote learning writing only. The reason for not using this strategy with speaking may have something to do with the difficulty in the assessment of speaking. In contrast, the EFL learners used the strategies of "Creating mental linkage" and "Cooperating" to facilitate the learning of writing, reading, and speaking. This can be explained in the effectiveness of the cooperative learning in the acquisition of writing, reading, and speaking skills more than individual learning. Finally, it should be kept in mind that there were still many mentalistic unobservable strategies used.

5.5 Conclusion

This section provides an overview of the results and draws conclusions from the study undertaken. It involves information that can benefit applied linguists, educational researchers, teacher trainers, course designers and language teachers who wish to apply research findings on EFL learning strategies to their classrooms and help students become more effective and independent learners. This section discusses some important

issues for further research and puts forth some suggestions that are related to using learning strategies in the classroom.

This study reaffirmed the importance of context, gender, major field of study, and English language performance level of the learners as factors explaining strategies a student uses in learning English.

Gender is the first factor discussed that influences the choice of language learning strategies. Although males and females study the same curriculum and use the same books at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia, it is expected that there are differences in their use of strategies as suggested by previous studies. This exploratory study attempted to describe the English language learning strategies used by female undergraduates at the individual, category, and overall levels. Results from the present study, support the view that female students use specific strategies significantly. But applying some strategies significantly does not guarantee differences in the use of strategies according to gender. This issue needs future research.

Similarly, context proved to play an important role in the choice of language learning strategies. Several studies differentiate between learning English as a second and as a foreign language. The findings of these studies reached a conclusion that learning a language is better in a natural environment than in the classroom. Since English in Saudi Arabia has only a foreign language status officially, it is a required subject acquired in the English classroom. Thus being aware of the learner's strategies may aid foreign language learning.

At the individual level, the most popular strategies used by the Saudi EFL learners are cognitive and meta-cognitive ones. These learners know through trial and error that these strategies have powerful contribution to language learning. They realize how essential practice is through imitating native speakers' speech and repetition. Thus, teachers can use the pattern drill activity to meet students preferred learning strategies. At the same time EFL students showed that they are active learners; they like to reason and analyse, and they skim and scan a reading passage before going into the next level of comprehension. They always look for Arabic equivalents when they come across new English words. However, according to linguists and methodologists using an approach which makes few references to their native language is preferable. EFL students control their cognition by planning what they want to do, checking how the plan is going and then evaluating how well the product fits the intentions. They set goals, pay attention, and think about their progress. They do not panic when making mistakes rather, they learn from the mistakes to improve their English. However, the cognitive strategy of practising need to be activated by the EFL learners through reading as much as possible in English, writing notes, letters in English and making summaries. This cognitive strategy is necessary for both comprehension and production in the new language (Oxford, 1990). EFL students make up for limited knowledge by guessing the meaning of the new English words, using alternative forms of expression, and using gestures to convey meaning through the use of compensation strategies. They reportedly know through trial and error that the most important influences on language learning success or failure are the affective factors. They reduce their anxiety through using physical relaxation techniques and talking about their feelings on language learning to their friends. They encourage themselves by taking risks wisely even if they are afraid of making mistakes. However, EFL students can be trained to use other powerful affective strategies such as positive self- talk, and self reward. These strategies reduce

anxiety and help learners feel competent and do their learning tasks (Oxford, 1990). In addition, students should learn how to write down their feelings in a language learning diary. This strategy helps them improve their writing as they express their feelings. They also use the memory strategies in remembering new English words, such as connecting sounds to images, or by remembering the location of these words on the page or on the board. However, teachers can reinforce the use of other types of powerful strategies such as activating students' background knowledge or schematic knowledge to facilitate their comprehension processes. The Students can be asked to recall an event or a story; they can be asked to read the title or look at the picture and say what they know about the topic. Teachers can also encourage their students to review their lessons. During short, regularly spaced periods of review, students can refresh their memory and bring themselves up to date. In order for new items to enter long-term memory, teachers can encourage active involvement on the part of the learner. Swain (1985) cited in Cook (1993) points out that successful language learning needs more than comprehensible input rather it needs successful management of classroom interaction. In other words   a learner who has activated the new information by using it will be more likely to retain it than a learner who has simply heard or read the item and seen a translation. Teachers can ask students to use the new words in sentences, physically act them or use rhymes. Finally, EFL students use social strategies such as asking others to slow down when they do not understand something. Raising students' awareness of the use of other social strategies is a must. EFL students can be trained to ask questions in English. The lesson should not be tightly controlled by the teacher asking all the questions, students can work in pairs, one asks a question and the other gives the answer. The EFL learners should also be encouraged to learn about the culture of English speakers. They should learn to tolerate different cultures or different points of view and at the same time, they should develop the kinds of analytical and critical

skills if the material is not Islamic in context. Finally, EFL students have to practise English with other students, and ask English speakers for correction.

On the other hand, at the category level, EFL students indicated that they learn best by organizing and evaluating their learning (Meta-cognitive). In general, students reported medium overall strategy use. This result suggests that other learning strategies should be activated. Thus, in the foreign language context, students have to work hard, prepare and monitor their progress in order to succeed in learning the language. Furthermore, they need to learn using new strategies that facilitate the process of their English language learning and be more autonomous rather than be just recipients. Teachers can provide adequate motivation to enhance learners' use of different cognitive, memory, compensation, social and affective strategies. Furthermore, the results suggest a need for offering well-designed language strategy training to foreign language learners. Teachers can help students to recognize the power of consciously using language learning strategies to make learning faster, easier, more effective and more fun. Students can be taught how to use strategies, practise them and to transfer them to new tasks. Thus, raising the teachers' as well as the students' awareness of the use of different learning strategies is a must.

Regarding the relationship between the use of learning strategies at an individual level and major field of study, additional results from the present study specified the English language learning strategies used by EFL students with four major fields of study, Medicine, English Language, Computer Science and Biology. Results indicated that there were some differences in the use of strategies at the individual item level with regard to major field of study. Although, Medical majors share most of the strategies with English majors, they reported the use of some strategies more frequently than the

strategies used by students in all the other major fields of study. An explanation to this result might be the high score required for enrolment in the Department of Medicine. In other words, all Medical majors are academically the best at King Khalid University. They work very hard and use different types of learning strategies to cope with their study. On the other hand Biology majors reported the least use of strategies. This result might be due to the lack of motivation to use English as the language of instruction in this department is Arabic. Finally, the strategy of "I pay attention when someone is speaking English" was used most frequently by all students across different major fields of study. This might indicate that language learning is a conscious process. On the other hand, the strategy "I use flashcards to remember new English words" was generally not used by all students across different major fields of study. However, using this strategy is very useful in remembering the new target language, with the new word written on one side and the definition written on the other (Oxford, 1990).

Further results on the relationship of language learning strategies with major field of study indicated that Medical, English and Computer Science majors used the meta-cognitive strategy category most often followed by the cognitive one. On the other hand, Biology majors used the compensating strategy category as highest followed by the meta-cognitive one. These results indicated that it is essential for Medical, English and Computer Science majors to have greater meta-cognitive control over their language learning; they should be more organized, they should be able to set realistic goals for themselves and make plans for their learning in terms of time and materials. On the other hand, it is convincing to find that Biology majors used a wide range of compensation strategies to overcome the breakdown in communications. This is due to their limited exposure to the English language as mentioned earlier that the language of instruction in the Biology Department is Arabic. Similarly, results indicated that

Medical students used the memory strategy category "Remembering more effectively" more than the students in all the other major fields of study. Maybe this is due to their experience in using memory strategies in the study of Medical courses which contain a large number of new terminologies and thus it is easy for them to transfer the use of these memory strategies to learning English. Both Medical and English Language students used the cognitive strategy category "Using all your mental Processes" and the meta-cognitive "Organising and evaluating your learning" more than students in all other major fields of study. This indicated that Medical and English majors have to follow certain processes to facilitate second language learning; they have to know how to practise, reason out the new language, create general rules, revise these rules when new information is available and plan, organize and evaluate their learning consistently. Finally, Biology majors used the compensation strategy category "Compensating for missing Knowledge" more than Computer Science majors. This is perhaps due to the limited exposure to the English language of Biology students.

In determining the differences and similarities in the overall strategy use of the EFL undergraduates according to major fields of study, Medical students reported the highest use of overall strategy while the Computer Science and Biology students, reported the use of overall strategy least often. It might be that studying Medicine in English requires operating many strategies unlike studying Computer Science and Biology. Thus it is easy for Medical students to transfer the strategies used in the study of Medicine to the study of the English language. Further research is suggested to cross validate results of the present study and to include more major fields of study.

Regarding the relationship between strategy used at the individual level and the year level of the students, results revealed that first and second year students share most of

the strategies. Furthermore, both of these groups learn best through the use of cognitive strategies. On the other hand, second year students reported higher use of cognitive, compensation and memory strategies than did first year students. In other words, second year students appeared to be active strategy users as their exposure to the English language is more than that of first year students, they have to employ a wide range of strategies to cope with their studies.

At the category level, both first and second year students reported that they learn best by "Organizing and evaluating their learning" (Meta-cognitive). They both have the abilities to take charge of their learning, organizing, setting goals and evaluating. In general, there were no significant differences in the overall strategy use between the first and second year students as both used this overall strategy at a medium level. This indicated that students should be trained to use different types of strategies effectively and teachers should be trained in strategy instruction and assessment.

Additional results confirm the conclusion that language learning strategies are related to language proficiency. At the individual level, the findings indicated that there are some qualitative differences in the use of strategies with regard to proficiency level. The proficient learners do not necessarily use more strategies but different and more appropriate ones. Compensation and meta-cognitive strategy categories were popular among students with different grades. In general, students reported no differences in the overall strategy use with regard to proficiency level; all students with all grades used the overall strategy at a medium level. This result might be attributed to the large classes that give very limited opportunities for students to use learning strategies. Again, students' awareness of the use of different strategies should be raised. Teachers should encourage the use of strategies and transferring them to different situations.

Class observations of first year students supplemented with questionnaires and interviews yielded some information about the language learning strategies that were associated with the four language skills. The findings specify the English language learning strategies used with each skill and how some strategies could be used with all skills. EFL students used specific cognitive strategies with each skill. Both reading and listening comprehension are interactive processes; the EFL first year students used cognitive strategies in summarizing information they heard or read and in analysing expressions. Similarly, EFL students used the cognitive strategies in the speaking class through using formulas and patterns and through repeating. The cognitive strategies were used as well in the writing class by writing guided paragraphs, notes or reports in English. On the other hand, the results indicated that the meta-cognitive strategy of "Paying attention" is crucial in language learning with all of the skills. In addition, the strategy of "Evaluating learning" through self monitoring and self evaluating was used to promote learning writing only. Because of the limited linguistic knowledge of EFL students, they relied on guessing intelligently through using linguistic and non-linguistic clues to understand the input. On the other hand, EFL students used the compensation strategies of "Coining words" and "Using circumlocution" with the writing skill and extensively with the speaking skill. The social strategy of "Asking questions" appeared to be crucial for EFL students in mastering all of the four language skills; it helps students to make sure that something has been rightly understood. In addition, EFL students relied on the social strategy of "Cooperating with others" in the learning of reading, writing and speaking. Finally, the memory strategies of "Creating mental linkages" were used with all of the skills except listening. The reason for not using these memory strategies with listening is may be attributed to the invisibility of the mental strategies. The extensive use of compensation strategies in speaking merits special attention. There are three main features related to the choice and use of compensation

strategies. One is probably a general problem of the EFL learners and can be solved over time with the development of overall language proficiency. The second feature, which is of some concern, is the traditional methodology of teaching English where classes tended to be teacher directed. The pedagogical implication here is to teach English following a communicative approach where the initiation of the interaction goes both ways, from lecturer to students and from students to lecturer, rather than considering the teacher as an authority in the classroom. The third feature can be the curriculum that does not focus on oral production skills. Thus, the students do not regularly engage in complex language activities such as social communication or classroom oral presentations. However, there are many drawbacks in using the observational method in collecting the data as the mental strategies are unobservable; furthermore, classes are teacher directed, and students have limited opportunities to engage in active learning with observable strategies.

In summation, identifying the learning strategies used by the female EFL undergraduates can benefit learners, lecturers and researchers. Learners will be aware of their learning strategy preferences and thus develop other strategies to accomplish various language tasks. Teachers can incorporate the findings into classroom teaching and material preparation. Finally researchers can use the findings to support or contradict the results of previous studies and thus provide a comprehensive insight about the following: the strategies used in the EFL context, the strategies used with different major fields of study, the strategies used with different performance levels, and finally the strategies used with different language skills.

5.6 Recommendations for EFL Teachers

As it is indicated in the present study, EFL students reported medium overall strategy use and there is a strong relationship between the use of language learning strategies and the two variables: major field of study and English language performance level. Strategy training should be conducted in classrooms to help students become autonomous L2 learners outside the classroom where much L2 learning occurs.

The following four step model for training the EFL students to use language learning strategies is recommended:

1. After selecting the strategies used by EFL students based on their major field of study and performance level as indicated in the previous chapter, teachers can design activities that focus on the use of these preferred strategies by EFL students and develop other activities that introduce new strategies to students. It is suggested that these activities are integrated in the language teaching programme and are accompanied by handouts. These handouts describe the way of using the strategies and the suitable time for using them.

2. The next step is awareness training, the training on raising learners' consciousness of the existence of language learning strategies and their values. Students can be introduced to the concept of learning strategies in a fun and motivating way and not in a lecturing format. Students can enhance their knowledge of strategies by becoming conscious users of various strategies.

3. The third step is the intensive language learning strategy training. It involves practising a number of strategies that are suitable for the particular language level of the students and for their major fields of study. Teachers can combine the strategy training with regular class teaching. Students can be taught on how

to transfer strategies to new learning contexts and how to evaluate the success of their strategies used.

4. Evaluating strategy training is the last step. Teachers assess whether the strategies have been deployed effectively by the learners. This step helps in the improvement of strategy training.

In conclusion, teachers should have in mind three important considerations in the design of strategy training programme: the students' needs, the available resources (e.g. time, money, materials and availability of teacher trainers) and the feasibility of providing this kind of instruction.

5.7 Suggested Areas for Further Research

Future studies might consider the following directions:

1. The relationship between learning strategies and gender needs to be further inspected.

2. Although the present study focused on the strategies of good language learners, strategies of poor language learners could also be further explored. This might help in the explanation of the relationship between the use of learning strategy and proficiency level.

3. No investigation has been done on the strategies used in the first language of the Arabs. This could be a suggested area for future research to determine which strategies transfer most readily and which ones do not.

4. The relationship between learning strategy and students' year level needs further research to include strategies used by third and fourth year students.