COMPARISON OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES OF IRANIAN COLLEGE LEVEL STUDENTS IN EFL AND ESL SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to investigate and compare language learning strategy (LLS) use pattern of Iranian college level English learners in EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language) environments and through different groups of proficiency. Exploring the participants' views on some language learning related issues such as language use and language learning obstacles within both EFL and ESL environments was another purpose of this study.

A total of 157 Iranian students participated in the survey. Twelve Iranian students, six from each setting group, participated in the semi-structured interviews. The data were collected and analyzed in separate parts: (1) quantitative analysis, which discussed the data gathered by the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990) survey (SILL), (2) qualitative analysis, which contained the results of semi-structured interviews concerning ESL/EFL Iranian language learners' views on some critical language learning related issues in EFL/ESL settings.

The results of statistical analyses, namely, one-way and two-way ANOVA, MANOVA, and *t*-test revealed that Iranian ESL learners significantly performed better than Iranian EFL learners on the overall SILL, on the six strategy categories of the SILL, and on individual strategies listed in the SILL. The results also showed that while language proficiency group factor significantly affected the ESL learners in using both the overall SILL and its six categories, it did not significantly differentiate between low, intermediate and advanced EFL learners with respect to overall use of SILL and its six strategy categories. The results of the interview analysis indicated that EFL and ESL groups considerably differed from each other with regard to using language outside the class, and the obstacles placed in their

path to learning and using the target language in and outside the classroom in their related settings. The main theoretical implication of the study is that learners' use of LLSs is influenced by their cognitive stance as well as social settings in which strategies are applied.

ABSTRAK

Perbandingan Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa Pelajar Iran Peringkat Kolej Dalam Persekitaran EFL dan ESL

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk membandingkan corak penggunaan strategi pembelajaran bahasa pelajar Iran peringkat kolej dalam persekitaran EFL (Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Asing) dan ESL (Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua) bagi kumpulan kecekapan bahasa yang berbeza. Meneroka pandangan partisipan mengenai beberapa isu pembelajaran bahasa seperti penggunaan Bahasa dan sekatan pembelajaran dalam persekitaran EFL dan ESL merupakan tujuan sampingan kajian ini.

Sejumlah 157 pelajar Iran mengambil bahagian dalam kajian tinjauan ini. Dua belas pelajar Iran, enam dari setiap kumpulan persekitaran, mengambil bahagian dalam temu bual separa struktur. Data dikumpul dan dianalisis dalam bahagian berasingan: (1) analisis kuantitatif, yang membincangkan data terkumpul oleh soal selidik SILL atau *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (Oxford, 1990), (2) analisis kualitatif, yang merangkumi dapatan temu bual separa struktur berkenaan dengan pandangan pelajar ESL/EFL Iran mengenai beberapa isu kritikal pembelajaran bahasa dalam seting ESL/EFL.

Hasil analisis statistik, iaitu ANOVA se hala dan dua hala, MANOVA, dan ujian-*t* menunjukkan bahawa pencapaian pelajar ESL Iran berbeza secara signifikan berbanding dengan pelajar EFL Iran bagi keseluruhan SILL, dalam enam kategori SILL, dan juga dalam strategi individu yang tersenarai dalam SILL. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan walaupun faktor kecekapan bahasa mempengaruhi pelajar ESL secara signifikan dalam penggunaan SILL dan enam kategorinya, faktor tersebut tidak membezakan secara signifikan antara pelajar EFL peringkat rendah, pertengahan dan tinggi merujuk kepada

penggunaan SILL secara keseluruhan dan enam kategorinya. Hasil analisis temu bual mencadangkan bahawa kumpulan EFL dan ESL berbeza secara ketara dari segi penggunaan bahasa di luar kelas, dan kekangan yang mereka hadapi apabila mempelajari dan menggunakan Bahasa sasaran di dalam dan di luar kelas dalam seting yang berkenaan. Implikasi teoretikal yang penting dalam kajian ini adalah penggunaan strategi pembelajaran bahasa oleh pelajar dipengaruhi oleh pendirian kognitif (*cognitive stance*) mereka dan juga seting di mana strategi tersebut diaplikasi.

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ANOVA:	analysis of variances
CS:	communication strategy
EFL:	English as a foreign language
ESOL:	English for speakers of other languages
ESL:	English as a second language
EWL:	English as a world language
FL:	foreign language
IELTS:	international English language testing system
L1:	first language
L2:	second language
LLS:	language learning strategy
LS:	language strategy
M:	mean
MANOVA:	multivariate analysis of variances
SA:	study abroad
SD:	standard deviation
SILL:	strategies in language learning
SLA:	second language acquisition
TOEFL:	test of English as a foreign language

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the strategy use pattern of Iranian college level English learners within EFL and ESL environments and through different groups of proficiency. In other terms, this study aimed at investigating the effects of EFL/ESL (English as a second language and English as a foreign language) settings on the language learning strategy (LLS) use of Iranian language learners, who were learning English in Iran and in Malaysia respectively. Discovering the strategy use and preferences of Iranian L2 learners through different groups of proficiency across ESL and EFL settings was another concern of the present author. Finally, exploring Iranian EFL/ESL learners' views on some language learning related issues within EFL and ESL settings was another target of the present author. To provide justification for a need to do such study a background to the study seems imperative.

1.2 Background to the Study

The behaviorist conceptions of language learning and teaching were the prevailing theoretical ideologies after the Second World War; however, conceptions about the teaching-learning process changed in many ways due to the switch in thinking from behaviorist learning theories to cognitive learning theories, which resulted in less emphasis on teachers and teaching and greater stress on learners and learning. Corder (1967) argued that language errors made by L2 learners indicate the development of underlying linguistic competence and echo the learners' attempts to organize linguistic input. Along the same

line, Selinker's (1972) interlanguage (IL) viewed language errors as evidence of positive attempts by the student to learn the new language. Regarding the above statements, Griffiths (2004) states that this view of language learning allowed for the possibility of learners making purposeful attempts to control their own learning and, along with theories of cognitive processes in language learning promoted by authors such as McLaulin (1978) and Bialystok (1978), contributed to a research thrust in the mid to late seventies which aimed at investigating how learners employ learning strategies (LSs) to promote the learning of language (e.g., Naiman, Frohlich, Stern & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). Thus, the emerging cognitive psychology in the 1960s, changed language researchers' way of thinking about LLSs (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986).

LLSs are operations employed by language learners to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information (Oxford, 1990). According to Nyikos and Oxford, (1993) LLSs are important for learning and teaching a language because:

(1) LLSs enable students to become more autonomous, self-directed, and responsible for building up their own language proficiency.

(2) LLSs are linked to successful language performance.

(3) Effective LLSs can be taught for application inside or outside the classrooms.

Obviously, learning strategies have received much attention since the late 1970s and the investigation of LLSs has advanced our understanding of the processes learners use to develop their skills in a second or foreign language. For instance, Chamot and O'Malley (1987) have tied LLSs to Anderson's (1983, 1985) information processing theory, contending that LLSs operate to transform the way in which information is processed and learned. Oxford (1990) also claims that there is a general agreement among LLS researchers that LLSs are grounded in cognitive theory. Cognitive theory emphasizes

learners' mental processes and meaningful learning. In other words, LLSs foster meaningful learning as they relate the received (linguistic) information to related pre-existing chunks of information. Thus, it is not odd to hear Oxford and Ehrman (1995) as stating that many studies indicate the frequency of use of language learning strategies directly relates to language performance, regardless of whether performance is measured as a course grade, a class test score, a standardized proficiency test score, a self-rating, or something else.

Research in the field started with investigating the strategies of "Good Language Learners" followed by research on "Less Successful Language Learners". Then, several classification frameworks of LLSs were outlined by experts in the field such as Bialystok (1978), O' Mally and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and Rubin (1981). From 1980 up to date, it has been the concern of many researchers to investigate the probable effect of different variables on learner's choice and use of learner strategies.

1.3 Background of the Problem

To better understand language learning strategies and the ways different learners approach understanding and manipulating second language tasks, many researchers have investigated the relationship between language learning strategies (LLSs) and factors such as age, gender, personality type, ethnicity, proficiency, learning styles, goal-orientation and beliefs about language learning (Bedell, 1993; Bialystok, 1981; Chen, 2014; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Griffiths, 2003a; Kamalizad & Jalilzadeh, 2011; Kamalizad & Samuel, 2014; Kashefian, 2011; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Phillips, 1991; Politzer, 1983; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; Rahimi, Riazi, & Seif, 2008; Ramirez, 1986; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005;

Sadeghi & Attar, 2013; Sadeghi & Mansouri, 2014; Wang, 2002; Wenden, 1987b; Yang, 1992; Zare, 2010). A rationale behind this inquiry as Takeuchi, Griffiths, and Coyle (2007) regard is that strategy teaching should be geared to learners' individual and situational or group needs. Hence, there is justification for studying the influence of individual, group, and situational variables on learners' strategy use.

The variables in the above mentioned studies have been shown as having impact on the strategy choice of L2 learners with slight contrast in their findings, though. For instance, with respect to age, while some studies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Peacock & Ho, 2003) indicated the impact of age on LLS use of L2 learners, other studies (see, e.g., Griffiths, 2003a) showed that age was not significantly related to learners' strategy use.

Research on the influence of ESL/EFL settings on LLS choice of language learners is rare. Bedell (1993) for instance compared LLSs of Chinese students studying in China with those of Chinese students studying in the US. He concluded that compensation strategies were the most frequently used strategies among both groups of students in different settings. Another study by Riley and Harsch (1999) compared the strategies of 28 Japanese ESL students entering two language programs in Hawaii with the strategies used by 28 of their Japanese EFL counterparts attending a university in Japan. The researchers found that the two groups used variant strategies; hence, they argued that the environmental differences could play a significant role when learning another language. A more recent related study was conducted by Chang (2009) who used Oxford's (1990) SILL to look at the patterns of strategy use of Chinese ESL/EFL college students learning English in the U.S and Taiwan respectively. Except for the social category of strategies which was more significantly used by his ESL participants, Chang found statically no significant difference

between the two groups of participants in terms of using other categories of strategies listed in the SILL.

Generally, it seems that there is a dearth of research with regard to the issue of ESL/EFL settings and their probable effect on the strategy use of language learners who belong to a particular nationality. Additionally, the context of the above mentioned studies are those countries where English is deemed as the first language of the indigenous people. There is no literature in the field indicating the investigation of the impact of a specific domain of ESL contexts such as the British past colonial countries where English is not the first language of the indigenous people on the ESL learners' choice and use of language learning strategies.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The literature on English learners' use of language learning strategies within an ESL or EFL environment is abundant(Chen, 2014; Griffiths, 2003a; Kamalizad & Jalilzadeh, 2011; Kamalizad & Samuel, 2014; Kashefian, 2011; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Phillips, 1991; Rahimi, Riazi, & Seif, 2008; Rahimi, 2005; Sadeghi & Attar, 2013; Sadeghi & Mansouri, 2014; Wang, 2002; Zare, 2010) to name some. Among a multitude of studies conducted within either setting, researchers have investigated the impact of age, gender, years of study, language proficiency, learning style and ethnicity as variables on the learners' LLS use. Nonetheless, as noted by Riley and Harsch (1999), and reflected in Chang's (2009) project, in a few studies researchers have looked at the differences between language learning strategies used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting versus English as a second language (ESL) setting by learners of the same

nationality or language background which is in turn the author's main concern in the present study for investigation.

Also, investigating LLS use of Iranian English learners within different educational settings has been the focus of a large number of studies (Kashefian, 2011; Rahimi, Riazi, & Seif, 2008; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005; Sadeghi & Attar, 2013; Sadeghi & Mansouri, 2014; Zare, 2010) to name a few. However none of these studies have looked at Iranian English learners' strategy use pattern in EFL versus ESL settings. Specifically, Iranian EFL context has been mainly the focus of these studies. In this study the author aims to look at the possible influence of ESL/EFL settings on the language learning strategy use of Iranian language learners who are learning English in Malaysia (ESL setting) and Iran (EFL setting) since he has access to Iranian students in these two settings. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is a gap in knowledge regarding the strategy using behavior of Iranian English learners in an ESL setting compared to that in Iranian EFL setting, particularly when the ESL setting is a country such as Malaysia where English is not the native language of the local people. Also, investigating the cross-context role of proficiency in Iranian English learners' use of LLSs is another aim of this study which has not been touched by previous efforts in the field.

The author has selected Malaysia and Iran as the two settings for investigation for the number of Iranian students enrolling in Malaysian universities has increased in recent years. English is deemed as the second language in Malaysia based on what Carter and Nunan (2001) account for this concept, arguing that the term 'ESL' is also used to refer to countries where English is the main lingua franca. This domain of ESL contexts consists of British past colonial territories such as Singapore, India, and Malaysia and as McArthur (1998) defines ESL territories are ones in which English is used for specific purposes (i.e.,

legislative, education, judicial) but not necessarily recognized as a national language. In Malaysia, foreign language learners such as Iranian students have ample opportunities to use English in out of class situations for communicative purposes. Also English is the medium of instruction in Malaysian international universities and nearly all those universities require international students to submit an IELTS minimum score of 6.0 or TOEFL minimum score of 550 as part of their enrollment regulations.

Many Iranian students strive to fulfill that requirement through enrolling in Iranian language institutes in Iran before moving to Malaysia to continue their education while many others prefer to improve their English through enrolling in Malaysian language institutes or colleges. The latter might think learning English in an English as a second language country where they can benefit from multitude opportunities of English use both in and out of class situations will be a shortcut to this aim as compared to learning English in Iran where, as Carter and Nunan (2001) define for EFL contexts "English is neither widely used for communication, nor used as the medium of instruction" (p. 2). To explore which group is more successful in achieving this goal we should ask what success means in terms of language learning. Success in language learning, in one way, can be attributed to conscious application of language learning strategies (Oxford, 1985) or as Nyikos and Oxford (1993) state, language learning strategies are related to successful language performance. Supposedly, if other variables that might contribute to differences of strategy use among Iranian language learners, such as age, gender and language proficiency could be kept constant or act as moderator variables in the study, we might be able to look at the possible impact of EFL/ESL settings on their language learning achievement through observing their performance on the application of language learning strategies. Also, investigating the interactive effect of proficiency and setting factors on the strategy use of

Iranian English learners is a secondary issue of focus in this study which has not been addressed by past studies.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The author in the present study has adopted the LLS framework as a vantage point to look at the differences in language learning between the two groups of participants (Iranian ESL learners/ Iranian EFL learners) across different groups of proficiency. In other terms, what is really appealing to the author is to determine which group of Iranian students are more successful in the course of target language attainment; those studying in Malaysian ESL context? or those learning English in Iranian EFL context? Therefore the purpose of this study could be summarized as:

1. Investigating the LLS use pattern of Iranian English learners,
2. Investigating LLSs of Iranian college level English learners within different groups of proficiency across EFL and ESL settings (Malaysia and Iran) and finally,
3. Exploring Iranian English learners' views on some critical language learning related issues such as language use in variant social settings and obstacles they might see in their path to using and learning English within EFL and ESL environments.

1.6 Conceptual Framework of the Variables

The relationship between dependent and independent variables under investigation in this study has been diagrammatized in Figure 1.1 as follows:

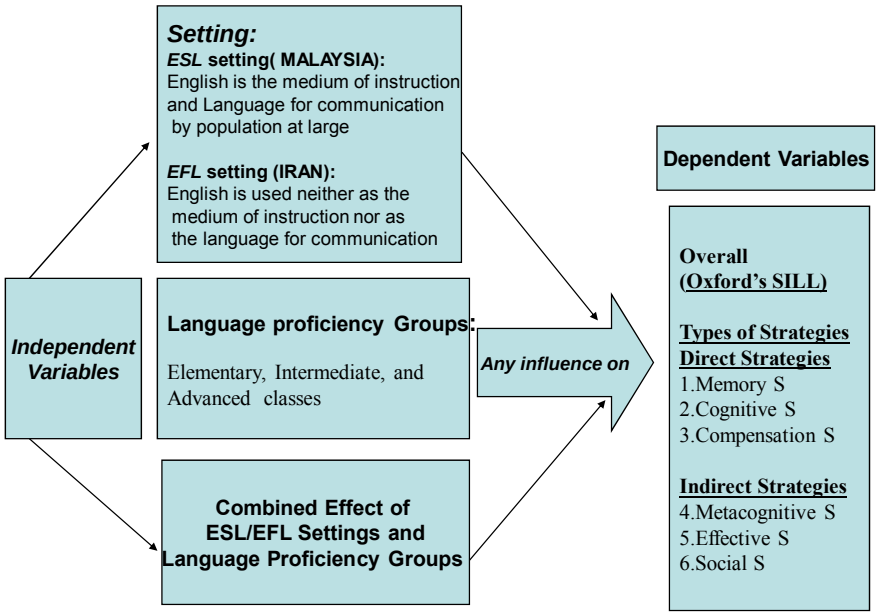

Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework of the Variables.

The independent variables as displayed in Figure 1.1 are settings (ESL/EFL), proficiency groups, and their interaction. There are seven dependent variables in this study which are the overall strategies in Oxford's (1990) SILL as one dependent variable along with six strategy categories (six dependent variables) in the SILL. The study intends to investigate the influence of setting and proficiency groups on the learners' use of language learning strategies. These variables have been discussed in some detail in the definition of the key terms section of this chapter.

1.7 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study has been guided by Oxford's (1990) SILL in its quantitative phase. Therefore, Oxford's classification has been diagrammatized along with brief explanations in this section and has been reviewed in some detail in chapter two. Oxford (1990) divides learning strategies to major groups of direct and indirect strategies as shown in Figure 1.2.

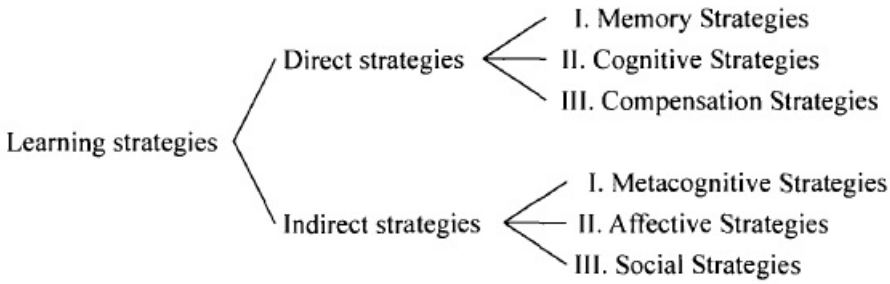

Figure 1.2. Diagram of Learning Strategies.

Each of these major classes consists of three groups of strategies. Direct learning strategies are directly involved with the target language. They require mental processing of the language. Direct language learning strategies include memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. Each category includes various sets of strategiesas as shown in Figure 1.3.

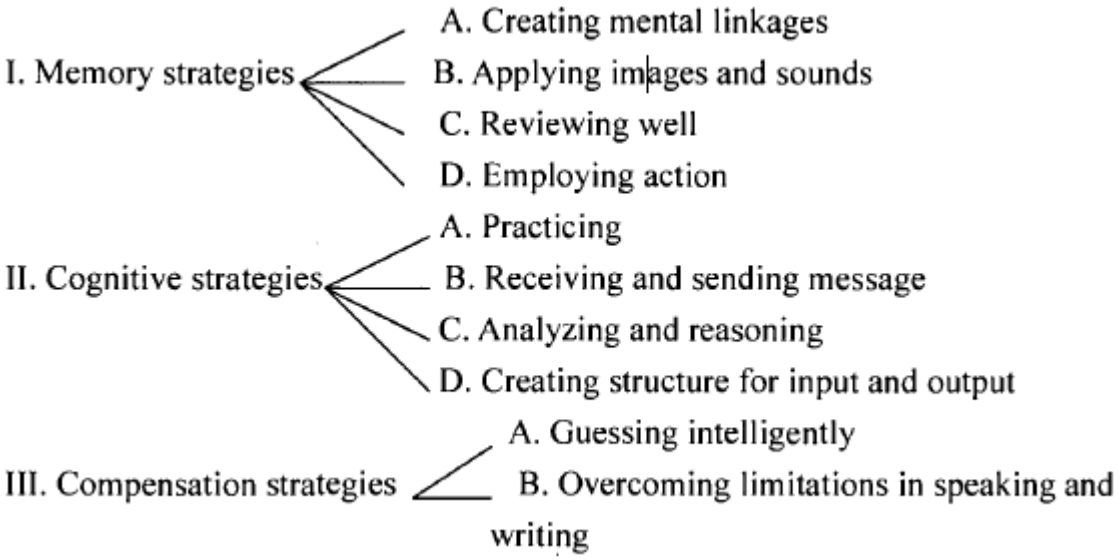

Figure 1.3. Diagram of Direct Strategies.

Oxford (1990) states that indirect strategies do not require direct involvement with the target language in many cases. There are three sets of indirect strategies: metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Each category includes different sets of strategies as can be seen in Figure 1.4.

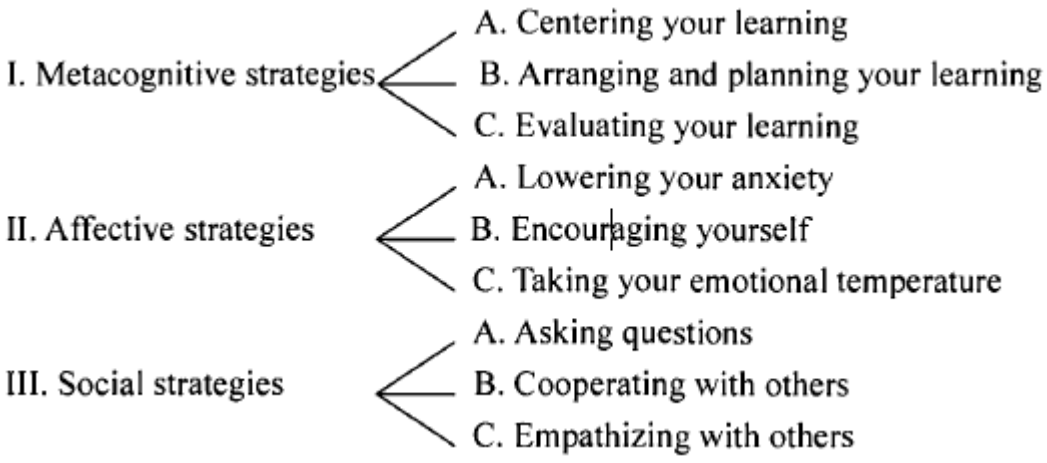

Figure 1.4. Diagram of Indirect Strategies.

1.8 Research Questions

In this study we had two main groups of subjects who were (1) Iranian students, who were learning English in Malaysia, (2) Iranian students, who were learning English in Iran. In each main group, there were three proficiency groups, namely elementary, intermediate and advanced groups of learners. With this regard, the purpose of conducting this research can be summarized in the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences between the mean scores of the SILL six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) as reportedly used by the whole participants in the study?

2. Is there any significant difference in the means of the overall language learning strategies of ESL/EFL groups in this study?

3. Are there any significant differences between EFL and ESL groups' mean scores in using six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) included in the SILL?

4. Does language proficiency factor affect the use of the overall language learning strategies of Iranian language learners in (1) the whole population, (2) the EFL group and (3) the ESL group?

5. Does language proficiency factor affect the use of any of the six categories of language learning strategies in (a) the whole population, (b) the EFL group and (c) the ESL group in this study?

6. Regarding the 50 individual strategy items included in SILL, a) What are the most and least frequently used strategies of Iranian learners in (i) the EFL group, (ii) the

ESL group? b) How comparable are EFL and ESL groups regarding their most and least favored strategies?

7. Does the interaction of settings (ESL/EFL) and proficiency factors affect the application of the overall language learning strategy use of the participants in the study as revealed by the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)?

8. Does the interaction of setting (ESL/EFL) and language proficiency factor affect the application of the six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) on the SILL?

9. What may be the similarities and differences between Iranian EFL and ESL learners in terms of English learning as experienced by the participants in this study?

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study is aimed at identifying the probable effect of contextual (ESL/EFL setting) factor, proficiency group factor and their interactive effect on Iranian college level English learners' performance in using the overall SILL and the six categories of strategies included in SILL. Discovering differences or similarities between Iranian ESL and EFL learners with relation to some critical language related issues as viewed by the participants in the study is another concern of the author. The significance of the present study could be summarized as:

- Research in language learning strategies as influenced by ESL versus EFL differences is rare and considering Malaysia and Iran as ESL/EFL settings, it is non-existent. Therefore the result of this study might add to the literature in the LLS field.

- Any rationale behind a given strategy teaching schedule as Takeuchi, Griffiths, and Coyle (2007) believe should be geared to learners' individual and situational or group needs. Accordingly, it is an urge to find out individual, group, and situational variables that might affect the learner's strategy choice and use. Thus, exploring the effect of contextual or situational factors on the learner's strategy use as set by this study might offer fruitful insights to both learners and teachers who might study or teach in variant sociocultural settings.
- Practically, it would be very fruitful to determine if learning English in a specific domain of ESL context such as Malaysia where English is deemed as a lingua franca but not the first language of the country has any noticeable effect on EFL learners' choice and use of language learning strategies and on their language attainment as well.
- A significance of the present study could be seen in the author's concern to explore some critical language learning issues as experienced by Iranian English learners in different unique settings (EFL Iran/ ESL Malaysia) using qualitative interview.
- Finally, a likely significance of this study is tied with the author's attempt to discover cross context role of proficiency in learner's use of LLSs as an area which, most probably, has not been tapped, by past studies in the field.

1.10 Definition of the Key Terms

In the following section the concepts of ESL/EFL settings have been included in the definitions for ESL/EFL concepts. Therefore the terms "language learning strategies, EFL/ESL settings, and language proficiency" have been used in this study in the following senses:

1.10.1 Language Learning Strategies

A number of definitions have been given in the review of the literature section of this study; however a definition by Oxford might suffice in this section. As Oxford (1990) defines LLSs are certain actions or techniques that learners use to improve their progress in developing second or foreign language skills. In the present study, Oxford's taxonomy of strategies has been applied that will be fully explained in the next chapter .In the following section, however, a brief definition for Oxford's (1990) categories of language learning strategies is presented as follows:

(1) Memory strategies help the learner to remember and retrieve new information.

(2) Cognitive strategies help the learner to understand and produce the language.

(3) Metacognitive strategies help the learner to coordinate the learning process.

(4) Compensation strategies help the learner to use the language despite knowledge gaps.

(5) Affective strategies have to do with regulating learner's emotions.

(6) Social strategies have to do with learning with others.

1.10.2 ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

Although the acronym ESOL has not been utilized in this research, a brief definition of the concept might shed more light on our understanding of ESL/EFL concepts which are two important key terms in this study.

ESOL in many contexts serves as an umbrella term for all varieties of English language teaching. However, in the United States, ESOL refers to the English language instruction of child and teenage non-native speakers in grades K-12. Like ESL learners ESOL students study English in an English-speaking country (Renoud, 2007).

1.10.3 EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

The term EFL is used to refer to contexts where English is neither widely used for communication, nor used as the medium of instruction (Carter & Nunan, 2001).

McArthur (1998) argues that in comparison to ESL and ESOL instruction which occurs inside of a predominately English-speaking nation, EFL is adult/youth English-language instruction that occurs in a country where English is not traditionally a native language (i.e., Japan, Mexico, and Russia). Within these settings English is learned for specific purposes (business, engineering, etc.) or as part of the education. In these settings English is not the language of communication or survival in schools or language institutes and organizations. In this study Iran is deemed as an EFL setting as English is not used for communication in the society nor is it used as the medium of instruction in schools or universities.

The context of Iran is widely different from other EFL environments such as Taiwan or Vietnam where English is noticeably used for trade, education and communication. In Iran English is only communicatively used in language institutes in some way and there is no dynamic interplay between target language use in the classroom and outer class language application.

It is worth mentioning that Iran is an EFL context where English learners do not have much exposure to the target language to pick it up unconsciously. In the same line, Riazi and Rahimi (2005) state that in most English classes, schools, universities, or even language institutes of Iran, a lot of emphasis is put on explaining about the language and making the learners conscious of the process of learning even in cases where so called communicative approaches of teaching are adopted. It should be mentioned that the author has selected the capital city of Tehran as representing the EFL setting of the study in order

to make the study more manageable and the results more meaningful. In the capital city of Tehran, the author has selected a reputable language institute to locate the participants of the study. Thus, the term EFL setting used in this study represents interplay between the dynamics of the classroom situations and the outer class target language use by the participants of the study. Accordingly, the term EFL learners used in this study refers to Iranian English learners that are learning English in such setting.

1.10.4 ESL (English as a Second Language)

The term ESL as Carter and Nunan (2001) define is used to refer to situations in which English is taught and learned in cultures, countries or contexts in which English is the predominant language of communication. They state that teaching of English to immigrants in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and America typifies ESL. The term is also current in countries where English is widely used as a lingua franca. This second context mainly consists of British past colonial territories like Hong Kong, Singapore, India and Malaysia (where the population speak a range of other languages). McArthur (1998) defines this second context as referring to territories in which English is used for specific purposes (i.e., legislative, educational, and judicial), but is not necessarily recognized as a national language. In this study Malaysia is deemed as an ESL environment or setting where English is used for communication by many and it is the medium of instruction in many (but not all) universities and educational settings. Malaysia is a multicultural country that plays host to the world's people at large. As a result, English is deemed as the main Lingua Franca especially in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur which is habitat to many international students, businessmen and visitors.

Additionally, in the capital city, English is widely used for communication among local people who come from different linguistic groups including Malay, Chinese, and Tamil. English can foster interaction between these diverse linguistic groups as well as it might be a sign of prestige or literacy for these local people. However, many parts of the country may not represent ESL environment as local people in those areas do not value their relationship in terms of using English due to a number of reasons such as lack of international schools, universities or international people. In the present study, the term ESL has been applied to mainly refer to the capital city of Kuala Lumpur where the Iranian participants live and learn English both in and outside of their language classes. In other terms, the term ESL setting used in this study represents an interplay between the dynamics of the classroom situations and the target language use in outer classroom settings in the capital city. Accordingly, the term ESL learners used in this study refers to Iranian English learners that are learning English in such setting.

1.10.5 Language Proficiency Groups

Proficiency level might indicate a scoring procedure for its operational definition. In this study we didn't administer any proficiency tests. Thus in reality we have elementary, intermediate and advanced groups of learners since the learners were selected as they had been posited to their appropriate proficiency groups by their language institutes. Detailed operational definition of these proficiency groups will appear in chapter three.

1.11 The Delimitations of the Study

In interpreting and analyzing the findings of this study, the following points should be taken into account:

1. All subjects in each group are male language learners.

2. Among the factors that might contribute to the differences of strategy use among the participants, only EFL/ESL settings and language proficiency groups are the main independent variables in this study.

3. The researcher has delimited the study to two groups of Iranian language learners who are learning English in Kuala Lumpur and Tehran respectively.

4. All participants are between 20 to 30-year-old age range.

5. All language learners in this study are university students.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the literature related to previous investigations of language learner strategies. The following five areas will be addressed as related to the present investigation: (1) Definitions of language learning strategies, (2) Current perspectives for defining language learning strategies, (3) Classification framework of language learning strategies, (4) Historical overview of studies on language learning strategies, and finally (5) Factors affecting language learning strategies.

2.2 Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1992/1993) states that LLSs are "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability" (p.18). At the same time, we should note that LLSs are distinct from learning styles, which as Kinsella (1995) defines refer more broadly to a learner's natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills.

Richards and Renandya (2002) define learning styles as general approaches to language learning and key determiners of language learning strategy choice. They also state "for example, students with an analytic learning style prefer strategies such as contrastive

analysis, rule learning, and dissecting words and phrases, whereas students with a global style use strategies that help them find the big picture (i.e., guessing, scanning, predicting) and assist them in conversing without knowing all the words (i.e., paraphrasing, gesturing)" (p. 127). They maintain that those with a visual orientation tend to list and group words, whereas those learners with an auditory preference like to work with tapes and practice aloud. Finally those whose style contains tolerance for ambiguity use significantly different learning strategies in some instances from those used by students who are intolerant.

Research shows that student can act beyond their learning style and apply some valuable strategies that are initially uncomfortable (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). LLSs are often confused with skills; Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992) define skills as relating to the manner in which language is used. In other words, learning strategies are used to learn, while skills are applied to utilize what has been learnt. Skills, nevertheless, can be used as a learning strategy, for instance, if students decide to read for pleasure in order to expand their vocabulary.

Many researchers have underscored the pivotal role of LLSs; however they have differed in defining what LLS is. Rubin (1987) regards LLS as constructed by the learner to directly contribute to the development of their language system. Chamot (1993) defined LLSs as the behaviors and thought processes language learners apply to help them acquire, store, retrieve and use information within the target language. Ellis's (1994) definition of LLS reads "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language" (p. 530). According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) LLSs are specific ways of processing information and enhancing comprehension, learning or the retention of information. The difference in the definitions of LLSs could be traced to the different

processes LLSs have been attached to by different researchers in the field during discrete periods of time.

In the last decade the term 'language learner strategies' has also been used along with terms such as 'language learning strategies' or 'learner strategies' and as Cohen and Macaro (2007) claim "the term 'language learner strategies' was probably never used before June 2004" (p. 2). They also state that it was then that 23 international scholars who were expert in the field convened at the University of Oxford for a few days to collaborate on crucial issues relating to LLSs and language use following planning meetings in Singapore, at the AILA Congress, December 2002, and in Oxford, December 2003.

A great deal of what goes on in this chapter as relating to the major themes in defining language learner strategies, theories of LLSs, and purpose of LLSs have been selected from the printed results of these series of meetings, specifically from the book of *Language Learner Strategies* edited by Cohen and Macaro (2007). In this section, with reference to Cohen (2007) I try to review the aforementioned participants' descriptions of LLSs based on a relative consensus among them. This means the dissenting voices in these meetings are scantly reviewed as they are beyond the scope of this literature.

2.3 Major Themes in the Description of Strategies

2.3.1 Level of Consciousness

Any form of strategy needs to have a metacognitive component whereby the learner consciously and intentionally attends selectively to a learning task, analyzes the situation and task, plans for a course of action, monitors the implementation of the plan and evaluates the effectiveness of the whole process.

2.3.2 Extent of Attention

Attention can be viewed as being on a continuum from full focus on the strategy at one end to only minimal attention at the other end of the continuum. In other words at the beginning the strategy receives much attention, but as the plan is executed, the strategy is reduced to peripheral attention, then to a standby mode, and perhaps finally to a "no attention" mode.

2.3.3 Explicitness Regarding Action

It refers to whether the action component in a given learning situation needs to be explicit (for example, what is meant by 'reading a text' or 'rehearsing and memorizing' a dialog). Some experts in the meeting felt that since strategies are conscious, the learners should be able to explicitly state what a strategy as *rereading a text* actually entailed. Revolving around the issue of explicitness there was a range of reactions and less consensus, however what emerges from the survey relating to the explicitness of the action is the conceptualization of a 'strategy' as being a behavior which may change according to the learner.

2.3.4 Degree of Goal Orientation

Although most of the respondents agreed that strategies have a goal, there was ambivalence on whether the learner was able to identify this goal. Many supported the notion that any given strategy can be situated on a continuum from being more to less goal-oriented as it is easy for the learners to decide if a process was motivated by a purpose. Purposefulness was viewed as the intentionality aspect of consciousness.

2.3.5 Strategy Size

While many participants tended not to make the distinction between macro- and micro-strategies, even some of those not making the distinction could see the advantages of doing so. Note-taking, for example could be called a macro-strategy, using outline form to take notes could be seen as a micro-strategy.

2.3.6 Amount of Strategy Clustering

Most experts in the team agreed that strategic behavior could fall along a continuum from a single action to a sequence of actions depending on the task at hand. Sometimes one strategic action for example using a 'keyword mnemonic' to remember a difficult word would be enough to handle the task but for a more complex task such as looking up a new word in a dictionary a cluster of strategies would be needed. With respect to expanding on the issue of strategy clustering many supported the notion that for a strategy to be effective in promoting learning and or improved performance, it must be combined with other strategies either simultaneously in strategy clusters or in sequence, in strategy chains. In other words they generally felt that no strategy can function well in isolation.

2.3.7 Potential for Leading to Learning

Most of the participants in the team agreed that in the description of a strategy is included its potential for leading to learning given the fact that any strategic action might lead to learning in different ways for different learners.

2.3.8 Strategy Selection and Effectiveness

The source for language learner strategies, the learner's choice of strategies, and the effectiveness of strategy deployment for the given learner were also among the hot issues to be discussed by the expert team in the meetings aforementioned. With regard to the source for strategies, the feature was said to be in flux, with the source sometimes being the teacher, sometimes being a peer, and sometimes themselves. They said there was likely to be a gradual shift from initially looking elsewhere for strategies to use and then eventually generating their own strategies. Tracking the types of strategies learners used and their source they claimed to provide useful insights about the value of strategy instruction. In terms of the learner's choice of strategies and their effectiveness, nearly all the experts believed they were dependent on the learner themselves (for example, age, gender, language aptitude, intelligence, cognitive and learning style preferences, self-concept/image, personality, attitudes, motivation, prior knowledge), the learning task at hand (for example, type, complexity, difficulty, and generality), and the learning environment (for example, the learning culture, the richness of input and output opportunities).

2.4 Purpose of Language Learner Strategies

Cohen (2007) also listed the purposes of LLSs as experts in the meetings (mentioned earlier) viewed:

2.4.1 To Enhance Learning

Learner strategies have the purpose of enhancing learning, in fact, without strategies conscious learning cannot take place.

2.4.2 To Perform Specific Tasks

Even though until now many strategies have been stated in broad, general, and even fuzzy terms, they have as their purpose to perform specific tasks. Some experts in the team noted that the selection of strategies depends on the task at hand, with some strategies being appropriate for more than one task.

2.4.3 To Solve Specific Problems

The majority of respondents in the team agreed that a purpose for strategies is to solve specific problems.

2.4.4 To Make Learning Easier, Faster, and More Enjoyable

This notion received support from the most respondents in the team. According to their views, strategies allow learners to develop more knowledge of themselves and of language learning. This self-awareness aspect was what made learning more satisfying and fruitful for themselves.

2.4.5 To Compensate for a Deficit in Learning

This issue seemed controversial among the experts with half of them disagreeing with the notion. It seems, as one respondent in the team states, while many people relate to strategy use in terms of deficit (for example, ESL students need strategies to help with their problems in learning to speak, write, etc.) some learners can be very strategic in an area where they do not seem to have a deficit or problem.

2.5 Language Learning Strategy Definition from two Perspectives

A point which needs to be reconciled before reviewing strategies from current perspectives in the field is that the present researcher has applied Oxford's (1990) SILL as the theoretical framework (discussed later) for the study investigation which is mainly grounded in cognitive (psychological) theories of language learning. Oxford and Schramm (2007) strongly suggest researchers to conceptualize strategies as encompassing both cognitive and social aspects of LLSs while using SILL. Accordingly, the present author aims to do so, but without claiming to ground the study on sociocultural theories of LLSs. Oxford and Schramm (2007) define LLS from the psychological perspective as a specific plan, action, behavior, step, or technique which learners apply, with a degree of consciousness, to improve their progress in developing skills in a foreign or second language. "Such strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language and are tools for greater learner autonomy" (Oxford, 1999). They also state that internalization and storage of language relate directly to learning. Retrieval and use of the target language indirectly cause further L2 learning as learners can discern where their L2 speech or writing is understandable to others and where they need to improve it, and they can receive input and negotiate meaning. A strategy is fruitful only when it addresses the second language task at hand and when the learner employs it effectively and links it to other relevant strategies.

The sociocultural perspective starts with society or culture, not the individual, as being central in learning. Lantolf (2000) wrote that the fundamental concept of sociocultural theory is that higher forms of human mental activity are mediated. Vygotsky (1987) argued that as humans do not directly act on the physical world but rely, instead, on tools and labor activity, we also use symbolic tools, or signs to mediate and regulate our

relationship with others and with ourselves. These symbolic and physical tools are artifacts created by human cultures over time and are transferred to succeeding generations. These artifacts are often modified before they are passed on to future generations. Included among symbolic tools are music, numbers, art, and above all, language. From the above statements we realize the centrality of language as a tool for thought or a means of mediation in terms of mental activity. With extension, the sociocultural perspectives, as Oxford and Schramm (2007) view, contain several definitions of L2 learner strategy, the most general form being an individual learner's socially mediated plan or action to meet a goal, which is related directly or indirectly to L2 learning. They believe Vygotsky's (1978) dialogic model (discussed later) suggests that a second language learner strategy can be regarded as a higher order mental function, such as analysis, synthesis, planning, or evaluation that the SL learner develops with the assistance of a more capable person in a sociocultural context.

As mentioned earlier, the approach I tend to review in this section is a positive and complementary one that tends to reconcile the two perspectives in describing LLSs. As Newman and Benz (1998) demonstrated the qualitative (often but not always) sociocultural approaches and quantitative (often but not always) rationalist (psycholinguistic) approaches are on a continuum and the two ends of the continuum actually meet to form a complete research cycle. Brown (2004) emphasized the utility of this continuum for L2 research. Larsen-Freeman (2000) suggested that the two perspectives could be linked in a single framework. In the following part strategic self-regulation (a broader notion for strategy) is viewed from the two perspectives.

2.5.1 Psychological Views of Self-regulation

Psychological self-regulation models often include strategies for setting and adjusting goals, planning approaches to tasks, evaluating progress, assessing the utility of strategies, controlling the physical and social environment, utilizing analysis and synthesis, using inference, and handling motivation and emotion (Oxford & Schramm, 2007).Within the L2 field, a predominantly psychological approach to self-regulation belongs to O'Mally and Chamot (1990). Oxford and Schramm argued that this model is based on cognitive information processing and contains three broad strategy categories: (a) cognitive strategies for controlling the processing of L2 information; (b) metacognitive strategies for managing the L2 learning process in general; and (c) socioeffective strategies for controlling emotions and managing motivations and for learning with others. It is worth knowing that this last category which acknowledges the role played by the individual learner as part of a collective is not theorized as is the case with socioeffective strategies in most LLS taxonomies. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) stated that knowledge of strategies, like the knowledge of L2 moves from declarative to procedural through practice by the learner.

Oxford and Schramm (2007) regard strategy instruction as a complementary part of self-regulation and refer to O'Malley and Chamot's (1987, 1994b, 1996) Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). They created this approach to demonstrate how declarative knowledge about strategies is taught, practiced, transferred, and evaluated so that it gradually moves to procedural knowledge. In CALLA, teaching strategies are combined with L2 instruction and content teaching. Oxford and Schramm (2007) state that so far research has demonstrated the most beneficial strategy instruction to be woven in to regular, everyday L2 teaching. They, hence, conclude that the Psychological approach shares ideas with the sociocultural learning principle: "mediation of learning by

the more experienced other" which is a key element in Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development and scaffolding. Mediated learning occurs when the teacher or any more capable other helps learners by offering scaffolding that is the assistance offered until it is no longer needed.

2.5.2 Sociocultural views of Strategic Self-Regulation

In the following section I review three sociocultural models as related to learner strategies and strategy instruction: The dialogic model, the communities of practice model, and the social autonomy model.

2.5.2.1 The Dialogic Model

Oxford and Schramm (2007) believe Vygotsky's (1978) dialogic model to be the best-known sociocultural model of self-regulation and strategy instruction. They note that Vygotsky did not use the term 'strategies' but he instead discussed a number of higher order functions that we regard as strategies. For instance, Vygotsky's higher order functions of analyzing and synthesizing are known to us as *cognitive strategie*s, while his higher order functions of monitoring, planning, and evaluation are known to us as *metacognitive strategies*. Oxford (1999) explains that for Vygotsky these functions are internalized through social interaction in the form of dialogs, which necessitate social strategies, such as questioning and seeking for help, and affective strategies for controlling motivation and emotion.

Oxford and Schramm (2007) also regard Graham and Harris's (1996) self-regulation strategy development model as reflecting the elements of Vygotsky's dialogic model. This model that puts an emphasis on children's self-regulation through social interaction within

the first language, is also applicable to L2 learning, especially if the learners have a common first language background and if strategy instruction occurs in the L1.This model emphasizes strategy instruction taking place in a group, with the teacher explaining and modeling specific strategies and providing useful mnemonics, such as acronyms, for remembering the strategies. Those students who are slow at the uptake receive individual strategy coaching, in which a "more capable other" models strategy use and provides help for internalizing strategies. This model underscores children working collaboratively on a learning task; for instance students write together until they are ready to work on their own, so there will be a movement from social to individual (self) as in Vygotsky's model.

2.5.2.2 Situated Condition in Communities of Practice

Community of practice is defined as an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor; ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, power relations, values and practices in sum emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor (Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 1992, P. 464). Different individual may be peripheral or core members of a given community of practice. Also, participation in community of practice is assumed to lead to expertise or social construction of knowledge as reflected in studies with such focus (Bereiter, 2002; Boylan, 2010; Engestrom & Sannino, 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Paavola, Lipponen & Hakkarainen, 2004; Wenger, 1998), to name some. Lave and Wenger (1991) believe that learning is socially situated, and contains growing participation in communities of practice, alongside experienced community members who already possess the necessary resources. Old-timers (experienced members) model strategies simply by doing their usual tasks. New-comers learn from old-timers or other new comers (apprentices) or from both. Paris, Byrnes, and Paris (2001) explain their viewpoints on

strategies in situated condition and communities of practice. They hold the view that in the sociocultural perspective the individual is not all- powerful; the social environment might restrict or facilitate individual efforts to learn the strategies of the old-timers.

2.5.2.3 The Social Autonomy Model

In a social autonomy model such as Holliday's (2003), students share their strategies with their peers and with teachers. Students already own practical, inbuilt, and socially relevant forms of autonomy. Holliday also criticizes teachers who impose imperialistic strategy instruction based on their alien cultural values. In a non-imperialistic model learners and teachers can understand, support and empower one another's version of autonomy through sharing and observation. Teachers in such a model will not judge students' strategies based on their own cultural values or experiences.

In the following part, I will review strategies as related to activity and action from the psychological and sociocultural perspectives.

2.6 Psychological Views of two Key Types of Mental Activity

Two broad aspects of mental activity as Oxford and Schramm (2007) regard are metacognition and cognition which are discussed here as related to learner strategies. They note that cognition contains the mental process of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, judgment and strategies related to these aspects. Metacognition which means beyond cognition encompasses strategies for regulating and controlling one's own cognition. Metacognition relates to declarative and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge is effortful and static, whereas procedural knowledge is automatic and mostly unconscious. Cognition in a declarative form (cognitive declarative knowledge) contains topic-specific data, or conscious facts, while cognition in a procedural

form (cognitive procedural knowledge) involves problem-solving skills that operate automatically. Metacognition in a declarative form (metacognitive declarative knowledge) encompasses knowledge about one's own cognition, for instance, thinking, or learning, while metacognition in a procedural form (metacognitive procedural knowledge) contains automatic, executive processes of control and regulation.

2.7 Sociocultural Views of Strategies as Actions

Donato and McCormic (1994) explained that activity is defined in terms of sociocultural settings in which collaborative interaction, intersubjectivity, and assisted performance take place. They suppose Leontiev (1981) as conceiving activity as containing a subject, an object, actions and operations. To illustrate these constituents of activity, they used the classroom as an example. A student (a subject) is involved in an activity, for example, learning a new language. An object, in the sense of a goal, is set by the student and motivates their activity, giving them a specific direction. In the case of our language learner, the object could range from full participation in a new culture to receiving a passing grade required for graduation. To gain this object, the learner takes actions, and these actions [strategies] are always goal-directed. Different actions or strategies may be taken to achieve the same goal, such as guessing meaning from context, reading foreign language newspapers, or using a bilingual dictionary to improve reading comprehension.

Finally, the operational level of activity is the way an action is carried out and is dependent on the conditions under which actions are implemented. In our example the second language readers who have operationalized at the unconscious level the strategy of contextual guessing, it is conceivable that this strategy will be reactivated at the conscious level if they are confronted with a difficult passage beyond their strategic ability, which

means, if the conditions of strategy use change. Wertsch (1995) proposes for a research methodology that sees all human actions and mediated actions as manifestations of influences, both social and individual, within a dynamic system. Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) described L2 learners as agents whose actions [strategies] occur in specific sociocultural settings and are affected by learners' dynamic identities which relate to nationality, ethnicity, educational experience, class, gender, age and so on.

Based on the above argumentations what are called strategies or mental processes or even cognitive and metacognitive strategies in psycholinguistic perspective are called actions or strategies in sociocultural views of language learning which accords with Bakhtin's (1998) viewpoint as holding that the psycholinguistic and sociocultural perspectives might be called two voices or dialects in the current world conversation about LLS. Despite these different voices, it is possible to have an ongoing dialog, which involves responding to, relying on, supplementing, presupposing, rejecting, or affirming others in an open interaction.

2.8 Historical Overview of Language Learning Strategy Studies

2.8.1 The Birth of Language Learning Strategies

The behaviorist conceptions of language teaching and language learning were the prevailing theoretical ideologies after the Second World War and as Ellis (1994) notes: Behaviorist theories espoused three general principles of language learning which involved the law of exercise, the law of effect, and the principle of shaping. The first one refers to repeated responses to stimuli while the second law involves reinforcing the learner's responses and finally the principle of shaping claimed that if complex behaviors were

broken down into component parts and were learned bit by bit, learning would be processed more smoothly and rapidly.

Conceptions about the teaching-learning process changed in many ways due to the switch from behaviorist learning theories to cognitive learning theories, resulting in less emphasis on teachers and teaching and greater stress on learners and learning. Cognitive Psychology, emerging in the 1960s, changed language researchers' way of thinking about language learning strategies (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Chomsky (1968) believed that behaviorist theory could not explain the complexities of generative grammar and suggested that the creative aspect of language use, when investigated with attention and respect for the facts, shows that current notions of habit and generalization, as determinants of behavior or knowledge, are quite inadequate.

Griffiths (2004) voiced that Chomsky's theories that directly related mainly to first language learners was taken up by Corder (1967) who argued that language errors made by students who are speakers of other languages indicate the development of underlying linguistic competence and reflect the learners' attempts to organize linguistic input. Selinker's (1972) interlanguage (IL) viewed language errors as evidence of positive efforts by the student to learn the new language. Griffiths (2004) argued that this view of language learning allowed for the possibility of learners making purposeful attempts to control their own learning and, along with theories of cognitive processes in language learning promoted by authors such as McLaulin (1978) and Bialystok (1978), contributed to a research thrust in the mid to late seventies aimed at investigating how learners employ learning strategies to promote the learning of language (for instance Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975).

2.8.2 Studies of Good Language Learners

Research in language learner strategies started with studies of good language learners. Grenfell and Macaro (2007) claim that if there is one article which can be viewed as announcing the birth of language learner strategy research, then it was: "What the 'Good Language Learner' Can Teach Us" by Joan Rubin in 1975. Rubin's (1975, 1981) answer contains two types of processes:

I. Processes which may directly help learning: (a) Clarification and verification, (b) Monitoring, (c) Memorizing, (d) Guessing/inductive inferencing, (e) Deductive reasoning and (f) Practice

II. Processes which may contribute indirectly to learning: (a) Creates opportunities for practice and (b) Production tasks related to communication

Along a similar line other researchers attempted to outline their lists of strategies. For example, Stern (1975) listed the top-ten strategies of the good language learner:

1. A personal learning style or positive learning strategies
2. An active approach to the learning task
3. A tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and empathy with its speakers
4. Technical know-how about how to tackle a language
5. Strategies of experimentation and planning with the object of developing the new language into an ordered system, and revising this system progressively
6. Constantly searching for meaning
7. Willingness to practice
8. Willingness to use the language in real communication
9. Self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use

10. Developing the target language more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it.

Following the good language learner studies in the 1970s, several studies have been conducted to understand less successful language learners by identifying their preference for the use of language learner strategies. Some of these studies have compared language learner strategies used by the good language learners with those of the low achieving language learners.

In a study, O'Malley et al. (1985a) found that beginning level students employed note taking and repetition strategies most frequently. Both of them are cognitive learning strategies. Advance preparation and self management were most frequently used by the intermediate level students. Both of them are metacognitive strategies. They also found out that intermediate level students tended to use more metacognitive strategies than beginning level students. However, they concluded that both beginning and intermediate level students used more cognitive than metacognitive strategies.

Porte (1988) discovered some similarities and differences between good language learners and poor language learners. Based on the data he collected through interviews, he showed that poor language learners applied several strategies which were also employed by good learners. Repetition and writing out the translation equivalents were discovered as the strategies to aid learning. However, the poor language learners used the strategies in less sophisticated and inadequate ways.

Along the same line, Vann and Abraham (1990) conducted a study of two participants who struggled in their language learning efforts to determine possible reasons for the lack of success they experienced. Contrary to the common belief that poor language

learners were inactive, the result of their study showed that the participants were actively engaged in their learning. They repeatedly used strategies such as checking for errors, attempting to clarify meaning, checking comprehension and repeating words. Nevertheless, these participants failed to correctly match the language learning strategy to the task at hand, because they lacked cognitive control.

Vann and Abraham further argued that the difference between good and poor language learners in using language learning strategies is not quantitative but qualitative. The study concluded that although these learners used many of the same strategies as successful language learners, the difference was in how effectively they matched the learning tool to the learning task. In sum, as Mokhtari (2007) suggested, research done in the 1970s provided a turning point for further investigation into the area of language learning strategies. One constant finding is that all language learners report using some type of strategies in their language learning. Differences across learners, however, lie in the relative effectiveness of strategy application; that is, the appropriate implementation of the right strategies at the right times.

2.8.3 Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies

There has always been a logical requirement for researchers to take the classification of LLSs into consideration in order to categorize and describe the strategic behaviors of language learners. The classification framework of learning strategies developed from efforts for distinguishing the characteristics of the good language student. Different researchers have classified their lists of behaviours according to various criteria, such as whether they contribute directly or indirectly to learning (Rubin, 1981); whether they are cognitive or metacognitive (O'Malley et al., 1985a) and whether they are practised in the

classroom, in individual study or during interaction with others (Politzer 1983, Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). In the following part I review different classifications of LLSs based on chronological order.

2.8.3.1 Ellen Bialystok

The theoretical model of second language learning presented by Bialystok (1978) takes into consideration social and biological as well as other factors that may latently be tied to differences in language learning across the whole population of students of languages. Bialystok stressed that learners ought to exploit learning strategies in order to use available information to improve competence as well as proficiency in second language learning. There are three stages for this exploitation: language learning input, knowledge and output. Subsequently, Bialystok identified four categories of language learning strategies:

- Formal language practicing which refers to knowledge about language related to grammatical and syntactical elements, which involves learners' efforts to acquire information about the properties of the language code.
- Functional practicing for using the language for 'authentic communication purposes': Here the meaning of the message is emphasized rather than the systematic features of the language code.
- Monitoring for producing linguistic output: A monitoring strategy is used to help shape up the productive responses and its purpose is to make improvements.
- Inferencing for comprehending linguistic output in a second language: An inferencing strategy is when a language learner adapts to certain linguistic information which was previously unknown.

In a later study, Bialystok (1981) assessed students' use of the four strategy types in the context of text-based language learning. She connected the use of strategies to achievement as measured by standardized tests and demonstrated that strategy use was differentially correlated with language proficiency where monitoring and inferencing were observed as being applied the most. With regard to influencing learner achievement in both written and verbal tasks, functional practice was found to be the most effective strategy. A noticeable discovery was the linking of formal practice strategies to achievement on written measures by a negative correlation, which implies that grammar exercises, homework, lab works and so on do not play a positive role in students' success in language learning. Bialystok underscored the fact that in using language learning strategies, it is the quality and not the quantity that influences successful language realization.

2.8.3.2 Joan Rubin

Rubin (1981) outlined major cognitive strategies that help language learning process both directly and indirectly. The direct cognitive strategies contain clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, and practice. The indirect cognitive strategies involve creating practice opportunities and using production tricks such as communication strategies. In a later study, Rubin (1987) proposed three types of strategies: learning strategies which include cognitive and metacognitive strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies.

Bialystok (1978), Rubin (1981), Politzer (1983) and Ramirez (1986) were concerned with the creation of a thorough picture of all the probable strategies used by language learners and attempted to classify them, whereas the next wave of studies

displayed an ever growing awareness of the relationship between the strategies selected by the learners, and the strategies acquired by means of explicit instruction and modeling.

2.8.3.3 Michael O'Malley and Anna Chamot

Pearson and Dole (1987), Oxford, Crookall et al. (1990), Chamot and O'Malley (1994) and Cohen (1998), endeavored to design and implement a range of templates for raising the awareness of the language learners in using strategies, giving learners the opportunity to practice those strategies and apply them in new learning contexts. O'Malley and Chamot (1990), as well as others, who have investigated language learning strategies, describe these strategies as complex cognitive skills which are grounded in cognitive theory. Using small group interviews with beginner and intermediate ESL students, they endeavored to identify the range of the learners' language learning strategies and to verify if the identified strategies could then be classified within a single system. They classified twenty-six strategies as identified into these three groups:

1. Metacognitive strategies: self-regulatory strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluation which are applicable to a variety of learning tasks.
2. Cognitive strategies: strategies which involve direct manipulation or transformation of learning materials in order to enhance learning or retention such as rehearsal, inferencing, and elaboration processes.
3. Socioaffective strategies: strategies which involve either interaction with another person or affective control over one's own learning behaviors. Cooperative learning is an example of social/affective strategies.

On the whole, beginner as well as intermediate level students tended to apply more of the cognitive strategies than the metacognitive ones. They found out that repetition and note-taking were the most frequent cognitive strategies brought into play. Social mediation strategies were among the least frequently used strategies.

Jones (1998) believed that Oxford had developed a classification framework of language learning strategies which is more comprehensive and detailed than earlier classification models.

In this study the author uses Oxford's classification of language learning strategies. Hence, a thorough picture of her classification will be given in the following part.

2.8.3.4 Oxford's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

As the present study has been guided by Oxford's (1990) SILL in its quantitative phase, this classification is reviewed in some detail. Oxford (1990) saw the aim of language learning strategies as being oriented toward developing communicative competence. Subsequently, she classified language learning strategies based on the synthesis of earlier work on good language learning strategies in general (i.e., Naiman et al., 1975; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975) and in relation to each of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Hosenfeld, 1976; Papalia & Zampogna, 1977). She proposed a comprehensive classification system of learning strategies utilizing the two major groups proposed by Rubin (1981): direct and indirect strategies. Each category was further broken down into a few subcategories.

Oxford (1990) argued that each of the six subcategories of language learning strategies can be classified as either direct or indirect depending on the involvement of the target language; however, Oxford's classification of direct and indirect strategies was quite

different from Rubin's classification. Oxford divided language learning strategies into two main groups, direct and indirect, which were further subdivided into six groups. In Oxford's system, metacognitive strategies help students to regulate their learning. Affective strategies are concerned with learners' emotional requirements such as confidence, while social strategies lead to increased interaction with the target language. Cognitive strategies are the mental strategies students use to make sense of their learning, memory strategies are those used for storage of information, and compensation strategies help students to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication. A more detailed classification of Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies follows Figure 2.1 as:

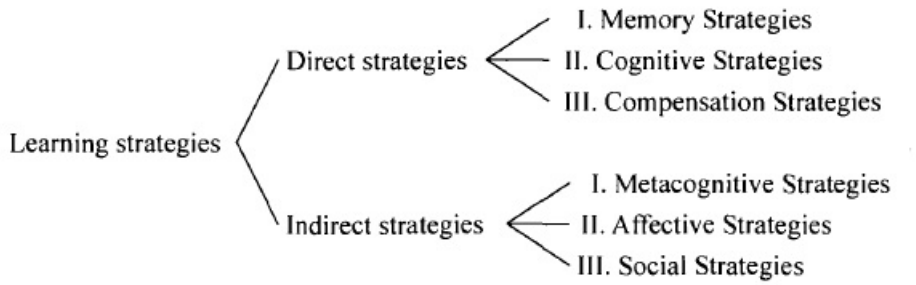

Figure 2.1. Oxford's (1990) Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies.

2.8.3.4.a Direct Strategy: Memory Strategies

Memory strategies can be divided into four strategies. The first is creating mental linkages. Students who use this strategy are prone to grouping, associating, elaborating and placing new words into a context. The second strategy under memory strategy is applying images and sounds. Students who apply this strategy are keen to using imagery, semantic mapping, using keywords and representing sounds in memory. The third memory strategy is

reviewing which enables students to do structured reviewing, while the fourth memory strategy is employing action using physical response and using mechanical technique.

2.8.3.4.b Direct Strategy: Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies can be divided into four strategies. Practising strategy helps students to repeat, formally practise with sounds and writing system, recognize and use formulas and patterns, recombine, and practise naturally. The second strategy is receiving and sending messages. Students using this strategy get the idea quickly and use resources for receiving and sending messages. The third strategy is analyzing and reasoning. This strategy enables students to analyze expression, analyze contrastively (across languages), translate and transfer. Finally the last cognitive strategy is creating structure for input and output which enables students to take down notes, summarize and highlight.

2.8.3.4.c Direct Strategy: Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies can be divided into two strategies. When students use the first strategy, guessing intelligently, they use linguistic cues and other cues. The second strategy is overcoming limitations in speaking and writing in which students switch to the mother tongue, get help, use mime or gesture, avoid communication partially or totally, select the topic, adjust or approximate the message, coin words, and use circumlocution or synonyms.

2.8.3.4.d Indirect Strategy: Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies can be divided into three strategies. Students who use the first strategy overview and link already known material, pay attention, and delay speech production to focus on listening. Students who employ metacognitive strategies also

arrange and plan their learning by finding out about language learning and organizing it, setting goals and objectives, identifying the purpose of a language task, and seeking practice opportunities, while the third strategy is evaluating one's learning by self-monitoring and self-evaluating.

2.8.3.4.e Indirect Strategy: Affective Strategies

Affective strategies can be divided into three subcategories. Lowering anxiety, the first strategy, is employed by students by using progressing relaxation, using music, and laughter. The second strategy, encouraging oneself, is done by making positive statement, taking risks wisely, and risking oneself. The third strategy, taking emotional temperature is utilised by listening to your body, using a checklist, writing a language learning diary, and discussing your feelings with someone else.

2.8.3.4.f Indirect Strategy: Social Strategies

Oxford (1990) thinks social strategies help students learn through interaction with others. These strategies help learners to learn the language by communicating with the target language speakers and get to know more about their culture.

2.9 Critiques of Language Learning Strategy Research

LLS research has attracted a lot of attention during the last few decades with receiving scant critiques from individuals such as Zoltan Dornyei, though. Dornyei (2005) casts skepticism on psychological construct of LLS. For Dornyei it is not clear whether LLS exists as a psychological construct; therefore LLS for him does not have any theoretical basis. More clearly, he believes the literature in the field has not been able to explain the

difference between a typical learning activity and a strategic learning activity. Dornyei (2005) concludes that a number of researchers in the field have left the field and switched to the broader and more versatile notion of self-regulation due to the lack of any watertight definition for strategy.

Also, with regard to the Oxford's (1990) SILL which is the most used inventory, Dornyei (2005) believes it to be flawed in the design since the scholars mostly adopt frequency-of-use scales with highly specific items which are of different nature. These items attempt to show actual specific behaviors rather than tapping to a general trend. This leads to the invalidity of the relationship between item scores and total scale scores. However, when it comes to the issue of strategy instruction, Dornyei puts all the doubts aside and supports continuing strategy teaching in the classroom. Accordingly, Oxford' (1990) SILL used in this study might not soundly depict similarities and differences in using LLSs between Iranian English learners who study in different settings (EFL/ESL). To complete the research cycle, the author has applied an interview instrument to shed more light on these similarities and differences.

2.10 Learning Strategies versus Communication Strategies

Griffiths (2008) suggested that the learning goal distinguishes between LLSs and other types of strategies, especially communication strategies, whose basic purpose is to maintain communication. Tarone (1981) stated that the distinction between learning strategies and other types of learner strategies is not always so clear in practice; nevertheless, on a theoretical level communication strategies are intended to maintain communication, whereas language learning strategies are for learning. Tarone also noted that it is sometimes

difficult to distinguish learning strategies from communication strategies since comprehension and production often occur at the same time.

Brown (2000) distinguished between learning strategies and communication strategies: LSs are associated with input, such as the processing, storage, and retrieval of messages from others. Communication strategies, on the other hand, refer to output, such as how to productively express meaning and how to deliver messages to others. While the focus of learning strategy research has been on language acquisition, research on communication strategies has more often referred to language use (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). As the focus of the present study is on language learner strategies, a short description of communication strategies will suffice to provide us with a general picture of CSs and their relatedness to our discussion on LLSs.

2.10.1 Communication Strategies

Communication strategies (CSs), as described by Nakatani and Goh (2007), refer to learners' speaking strategies, which in fact captured the interest of scholars in the 1970s. They also stated that after Canale and Swain's (1980) influential conceptual framework for teaching and testing L2 communicative competence was put forward, greater importance was attached to CS research.

However, after nearly forty years of scholarly discussion and research on CSs, there is still little consensus on what CSs really are, their teachability in the classroom and their transferability from L1 to L2. In spite of this little agreement, much has been learnt from scholarly work offered by the researchers who have been working on CSs from two major perspectives: interactional and psycholinguistic. The former perspective on CSs focuses on the interaction process between language learners and their interlocutors, and, in particular,

the way in which meaning is negotiated by one or both parties. The latter view, however, examines learners' problem solving behaviors arising from gaps in their lexical knowledge (Nakatani & Goh, 2007). Bialystok (1983 b) from the psycholinguistic party conducted one of the earliest projects on CSs. She defined CSs as all attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication. The cognitive perspective of CSs has traditionally focused on compensatory strategies that learners use to overcome lexical problems in tasks where they describe or name objects.

From the interactional side, Tarone (1980, 1981) regarded CSs as the attempts at avoiding communication disruptions. She also suggested the distinction between communication strategies which are strategies for language use and learning strategies which are used for developing linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the TL. Canale (1983) from the interactional party extended the concept of CSs by presenting two types of CSs: (I) strategies to compensate for disruptions in communication problems related to speakers' insufficient TL knowledge and (II) strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of communication with interlocutors.

Several taxonomies of CSs have emerged from both perspectives, thus making comparisons and interpretation problematic. In the following part, however, I only review Dornyei's (1995) taxonomy of CSs which suffices for our present discussion.

2.10.2 Dornyei's Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

According to Dornyei's (1995) classification, communication strategies consist of two strategy types: avoidance and compensatory strategies.

Avoidance strategies include message abandonment and topic avoidance. Under compensatory strategies, there are 11 sets of strategies: circumlocution, approximation, use

of all-purpose words, word coinage, prefabricated patterns, nonlinguistic signals, literal translation, foreignizing, code-switching, appeal for help, and stalling or time-gaining strategies. These communication strategies features are listed as follows:

1. Circumlocution: describing or exemplifying the target object of action (e.g., the thing you open bottles with for corkscrew).

2. Approximation: Using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible (e.g., ship for sailboat).

3. Use of all-purpose words: extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., the overuse of thing, stuff, and what-do-you-call-it).

4. Word coinage: creating a nonexistent L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g., vegetarianist for vegetarian).

5. Prefabricated patterns: using memorized stock phrase, usually for "survival" purposes.

6. Nonlinguistic signals: mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation.

7. Literal translation: translating literally a lexical item, idiom, compound word, or structure from LI to L2.

8. Foreignizing: using a LI word by adjusting it to L2 phonology (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphology (e.g., adding to it a L2 suffix).

9. Code-switching: using a LI word with LI pronunciation or a L3 word with L3 pronunciation while speaking in L2.

10. Appeal for help: asking for aid from the interlocutor either directly (e.g., What do you call...?) or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression).

11. Stalling or time-gaining strategies: using fillers of hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., well, now let's see, uh, as a matter of fact).

2.11 Variables Affecting Language Learner Strategy Use

Questions such as "What variables affect the choice and use of language learner strategies?" or "How strong is the influence of a specific variable on learners' LLS use?" have been asked for more than thirty years in the course of strategy research. One significant rationale behind this inquiry as Takeuchi et al. (2007) suggested is that strategy teaching should be geared to learners' individual and situational or group needs. Research studies on language learning strategies have often demonstrated that a number of factors affect the choice of language learning strategies and their frequency of use. These studies have attempted to investigate how language learning strategy use is influenced by specific variables such as age, gender, motivation, learning styles, language proficiency, national origin, cultural background, learning situation or setting, attitudes, and beliefs about language learning (Bedell, 1993; Bialystok, 1981; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Griffiths, 2003a; Kamalizad & Jalilzadeh, 2011; Kamalizad & Samuel, 2014; Kashefian, & Maarof, 2010; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Phillips, 1991; Politzer, 1983; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; Ramirez, 1986; Rahimi, Riazi, & Seif, 2008; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005; Wang, 2002; Wenden, 1987b; Yang, 1992; Zare, 2010).

The following section discusses some of the variables influencing language learners' use and choice of strategies for learning a language. Meanwhile the author will comprehensively address the issue of "ESL/EFL settings" as an important variable of the

present study by: (a) discussing the terms "ESL/EFL Settings", "ESOL" and "World Englishes" (b) reviewing the studies on ESL/EFL settings.

2.11.1 Age

Age is a clear factor which influences the way strategies are utilized by language learners (Macaro, 2001). Peacock and Ho (2003) found that older students (aged 23- 39; N= 112) used memory, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies of Oxford's SILL more than did younger students (aged 18-22; N= 894). Ehrman and Oxford (1989) investigated adult language learners and found out that they use more sophisticated language learning strategies than young learners. Ellis's (1994) study suggested a similar result. He reported that in contrast with the adults' complex, sophisticated, and flexible strategies, young children's strategies were rather simple and straightforward.

The findings of a study by Victory and Tragant (2003) indicated that older students (aged 17) reported significantly higher use of cognitively complex strategies than the younger learners (aged 10-14), whereas the younger learners reported higher use of social strategies. Nevertheless a study by Griffiths (2003a) involving a total of 348 students aged 14-64, indicated that age was not significantly related to strategy use. Although there are mixed findings regarding the age variable, the majority of studies on age and strategies indicate a difference between adult learners' and younger learners' strategy use.

Macaro (2001) commented that there were three reasons for the difference between the adult learners' and young learners' strategy use. First, adult learners had greater contextual knowledge than young children learners. Adult learners with greater contextual knowledge tended to test the hypotheses they had with the new language, such as what a word or idiomatic phrase might mean. Second, adult learners' greater vocabulary repertoire

in their first language (LI) helps them to make links between words in the LI and second language (L2) more readily than young learners. Finally, adult learners might use strategies more flexibly and are able to apply many more of the support strategies, such as evaluating and monitoring, which are key factors in rapid language learning development.

2.11.2 Gender

A number of researchers have focused on strategies used by both genders, and the findings have suggested that female language learners tend to use L2 strategies significantly more than male learners (Macaro, 2001).One of the very first empirical studies on the role of gender on students' learner strategies was conducted by Politzer (1983), who studied ninety American college students learning foreign languages and found that social/interactional strategies of female students were frequently higher than those of their male counterparts, as reviewed by Oxford (1993a, 1993b, 1994). Ehrman and Oxford's (1989) study of strategy use of various occupational groups indicated that female students used four strategy categories of general learning, functional, searching for /communicating meaning, and self-management more frequently than male learners.

Strategies of 1,200 American college students were studied by Oxford and Nyikos (1989) who concluded that female learners used social/communicative/interactional strategies more frequently than their male participants. The greater use of strategies by female students was attributed by Oxford, Nyikos, and Ehrman (1988) to women's greater (a) desire for social approval, (b) willingness to accept existing norms, and (c) verbal ability. Peacock and Ho's (2003) large-scale study with 1,006 Chinese EFL male and female students showed that females used all six strategy categories on the SILL significantly more than did their male counterparts. Zare (2010) investigated the strategy

use of 148 Iranian undergraduate EFL learners studying in two universities in Iran and concluded that strategy use significantly varied according to gender; female students reported using strategies more frequently than male learners. More recently Kamalizad and Jalilzadeh (2011) studied a group of under-achieving Malaysian male and female students and gained a similar result; females reported a greater use of all six strategy categories on the SILL.

Takeuchi et al. (2007) referred to some studies which differ in their findings from those presented above. They refer to Hashim and Sahil (1994) who concluded that apart from affective strategies, which were more significantly used by females, no difference was observed in the other SILL categories. They also address Wharton's (2000) study whose result indicated a greater use of strategies by men. Griffiths (2003 a) conducted a study in New Zealand with 234 females and 114 male learners. She found no significant difference in strategy use by gender. Among Iranians' attempts in the field, the same result could be seen in Rahimi's (2004) study of Persian EFL learners at post secondary level; he did not find much gender-based impact on LLS use of the participants in the study. Also, Ziahosseini and Salehi (2008) studied 100 Iranian EFL university students' strategy use and found no important difference between males and females in terms of strategy choice and strategy use. Another related Persian study was conducted by Kashefian and Maarof (2010) on 91 male and female university students majoring English literature in Iran, whose result indicated that gender did not play a part in the strategy use of the students in the study. This mixed finding, nevertheless, could be related to different factors such as context of the study, cultural differences and goals of the participants, course and years of study.

2.11.3 Motivation

There is a general consensus among researchers that higher motivated students tend to use a wider range of learner strategies and they use them more frequently (Takeuchi et al., 2007). Oxford and Nyikos (1989) in a large-scale study of American college students found that highly motivated students used four out of five strategy groups more often than less motivated students. These strategy types were formal practice, functional practice, general study practice and conversational input elicitation. In a related study, Prokop (1989) also found a motivational orientation effect on strategy use of university students of German. He examined three types of motivations; integrative, instrumental, and intellectual/aesthetic motivation. He found that only students with an instrumental motivation more often employed learning strategies which encompassed "Attending to the Details of the Learning Task" (p. 89). In another related study, adult learners learning a foreign language for job related goals were also found to use many functional communicative strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989). Okada, Oxford, and Abo (1996) conducted a study with 36 learners of Japanese and 36 learners of Spanish and found strong relationship between metacognitive/cognitive/social strategy use and motivational aspects in both language groups.

Mochizuki (1999) and Wharton (2000) also found that, of SILL strategies, highly motivated Asian university students used all six categories more frequently than their less motivated counterparts. Ziahosseini and Salehi (2008) in their study of 100 Persian EFL university students in Iran concluded that extrinsic motivation did not correlate meaningfully with the choice of language learning strategies. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation correlated meaningfully with the choice of language learning strategies. Along the same line, in another related study (Kafipour, Jabbari, Soori, & Shokrpour, 2011) 156

Iranian postgraduate students were studied in terms of strategy use and motivation. The findings implied that integratively motivated students who were acquiring language for their daily life or for social purpose, reported using all strategy types more often than instrumentally-motivated ones who learn language for getting a better job or for pursuing knowledge in their specific fields of study.

Concerning the issue of causality and motivation, however, a question remains unanswered: whether motivation triggers strategy use or, conversely, strategy use leads to better language performance, which in turn increases motivation and thus leads to increased strategy use (Okada, Oxford, & Abo, 1996). Thus, more studies need to be conducted to address the issue of causality.

2.11.4 Nationality/Ethnicity

Politzer and McGroarty (1985) in a pioneering effort to investigate the effect of nationality on LLSs found out that Asian students showed fewer of the strategies expected of "good" language learners than did Hispanic students. In terms of progress in English, however, the Asian learners made more progress than did their Hispanic counterparts. The authors speculated, based on these results, that what constitute good strategies might be ethnocentric. In a study of 353 mainland Chinese EFL university students, Bedell and Oxford (1996) revealed that compensation strategies were the highest-ranking category. They found that this was also true with Chinese students studying in Taiwan and the US. The Puerto Rican and Egyptian students, in contrast, reported a moderate use of compensation strategies. Based on their findings, the authors argued that the higher use of compensation strategies might be typical of Asian students. They also reported low use of memory strategies by Asian students.

In Bremner's (1999) study of a group of Hong Kong university students, the findings suggested that compensation and metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used strategies, while affective and memory strategies were the least frequently used ones. Meanwhile, the participants were reported as medium strategy users. Griffiths and Parr (2000) reported finding that European students reported using language learning strategies more frequently than language learners of other nationalities. They reported that European students showed working at a significantly higher level than learners of other nationalities. Mochizuki's (1999) study on Japanese EFL students showed infrequent use of memory strategies by Japanese learners.

Peacock and Ho (2003) studying the strategy use of 1006 Hong Kong university students, argued that the participants were medium strategy users with compensation category as their most frequently used strategies followed by cognitive and metacognitive and social strategies. Memory and affective strategies were reported as their least frequently used ones. A more recent study by Riazi and Rahimi (2005) on Iranian university students' LLSs gained similar result, that is, Iranian students are medium strategy users. They perceived using memory strategies less frequently than other strategies, while, metacognitive category was the most frequently used one, and compensation strategies were used with a medium frequency by the participants. However, affective strategies were reportedly found to be popular among the participants of this study; the frequency of their use was relatively as high as compensation strategies. This finding, nonetheless, contradicts those of similar studies. For instance, Wharton (2000) reported that affective strategies were among the least frequently used strategies by Asian students. The result of their study is also in contrast with results from Bremner's (1999) as well as from Peacock and Ho's (2003) studies.

Another Iranian study investigating the LLS use pattern of Persian learners was conducted by Nikoopour, Amini, and Kashefi (2011). Their findings revealed that, in terms of overall strategy use, Iranian EFL learners are, in general, moderate strategy users. The results showed that Iranian EFL learners preferred to use metacognitive as the most frequently used language learning strategy category and memory as the least frequently used one**.** The result of a study by Zare (2011) indicated a similar result; Iranian EFL learners are generally moderate strategy users with metacognitive strategies being their most favored and memory and affective strategies being their least favored ones.

Chang's (2009) comprehensive study on Chinese EFL/ESL learners of English at the university level indicated a medium frequency for the overall use of LLSs in Oxford's SILL by the participants in the study. While memory and affective categories were the least frequently used strategies, cognitive and social strategies were reported as the most frequently used ones which is rather in contrast with some other EFL studies in the field regarding the high use of cognitive and social strategies by their participants in the study. Yang (2010) studied the strategy pattern of 288 Korean university students. The findings indicated that Korean university students used a medium range of strategies. Compensation strategies were used most frequently whereas memory strategies were used least frequently among Korean university learners. The studies presented above generally suggest that nationality is a significant factor influencing the use of learner strategies. In sum, the results of the studies reviewed above can be summarized as follows. Firstly, the EFL participants of the studies perceived themselves as medium strategy users. Second, metacognitive and compensation strategies were reported as the most frequently used strategies by EFL learners while affective and memory strategies as the least frequently used ones. Finally European learners reported higher use of LLSs compared to other nationalities.

2.11.5 Learning Style

Claxton and Ralston (1978) have defined learning styles as "consistent ways of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning" (p.7). Another definition has been offered by Kinsella (1995) as natural, habitual, and preferred ways of receiving, absorbing, processing, and retaining new knowledge and skills which persist regardless of teaching methods or content area. Curry (1991) pointed to the existing confusion of definitions surrounding learning style conceptualizations; nevertheless, elsewhere Curry (1983) employed a metaphorical onion with multiple layers as a useful way to conceptualize learning style. The first layer is made of environmental as well as instructional preferences which is open to introspection and is context-dependent. The second layer relates to information processing of the learner and the next layer refers to the personality dimension of the learner and is a relatively permanent dimension.

There are several models of learning styles; many of which contain opposite preferences. Among the many learning style models, the author will look at Soloman and Felder's (2001) model and Reid's (1987) classification of perceptual preferences. The Soloman-Felder model of learning styles (2001) incorporates most of the major approaches to understanding learning styles and is designed for use with college and university students to self-test their learning preferences. Each of the four scales of the Soloman-Felder index of learning styles has two opposite preferences: (1) Active /Reflective: Active learners learn by doing something with information. They prefer to process information by talking about it and trying it out. Reflective learners learn by thinking about information. They prefer to think things through and understand things before acting, (2) Sensing/Intuitive: Sensing learners prefer to take in information that is concrete and practical. They are oriented towards details, facts, and figures and prefer to use proven procedures. They are realistic

and like practical applications. Intuitive learners prefer to take in information that is abstract, original, and oriented towards theory. They look at the big picture and try to grasp overall patterns. They like discovering possibilities and relationships and working with ideas, (3) Visual/Verbal: Visual learners prefer visual presentations of material – diagrams, charts, graphs, pictures. Verbal learners prefer explanations with words – both written and spoken and (4) Sequential/Global: Sequential learners prefer to organize information in a linear, orderly fashion. They learn in logically sequenced steps and work with information in an organized and systematic way. Global learners prefer to organize information more holistically and in a seemingly random manner without seeing connections. They often appear scattered and disorganized in their thinking yet often arrive at a creative or correct end product.

According to Reid (1987) research has identified four basic perceptual style preferences: visual (for example reading, charts), auditory (for example lectures, tapes), kinesthetic (involving physical activity), and tactile (for instance building models or doing laboratory experiments). To these groups Reid has added the dimensions of group versus individual learning preferences to develop the well-known Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire.

A lot of factors may influence a student's stylistic preferences, including nationality (Griffiths, 2008). Additionally, Hofstede (1996) believed that differences in learning styles are directly based on cultural needs and values. Likewise, Oxford (1990) held that culture affects the development of overall learning style, and this, in turn, helps to determine the LLS choices of learners. Hence, I will review some of the studies that have looked at the general learning features of learners, specially, those from Southeast Asian countries as well as Iran to help develop a general picture of their cultural differences.

In a study by Rossi-Lee (1995) Spanish speakers proved to be mostly auditory learners, while Vietnamese students expressed a preference for visual learning. Reid (1987) conducted a study and showed that Korean students were the most visual in their learning style preferences. They like to read and obtain a great deal of visual stimulation. For Korean learners, lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual backup are very confusing and can be anxiety-producing. Reid also concluded that Arabic and Chinese language learners exhibited a strong preference for auditory learning. Japanese learners in Hyland's (1993) study favored auditory and tactile styles. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) discovered that Chinese and Japanese are concrete-sequential learners; they reported a variety of strategies such as memorization, planning, analysis, sequenced repetition, detailed outlines and lists, structured review and a search for perfection.

Watson-Raston (2002) studied the learning style of students from Southeast Asian countries such as Hong Kong, China, South Korea, and Japan. She maintained that these students generally are used to being fed by their teachers all the necessary information. They do not exhibit a high interest in studying in group and learning things in group. She relates it to the nature of the Chinese ideographic or character-centered writing system that requires memorization, rote learning, and repetition.

Rahimi, Riazi, and Saif (2008) in a study investigating the relationship between the use of LLSs and various factors, including learning style, discovered that Iranian students are generally reflective (vs active), intuitive (vs sensing), verbal (vs visual), and global (vs sequential) learners. According to Naraghi Zadeh (2004) Iranian students mix all the learning orientations. It is rooted in the Iranian learning culture. This might relate to their specific philosophy of life indicating that a human being can only be perfect, when he studies all of the sciences and arts. This might also be due to the influence of the French

educational system that Iran adopted in the last century. In such a system the students have to study all subjects. The results of her study also indicated that Iranian students are "assimilators" in the sense that they prefer to study more theory and they are more oriented towards reflective observation and an abstract formation of concepts. The reason for this orientation she believes to be the historical evolution of science in Iran, the lack of experimental learning processes, as well as Iran being a non-industrial country.

In the following section, I will define and review studies related to EFL/ESL settings, language proficiency and their relation to LLSs as they are the main focus of this study.

2.12 EFL/ESL Dichotomy

Carter and Nunan (2001) argue that we might find the EFL/ESL distinction problematic for some reasons. First, the contexts in which L2s are taught differ noticeably. Teaching English in Japan, for instance, is different from teaching it in Brazil. Second, the growth of English as a world language (EWL) also impinges on this dichotomy. They argue that with globalization and the rapid expansion of information technologies, there has been an explosion in the demand for English worldwide. This in turn has led to greater diversification in the contexts and situations in which it is learned and used. Nonetheless, as they regard this dichotomy has been widely used, generally accepted and served as a useful conceptual framework for many years. Likewise, in the present study, this dichotomy will be used to study language learners of the same nationality (Iranian students) in two unique EFL and ESL contexts. The uniqueness of the Iranian EFL context could be seen in the fact that English is rarely used outside language classes for communicative purposes by people. Malaysia typifies a specific domain of ESL context where English is not the native

language of the indigenous people but it is used as an accepted lingua franca to enable communication among people of different linguistic groups.

2.12.1 EFL/ESL Definition

EFL Settings (English as a Foreign Language) is defined as the teaching and learning of English in contexts where it is not widely used for communication (Nunan, 1999). McArthur (1998) writes that in comparison to ESL and ESOL instruction which occurs inside of a predominately English-speaking nation, EFL is adult/youth English-language instruction that occurs in a country where English is not traditionally a native language (e.g., Japan, Mexico, and Russia). In these settings English is learned for specific purposes (business, engineering, etc.) or as part of their education. In these settings English is not the language of communication or survival in schools or language institutes and organizations. In this study Iran is deemed as an EFL setting for English is not used for communication at all nor used as the medium of instruction in schools or universities. As Brown (2001) expands on the concept, foreign language contexts are those in which students do not have ready-made situations to communicate the target language outside their classes. They might be reachable through special media opportunities, books, or an occasional tourist, but efforts must be made to create such situations. Brown believes that teaching English in Japan, Thailand or Morocco is almost always a context of English as a foreign language.

The ESL (English as a Second Language) term, based on Nunan's (1999) definition, refers to the teaching and learning of English in contexts where it is widely used for communication by the population at large. In explaining the ESL concept, context of language learning is of paramount importance. McArthur (1998) voiced that ESL territories are ones in which English is used for specific purposes (i.e., legislative, educational,

judicial), but is not necessarily recognized as a national language. In this study Malaysia is deemed as an ESL setting where English is vastly used for communication, especially, by international people who live, study or work in Malaysia. It is also the medium of instruction in all international universities there. Since in recent years the issue of "world Englishes" has been used and worked on by researchers and scholars in the field, and it might put more light on our understanding of ESL setting, it is briefly reviewed in the following section.

2.12.2 World Englishes

In this study one group of Iranian subjects are learning English in a renowned language institute, namely British Council, where all the teaching staff are native users of English and students are exposed to a native speaker English variety in the classroom. However they are using English as a means of communication in out of class situations where they are partially exposed to "***Malaysian English"***. The term 'Malaysian English' might be better elaborated by referring to the contemporary issue of '***world Englishes***'.

In his reflection to a set of conferences with related themes as 'English is an Asian language', 'English is an African language', 'English is a North American Language' and 'English is the Language of England', Samuel (2005) argues that all the above themes could hold. He adds that English can be deemed as an Asian language, while at the same time could be an African or a North American language or the language of England. He argues that "the truth value of any one of the above conference themes does not automatically negate or falsify the other theme statements. Thus, the English language is an entity that could be perceived to have multiple identities--and by extension, multiple owners-simultaneously" (p. 49). Along the same lines one can argue the terms Malaysian,

Nigerian, Philippine and Singaporean ESL contexts could be used as separate identities in that any one of them has its own unique features.

Additionally, the ESL concept in native English speaking countries is different from ESL concept in post-colonial countries where English is not deemed as the native language of the indigenous dwellers. Thus the findings of the present study should be cautiously interpreted and generalized to the ESL setting in Malaysia and also to Iranian nationality and carefully to other ESL settings in a certain way. Accordingly, EFL settings are different from each other in terms of English usability in real life situations. For instance, in an EFL setting such as Iran English is almost not used for communication by individuals beyond the walls of the classrooms while in other EFL settings such as Japan and Thailand, English might be somewhat used for communication due to the presence of foreigners who cannot speak the native languages of these countries.

2.12.3 Studies on ESL/EFL Contexts

Research on the influence of ESL/EFL settings on LLSs used by language learners is sporadic. Phillips (1991) and Mullins (1992) found out that ESL university students generally used more English learning strategies than EFL university students. In their study mainly ESL/EFL learners rather than ESL/EFL settings was the issue of focus. Bedell (1993) for instance compared LLSs of Chinese students studying in China with Chinese students studying in the US. He concluded that compensation strategies were the most frequently used strategies among both groups of students in different settings. Another pertinent study belongs to Riley and Harsch (1999) who compared the strategies of 28 Japanese ESL students entering two language programs in Hawaii with the strategies used by 28 of their Japanese EFL counterparts attending a university in Japan. The researchers

found that the two groups used variant strategies with ESL learners showing higher frequency of strategy use; hence, they argued that the environmental differences could play a significant role when learning another language. Riley and Harsch suggested that ESL learners were more willing to take advantage of the availability of the English speaking sources that surround them.

A more recent related study was conducted by Chang (2009) who looked at the patterns of strategy use of Chinese ESL/EFL college students studying in the U.S and Taiwan respectively. Chang found no significant difference between the two groups of participants in terms of five strategy categories in the SILL. However, he showed that ESL groups of participants used significantly more social strategies than their EFL counterparts. As mentioned earlier, the number of studies with a focus on EFL/ESL settings as a variable that might affect the use of LLSs is rare and in the few existing ones with such a focus, LLSs have not been defined as being both cognitively and socially grounded in their theoretical foundation.

It should be mentioned that ESL/EFL students vary in terms of strategy use as ESL/EFL contexts vary. Pertinently, Iranian students, for instance, as EFL learners are different from Japanese or Chinese students as EFL learners due to the context differences (i.e., Iran as an EFL setting with all its socio-cultural features is different from Japan as anther EFL setting). Hence, concerning the main independent variable of the present study, the author has not regarded the terms "ESL/EFL contexts" as fixed entities and has instead applied the terms "ESL/EFL settings" as standing for Malaysia and Iran respectively and subsequently he has generalized the findings of the study to these particular ESL/EFL settings.

In sum, study on identifying the influence of ESL/EFL settings on the language strategy use of learners is rare and regarding Iranian students at university level as the participants, it is non-existent, thus it provides the spur for the author for investigation.

2.13. Proficiency and Language Learning Strategies

The relationship between proficiency and language learning strategies can be seen in many studies. Past studies conducted in this area have proven the relationship between language learning strategies and students' proficiency level. More proficient language students use a greater variety and a greater number of learning strategies. Vann and Abraham (1990) on the other hand took a different stance, as they reported that students who were less proficient were using strategies considered as useful, and were often the same strategies used by students who were more proficient. They claimed that the difference between successful and less successful students was the degree of flexibility the students showed when choosing strategies, and the students' ability to appropriately apply strategies in their own learning situation. However, Rost and Ross (1991) pointed out that students with different levels of language proficiency differed in their use of certain strategies; more specifically, the more proficient students differed from the less proficient students in their cognitive level.

Phillips (1991) used SILL and TOEFL scores to investigate the relationship between adult ESL students' language learning strategies and proficiency. Phillips reported strong relationships between ESL/EFL strategy use frequency in language learning and English proficiency levels. Oxford and Ehrman (1995) studied 520 highly educated and motivated adult students in the US, aiming to explore the importance of the use of learning strategies

in the success of adult students of foreign languages. They reported a low but significant correlation between cognitive strategy use and speaking proficiency.

In Green and Oxford's (1995) study of Puerto Rican students, they suggested a causal ascending spiral relationship between proficiency levels and language learning strategies. They reported that the more successful students used language learning strategies more frequently than less successful students. In Park's (1997) study, SILL was used to measure language learning strategies, while the TOEFL score was used as the indicator of the Korean students' proficiency. Park also reported a linear relationship between language learning strategies and L2 proficiency. All six categories of language learning strategies in SILL were significantly correlated with the TOEFL scores, with cognitive and social strategies as the most predictive of the Korean university students' TOEFL scores.

In his study of language learning strategies and proficiency factor, Bremner (1999) involved 149 students who were primary lecturers. The results of the study reported significant relationships between proficiency factor and strategy use, especially compensation strategies, social strategies and mostly, cognitive strategies. Bremner pointed out that the link between proficiency and strategy use might be that strategies are simply features of proficiency, which means that only by reaching a certain level will a student be likely to use a given strategy. In a related study, Rahimi (2004) investigated the factors influencing the LLS use of post secondary level Persian EFL learners. The results of this study pointed to proficiency and motivation as major predictors of LLS use of the participants in the study. Kalil (2005) also concluded that proficiency has a main effect on the overall strategy use of his Palestinian EFL participants while the effect on each of the six strategy categories is variable. Another pertinent study was conducted by Yang (2007) whose results indicated that there are significant differences between low, intermediate and

advanced proficiency groups of Taiwanese EFL learners in using cognitive, compensation and social categories of strategies as well as in using the overall SILL. Tahamtani (2010) studied the impact of proficiency factor on metacognitive strategy choice of a group of 130 Iranian university EFL students and found significant difference among various proficiency levels in the choice of metacognitive strategies. Finally a study by Yang (2010) on 288 Korean university students proved that language proficiency levels had significant effects on the overall strategy use, the six categories of strategy, and individual strategy use items.

In this study, however language proficiency will be intervened as an independent variable to determine its effect on the language learning strategy use of Iranian students across the two settings of the study; namely ESL setting (Malaysia) and EFL setting (Iran). More clearly, regarding the combined effect of language proficiency with setting factor, such study is rare and considering Iranian nationality such study is non-existent, and thus, provides the necessary incentive for the author to investigate.

2.14 Summary

I started the literature review by drawing clear-cut boundaries between concepts of LLSs, learning styles and skills. Then various definitions for LLSs were offered with reference to different figures in the field. The major themes in the description of LLSs were briefly reviewed and areas of selection, effectiveness and purpose of LLSs were discussed. I reviewed the ontological (reality existence) as well as the epistemological (learning reality) orientations of the two broad perspectives in language learning, namely, psycholinguistic and sociocultural with regard to their vantage points about language learning strategies, saying the former perspective starts with the individual and his/her cognitive stance, while the latter begins with society or culture as being focal in language learning. I discussed two

major issues of self-regulation and activity as aspects of LLSs from the vantage points of both perspectives. It was argued that the two perspectives could be viewed as different dialects or voices of the same language, specifically, in descriptions of LLSs.

I mentioned that research in the field started with strategies of "Good Language Learners" followed by research on "Less Successful Language Learners". It was emphasized that both groups utilize strategies; the differences across learners, however, lie in the relative effectiveness of strategy application; that is, the appropriate implementation of the right strategies at the right times. Among the several classification frameworks of LLSs, I looked at Bialystok (1978), Rubin (1981), O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford's (1990) taxonomies indicating that most of them have some shared features. Basically, there are six sets of learning strategies, namely: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Finally, some factors that affect the use of language learner strategies were discussed. With regard to nationality, metacognitive strategies were the most used strategies by Asian English learners including Iranian students, while memory strategies were their least favored ones. With respect to learning style, we realized that culture affects learning style, and this, in turn, helps to determine the LLS choices of learners. We referred to research suggesting that Iranian students are generally reflective (vs active), intuitive (vs sensing), verbal (vs visual), and global (vs sequential) learners.

Most of the studies on LLSs and the proficiency factor suggest high proficient learners apply a wider range of LLSs than less proficient ones. Concerning the effect of ESL/EFL settings on LLS use, the study is sporadic and the few existing ones indicate a contrast in their findings. Additionally, in those studies ESL setting represents a country where English is the native language of the indigenous people. I could locate no study with

a focus on ESL contexts such as Malaysia where English is an accepted lingua franca among local people without being their mother tongue. Specifically, no study has been conducted to explore and compare Iranian students' language learning strategies across EFL (Iran) and ESL (Malaysia) settings. Thus it provides the motivation for investigation. Additionally, discovering the effect of proficiency on learners' use of LLSs across EFL and ESL settings has not been the focus of previous investigations which in turn provides extra incentive for the present author to investigate. Finally, the researcher will try to enrich the quantitative results by collecting some interview data aimed at spotting the differences between the EFL and ESL learners with regard to some of their language learning issues such as English use and the obstacles they encounter outside the classroom.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study was the author's attempt to investigate and compare Iranian college level English learners' pattern of LLS use within EFL and ESL (Tehran and Kuala Lumpur) settings through different proficiency groups and to explore their views on some critical language learning related issues in those settings. A self-report questionnaire and two semi-structured interviews which were voluntarily completed by Iranian students in both settings were this study's main source of data collection. Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used as the questionnaire to collect data on LLS use of the participants in EFL and ESL settings. The author's made semi-structured interviews were also applied to collect data on the participants' views on some English learning issues in the capital cities of Tehran and Kuala Lumpur as representing our EFL an ESL settings respectively. Therefore the following areas will be addressed in detail in this chapter: (1) the participants, (2) research design, (3) instrumentation, (4) data collection procedures, (5) data analysis, and (6) the limitations of the study.

3.2 Participants

Two groups of Iranian male students as one group studying English in Kuala Lumpur the capital city of Malaysia and the other group studying English in Tehran, the capital city of Iran constituted the whole sample in this study. The ESL group, were 61 Iranian English learners from different groups of language proficiency, selected from all available male language learners studying in the British Council Language Center in Kuala Lumpur which

is the only branch of that language center in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia. The group of participants in Iran, as representing the EFL group, were 96 Iranian low, intermediate, and high proficient English learners who were randomly selected from all available male language learners studying in different branches of 'Kish Language Institute" located in Tehran, the capital city of Iran.

All participants were adult college level male English learners within a 20-30 year old age range. Although it would be best to select the participants from both male and female Iranian students, the researcher decided to keep the gender variable constant in this study so as to focus on the setting variable only. In socioeconomic status terms, the group of participants in Kuala Lumpur who were taking English courses in the British Council Language Center located in the capital city were normally those individuals from middle or above middle class families who could afford to pay for their education at university level in a foreign country and could be compared to those participants in Tehran who were attending different branches of 'Kish Language Center' which is one of the most reputable and valid language centers in Iran. The Participants in Tehran also belonged to the same socioeconomic class for they could meet the requirements for living and learning English in Tehran which is in fact the most expensive city of Iran. The same criteria were held to select the interviewees to help us collect our qualitative data; they were all motivated college-level male language learners within the 20 to 30 year old age range. For the ESL group of interviewees, however, one additional condition was set; they needed to have lived and studied English in Malaysia for a minimum period of six months to ensure they had enough exposure to a different variation of English in an ESL setting.

It is worth mentioning that the participants in the Iranian EFL context do not have much exposure to the target language outside of the classroom to pick it up unconsciously.

In Iranian public schools, universities and other educational settings a lot of emphasis is put on explaining about the language and making the learners conscious of the process of learning. In private language institutes where communicative approaches of teaching are claimed to be used, learners are often unable to pick up the language unconsciously as they do not use it communicatively outside the classroom. In the capital city of Kuala Lumpur (ESL setting) on the other hand, the participants have enough exposure to the target language both inside and outside their language classes as English is the lingua franca for international people living, working, studying or visiting in Malaysia which, in turn, creates a spur on the part of those with other native languages to learn English for, so called, survival. Additionally, English is the medium of instruction in Malaysian international universities and nearly all those universities require international students to submit an IELTS minimum score of 6.0 or TOEFL minimum score of 550 as a part of their enrollment regulations.

3.3 Research Deign

The aim of this study was to determine the effect of ESL/EFL (English as a second and English as a foreign language) settings factor, proficiency group factor, and the combined effect of the two on the strategy use of Iranian language learners who were learning English in Kuala Lumpur and Tehran respectively. Meanwhile discovering their perceptions on some language learning issues within those settings was another purpose of the study.

Both numerical and descriptive data were collected to form the general design of this study. Nevertheless, the study is mainly quantitatively oriented and except for the last research question (question 9), the other questions of the study were answered using quantitative data. A questionnaire survey was used to collect the numerical data. Creswell

(2008) states that survey studies describe trends in the data and their focus is on learning about a population and less on relating variables as is the focus in correlational studies. Since the numerical data in this study were collected at one point in time, the study is a cross-sectional survey in its quantitative form. Accordingly, as Creswell defines, cross-sectional survey is used, in one way, to compare two or more educational groups in terms of attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices as is the case in this study.

In order to explore Iranian students' choices and use of language learning strategies within EFL/ESL settings, Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was adopted as the numerical data collection instrument. The SILL is a structured survey instrument which uses standardized categories for all participants; hence it makes it easier for researchers to summarize results for a group and objectively diagnose problems of individuals (Oxford, 1990).

As deeply discovering and interpreting the participants' views about some language learning issues within EFL/ESL environments (question 9) was another purpose of the study, two semi-structured interviews were designed and employed by the author to collect the qualitative descriptive data. Also, the data collected in this way were used to discuss some of the quantitative results. Creswell (2008) noted that a qualitative interview is applied when researchers ask one or more participants, general, open-ended questions and record their answers for analysis. In fact, they have both advantages and disadvantages compared to observation which is also popular in qualitative research. Creswell regards some advantages as providing useful information when you cannot directly observe participants and also during an interview, the interviewer has better control over the types of information received as they can ask specific questions to elicit this information. Similar to observation Creswell thinks interview data may be deceptive and provide the perspective

the participant wants the researcher to hear. Another disadvantage is that the interviewer may affect the interviewee's responses. In this study the interviews were conducted on a one on one mode which is the most time consuming and costly approach as Creswell regards. The reason the author adopted individual interviews was to keep constant the effect the participants could have on each other. The data collected demonstrated the participants' use of language learning strategies as well as their views on some language learning-related issues within both EFL and ESL settings which have been described in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

3.4 Instrumentation

In this study both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using the following instruments: A) the Personal Background Information Questionnaire (PBIQ) for gathering demographic information of the participants (see Appendix A), B) Proficiency Assignment Guidelines for defining the proficiency groups within both settings (see below), C) Oxford's (1990) Persian-Translated Version of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, see Appendix B), D) Semi-Structured Interview containing questions to collect information about EFL participants' views about some language learning issues in Iran (see Appendix C), and finally, E) Semi-Structured Interview which contained questions to collect information on ESL participants' views of language learning in Malaysia (see Appendix D). In the following sections, the above instruments are discussed along with their application, merits and demerits.

3.4.1 Personal Background Information Questionnaire (PBIQ)

The PBIQ used in this study was a modified version of the Oxford (1990) Background Questionnaire. By means of this questionnaire, brief information on participants' individual background was collected. The collected information contained: their age, gender, job, length of studying English, number of months or years of studying English in their current language institute, self-rated English proficiency, and so on (see Appendix A). Because the study relied on the language institutes for rating the students to different proficiency groups, the researcher used students' self-rated proficiency report to further ensure the homogeneity of the groups regarding the students' level of proficiency. Thus the researcher crossed out those participants who thought they had not been rightously posited to their appropriate English class. One extra question was added to the PBIQ of the ESL participants' questionnaire which required their length of residence in ESL Malaysia. For confidentiality reason, the participants had a choice to leave or not leave their names, but they were assured that their personal information would be confident and used in this study only.

3.4.2 Proficiency Assignment Guideline

Proficiency level might indicate a scoring procedure for its operational definition. In this study we did not administer any proficiency tests. In this study we have elementary, intermediate and advanced groups of learners since they were selected as they had been posited to their appropriate proficiency groups by their institutes. In other words we have proficiency groups rather than proficiency levels. But for clarity, the term proficiency has been used throughout the thesis. The English course books *Cutting Edge* and *True to Life* were being taught at the time of collecting data for this study in the Malaysian British

Council and Iranian Kish Language Centers respectively. Both institutes and their related course books were based on a British system of language education and provided a six-level English course (Pre-Elementary, Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced) for adults. Based on the discussion we had with language experts and test developers from both institutes, a proficiency assignment guideline emerged based on which the participants in both settings were randomly selected from three proficiency groups of Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced classes in order to have homogeneous groups of proficiency. Other groups including Pre-elementary, Pre-intermediate, and Upper-intermediate classes were not included in our sample to prevent overlapping of the proficiency groups. To assure homogeneous variances among the groups, the normality test was run and the assumption of normality was also met. The values of skewness and kurtosis were within the ranges of +/- 2. These groups of proficiency were operationally defined based on the experts and test developers' views as well as the common features defined for each proficiency groups by both course books (Guideline) as follow:

Learners in the elementary group at the end of the course will be able to:

- understand and respond to simple questions about themselves
- understand and have simple conversations
- read and understand simple articles and public notices
- speak English clearly so that others understand them
- ask for help when they don't understand
- write simple instructions or messages with some errors in grammar

- understand basic English vocabulary to help them communicate and understand English
- understand and use basic grammar rules of English with some errors

Learners in the intermediate group at the end of the course will be able to:

- speak with ease and confidence with others in common social situations
- speak clearly and with correct intonation, so as to be easily understood
- listen for general understanding, and identify main points
- express opinions and justify their point of view
- read and understand the main points of authentic reading material
- express ideas through a variety of writing formats
- use relevant vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to enhance speaking and writing

Learners in the advanced group at the end of the course will be able to:

- use English confidently in real-life situations, so that they can communicate easily and accurately
- listen to and read English everyday to enhance understanding and proficiency in the language
- freely express needs, thoughts and feelings in English with few errors
- listen, speak, read and write with high frequency

3.4.3 Language Learning Strategy Inventory (SILL)

Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning or SILL is a 50-item survey, proven to be reliable, to discover the frequency of language learner strategies used by second or foreign language learners in learning English. A rating scale from 1 to 5 is used as the indication of the numbers for the likert scale as can be seen in Table 3.1.

Table.3.1

Oxford's SILL Likert Scale

Scale	Meaning
1	Never or almost never true of me (very rarely true)
2	Usually not true of me (true less than half the time)
3	Somewhat true of me (true about half the time)
4	Usually true of me (more than half the time)
5	Always or almost always true of me (almost always true)

The SILL is used to conduct surveys for the purpose of summarizing results for a group by means of statistical treatment and objectively diagnosing the problem of individual students (Oxford, 1990). The overall average indicates how often learners tend to use the Language Learning Strategy. For example, if the learners score 2.5 on average for memory strategy, then this score indicates that the learners, on average, use the strategy about half the time.

To collect data on the participants' language learning strategies in this study, Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) along with the author's equivalent Persian translation of the SILL was used (see Appendix B). The questionnaire contains two sections; section one including Personal Background Information Questionnaire (PBIQ, see Appendix A) discussed earlier, and section two includes fifty items in all six Oxford's categories of strategy use containing memory (9 items), cognitive (14 items), compensation (6 items), metacognitive (9 items), affective (6 items), and social strategies (6 items) as can be seen in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Number of Items for Each Category of Strategies

Strategies	Number of items	Questions
Memory	9	1-9
Cognitive	14	10-23
Compensation	6	24-29
Metacognitive,	9	30-38
Affective	6	39-44
Social	6	45-50

Students' responses to the items in the questionnaire were scored. Version 7.0 of the SILL is a self-report instrument that can assess the subjects' frequencies of strategy use and the frequencies with which subjects use different techniques for learning English. The SILL's alpha co-efficient for reliability is .92 (Griffiths, 2007) and content validity is .99 (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

Based on Oxford's (1990), the SILL categories of strategies are briefly defined as:

(1) Memory strategies help learners store and retrieve new information, such as creating mental linkages, applying images and sound, reviewing well, and taking action.

(2) Cognitive strategies assist learners to comprehend and produce L2 input and output by using many different methods such as practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing, reasoning, and creating structure for input and output.

(3) Compensation strategies are applied by learners to use the language regardless of their gaps in knowledge. Examples are guessing or using synonyms.

(4) Metacognitive strategies help learners to master their own cognition, such as centering arranging, planning, and evaluating their learning.

(5) Affective strategies are responsible for managing learners' emotions, motivation, and attitudes, by lowering anxiety, encouraging oneself, and regulating learners' emotional temperature.

(6) Social strategies help learners learn the language through interactions with others. Examples include asking questions, cooperating with others, wanting others to help you with your English, and empathizing with others.

3.4.4 Interview

This part of data collection instruments contains two semi-structured interviews, as one designed for Iranian students learning English in EFL Tehran (KISH Language Center) and the other designed for Iranian students learning English in ESL Kuala Lumpur (the British Council Language Centre). Both EFL/ESL interviewees were male learners of English so as to keep the gender effect constant as was the case with the questionnaire survey. There were six mainly open-ended questions in the EFL interview questionnaire (see below) to

probe EFL participants' thoughts and attitudes about their language learning experiences in Iran. The EFL interviewees were six Iranian adult male learners who had never left their country to live overseas for a long time. Seven primary questions were also designed for the ESL interviewees (see below).

The ESL interview questions were very similar to the EFL ones except that the ESL questionnaire contained one more question (question 2) and that one ESL question (question 4) required the ESL respondents to compare EFL Iran with ESL Malaysia in terms of English learning as the ESL interviewees were six Iranian adult male students who had the experience of living and learning English in both Iran and Malaysia with having enough exposure to different variations of English language; hence, their responses would help to point out differences to EFL group participants who had never gone to an English speaking country to study English. In each group, there were two elementary, two intermediate and two advanced learners of English. The data collected and analyzed would help shed light on the differences of language learning among Iranian language learners due to the setting as well as language proficiency differences. Each interviewee's response sheet was given a code which substituted their real names in order to maintain confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in both Persian (participants' first language) and English in order to let them freely exhibit their thoughts and attitudes. In other terms, the respondents were free to choose either language or shift from one to the other.

Interview Questions for the EFL Group

1. How much do you enjoy learning English in this country? 1. Do not enjoy at all 2. Rarely enjoy 3. Neutral (somehow enjoy) 4. Usually enjoy 5. Extremely enjoy, Please explain.
2. How important is it for you to improve your English proficiency level? 1. Not important at all 2. Not important 3. No special feeling (somehow important) 4. Important 5. Extremely important, please explain.
3. What language activities do you perform in your English class? Do you enjoy them all? Please explain.

4. How do you use English in out of the class situations in Iran? (interacting with people, interacting with international people, exchanging emails in English, doing your homework assignment, note taking, writing journal articles, watching English movies, shopping, finding foreign friends, and etc…) please explain.

5. What prevents you from learning or improving your English in Iran?

6. What motivates or encourages you to learn or use English in Iran?

Interview Questions for the ESL Group

1. How much do you enjoy learning English in Malaysia? 1. Do not enjoy at all 2. Rarely enjoy 3. Neutral (somehow enjoy) 4. Usually enjoy 5. Extremely enjoy, Please explain.
2. How much did you enjoy learning English when you were attending language classes in Iran? 1. Did not enjoy at all 2. Rarely enjoyed 3. Neutral (somehow enjoyed) 4. Usually enjoyed 5. Extremely enjoyed, Please explain.
3. How important is it for you to improve your English proficiency level? 1. Not important at all 2. Not important 3. No special feeling (somehow important) 4. Important 5. Extremely important, please explain.
4. How are in-class activities in your English institute in Malaysia different from class activities in Iranian English institute where you attended in Iran?
5. How do you use English in out of the class situations in Malaysia? (interacting with Malaysian people ,interacting with international people, exchanging emails in English, doing your homework assignment, note taking, writing journal articles, watching English movies, shopping, finding foreign friends, and etc…)please explain
6. What prevents you from learning or improving your English in Malaysia?
7. What motivates or encourages you to learn or use English in Malaysia?

3.5 Sampling Procedures

The sample of the study was obtained in two settings as the two groups of participants learning English in Tehran (EFL setting) and Kuala Lumpur (ESL setting) respectively constituted our study sample. In each setting a different approach was adopted to constitute the sample of the study. While a multi-cluster sampling was utilized to locate the EFL participants in Iran, a convenient sampling procedure was applied to locate the ESL participants in Malaysia. The population of the study was defined as all elementary, intermediate, and advanced Iranian college level male English learners in Malaysia and Iran. The target population or the sampling frame as Creswell (2008) defines is a group of individuals with some shared defining characteristics that the researcher can identify and study. Accordingly, the target population in the study was defined as all elementary, intermediate and advanced Iranian college-level male English learners learning English in Kuala Lumpur (ESL setting) and Tehran (EFL setting), the capital cities of Malaysia and Iran respectively.

It would be ideal, as Creswell regards, to select a sample of individuals to be the representative of the entire population; however, in practice it was impossible to locate all Iranian male English learners in Malaysia and Iran. Additionally in socio-economic terms the participants in two settings needed to be comparable regarding some shared features in order to righteously represent the target population. Specifically, in socioeconomic status terms, the group of participants in Malaysia who were taking English courses in the British Council Language Center located in Kuala Lumpur were normally those motivated individuals from middle or above middle class families who could afford to pay for their education at university level in a foreign country and could be compared to those participants in Tehran who belonged to the same socioeconomic class for they could meet

the requirements for living and learning English in Tehran which is in fact the most expensive city in Iran.

In Kuala Lumpur, many Iranian English learners attended either the ELS or British Council Language Centers where they could improve their English. From the two highly reputable language centers, many preferred to attend the British Council Language Centre where they could benefit from native English teachers. Hence, we purposefully selected the British Council Language Centre in Kuala Lumpur as part of the study site which is comparable to KISH Language Institute in Iran. As previously discussed, KISH Language Institute is the most reputable and valid language center in Iran with many branches all around the country where Iranian adults and young adults can benefit from topnotch English teachers who have passed rigorous entrance exams and taken teachers' training courses as their employment requirements. In this regard, teachers in both settings can be compared in terms of literacy and teacher's effect in some way. Both institutes and their related course books were based on a British system of language education and provided a six-level English course (Pre-Elementary, Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, upper- intermediate and advanced) for adults at the time of data collection and sampling.

At the time of sampling and collecting data, the British Council Language Centre had only one branch in Kuala Lumpur, which is the biggest one in the country. Thus, all available Iranian male language learners in that center could constitute our sample in the ELS setting which indicated a convenient sampling approach. In Iran, on the other hand, we adopted a multi-cluster sampling procedure to locate our EFL participants. There were six branches of KISH Language Institute in Tehran, among which, we randomly selected three centers and provided name lists of all Iranian college-level male English learners who had been posited to Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced classes by their institute

assessment codes. In order to give everybody in the lists a chance to participate in the study, we assigned a number to every student and selected the EFL participants with an interval of 3 out of the lists. The number of participants that constituted our sample size was 157 with 96 individuals making the EFL group and 61 learners establishing the ESL group. Creswell (2008) stated that some factors such as funding, access, the overall size of the population, and the number of variables influence the size of the samples in survey studies. Pertinently, in this study, language proficiency group of the learners played a role as one of the independent variables which reduced the sample size of the study as the questionnaires were distributed to those Iranian learners who had been posited to Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced classes by their institute assessment codes. Other language proficiency groups were excluded from the sample to prevent them from overlapping with other major proficiency groups.

For the interview part, the interviewer purposefully selected two elementary, two intermediate, and two advanced adult Iranian male learners of English in each setting who were university students within the age range of 22 to 30. The interviewees in both settings had filled out the SILL questionnaires in the study and were typical participants who could provide us with qualitative data on Iranian English learners' attitudes about language learning within the EFL and ESL environments. The ESL interviewees were typical of those Iranian motivated English learners who were studying in Malaysian international or private universities and were learning English to help them with their university courses as well as in their communication with English speaking people. An additional criterion set for the ESL interviewees was their length of residence in Malaysia which needed to be a minimum of six months to assure their enough exposure to the target language in an ESL environment.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected with the help of several teachers teaching in The British Council and KISH Language Centers located in Kuala Lumpur and Tehran respectively. Prior to collecting data, the participants were informed of three things: 1) the purpose of the study, which was comparing the LLSs of Iranian EFL learners with those of their ESL counterparts in Malaysia, 2) the contributions of the data they provided to the research in the field as well as to Iranian English teachers and learners in both settings, and 3) the confidentiality of their responses was assured. Thus, the Persian versions of the SILL questionnaires along with the Personal Background Information Questionnaires (PBIQ) were distributed to the participants in both settings. They were required to fill out the PBIQ which contained questions about their age, job, years of study, proficiency level, their residence length in Malaysia (for ESL learners) and so forth. Then, they were asked to carefully read the questionnaire items and select the option in each strategy item which best described their strategy learning behaviors not the one which was best for learning English in general. It was also made clear that there was no right or wrong answer for each item. Of 130 EFL questionnaires, a total number of 96 sheets were returned. Therefore, a total number of 96 participants constituted our EFL sample. Unfortunately, in the ESL setting, only 61 questionnaires were returned out of 100 distributed ones. Students' responses to the items of the questionnaire (section two) were scored based on a five-point Likert scale.

Creswell (2008, p. 229) provided a checklist to help researchers to conduct interviews or open-ended questionnaires which are as follows:

- Identify interviewees according to one of purposeful sampling

- Decide what type of interview (group, one-on-one, or telephone interview) is more practical and will yield the most useful information to answer your research question.
- Audiotape the questions and responses to have accurate record of the conversations.
- Take brief notes during the interview to form your interview protocol.
- Determine a quiet, suitable place for conducting the interview
- Obtain a consent form from your interviewees participating in the study.
- Stick with your questions but be flexible enough to follow the interviewee's conversation.
- Use probes or sub-questions under each question to elicit more information.
- Be courteous and professional when the interview is over by thanking the participant, assuring them of the confidentiality of the responses, and asking them if they would like a summary of the study results.

With regard to the above guidelines, we arranged interview sessions with the help from gatekeepers in both institutes. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis in order to control the Halo effect as participants in a group interview might have a tendency to respond positively which, in turn, results in exaggerated, flawed collected data. The interviews were done in a comfortable, quiet place. Prior to collecting the interview data, participants were informed of the purpose of the study and their contribution to the project. When the interviewee was clear about what he would do in this interview, he was asked to fill out the personal background information questionnaire. Then, the interviewee was given a sheet with the interview questions on it and was asked to review the interview questions before the process began. He was told that he might want to put down some important notes on his sheet before, during, and after the interview. Two semi-structure

interview questionnaires were designed as we had two groups of interviewees (ESL/EFL participants). Each interview contained several open-ended questions so that the interviewees could best voice their language learning experiences unrestricted by any perspectives of the researcher. The interviewer was also sensitive to some ethical or emotional issues raised by the nature of some questions and the process of interviewing which could not be predicted in advance. This issue was underscored as the data was being collected face-to-face and on a one-on-one mode. All the conversations were audio-taped, and transcribed to have accurate record of the qualitative data for interpretation, meanwhile, the interviewer took useful notes during the interviews to make the interview protocol.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

Apart from the information collected on participants' age, occupation, number of months or years of study, self-rated language proficiency level and their residence length in the Malaysian ESL context through Personal Background Information Questionnaire (PBIQ), data were collected on: 1) their language learning strategy use using the SILL questionnaire, and 2) their attitudes about some language learning related issues within ESL/EFL settings by means of semi-structured interviews. The former is quantitative data while the latter is qualitative in nature. The following explains how the collected data were analyzed.

3.7.1 Analyzing the Data Collected by the SILL

Because the questionnaire items were all closed questions and all the responses were presented on a Likert-scale, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 19) was utilized to analyze this quantitative data. The participants responded to all the strategy

items on a Likert-scale from 1 to 5, which ranked their frequencies of language learning strategy use. The mean scores of each of the six categories of strategies were calculated in order to find out the frequencies of individual categories of strategies that the participants used. The mean scores of all strategy categories were calculated to find out the overall use of the participants' language learning strategies.

Except for the last question (question 9) which was answered by means of qualitative date analysis, other research questions were answered by means of both descriptive and inferential statistics. More specifically, *T*-tests were to determine any significant differences between the mean scores of EFL and ESL groups' overall using of the SILL. Multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) was utilized to find out the significant differences between the EFL and ESL groups' mean scores in using six categories of strategies in SILL, to help find out the effect of the proficiency group factor on the learners' performance in using SILL six strategy categories in EFL and ESL groups, and to show the interactive effect of proficiency group and setting factors on the learners' performance in using SILL six categories of strategies. In order to find out the differences between low, intermediate, and advanced participants in using the overall SILL in different settings (EFL/ESL), One-way ANOVA functioned the best. Finally, the researcher applied a Two-way ANOVA to investigate the combined effect of proficiency group and setting factors on the learners' performance in overall use of the SILL.

3.7.2 Analyzing the Data Collected by the Interviews

In collecting the interview data which was mainly qualitative in nature, the researcher (interviewer) administered the process of interviewing on a one-on-one basis with sensitivity to the topics centering around the differences in English learning among EFL

and ESL learners based on the interviewees' thoughts and attitudes. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. As we had two elementary, two intermediate, and two advanced learners in each group, we not only gave each interviewee a code to be substituted with their real names, but we also gave each proficiency group a specific code to guide us accurately interpret and analyze the data. Additionally, each question was given a code along with the topic it involved.

Each interview took about 18 minutes to be recorded. As the interviews were recorded separately for individual interviewees, we had six interview sessions in each setting. Their responses were categorized and discussed as to the similarities or differences that were identified. Relevant portions of the transcriptions were translated into English by the researcher and viewed by two doctoral degree students in order to verify that the translation best suited to the interviewees' original expressions. Hence, these transcriptions were direct quotations from the participants to fulfill the research questions.

3.8 The Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations related to the sampling procedures as well as the instruments used for data collection. As there were two settings where data were collected, namely ESL and EFL settings, dissimilar sampling procedure was adopted in each setting. In the ESL Malaysia, convenient sampling technique was utilized as we collected the data in the only branch of the British Council Language Centre located in Kuala Lumpur. As a result, the sample may not be the representative of all Iranian language learners in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In EFL Iran, however, a multi-stage cluster sampling was adopted to locate Iranian college-level male English learners who were learning English in a few branches of KISH Language Institute in Tehran. Hence, the EFL sample may not be the

representative of all Iranian English learners in Tehran, Iran. The second source of limitations come from the way we collected data on proficiency level of the participants, their language learning strategy behaviors, and their perceptions on language learning-related issues in ESL/EFL settings.

Revolving around the issue of proficiency, it would be best to give our participants a test of general English proficiency and put them in their appropriate levels of language proficiency based on their performance on the test. But, practically it was impossible to do so due to the lack of time, money, and difficulty arranging with gatekeepers as well as the participants' reluctance to take a proficiency test in both settings, especially in the British Council Language Centre, in Malaysia. Also, all participants are male language learners; this limits the generalization that can be drawn from the results of the study. Related to the SILL questionnaire which was used to collect quantitative data on LLS behaviors of the participants, obviously it is a Likert-scale questionnaire which gives the respondents a rigid and standardized form of providing their responses. It does not allow the participants to have much flexibility in reflecting on and responding to their situation due to the fixed nature of the SILL. Finally, although the data collected by the interviews provides us with in-depth information about participants' aspects of language learning as well as similarities and dissimilarities of learning English in two different settings, it might be tinged with interviewees and interviewer's exaggerated perspectives. Therefore, the result of the interview data cannot be generalized to the whole population of Iranian English learners or other EFL/ESL settings.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This study aimed at finding the probable influence of ESL/EFL settings, language proficiency and their interaction on the overall using of the Oxford's (1990) SILL as well as on the application of all the SILL categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) by Iranian students who were learning English in Malaysia and Iran respectively. Exploring the participants' views on some language learning related issues such as language use and learning obstacles within EFL and ESL environments was another purpose of this study. This study is mainly quantitatively oriented, though qualitative data was also used to shed more light on the differences in language learning among the participants of the study related to environmental differences. Thus, the data presented in this chapter are divided into two parts: (1) quantitative analysis, which discusses the data gathered by the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990) survey, (2) qualitative analysis, which are the results of semi-structured interviews concerning Iranian language learners' views on some language learning issues in EFL and ESL environments.

4.2 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data were obtained from 96 Iranian students in Tehran, the capital city of Iran and 61 Iranian students in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia (a total of 157 students) through the SILL. The average age of the participants was 25 for the EFL group and 26 for the ESL group. All the participants were college-level male English learners.

The average length of the residence in Malaysia for the ESL group was nearly one year. Table 4,1 shows setting information.

Table 4.1

Number of Participants in each Setting

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	EFL	96	61.1
	ESL	61	38.9
	Total	157	100.0

As proficiency group was another independent variable, the author selected the participants from different groups of language proficiency as displayed in table4.2.

Table 4.2

Number of Participants within Proficiency Groups

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Elementary	49	31.2
	Intermediate	55	35.0
	Advanced	53	33.8
	Total	157	100.0

Oxford's (1990) coding system (see Table 4.3) was employed to interpret the collected data from the 5-point (1-5) Likert scale of the SILL questionnaire. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was also used to analyze the data.

Table 4.3

Oxford's SILL Likert Scale

Scale	Meaning
1	Never or almost never true of me (very rarely true)
2	Usually not true of me (true less than half the time)
3	Somewhat true of me (true about half the time)
4	Usually true of me (more than half the time)
5	Always or almost always true of me (almost always true)

4.2.1 Testing Assumptions

Field (2009) holds that four assumptions should be met before one decides to run parametric tests: (1) the data should be measured on an interval scale, (2) the subjects should be independent that is to say their performance on the test is not affected by the performance of other students, (3) the data should enjoy normal distribution and (4) the groups should have homogeneous variances. Along the same line, the present data were measured on an interval scale and the subjects performed independently on the tests. The assumption of normality was also met. As displayed in Table 4.4 the values of skewness and kurtosis are within the ranges of +/- 2.

Table 4.4

Normality Tests

SETTING		N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
EFL	SILL	96	.228	.246	-.136	.488
	MEMORY	96	.395	.246	.015	.488
	COGNITIVE	96	-.501	.246	.840	.488
	COMPENSATION	96	.222	.246	-.609	.488
	METACOGNITIVE	96	-.515	.246	.053	.488
	AFFECTIVE	96	.238	.246	-.602	.488
	SOCIAL	96	-.789	.246	.243	.488
ESL	SILL	61	-.221	.306	.597	.604
	MEMORY	61	.253	.306	-.086	.604
	COGNITIVE	61	-.880	.306	1.313	.604
	COMPENSATION	61	.062	.306	-.478	.604
	METACOGNITIVE	61	-.951	.306	1.942	.604
	AFFECTIVE	61	.573	.306	.221	.604
	SOCIAL	61	-.836	.306	.598	.604

4.3 Resaerch Questions

To answer the following research questions, both descriptive and inferential statistics has been utilized. Both null and alternative hypotheses are assumed. Based on the statistical results, one hypothesis is rejected and the other one is accepted.

4.3.1 Research Question 1

Are there any significant differences between the mean scores of the six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) on the SILL as reportedly used by the whole population in the study?

H0: There are not any significant differences between the mean scores of the six categories of LLSs on the SILL as reportedly used by the whole population in the study.

H1: There are significant differences between the mean scores of the six categories of LLSs on the SILL as reportedly used by the whole population in the study.

The participants' mean scores for memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies on the SILL are 2.89, 3.26, 3.42, 3.79, 2.75 and 3.82 respectively as evident in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Descriptive Statistics of Using of the SILL's Strategy Categories by the Whole Participants

SILLC	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Memory	2.896	.053	2.791	3.001
Cognitive	3.261	.048	3.165	3.357
Compensation	3.421	.056	3.310	3.532
Metacognitive	3.793	.056	3.682	3.904
Affective	2.756	.049	2.659	2.853
Social	3.821	.056	3.710	3.931
Total mean	3.324			

A multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) is run to compare the participants' mean scores on the six strategy categories of the SILL. Based on the results displayed in Table 4.6 (F (2, 152) = 120.48, p = .000 < .05, Partial η^2 = .79 representing a large effect size) it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the mean scores of the six categories of strategies on the SILL. Thus, the null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is supported.

Table 4.6

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (MANOVA) for the Categories of the SILL by the Whole Participants

Effect		Value	*F*	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SILL Categories	Pillai's Trace	.799	120.480	5	152	.000	.799
	Wilks' Lambda	.201	120.480	5	152	.000	.799
	Hotelling's Trace	3.963	120.480	5	152	.000	.799
	Roy's Largest Root	3.963	120.480	5	152	.000	.799

In order to see where the differences lie in the means of the SILL categories, Post-Hoc Scheffe's Comparison Tests are run and displayed (Table 4.7) as follows:

Table 4.7

Post-Hoc Scheffe's Comparison Tests for the Categories on the SILL

(I) SILL	(J) SILL	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Cognitive	Memory	.365*	.043	.000	.237	.493
	Affective	.505*	.052	.000	.349	.662
Compensation	Memory	.525*	.059	.000	.349	.702
	Cognitive	.160*	.050	.027	.010	.311
	Affective	.666*	.059	.000	.490	.842
Metacognitive	Memory	.897*	.049	.000	.749	1.044
	Cognitive	.531*	.047	.000	.393	.670
	Compensation	.371*	.063	.000	.183	.559
	Affective	1.037*	.053	.000	.878	1.196
Social	Memory	.925*	.057	.000	.754	1.095
	Cognitive	.559*	.051	.000	.407	.712
	Compensation	.399*	.064	.000	.209	.589
	Affective	1.065*	.064	.000	.875	1.255

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The results of the post-hoc comparison tests (Table 4.7) indicate that;

The students' mean scores on social (M = 3.82) and metacognitive (M = 3.79) strategies are significantly (p = .000 < .05) higher than their mean scores on other categories of strategies. Meanwhile, the two categories are not significantly different (p > .05) from each other on their mean scores.

At a second level are compensation (M = 3.42) and cognitive (M = 3.26) strategies which are significantly (p = .000 < .05) used more than memory (M = 2.89) and affective (M = 2.75) strategies. Additionally, compensation strategies are used statistically more than cognitive strategies (p = .027 < .05).

At a third level appear memory and affective categories of strategies which are significantly used less than all the other categories on the SILL, but are not statistically (p > .05) different from each other on their mean scores.

4.3.2 Research Question 2

Is there any significant difference in the means of the overall language learning strategies of ESL and EFL groups in this study?

H0: There is no significant difference in the means of the overall language learning strategies of ESL/EFL groups in this study.

H1: There is a significant difference in the means of the overall language learning strategies of ESL/EFL groups in this study.

Table 4.8 shows that on average the ESL students (M = 3.45, SD = .59) show a higher mean score on the overall language learning strategies than the EFL group (M = 3.22, SD = .42).

Table 4.8

Overall Use of Strategies by ESL/EFL Groups

	SETTING	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SILL	ESL	61	3.459	.5946	.0761
	EFL	96	3.226	.4249	.0434
TOTAL	EFL/ESL	157	3.317	.5088	.0597

The results of the independent t-test (t (98) = 2.65, p = .009 <.05), (table 4.9) indicate that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the EFL and ESL

groups on the overall use of the SILL. Meanwhile R = .25 represents an almost moderate effect size. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4.9

Independent Samples T-test on the Overall Use of the SILL by the ESL/EFL Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SILL	Equal variances assumed	4.954	.027	2.855	155	.005	.2326	.0815	.0716	.3935
	Equal variances not assumed			2.654	98.693	.009	.2326	.0876	.0587	.4064

It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is not met (Levene's $F = 4.95$, $p = .027 < .05$), (Table 4.9). This is why the second row of Table 4.9, i.e. "Equal variances not assumed" is reported.

One statement can be made regarding the result of the *t*-test: In ESL setting, Iranian participants significantly apply more learning strategies than their counterparts in EFL environment.

Additionally, according to Oxford's scale for interpretation of the scores for the SILL (Table 4.10), the mean score of the whole participants' overall learning strategies is

3.317 (Table 4.8) which is a medium range of use. It means that, on average, all of the participants sometimes use the learning strategy items listed in the SILL questionnaire.

Table 4.10

Scale for Interpretation of Scores for the SILL

Frequency	Use of strategies	Scores
High	Always or almost always used	4.5 to 5
	Generally used	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never used	1 To 1.4

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4.3.3 Research Question 3

Are there any significant differences between EFL and ESL groups' mean scores in using six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies)included in the SILL?

H0: There are not any significant differences between EFL and ESL groups' mean scores in using six categories of language learning strategies included in the SILL.

H1: There are significant differences between EFL and ESL groups' mean scores in using six categories of language learning strategies included in the SILL.

A multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVA) is run to compare the ESL/EFL groups' use of the strategy categories of the SILL as there are a number of dependent variables which are, in fact, the six categories of the SILL. Before proceeding, the descriptive statistics (Table 4.11) containing the mean scores of the strategy categories of the ESL/EFL groups is displayed as follows:

Table 4.11

Descriptive Statistics of Categories of Learning Strategies by Setting

Dependent Variable	SETTING	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MEMORY	EFL	2.780	.066	2.649	2.911
	ESL	3.078	.083	2.914	3.243
COGNITIVE	EFL	3.179	.061	3.058	3.300
	ESL	3.390	.077	3.238	3.542
COMPENSATION	EFL	3.347	.071	3.206	3.488
	ESL	3.538	.090	3.361	3.715
METACOGNITIVE	EFL	3.693	.071	3.553	3.833
	ESL	3.949	.089	3.773	4.125
AFFECTIVE	EFL	2.651	.062	2.529	2.773
	ESL	2.921	.077	2.768	3.074
SOCIAL	EFL	3.760	.071	3.620	3.901
	ESL	3.915	.089	3.739	4.092

According to Table 4.11, ESL group show higher mean on all categories of strategies than the EFL group. However, a multivariate analysis of variances test (MANOVA, Table 4.12) was run to determine the significance of the difference in EFL/ESL groups' mean scores as well as their effect size.

Table 4.12

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (MANOVA) for the Categories of the SILL by Setting

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SETTING	Memory	3.317	1	3.317	7.855	.006*	.048
	Cognitive	1.655	1	1.655	4.585	.034*	.029
	Compensation	1.361	1	1.361	2.776	.098	.018
	Metacognitive	2.439	1	2.439	5.059	.026*	.032
	Affective	2.714	1	2.714	7.425	.007*	.046
	Social	.895	1	.895	1.838	.177	.012
Error	Memory	65.465	155	.422			
	Cognitive	55.934	155	.361			
	Compensation	76.003	155	.490			
	Metacognitive	74.724	155	.482			
	Affective	56.649	155	.365			
	Social	75.469	155	.487			
Total	Memory	1385.481	157				
	Cognitive	1727.296	157				
	Compensation	1915.250	157				
	Metacognitive	2335.469	157				
	Affective	1251.722	157				
	Social	2368.083	157				

Based on the results displayed in Tables 4.11 and 4.12, it can be concluded that:

- The ESL students (M = 3.07) show a higher mean on memory strategies than the EFL learners (M = 2.78). There is a significant difference between the EFL and ESL groups' mean score in using memory category of strategies; F (1, 155) = 7.85, p = .006< .05. The effect size (Partial η^2 = .048) is almost moderate. Therefore the null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is supported.
- There is a significant difference between the EFL and ESL groups' mean score in using cognitive category of strategies (F (1, 155) = 4.58, p = .034 < .05). The effect size (Partial η^2 = .029) proves to be weak. Accordingly, the ESL students (M =

3.39) show a higher mean on cognitive section of strategies than the EFL learners (M = 3.17). Thus, the null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is supported.

- The ESL students (M = 3.53) show a higher mean on compensation strategies than the EFL learners (M = 3.34). By contrast, there is not a significant difference between the EFL and ESL groups' mean score in using compensation strategies (F (1, 155) = 2.77, p = .098 > .05). Partial η^2 = .01 also represents a weak effect size. Thus, the null-hypothesis is supported.
- The ESL students (M = 3.94) show a higher mean on metacognitive strategy section than the EFL learners (M = 3.69). There is a significant difference between the EFL and ESL groups' mean score in using metacognitive strategy category (F (1, 155) =5.05, p = .026 < .05). Thus, the null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is supported. It should be mentioned that the effect size value swings between weak to moderate (Partial η^2 = .03).
- The ESL students (M = 2.92) show a higher mean on affective category of strategies than the EFL learners (M = 2.65). There is a significant difference between the EFL and ESL groups' mean score in using affective strategies; F (1, 155) = 7.42, p = .007 < .05, Partial η^2 = .04. Accordingly, the null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is supported.
- Although the ESL students (M = 3.91) showed a higher mean on social strategy section than the EFL learners (M = 3.76), no significant difference was observed between the EFL and ESL groups' mean score in using social category of strategies; F (1, 155) = 1.83, p = .177> .05, Partial η^2 = .01.Thus, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null-hypothesis is supported.

4.3.4 Research Question 4

Does language proficiency factor affect the use of the overall language learning strategies of Iranian language learners in (1) the whole population, (2) the EFL group and (3) the ESL group in the study?

(1) The effect of the independent variable (proficiency) on the dependent variable (the overall use of the SILL) for the whole population:

H0: Proficiency factor has a significant effect on the whole participants' using of the overall SILL.

H1: Proficiency factor does not have any significant effect on the whole participants' using of the overall SILL.

On average, the advanced students (M = 3.47, SD = .531) show a higher mean on the overall SILL than the intermediate (M = 3.34, SD = .44) and elementary (M = 3.11, SD = .49) groups (Table 4.13). A test of analysis of variances (ANOVA, Table 4.14) was further run to decide if the differences of mean scores between the proficiency groups were significant. Before presenting the ANOVA results, the descriptive statistics of the whole participants' mean scores on the overall SILL through proficiency groups of elementary, intermediate, and advanced is displayed as follows.

Table 4.13

Descriptive Statistics for the Overall SILL (Whole Participants) by Proficiency

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ELEMENTARY	49	3.112	.4910	.0701	2.971	3.253	1.8	4.1
INTERMEDIATE	55	3.343	.4435	.0598	3.223	3.463	2.3	4.5
ADVANCED	53	3.479	.5318	.0730	3.332	3.625	2.4	4.6
Total	157	3.317	.5088	.0406	3.237	3.397	1.8	4.6

The results of one-way ANOVA (F (2, 154) = 7.28, p = .001 < .05, Table 4.14) indicate that there are significant differences between the mean scores of the advanced, intermediate and elementary groups on the overall use of the SILL for the whole population (EFL/ESL groups) of the study. The effect size (ω^2 = .07) of the significance is also moderate. Thus, the null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is supported.

Table 4.14

One-way ANOVA for the Overall Use of the SILL by Proficiency for the Whole Participants

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	3.489	2	1.745	7.282	.001
Within Groups	36.892	154	.240		
Total	40.381	156			

As one-way ANOVA does not show where the difference lies between proficiency groups, a post-hoc Scheffe's test (Table 4.15) was run, whose results indicate that there is only a significant difference between the means of advanced (M = 3.47) and elementary (M = 3.11) students on the overall SILL (MD = .36, p = .001< .05). The other groups do not show any significant differences.

Table 4.15

Post-Hoc Scheffe's Test for the Overall SILL by Proficiency for the Whole Participants

(I) PROFICIENCY	(J) PROFICIENCY	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
INTERMEDIATE	ELEMENTARY	.2314	.0961	.058	-.006	.469
ADVANCED	ELEMENTARY	.3670*	.0970	.001	.127	.607
	INTERMEDIATE	.1356	.0942	.357	-.097	.368

*. The mean difference is significant at the *0.05* level.

It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is also met (Levene's F = .89, p = .41 > .05) (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16

Homogeneity of Variances for the Overall SILL by Proficiency

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.893	2	154	.412

(2) The effect of the independent variable (proficiency) on the dependent variable (the overall use of the SILL) for the EFL group:

H0: The proficiency factor does not have any significant effect on the

learners' overall use of the SILL in the EFL group.

H1: The proficiency factor has a significant effect on the learners' overall use of the SILL in the EFL group.

On average the advanced students (M = 3.33, SD = .42) show a higher mean on the overall use of the SILL than the intermediate (M = 3.20, SD = .34) and elementary (M = 3.13, SD = .35) groups (Table 4.17) in the EFL group.

Table 4.17

Descriptive Statistics Overall SILL (EFL Setting) by Proficiency Factor

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ELEMENTARY	30	3.133	.4505	.0822	2.965	3.302	2.3	4.0
INTERMEDIATE	31	3.200	.3494	.0627	3.072	3.328	2.5	4.0
ADVANCED	35	3.330	.4521	.0764	3.174	3.485	2.4	4.3
Total	96	3.226	.4249	.0434	3.140	3.313	2.3	4.3

The results of one-way ANOVA (F (2, 93) = 1.84, p = .164 > .05, ω^2 = .01) (Table 4.18) indicate that there are not any significant differences between the mean scores of the advanced, intermediate and elementary EFL learners on the overall use of the SILL. Thus the null-hypothesis is supported.

Table 4.18

One-Way ANOVA Overall SILL by Proficiency Factor (EFL Group)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.655	2	.328	1.846	.164
Within Groups	16.497	93	.177		
Total	17.152	95			

It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's $F = 1.44$, $p = .24 > .05$, Table 4.19).

Table 4.19

Homogeneity of Variances Total SILL by Proficiency Factor (EFL setting)

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.443	2	93	.241

(3) The effect of Independent variable (proficiency factor) on dependent variable (the overall use of the SILL) for the ESL group:

Table 4.20 reports that on average the advanced students ($M = 3.76$, $SD = .59$) show a higher mean on the overall use of the SILL than the intermediate ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .48$) and elementary ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .56$) groups as displayed in the following part:

Table 4.20

Descriptive Statistics Overall use of the SILL (ESL Setting) by Proficiency Factor

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ELEMENTARY	19	3.078	.5602	.1285	2.808	3.348	1.8	4.1
INTERMEDIATE	24	3.528	.4890	.0998	3.322	3.735	2.3	4.5
ADVANCED	18	3.769	.5667	.1336	3.487	4.051	3.0	4.6
Total	61	3.459	.5946	.0761	3.307	3.611	1.8	4.6

The results of one-way ANOVA ((F (2, 58) = 8.03, $p = .001 < .05$), Table 4.21) indicate that there are significant differences between the mean scores of the advanced, intermediate and elementary groups on the overall use of the SILL in the ESL setting. Thus,

the null-hypothesis is rejected. The effect size (ω^2 = .18) also proves to be large statistically.

Table 4.21

One-Way ANOVA Overall Use of the SILL by Proficiency Factor (ESL Group)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	4.604	2	2.302	8.038	.001
Within Groups	16.609	58	.286		
Total	21.212	60			

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's tests (Table 4.22, see below) indicate that:

- There is a significant difference between the advanced (*M* = 3.76) and elementary (*M* = 3.07) groups' mean scores on the overall use of the SILL (MD = .69, *p* = .001 < .05).
- There is a significant difference between the intermediate (*M* = 3.52) and elementary (*M* = 3.07) groups' mean scores on the overall use of the SILL (MD = .45, *p* = .029 < .05).

Table 4.22

Post-Hoc Scheffe's Tests Overall SILL by Proficiency Factor (ESL Group)

(I) PROFICIENCY	(J) PROFICIENCY	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ADVANCED	ELEMENTARY	.6910*	.1760	.001	.249	1.133
INTERMEDIATE	ELEMENTARY	.4504*	.1643	.029	.038	.863

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's F = 7.22, $p = .49 > .05$), (Table 4.23).

Table 4.23

Homogeneity of Variances for Overall Use of SILL by Proficiency Factor (ESL Setting)

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.722	2	58	.490

4.3.5 Research Question 5

Does language proficiency factor affect the use of any of the six categories of language learning strategies in (1) the whole population, (2) the EFL group and (3) the ESL group in the study?

(1) The effect of language proficiency factor on the whole participants' use of six categories of language learning strategies in the SILL:

To avoid repeating the null and alternative hypotheses for every individual strategy category, the basic forms of the hypotheses are presented in the following part and are assumed to hold for every one of the six categories in the same way.

H0: Language proficiency factor does not have any significant effect on the whole participants' use of six categories of strategies in the SILL.

H1: Language proficiency factor has a significant effect on the whole participants' use of six categories of strategies in the SILL.

A multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVA) test is run to compare the advanced, intermediate and elementary ESL/EFL groups' mean scores of using the six

categories of the SILL. First, descriptive statistics (Table 4.24) containing the whole participants' mean scores on the SILL's sections is presented as follows:

Table 4.24

Descriptive Statistics Categories of Learning Strategies by Proficiency Factor

Dependent Variable	PROFICIENCY	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MEMORY	ELEMENTARY	2.739	.094	2.554	2.924
	INTERMEDIATE	2.885	.088	2.710	3.060
	ADVANCED	3.052	.090	2.874	3.230
COGNITIVE	ELEMENTARY	3.000	.083	2.836	3.164
	INTERMEDIATE	3.303	.078	3.148	3.457
	ADVANCED	3.460	.080	3.302	3.617
COMPENSATION	ELEMENTARY	3.068	.095	2.880	3.256
	INTERMEDIATE	3.533	.090	3.356	3.711
	ADVANCED	3.632	.091	3.451	3.813
METACOGNITIVE	ELEMENTARY	3.580	.098	3.386	3.775
	INTERMEDIATE	3.792	.093	3.609	3.975
	ADVANCED	3.990	.095	3.803	4.176
AFFECTIVE	ELEMENTARY	2.673	.088	2.500	2.847
	INTERMEDIATE	2.700	.083	2.537	2.863
	ADVANCED	2.890	.084	2.724	3.056
SOCIAL	ELEMENTARY	3.711	.100	3.513	3.908
	INTERMEDIATE	3.906	.094	3.720	4.092
	ADVANCED	3.833	.096	3.644	4.023

In order to see if the differences in the mean scores of the three proficiency groups in using all the SILL's strategy categories are significant for the whole participants we need to run a multivariate analysis of variances test (MANOVA, Table 4.25) which is illustrated as follows:

Table 4.25

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (MANOVA) Categories of Learning Strategies by Proficiency Factor (Whole Participants)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
PROFICIENCY	MEMORY	2.508	2	1.254	2.914	.057	.036
	COGNITIVE	5.523	2	2.761	8.168	.000	.096
	COMPENSATION	9.160	2	4.580	10.342	.000	.118
	METACOGNITIVE	4.260	2	2.130	4.499	.013	.055
	AFFECTIVE	1.457	2	.729	1.937	.148	.025
	SOCIAL	1.000	2	.500	1.022	.362	.013

Based on the results displayed in Tables 4.24 and 4.25 it can be concluded that in the whole population (EFL/ESL groups) of the study:

(A) The advanced students (M = 3.05) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 2.88) and the elementary (M = 2.73) learners on memory strategies. Nonetheless, F (2, 154) = 2.91, p = .057 > .05, and Partial η^2 = .03 which represents a weak to moderate effect size provide us with evidence to conclude that the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the students' use of the memory category of strategies. Thus, the null-hypothesis is supported.

(B) The advanced group (M = 2.89) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 2.70) and the elementary (M = 2.67) groups on affective category of strategies. However, the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the students' use of the affective strategy category based on the results of Table 4.25; F (2, 154) = 1.93, p = .148 > .05, Partial η^2 = .02 representing a weak to moderate effect size. Thus, the null-hypothesis is supported.

(C) The intermediate students (M = 3.90) show a higher mean score than the advanced (M = 3.83) and the elementary (M = 3.71) groups on social strategy category. By contrast, the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the students' use of social strategies (F (2, 154) = 1.02, p = .362 > .05, Partial η^2 = .01 representing a weak effect size). The null-hypothesis could not be rejected.

(D) The proficiency factor has a significant effect on the students' use of cognitive category of strategies based on the results of Table 4.24: F (2, 154) = 8.16, p = .000< .05, Partial η^2 = .096 representing a moderate to large effect size. The advanced students (M = 3.46) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 3.30) and the elementary (M = 3) groups. The null-hypothesis is rejected as a result.

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's tests indicate that;

- The advanced students significantly show a higher mean score on cognitive strategy category than the elementary students (MD = .46, p = .001< .05).
- The intermediate students significantly show a higher mean score on cognitive strategy category than the elementary students (MD = .30, p = .032 < .05).
- There is no significant difference between advanced and intermediate groups.

(E) The proficiency factor has a significant effect on the students' use of the compensation strategy category (F (2, 154) = 10.34, p = .000 < .05, Partial η^2 = .118 representing an almost large effect size). The null-hypothesis is rejected as a result. The advanced students (M = 3.63) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 3.53) and the elementary (M = 3.06) groups on compensation category of strategies.

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's tests (Table 4.26) indicate that;

- The advanced students significantly show a higher mean score on compensation strategy category than the elementary students (MD = .56, p = .000< .05).

- The intermediate students significantly show a higher mean score on compensation strategy category than the elementary students (MD = .46, p = .002< .05).
- There is no significant difference between advanced and intermediate groups in using compensation strategies.

(F) The proficiency factor has a significant effect on the students' use of metacognitive strategies (F (2, 154) = 4.49, p = .013< .05, Partial η^2 = .055 representing a moderate effect size). The advanced group (M = 3.99) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 3.79) and elementary (M = 3.58) groups. Obviously, the null-hypothesis is rejected.

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's tests (Table 4.26) indicate that;

- The advanced students significantly show a higher mean score on metacognitive strategies than the elementary students (MD = .41, p = .013< .05).
- There are not any significant differences between the other proficiency groups.

Table 4.26

Post-Hoc Scheffe's Tests Categories of Learning Strategies by Proficiency Factor

Dependent Variable	(I) PROFICIENCY	(J) PROFICIENCY	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Cognitive	Intermediate	Elementary	.303*	.1142	.032	.020	.585
	Advanced	Elementary	.460*	.1152	.001	.175	.744
Compensation	Intermediate	Elementary	.465*	.1307	.002	.142	.788
	Advanced	Elementary	.564*	.1319	.000	.238	.890
Metacognitive	Advanced	Elementary	.41*	.136	.013	.07	.75

*. The mean difference is significant at the ***.05*** level.

(2) The effect of language proficiency factor on EFL learners' using of six categories of language learning strategies in the SILL:

To avoid repeating the null and alternative hypotheses for every individual strategy category, the basic forms of the hypotheses are presented in the following part and are assumed to hold for any one of the six categories in the same way.

H0: Language proficiency factor does not have any significant effect on EFL learners' using of the six categories of strategies in the SILL.

H1: Language proficiency factor has a significant effect on EFL learners' using of the six categories of strategies in the SILL.

A multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVA) is run to compare the advanced, intermediate and elementary EFL groups' mean scores in using the categories of the SILL. First, descriptive statistics (Table 4.27) containing the EFL participants' mean scores on the SILL's six categories across proficiency groups is presented as follows:

Table 4.27

Descriptive Statistics for Categories of Learning Strategies by Proficiency Factor (EFL Setting)

Dependent Variable	PROFICIENCY	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MEMORY	ELEMENTARY	2.700	.110	2.481	2.919
	INTERMEDIATE	2.713	.108	2.498	2.928
	ADVANCED	2.908	.102	2.705	3.110
COGNITIVE	ELEMENTARY	3.036	.098	2.842	3.229
	INTERMEDIATE	3.154	.096	2.964	3.345
	ADVANCED	3.324	.090	3.145	3.504
COMPENSATION	ELEMENTARY	3.222	.110	3.003	3.441
	INTERMEDIATE	3.430	.109	3.215	3.646
	ADVANCED	3.381	.102	3.178	3.584
METACOGNITIVE	ELEMENTARY	3.578	.122	3.335	3.821
	INTERMEDIATE	3.627	.120	3.388	3.866
	ADVANCED	3.851	.113	3.626	4.076
AFFECTIVE	ELEMENTARY	2.644	.105	2.437	2.852
	INTERMEDIATE	2.559	.103	2.355	2.763
	ADVANCED	2.738	.097	2.546	2.930
SOCIAL	ELEMENTARY	3.744	.123	3.501	3.988
	INTERMEDIATE	3.806	.121	3.567	4.046
	ADVANCED	3.733	.114	3.508	3.959

As mentioned earlier, a multivariate analysis of variances test (MANOVA, Table 4.28)) is run to determine if there are significant differences between the advanced, intermediate and elementary EFL students' mean scores in using the categories of the learning strategies in the SILL.

Table 4.28

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (MANOVA) Categories of Learning Strategies by Proficiency Factor (EFL Setting)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
PROFICIENCY	MEMORY	.903	2	.451	1.241	.294	.026
	COGNITIVE	1.376	2	.688	2.410	.095	.049
	COMPENSATION	.722	2	.361	.987	.376	.021
	METACOGNITIVE	1.404	2	.702	1.560	.216	.032
	AFFECTIVE	.528	2	.264	.806	.450	.017
	SOCIAL	.099	2	.050	.110	.896	.002
Error	MEMORY	33.837	93	.364			
	COGNITIVE	26.543	93	.285			
	COMPENSATION	33.982	93	.365			
	METACOGNITIVE	41.849	93	.450			
	AFFECTIVE	30.476	93	.328			
	SOCIAL	41.946	93	.451			
Total	MEMORY	776.716	96				
	COGNITIVE	998.291	96				
	COMPENSATION	1110.278	96				
	METACOGNITIVE	1352.728	96				
	AFFECTIVE	705.694	96				
	SOCIAL	1399.556	96				

Based on the results displayed in Tables 4.27 and 4.28, it can be concluded that in the EFL group;

(A) The advanced students (M = 2.90) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 2.71) and the elementary (M = 2.70) groups on memory strategies. However, F (2, 93) = 1.24, p = .294 > .05, indicates that the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the students' use of the memory category of strategies. Thus, the null-hypothesis is supported. Also Partial (η^2 = .026) represents a weak effect size.

(B) Although the advanced students (M = 3.32) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 3.15) and elementary (M = 3.03) groups on cognitive strategies, the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the students' use of cognitive category of strategies as F (2, 93) = 2.41, p = .09> .05, and Partial η^2 = .049 represents an almost moderate effect size. Obviously, the null-hypothesis is supported.

(C) The intermediate students (M = 3.43) show a higher mean score than the advanced (M = 3.38) and elementary (M = 3.22) groups on compensation strategies. By contrast, the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the EFL participants' use of the compensation section of strategies (F (2, 93) = 098, p = .37 > .05, Partial η^2 = .021 showing a weak effect size). Thus, the null-hypothesis is supported.

(D) Even though the advanced group (M = 3.85) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 3.62) and elementary (M = 3.57) groups on metacognitive strategy category, the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the EFL students' use of metacognitive strategies (F (2, 93) = 1.56, p = .216 > .05, Partial η^2 = .032 showing a moderate effect size). Thus, the null-hypothesis is supported.

(E) The advanced students (M = 2.73) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 2.55) and the elementary (M = 2.64) groups on affective strategy category. However, the null-hypothesis is supported as the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the EFL students' use of affective strategies based on the statistical results; (F (2, 93) = .80, p = .450 > .05, Partial η^2 = .017 exhibiting a weak effect size).

(F) The intermediate students (M = 3.80) show a higher mean score than the elementary (M = 3.74) and advanced (M = 3.73) groups on social strategies. Nonetheless, the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the EFL participants' use of the social

section of strategies (F (2, 93) = .11, p = .898> .05, Partial η^2 = .002 showing a weak effect size). As a result, the null-hypothesis is supported.

(3) The effect of language proficiency factor on the ESL group' application of the six categories of language learning strategies:

To avoid repeating the null and alternative hypotheses for any individual strategy category, the basic forms of the hypotheses are presented in the following part and are assumed to hold for every one of the SILL's six strategy categories in the same way.

H0: Language proficiency factor does not have any significant effect on ESL learners' using of the six categories of strategies in the SILL.

H1: Language proficiency factor has a significant effect on ESL learners' using of the six categories of strategies in the SILL.

A multivariate analysis of variances test (MANOVA) is run to compare the advanced, intermediate and elementary ESL students' mean scores of using the categories of learning strategies in the SILL. Prior to that, descriptive information (Table 4.29) of the ESL groups' mean scores on the SILL's categories is displayed in the following:

Table 4.29

Descriptive Statistics Categories of Learning Strategies by Proficiency Factor (ESL Setting)

Dependent Variable	PROFICIENCY	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MEMORY	ELEMENTARY	2.801	.160	2.482	3.121
	INTERMEDIATE	3.106	.142	2.822	3.391
	ADVANCED	3.333	.164	3.005	3.662
COGNITIVE	ELEMENTARY	2.944	.141	2.661	3.226
	INTERMEDIATE	3.494	.126	3.242	3.746
	ADVANCED	3.722	.145	3.432	4.013
COMPENSATION	ELEMENTARY	2.825	.151	2.522	3.127
	INTERMEDIATE	3.667	.134	3.398	3.936
	ADVANCED	4.120	.155	3.810	4.431
METACOGNITIVE	ELEMENTARY	3.585	.157	3.271	3.899
	INTERMEDIATE	4.005	.140	3.725	4.284
	ADVANCED	4.259	.161	3.936	4.582
AFFECTIVE	ELEMENTARY	2.719	.146	2.426	3.012
	INTERMEDIATE	2.882	.130	2.621	3.142
	ADVANCED	3.185	.150	2.884	3.486
SOCIAL	ELEMENTARY	3.658	.169	3.319	3.997
	INTERMEDIATE	4.035	.151	3.733	4.336
	ADVANCED	4.028	.174	3.680	4.376

Obviously descriptive statistics does not tell us where the differences lie across proficiency groups and whether they are significant or not. T meet this aim, the author applied a multivariate analysis of variances test (MANOVA, Table 4.30).

Table 4.30

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (MANOVA) Categories of Learning Strategies by Proficiency Factor (ESL Setting)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
PROFICIENCY	MEMORY	2.649	2	1.325	2.736	.073	.086
	COGNITIVE	6.033	2	3.016	7.958	.001*	.215
	COMPENSATION	16.173	2	8.087	18.666	.000*	.392
	METACOGNITIVE	4.327	2	2.164	4.623	.014*	.137
	AFFECTIVE	2.066	2	1.033	2.541	.088	.081
	SOCIAL	1.829	2	.914	1.679	.196	.055

Based on the results displayed in Tables 4.29 (Descriptive) and 4.30 (MANOVA) it can be concluded that in the ESL setting;

(A) The advanced students (M = 3.33) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 3.10) and the elementary (M = 2.80) students on memory section of the SILL. Nevertheless, the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the students' use of memory strategies base on the statistical test results: F (2, 58) = 2.73, p = .073> .05, Partial η^2 = .086 showing a moderate effect size. Thus, the null-hypothesis is supported.

(B) The advanced group (M = 3.18) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 2.88) and elementary (M = 2.71) groups on affective strategy category in the SILL. However, the null-hypothesis is supported as the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the ESL students' use of affective strategies based on the statistical test result: F (2, 58) = 2.54, p = .088> .05, Partial η^2 = .081 showing a moderate effect size.

(C) Descriptive information indicates that the intermediate group (M = 4.03) show a higher mean score than the advanced (M = 4.01) and elementary (M = 3.65) groups. However, the proficiency factor has a non-significant effect on the ESL students' use of

social category of strategies (F (2, 58) = 1.97, p = .196 > .05, and Partial η^2 = .055 exhibiting an almost moderate effect size). Thus, the null-hypothesis is supported.

(D) The proficiency factor has a significant effect on the ESL students' use of cognitive strategies (F (2, 58) = 7.95, p = .001< .05, Partial η^2 = .215 representing a large effect size). As a result, the null-hypothesis is rejected. It is argued that the advanced students (M = 3.72) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 3.49) and elementary (M = 2.94) students.

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's test (Table 4.31) indicate that;

- The advanced students significantly show a higher mean score on cognitive strategies than the elementary students (MD = .77, p = .000< .05) in the ESL group.
- The intermediate students significantly show a higher mean score in using cognitive strategies than the elementary students (MD = .55, p = .019 < .05) in the ESL group.
- There is no significant difference between the advanced and intermediate groups.

Table 4.31

Post-Hoc Scheffe's Tests Components of Learning Strategies by Proficiency Factor (ESL Setting)

Dependent Variable	(I) PROFICIENCY	(J) PROFICIENCY	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Cognitive	Advanced	Elementary	.779*	.2025	.001	.270	1.287
	Intermediate	Elementary	.550*	.1891	.019	.075	1.025
Compensation	Intermediate	Elementary	.842*	.2021	.001	.334	1.350
	Advanced	Elementary	1.296*	.2165	.000	.752	1.840
Metacognitive	Advanced	Elementary	.67*	.225	.015	.11	1.24

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

(E) The advanced students (M = 4.12) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 3.66) and the elementary (M = 2.82) groups on compensation section of the SILL. Meanwhile, the proficiency factor has a significant effect on the ESL students' use of compensation strategies (F (2, 58) = 18.66, p = .000< .05, Partial η^2 = .392 representing a large effect size). As a result, the null-hypothesis is rejected.

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's test (Table 4.31) indicate that;

- The advanced ESL students significantly show a higher mean score on compensation strategies than the elementary ESL students (MD = 1.29, p = .000< .05).
- The intermediate ESL students significantly show a higher mean score in using compensation strategies than the elementary ESL students (MD = .84, p = .001< .05).
- There is not any significant difference between advanced and intermediate students in the ESL group.

(F) The statistical results (F (2, 58) = 4.62, p = .014 < .05) provide us with evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the proficiency factor has a significant effect on the ESL participants' use of metacognitive category of strategies. Partial η^2 = .13 also exhibits a moderate to large effect size. The advanced students (M = 4.25) show a higher mean score than the intermediate (M = 4) and the elementary (M = 3.58) groups.

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's tests (Table 4.31) indicate that;

- The advanced students show a significantly higher mean score on metacognitive strategy category than the elementary students (MD = .67, p = .015< .05).
- There are not any significant differences between the other comparisons.

4.3.6 Research Question 6

Regarding 50 individual strategy items included in SILL, A) What are the most and least frequently used strategies of Iranian learners in (1) the EFL group, (2) the ESL group? B) How comparable are EFL and ESL groups regarding their most and least favored strategies?

(A, 1) the most and least frequently used strategies of Iranian learners in the EFL Group;

Based on the results displayed in Table 4.32 and Oxford's (1990) scale for interpretation of scores for the SILL (Table 4.7), 16 items enjoy high frequency of use (*M* = 3 .5-5.0). 29 items enjoy moderate frequency of using (*M* = 2.50 to 3.49) and only five items enjoy low frequency of use (*M* = 1 to 2.49).

Table 4.32

Descriptive Statistics SILL Items (EFL Setting)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q49	96	1	5	4.35	.821
Q32	96	1	5	4.23	.852
Q48	96	1	5	4.04	1.035
Q29	96	2	5	4.04	.870
Q38	96	1	5	3.95	1.089
Q33	96	1	5	3.94	.993
Q14	96	0	5	3.93	1.126
Q37	96	1	5	3.88	1.126
Q45	96	1	5	3.81	1.098
Q11	96	1	5	3.78	1.018
Q15	96	1	5	3.72	1.246
Q40	96	0	5	3.70	1.224
Q35	96	1	5	3.67	1.176

Table 4.32 *Continued*

Q36	96	1	5	3.64	1.097
Q24	96	1	5	3.56	1.074
Q50	96	0	5	3.51	1.265
Q46	96	0	5	3.47	1.384
Q1	96	1	5	3.46	1.045
Q31	96	1	5	3.46	1.104
Q30	96	1	5	3.41	.969
Q47	96	1	5	3.38	1.275
Q25	96	1	5	3.36	1.198
Q2	96	1	5	3.36	1.097
Q12	96	1	5	3.33	1.139
Q39	96	1	5	3.25	1.086
Q28	96	1	5	3.25	1.066
Q18	96	1	5	3.24	1.158
Q20	96	1	5	3.23	1.051
Q10	96	1	5	3.21	1.353
Q4	96	1	5	3.17	1.194
Q16	96	1	5	3.14	1.211
Q34	96	1	5	3.08	1.202
Q42	96	0	5	3.08	1.211
Q13	96	1	5	3.07	1.008
Q22	96	1	5	2.99	1.110
Q26	96	0	5	2.97	1.277
Q8	96	1	5	2.97	1.090
Q9	96	1	5	2.95	1.226
Q27	96	0	5	2.90	1.302
Q19	96	1	5	2.86	1.245
Q23	96	1	5	2.83	1.279
Q3	96	0	5	2.66	1.272
Q21	96	1	5	2.66	1.212
Q6	96	1	5	2.56	1.450
Q17	96	0	5	2.52	1.179
Q44	96	1	5	2.30	1.258
Q5	96	1	5	2.13	1.126
Q41	96	1	5	1.99	1.061
Q7	96	1	5	1.77	.978
Q43	96	1	5	1.58	1.043

Among 16 highly used strategy items by EFL participants, the author will look at the top ten most frequent strategy items to discuss, in some detail, individual strategy use pattern of both groups. The most favored items identified by EFL participants (Table 4.32) are items 45 (M = 3.81), 48 (M = 4.04), and 49 (M = 4.35) classified as *"Social Strategies"*, items 32 (M = 4.23), 33 (M = 3.94), 37 (M = 3.88) and 38 (M = 3.95) classified as *"Metacognitive Strategies"*, item 29 (M = 4.04) classified as a *"Compensation Strategy"*, and finally items 11(M = 3.78) and 14 (M = 3.93) classified as *"cognitive strategies"*. The mean score of all these strategies is above 3.75 which are displayed as follows:

The Most Frequently Used Strategy Items by Mean by EFL Participants

(1) 49. I ask questions in English (in class). (Social)
(2) 32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English. (Metacognitive)
(3) 48. I ask for help from others who can speak English well. (Social)
(4) 29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing. (Compensation)
(5) 38. I think about my progress in learning English. (Metacognitive)
(6) 33. I try to find out how to be better learner of English. (Metacognitive)
(7) 14. I start conversations in English (in class). (Cognitive)
(8) 37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills. (Metacognitive)
(9) 45. If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down and say it again. (Social)
(10) 11. I try to talk like native English speakers. (Cognitive)

Among these highly used strategies 7 items belong to metacognitive and social strategy categories which were previously recognized as the mostly favored ones by Iranian EFL learners (question 3). Item 29 is located in the compensation category, while items 11 and 14 fall within the cognitive domain; both categories are sometimes used by the EFL participants in the study.

At the bottom of Table 4.32 appear five least frequently used items by EFL participants which are marked as items 41 (*M* = 1.99), 43 (*M* = 1.58), and 44 (*M* = 2.30) as *"affective strategies"*, and items 5 (*M* = 2.13), and 7 (*M* = 1.77) as *"memory strategies*". Based on Oxford's (1990) scale for interpretation of the SILL scores (Table 4.7), these items whose mean scores are below 2.5 are not generally used by Iranian EFL participants. They appear as follows:

The Least Favored Strategy Items by Iranian EFL Learners

(1) 43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary. (Affective)
(2) 7. I physically act out new English words. (Memory)
(3) 41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. (Affective)
(4) 5. I use rhymes to remember new English words. (Memory)
(5) 44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English. (Affective)

Not surprisingly, these items belong to the categories of strategies which were least favored (question 3) by Iranian EFL learners.

(A, 2) The most and least frequently used strategies by Iranian learners in the ESL group;

Based on the results displayed in Table 4.33 and Oxford's (1990) scale for interpretation of scores for the SILL (Table 4.7), 27 items enjoy high frequency of use (*M* = 3 .5 to 5.0); 20 items enjoy moderate frequency of use (*M* = 2.50 to 3.49) and only 3 items show low frequency of use (*M* = 1 to 2.49).

Table 4.33

Descriptive Statistics SILL Items (ESL Setting)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q49	61	1	5	4.34	.947
Q32	61	1	5	4.25	.925
Q38	61	1	5	4.25	.830
Q33	61	2	5	4.20	.891
Q35	61	1	5	4.16	.986
Q45	61	2	5	4.08	.971
Q15	61	1	5	4.03	1.169
Q48	61	1	5	3.98	1.008
Q29	61	1	5	3.95	1.117
Q10	61	1	5	3.93	1.109
Q31	61	1	5	3.92	.971
Q11	61	1	5	3.90	1.076
Q40	61	1	5	3.90	1.121
Q50	61	1	5	3.84	1.157
Q14	61	1	5	3.82	1.148
Q46	61	1	5	3.79	1.142
Q37	61	1	5	3.77	1.055
Q34	61	1	5	3.77	1.175
Q25	61	1	5	3.74	.998
Q2	61	1	5	3.67	1.106
Q30	61	1	5	3.62	1.067
Q36	61	1	5	3.61	1.173
Q20	61	1	5	3.61	1.021
Q1	61	1	5	3.59	1.101
Q24	61	1	5	3.57	1.161
Q26	61	1	5	3.57	1.310
Q39	61	1	5	3.51	1.090
Q47	61	1	5	3.46	1.163
Q8	61	1	5	3.46	1.119
Q12	61	1	5	3.34	1.153
Q18	61	1	5	3.28	1.002
Q22	61	1	5	3.26	1.277
Q28	61	1	5	3.26	1.237
Q4	61	1	5	3.21	1.127

Table 4.33 *Continued*

Q13	61	1	5	3.21	1.199
Q42	61	1	5	3.21	.985
Q27	61	1	5	3.13	1.297
Q23	61	1	5	3.13	1.310
Q9	61	1	5	3.13	1.284
Q16	61	1	5	3.02	1.271
Q6	61	1	5	3.00	1.414
Q19	61	1	5	2.98	1.297
Q17	61	1	5	2.98	1.310
Q3	61	1	5	2.97	1.238
Q21	61	1	5	2.95	1.161
Q44	61	1	5	2.69	1.311
Q41	61	1	5	2.56	1.272
Q5	61	1	5	2.43	1.190
Q7	61	1	5	2.25	1.234
Q43	61	1	5	1.66	1.109

In order to compare the ESL/EFL groups' individual strategy use pattern in some detail, among the 27 highly used strategy items by ESL participants, the author choose the top ten ones which ranked above 3.90 by their mean scores. Accordingly, these strategies (Table 4.33) are items 45 (M = 4.08), 48 (M = 3.98) and 49 (M = 4.34), classified as *"Social Strategies"*, items 32 (M = 4.25), 33 (M = 4.20), 35 (M = 16) and 38 (M= 4.25) classified as *"Metacognitive Strategies"*, and items 10 (M = 3.93) and 15 (M = 4.03) classified as a *"Cognitive Strategy"*. Finally item 29 (M = 3.95) falls within *"compensation strategy"* category. They are displayed as follows:

The Top Ten Most Frequently Used Strategy Items by Mean by ESL Participants

(1) 49. I ask questions in English (in class). (Social)
(2) 32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English. (Metacognitive)
(3) 38. I think about my progress in learning English. (Metacognitive)
(4) 33. I try to find out how to be better learner of English. (Metacognitive)
(5) 35. I look for people I can talk to in English. (Metacognitive)

(6) 45. If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down and say it again. (Social)
(7) 15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English. (Cognitive)
(8) 48. I ask for help from others who can speak English well. (Social)
(9) 29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.(Compensation)
(10) 10. I say or write new English words several times. (Cognitive)

Among these highly used strategies, 4 items belong to the metacognitive category while 3 items are placed within the social category; both were previously recognized as the mostly favored categories by Iranian ESL learners (question 3). Items 10 and 15 fall within the cognitive domain which, nevertheless, was a moderately used category (M = 3.39) among ESL participants (question 3). Finally item 9 belongs to the compensation category which is actually sometimes used by ESL participants. Obviously none of the above most favored strategies falls within the memory or affective domain of strategies.

At the bottom of Table 4.33 appear the three least frequently used strategy items by ESL participants which are shown as items 43 (M = 1.66), classified as an *"affective strategy",* items 7 (M = 2.25) and 5 (M = 2.43) classified as *"memory strategies"*. The mean score of these three items is below 2.5 and based on Oxford's (1990) scale for interpretation of the SILL scores (Table 4.7), these items are not generally used by Iranian ESL participants. They appear in the following part:

The Least Favored Strategy Items by Iranian ESL Learners

(1) 43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary. (Affective)
(2) 7. I physically act out new English words. (Memory)
(3) 5. I use rhymes to remember new English words. (Memory)

Not surprisingly, these items belong to the categories of strategies which turned out to be least favored by Iranian ESL learners (question 3).

(**B)** EFL and ESL groups' Individual Strategies on Comparison

In this section the author compares the ESL/ EFL groups on their similar and different patterns of strategy using by looking at their most and least favored strategies. Accordingly, Tables 4.34 and 4.36 display the most and least favored strategies of ESL and EFL participants. Table 4.35 showing the results of statistical MANOVA helps determine where there are statistically significant differences between EFL and ESL groups' mean scores in using 50 individual strategy items in the SILL.

Table 4.34

EFL/ESL Groups Most Favored Individual Strategies on Comparison

Top ten EFL Strategy Items	**Category of Strategy**	**Top ten ESL Strategy Items**	**Category of Strategy**	**EFL/ESL Most Favored S Items (combined mean)**
Item 49(M=4.35)	Social	Item 49(M=4.34)	Social	Item 49(M=4.35)
Item 32(M=4.23)	Metacognitive	Item 32(M=4.25)	Metacognitive	Item 32(M=4.24)
Item 48(M=4.04)	Social	Item 38(M=4.25)	Metacognitive	Item 38(M=4.06)
Item 29(M=4.04)	Compensation	Item 33(M=4.20)	Metacognitive	Item 33(M=4.04)
Item 38(M=3.95)	Metacognitive	**Item 35(M=4.16)**	Metacognitive	Item 48(M=4.02)
Item 33(M=3.94)	Metacognitive	Item 45(M=4.08)	Social	Item 29(M=4.01)
Item 14(M=3.93)	Cognitive	**Item 15(M=4.03)**	Cognitive	Item 45(M=3.94)
Item 37(M=3.88)	Metacognitive	Item 48(M=3.98)	Social	
Item 45(M=3.81)	Social	Item 29(M=3.95)	Compensation	
Item 11(M=3.78)	Cognitive	**Item 10(M=3.93)**	Cognitive	

The results of Table 4.34 show that ESL and EFL learners have striking similarities in their top most favored strategies; seven most favored strategies are shared by both EFL and ESL groups. These strategies are as follows:

The Most Frequently Used Strategies by Mean by EFL/ESL Participants

(1) 49. I ask questions in English (in class). (Social)
(2) 32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English. (Metacognitive)
(3) 38. I think about my progress in learning English. (Metacognitive)
(4) 33. I try to find out how to be better learner of English. (Metacognitive)
(5) 48. I ask for help from others who can speak English well. (Social)
(6) 29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing. (Compensation)
(7) 45. If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down and say it again. (Social)

Items 14, 37, and 11 which are in the EFL list of top ten strategies but not in the ESL list do not show significant differences ($p > .05$, Table 4.35) in their mean scores; item 14 (ESL $M = 3.82$/ EFL $M = 3.93$), item 37 (ESL $M = 3.77$/ EFL $M = 3.88$) and item 11 (ESL $M = 3.90$/ EFL $M = 3.78$). By contrast, items 10, 15 and 35 which are in the ESL list of top ten strategies but not in the EFL list seem to have noticeable differences in their mean scores; item 10 (ESL $M = 3.93$/ EFL $M = 3.21$), item 15 (ESL $M = 4.03$/ EFL $M = 3.72$) and finally item 35 (ESL $M = 4.16$/ EFL M= 3.67). Based on the results of the statistical MANOVA (Table 4.35), there are significant differences between the mean scores of EFL and ESL groups on item 10 ($p = 0.001 < .05$) and item 35 ($p = 0.006 < .05$)). Item 15, nevertheless, does not show any significant difference between the EFL and ESL groups. In other words ESL students use items 10 and 35 statistically more than their EFL counterparts do. These items are as follow:

- (10) I say or write new English words several times. (Cognitive*)
- (15) I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English. (Cognitive)
- (35) I look for people I can talk to in English. (Metacognitive*)

Another noticeable feature that can be observed comparing Iranian EFL and ESL participants on their highly used individual strategies is that (see Tables 4.32, and 4.33) while Iranian ESL participants perceived using 27 strategies of the SILL at a high frequency (*M* = 3.5 to 5), Iranian EFL learners high frequently used only 16 strategies of the SILL. These eleven strategies which were highly used by the ESL learners but moderately applied by the EFL participants are as follow:

Strategies Highly Used by ESL Learners but Moderately Used by EFL Learners

(1) 1. I think of relationship between what I already know and new things I learn in English. (Memory)
(2) 2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them. (Memory)
(3) 10. I say or write new English words several times. (Cognitive*)
(4) 20. I try to find patterns in English. (Cognitive*)
(5) 25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures. (Compensation*)
(6) 26. I make up new words when I do not know the right one in English. (Compensation*)
(7) 30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use English. (Metacognitive)
(8) 31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better. (Metacognitive*)
(9) 34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English. (Metacognitive*)
(10) 39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English. (Affective)
(11) 46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk. (Social)

Although ESL group show higher mean scores on all the above items, the results of statistical MANOVA (Table 4.35) indicate these mean differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$) for items10, 20, 25, 26, 31, and 34, and not statistically significant for other items (1, 2, 30, 39, and 46) between ESL/EFL groups in mean scores.

Table 4.35

MANOVA Tests of Between Subjects Effects for Individual Strategies Used by Iranian ESL/ EFL Participants

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Mean EFL	Mean ESL
SETTING	Q1	.648	1	.648	.569	.452	.004	3.46	3.59
	Q2	3.528	1	3.528	2.914	.090	.018	3.36	3.67
	Q3	3.607	1	3.607	2.276	.133	.014	2.66	2.97
	Q4	.080	1	.080	.059	.808	.000	3.17	3.21
	Q5	3.385	1	3.385	2.554	.112	.016	2.13	2.43
	Q6	7.139	1	7.139	3.462	.065	.022	2.56	3.00
	Q7	8.418	1	8.418	7.159	.008	.044	**1.77**	**2.25**
	Q8	8.965	1	8.965	7.390	.007	.046	**2.97**	**3.46**
	Q9	1.252	1	1.252	.803	.372	.005	2.95	3.13
	Q10	19.665	1	19.665	12.312	.001	.074	**3.21**	**3.93**
	Q11	.541	1	.541	.499	.481	.003	3.78	3.90
	Q12	.004	1	.004	.003	.954	.000	3.33	3.34
	Q13	.733	1	.733	.622	.432	.004	3.07	3.21
	Q14	.430	1	.430	.334	.564	.002	3.93	3.82
	Q15	3.678	1	3.678	2.486	.117	.016	3.72	4.03
	Q16	.528	1	.528	.347	.557	.002	3.14	3.02
	Q17	7.988	1	7.988	5.270	.023	.033	**2.52**	**2.98**
	Q18	.057	1	.057	.047	.828	.000	3.24	3.28
	Q19	.528	1	.528	.330	.567	.002	2.86	2.98
	Q20	5.312	1	5.312	4.915	.028	.031	**3.23**	**3.61**
	Q21	3.237	1	3.237	2.275	.134	.014	2.66	2.95
	Q22	2.774	1	2.774	2.002	.159	.013	2.99	3.26
	Q23	3.308	1	3.308	1.985	.161	.013	2.83	3.13
	Q24	.005	1	.005	.004	.951	.000	3.56	3.57
	Q25	5.193	1	5.193	4.106	.044	.026	**3.36**	**3.74**
	Q26	13.653	1	13.653	8.208	.005	.050	**2.97**	**3.57**
	Q27	2.065	1	2.065	1.222	.271	.008	2.90	3.13
	Q28	.006	1	.006	.004	.947	.000	3.25	3.26
	Q29	.308	1	.308	.325	.569	.002	4.04	3.95
	Q30	1.752	1	1.752	1.724	.191	.011	3.41	3.62
	Q31	7.882	1	7.882	7.086	.009	.044	**3.46**	**3.92**

Table 4.35 *Continued*

Q32	.010	1	.010	.013	.908	.000	4.23	4.25
Q33	2.506	1	2.506	2.750	.099	.017	3.94	4.20
Q34	17.612	1	17.612	12.402	.001	.074	**3.08**	**3.77**
Q35	9.223	1	9.223	7.536	.007	.046	**3.67**	**4.16**
Q36	.031	1	.031	.024	.876	.000	3.64	3.61
Q37	.407	1	.407	.337	.562	.002	3.88	3.77
Q38	3.312	1	3.312	3.332	.070	.021	3.95	4.25
Q39	2.487	1	2.487	2.103	.149	.013	3.25	3.51
Q40	1.548	1	1.548	1.102	.295	.007	3.70	3.90
Q41	12.025	1	12.025	9.135	.003	.056	**1.99**	**2.56**
Q42	.628	1	.628	.493	.484	.003	3.08	3.21
Q43	.196	1	.196	.171	.680	.001	1.58	1.66
Q44	5.570	1	5.570	3.408	.067	.022	2.30	2.69
Q45	2.708	1	2.708	2.452	.119	.016	3.81	4.08
Q46	3.775	1	3.775	2.249	.136	.014	3.47	3.79
Q47	.263	1	.263	.173	.678	.001	3.38	3.46
Q48	.126	1	.126	.120	.730	.001	4.04	3.98
Q49	.004	1	.004	.005	.945	.000	4.35	4.34
Q50	3.955	1	3.955	2.639	.106	.017	3.51	3.84

In order to discuss Iranian students' least favored strategies the author will look at all the individual strategies which show a low frequency of use (M = 1-2.4) based on Oxford'(1990) scale for interpretation of the SILL scores (Table 4.7). Accordingly, Table 4.36 displays these strategies for EFL and ESL groups as well as for their combination as a whole nationality as follows:

Table 4.36

Least Favored EFL/ ESL Individual Strategies on Comparison

EFL Least Favored Strategy Items	Category of Strategy	ESL Least favored Strategy Items	Category of Strategy	EFL/ESL Least Favored Strategy Items(combined mean)
Item 43(*M* =1.58)	Affective	Item 43(*M* = 1.66)	Affective	Item 43(*M* = 1.61)
Item 7(*M* = 1.77)	Memory	Item 7(*M* = 2.25)	Memory	Item 7(*M* = 1.96)
Item 41(*M* = 1.99)	Affective	Item 5(*M* = 2.43)	Memory	Item 41(*M* = 2.21)
Item 5(*M* = 2.13)	Memory			Item 5(*M* = 2.24)
Item 44(*M* = 2.30)	Affective			Item 44(*M* = 2.45)

The Least Frequently Used Individual Strategies by Iranian ESL/EFL Learners

(1) 43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary. (Affective)
(2) 7. I physically act out new English words. (Memory)
(3) 41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. (Affective*)
(4) 5. I use rhymes to remember new English words. (Memory)
(5) 44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English. (Affective)

Not surprisingly, these items belong to the categories of strategies which were recognized (question 3) as the least frequently used ones by both EFL/ESL Iranian learners. Two items (41 and 44) are in the EFL list of least favored strategies but not in the ESL list. By comparison, while ESL and EFL groups statistically show significant differences in their mean scores on item 41 ($p = 0.003 < .05$, Table 4.36), item 44 doesnot statistically exhibit any significant difference ($p = 0.067 > .05$) between EFL and ESL learners' mean scores.

4.3.7 Research Question 7

Does the interaction of setting (EFL/ESL) and language proficiency affect the Iranian participants' using of the overall language learning strategies as revealed by the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL)?

H0: The interaction of setting (EFL/ESL) and Language Proficiency does not significantly affect the Iranian participants' using of the overall language learning strategies.

H1: The interaction of setting (EFL/ESL) and language proficiency factor significantly affects the Iranian participants' using of the overall language learning strategies.

A statistical two-way ANOVA test (Table 4.38) was run to answer this question as there are two independent factors (setting/proficiency) with multiple layers and there is only one dependent variable (overall SILL) with no level. Before proceeding, descriptive information (Table 4.37) of Iranian learners' using the overall SILL across three proficiency groups is displayed as follows:

Table 4.37

Descriptive Statistics Overall SILL by Setting by Proficiency Factor

SETTING	PROFICIENCY	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
EFL	ELEMENTARY	3.133	.085	2.964	3.302
	INTERMEDIATE	3.200	.084	3.034	3.366
	ADVANCED	3.330	.079	3.173	3.486
ESL	ELEMENTARY	3.078	.107	2.866	3.290
	INTERMEDIATE	3.528	.096	3.339	3.717
	ADVANCED	3.769	.110	3.551	3.987

As illustrated in Table 4.37, both EFL and ESL students show higher mean scores at intermediate and advanced groups. In order to see if mean differences are significant through proficiency groups across the two settings of the study a two-way ANOVA was run and displayed as follows:

Table 4.38

Two-way ANOVA Overall SILL by Interaction of Setting and Proficiency Factors

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SETTING	2.078	1	2.078	9.478	.002	.059
PROFICIENCY	4.670	2	2.335	10.650	.000	.124
SETTING * PROFICIENCY	1.592	2	.796	3.631	.029	.046
Error	33.105	151	.219			
Total	1767.580	157				

The results of statistical Two-way ANOVA (Table 4.38) reveal that there is a significant interaction between the types of setting and language proficiency on the overall SILL (F (2, 151) = 3.63, p = .029 < .05, partial η^2 = .046, representing an almost moderate effect size). While ESL students outperformed their EFL counterparts on the overall SILL in intermediate and advanced groups, Iranian EFL participants showed higher mean on the overall SILL than the ESL learners in elementary groups. Based on these results it can be concluded that the null-hypothesis as the interaction of setting (EFL/ESL) and language proficiency group factors does not significantly affect the participants' use of the overall language learning strategies as revealed by the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

4.3.8 Question 8

Does the interaction of setting (EFL/ESL) and language proficiency factor affect the participants' use of six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) on the SILL?

To avoid repeating the null and alternative hypotheses for every individual strategy category, the basic forms of the hypotheses are presented in the following part and are assumed to hold for every one of the six categories in the same way.

H0: The interaction of setting (EFL/ESL) and language proficiency factor does not significantly affect the participants' use of the six categories of language learning strategies in the SILL.

H1: The interaction of setting (EFL/ESL) and language proficiency factor significantly affects the participants' use of the six categories of language learning strategies in the SILL.

A multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA, Table 4.40) was run to investigate the combined effect of setting and language proficiency factors on the participants' use of the six categories of the SILL. Before proceeding, descriptive information of the participants on the categories of the SILL in three groups of proficiency across ESL/EFL settings is depicted as follows:

Table 4.39

Descriptive Statistics Categories of Learning Strategies by Setting and Proficiency Factor

Dependent Variable	SETTING	PROFICIENCY	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Memory	EFL	Elementary	2.700	.117	2.469	2.931
		Intermediate	2.713	.115	2.486	2.940
		Advanced	2.908	.108	2.694	3.122
	ESL	Elementary	2.801	.147	2.511	3.091
		Intermediate	3.106	.131	2.848	3.365
		Advanced	3.333	.151	3.035	3.632
Cognitive	EFL	Elementary	3.036	.103	2.831	3.240
		Intermediate	3.154	.102	2.953	3.356
		Advanced	3.324	.096	3.135	3.514
	ESL	Elementary	2.944	.130	2.687	3.201
		Intermediate	3.494	.116	3.265	3.723
		Advanced	3.722	.134	3.458	3.986
Compensation	EFL	Elementary	3.222	.114	2.997	3.448
		Intermediate	3.430	.112	3.208	3.652
		Advanced	3.381	.106	3.172	3.590
	ESL	Elementary	2.825	.144	2.541	3.108
		Intermediate	3.667	.128	3.414	3.919
		Advanced	4.120	.147	3.829	4.412
Metacognitive	EFL	Elementary	3.578	.123	3.334	3.822
		Intermediate	3.627	.121	3.387	3.867
		Advanced	3.851	.114	3.625	4.077
	ESL	Elementary	3.585	.155	3.278	3.891
		Intermediate	4.005	.138	3.732	4.277
		Advanced	4.259	.159	3.944	4.574
Affective	EFL	Elementary	2.644	.109	2.429	2.860
		Intermediate	2.559	.107	2.347	2.771
		Advanced	2.738	.101	2.538	2.938
	ESL	Elementary	2.719	.137	2.448	2.991
		Intermediate	2.882	.122	2.641	3.123
		Advanced	3.185	.141	2.907	3.464
Social	EFL	Elementary	3.744	.127	3.493	3.996
		Intermediate	3.806	.125	3.559	4.054
		Advanced	3.733	.118	3.500	3.966
	ESL	Elementary	3.658	.160	3.342	3.974
		Intermediate	4.035	.142	3.753	4.316
		Advanced	4.028	.164	3.703	4.353

The interactive effect of setting (EFL/ESL) and language proficiency factor is discussed in the light of our statistical MANOVA which is displayed as follows:

Table 4.40

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (MANOVA) Categories of Learning Strategies by Setting and Proficiency

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SETTING	MEMORY	3.467	1	3.467	8.456	.004*	.053
	COGNITIVE	1.706	1	1.706	5.310	.023*	.034
	COMPENSATION	1.371	1	1.371	3.501	.063	.023
	METACOGNITIVE	2.576	1	2.576	5.638	.019*	.036
	AFFECTIVE	2.924	1	2.924	8.169	.005*	.051
	SOCIAL	.780	1	.780	1.601	.208	.010
PROFICIENCY	MEMORY	3.247	2	1.623	3.959	.021*	.050
	COGNITIVE	6.843	2	3.421	10.646	.000*	.124
	COMPENSATION	13.290	2	6.645	16.975	.000*	.184
	METACOGNITIVE	5.279	2	2.639	5.776	.004*	.071
	AFFECTIVE	2.203	2	1.102	3.077	.049*	.039
	SOCIAL	1.326	2	.663	1.362	.259	.018
SETTING * PROFICIENCY	MEMORY	.759	2	.380	.926	.398	.012
	COGNITIVE	1.702	2	.851	2.648	.074	.034
	COMPENSATION	7.632	2	3.816	9.748	.000*	.114
	METACOGNITIVE	1.188	2	.594	1.300	.275	.017
	AFFECTIVE	.845	2	.423	1.181	.310	.015
	SOCIAL	.982	2	.491	1.008	.367	.013
Error	MEMORY	61.913	151	.410			
	COGNITIVE	48.526	151	.321			
	COMPENSATION	59.109	151	.391			
	METACOGNITIVE	68.993	151	.457			
	AFFECTIVE	54.055	151	.358			
	SOCIAL	73.541	151	.487			
Total	MEMORY	1385.481	157				
	COGNITIVE	1727.296	157				
	COMPENSATION	1915.250	157				
	METACOGNITIVE	2335.469	157				
	AFFECTIVE	1251.722	157				
	SOCIAL	2368.083	157				

Based on the results shown in Tables 4.39 and 4.40, it can be concluded that

(A) According to Table 4.40, the interaction between settings (ESL/EFL) and language proficiency of the students does not have any significant effect on the participants' use of memory strategies (F (2, 152) = .926, p = .398 > .05, Partial η^2 = .012 representing a weak effect size). Thus, the null hypothesis is supported. As displayed in Table 4.39, the ESL students in elementary (M = 2.80), intermediate (M = 3.10) and advanced (M = 3.33) groups of proficiency show higher mean scores than the EFL students in the same proficiency groups whose means are 2.70, 2.71 and 2.90 respectively.

(B) As displayed in Table 4.39, the ESL students show higher means in advanced (M = 3.72) and intermediate (M = 3.49) groups on cognitive strategies than intermediate and advanced EFL groups whose means are 3.15 and 3.32 respectively, however the EFL students in elementary group (M = 3.03) show a higher mean than ESL subjects in elementary group (M = 2.94) on cognitive category of strategy. Table 4.40 indicates that the interaction between setting (ESL/EFL) and proficiency group of the participants does not have any significant effect on the participants' use of cognitive strategies (F (2, 152) = 2.64, p = .074 > .05, Partial η2 = .034 representing a weak to moderate effect size). Thus, the null hypothesis is supported.

(C) Based on the results displayed in Table 4.40, the interaction between setting (ESL/EFL) and proficiency group of the participants has a significant effect on the participants' use of compensation category of strategies (F (2, 152) = 9.74, p = .000< .05, Partial η2 = .114 representing a large effect size). As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. Table 4.39 reports that the ESL students show higher means in intermediate (M = 3.66) and advanced (M = 4.12) groups than intermediate (M = 3.22) and advanced (M=

3.38) EFL students on compensation strategy category, however the EFL students in elementary group (M = 3.22) show a higher mean than ESL subjects in elementary group (M = 2.82).

(D) As displayed in Table 4.39, the ESL students in elementary (M = 3.58), intermediate (M = 4) and advanced (M = 4.25) groups show higher mean scores than elementary (M = 3.75), intermediate (3.62) and advanced (3.85) EFL students on metacognitive strategies. By contrast, the interaction between types of setting (ESL/EFL) and proficiency group of the students does not have any significant effect on the participants' use of metacognitive strategies (F (2, 152) = 1.30, p = .275 > .05, Partial η^2 = .017 representing a weak effect size). Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

(E) As displayed in Table 4.39, the ESL students in elementary (M = 2.71), intermediate (M = 2.88) and advanced (M = 3.18) groups show higher mean scores on affective strategies than the EFL groups whose means in the same proficiency groups are 2.64, 2.55 and 2.73 respectively. However, as shown in Table 4.40, the interaction between setting (ESL/EFL) and language proficiency group of the participants does not have any significant effect on the their use of affective strategy category (F (2, 152) = 1.18, P = .310 > .05, Partial η^2 = .015 representing a weak effect size). As a result, the null hypothesis is supported.

(F) As displayed in Table 4.39, while the ESL students in intermediate (M = 4.03) and advanced (M = 4.02) groups show higher mean scores than the intermediate (M = 3.80) and advanced (M = 3.73) EFL students on social strategies, the EFL students show a higher mean in elementary group (M = 3.74) than their elementary ESL counterparts (M = 3.65). However, the interaction between setting (ESL/EFL) and proficiency group of the students does not significantly have any significant effect on the students' use of social strategies (F

(2, 152) = 1.008, p = .367 > .05, Partial η^2 = .013 representing a weak effect size). Therefore, the null hypothesis is supported.

4.4 Qualitative Analysis: Results of the Interview Analysis Related to Language Learning Issues in EFL/ESL Settings

A total of twelve interviewees participated in the qualitative part of this research which consisted of six Iranian male language learners living in Tehran, the capital city of Iran and six Iranian male students living in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia as establishing our EFL and ESL groups of interviewees respectively. EFL Interviewees were designated Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4, Student 5, and Student 6 while the ESL Interviewees were designated as Student A, Student B, Student C, Student D, Student E, and Student F. In each group, there were two elementary (Students 1, 2, A and B), two intermediate (Students 3, 4, C and D) and two advanced (Students 5, 6, E and F) learners of English.

The data collected and analyzed would help shed light on the differences of language learning among Iranian language learners due to setting as well as language proficiency differences. Therefore the purpose of analyzing the following qualitative data will be both answering the last research question of this study which shows up as *"What may be the similarities and differences between Iranian EFL and ESL learners in terms of English learning as experienced by the participants in this study?"* and discussing the results of some other research questions coming from the quantitative data analysis to a degree which is required and appropriate.

In the following section, the author will discuss the interview questions that have been similarly designed for both EFL/ESL groups in order to juxtapose their opinions and

point out the differences and similarities in their thoughts related to proficiency and setting differences. As the ESL interviewees have had access to both EFL and ESL settings there is one more question (question 2) included in their interview questionnaire to let them voice any changes in their attitudes about language learning after moving to and learning English in Malaysia. For the same reason, the fourth question of their interview questionnaire requires their answer which is based on a comparison they draw between the two learning contexts. Prior to the interview analysis demographic information of the EFL and ESL respondents appears in the following part which contains their age, length of studying English and their duration of residency in Malaysia as follows:

Table 4.41

EFL Interviewees' Demographic Information

Student's code	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age (year)	22	25	25	27	29	28
Length of English Learning in Language Institutes (month)	13	12	23	20	39	42
Level of Proficiency	E2	E2	I2	I2	A2	A2
Length of Residency in Malaysia (month)	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4.42

ESL Interviewees' Demographic Information

Student's code	A	B	C	D	E	F
Age (year)	24	26	27	27	29	30
Length of English Learning in language Institutes (month)	14	13	24	26	43	40
Level of Proficiency	E2	E2	I2	I2	A2	A2
Length of Residency in Malaysia (month)	8	7	14	15	36	35

The data were organized by converting all the audiotape recordings and field-notes into text data. Numerous codes were identified and labeled by the author, and through iterative process of collecting and analyzing the data, the following major themes were obtained to serve the purpose of responding to the ninth research question of the study as well as discussing the results of some other research questions coming from the quantitative data analysis to a possible degree.

4.4.1 The Level of Enjoyment for Learning English

During the interview, all of the interviewees were asked about their level of enjoyment for learning English in places where they were living and learning English (Tehran and Kuala Lumpur) on a 5-point scale (1 = don't enjoy it at all, 2 = rarely enjoy it, 3 = neutral or somehow enjoy it, 4 = usually enjoy it and 5 = enjoy it very much). Both groups of

interviewees reported a high level of enjoyment for learning English in their related settings where they lived and studied (Figure 4.1).

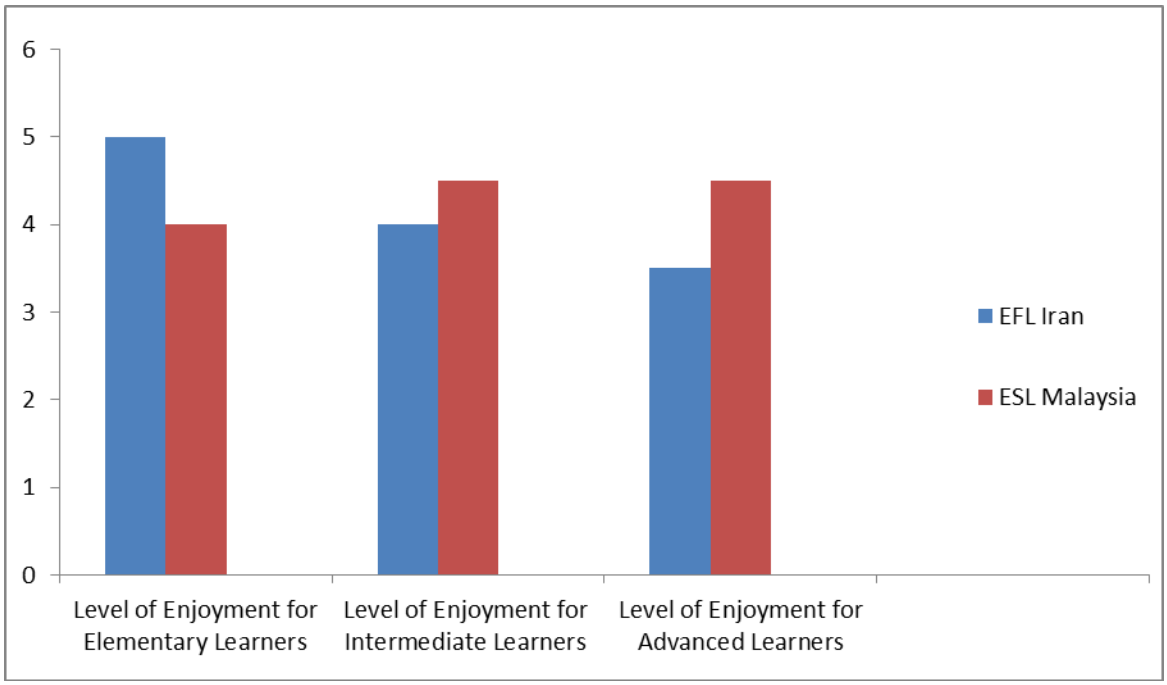

Figure 4.1. Level of Enjoyment for English Learning of Iranian Learners in EFL/ESL Settings at Different Levels of proficiency.

As displayed in Figure 4.1, almost all the interviewees at different levels of proficiency reported that they either usually or extremely enjoy learning English, though the ESL interviewees' total score (M = 4.33) for enjoying English learning was a bit higher than that of EFL learners (M = 4.16). In the following table (Table 4.43), number of respondents at different levels of proficiency with the score they obtained for their level of enjoyment in learning English has been displayed:

Table 4.43

Number of Students at Different Levels of Enjoyment for Learning English

Level of Enjoyment for Learning English	EFL Interviewees at Different Levels of Enjoyment	ESL Interviewees at Different Levels of Enjoyment
(1) don't enjoy it at all		
(2) rarely enjoy it		
(3) neutral or somehow enjoy it	Student 5	
(4) usually enjoy it	Students 3, 4, and 6	Students A, B, C, and E
(5) enjoy it very much	Students 1, and 2	Students D, and F
Total (average)	4.16	4.33

Nearly all the respondents started to explain their incentives for learning the language when they were asked to explain their reasons for enjoying English learning in Iran. Since the answers they offered were much like the ones obtained by the last question in the interview questionnaire (motivation for language learning), the author has unified the analyses of similar parts of the data and presented them in the following section. Some of the incentives offered by the EFL interviewees for enjoying learning English were: (1) I have an appreciation for English language, that is, I really enjoy when I understand words and structures of English, (2) I can log in different web-sites and learn many things by surfing the net, (3) I can watch English movies and series and learn about other nations' culture, (4) I can interact with English speaking people through Internet and chat with them, (5) the system of teaching in this language center is totally different from the one in our college or in our high-school where we used to attend, (6) I really enjoy learning English as I am determined to study abroad in the near future. As it is evident in Table 4.44 and figure

4.1, EFL interviewees at the elementary level of language proficiency (students 1 and 2) seem more enthusiastic about learning English than those at higher levels of proficiency (see, for example student 5). The reason as offered by Student 5 might be due to the same routine for learning English in language classes in Iran which as he believes become dull in time. He explained:

> *When I was taking lower-level English courses in this institute I was very greedy to learn English both in and outside my language classes. I watched English cartoons, listened to simple English songs. When I was an intermediate student, I listened to and watched BBC programs. However, I gradually lacked interest in these activities*.

On the other hand, Students 1 and 2 who are at the beginning of their language learning journey avidly talk about their language classes, teachers and the way they interact with their peers in English. Student 2 who instantly uses English at his workplace to exchange emails as part of his work chores regards English learning as his main entertainment which takes place both at work and in language classes.

Students 1 and 4 pointed to the variant approaches of English teaching adopted by the teachers in their language center as a source of their enjoyment. Student 1 explains that:

> *In public schools or colleges, English is not learnt for communication and the course books are boring; therefore, students do not enjoy learning English in such centers. On comparison, English learning is more interesting in our language institutes.*

In the same line, student 4 voices that:

> *I was not fond of English at high-school or even when I went to college despite its importance for my future. One reason for the lack of interest was related to the*

ways of English teaching in public schools and the course books that were boring. When I grew older I still did not like English until my family encouraged me to register here. Then I realized that how joyful is learning English, especially when you can use it for speaking to your classmates.

Interestingly, all the respondents regardless of their language proficiency level referred to using the Internet and fulfilling their dreams of studying overseas as strong incentives for learning and enjoying the target language. As related to the former, they mainly held the view that the more they get mastery in English, the more they achieve in their on-line searches related to their field of study, meanwhile they can use English to know about and interact with people everywhere in the world which is reportedly a key incentive for their joyful English learning. Student 3 for instance explained his own case as: *One of my happiest moments in a typical day is when I am on line, chatting with friends using the Facebook. It is very joyful for me to post English comments for friends in Facebook.*

As related to the latter point, some respondents were determined to study abroad for which they were motivated to learn English and they reportedly found it very joyful. Other respondents thought of immigration as one of their plans which might turn real in time.

As evident in the viewpoints of these EFL learners, the level of enjoyment for English learning in Iran is tied with the learners' incentives or motivations for improving their English mastery. Although Iran is an EFL setting where English is not used for communicative or trade purposes, learners still enjoy learning it in language centers as a power tool to fulfill their variant purposes including helping them with their English based academic tasks, knowing about the world and interacting with other people especially using the internet, and fulfilling their dreams of living and studying abroad among the many.

ESL interviewees shared some reasons or incentives with EFL counterparts for enjoying English learning in their related setting (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) such as interacting with other people or cultures, watching and understanding English movies or programs by means of which they both improve their English and learn about other people's culture. Additionally, they voiced some variant reasons for their high level of enjoyment for learning English. Among the reasons offered were: (1) to take advantage of native English speaking teachers in the British Council Language Institute, (2) to have ample opportunities for English use in out of the class situations, (3) to meet students from various nationalities in and out of the class to whom one can interact using English, (4) to continuously learn and use English in Malaysia, and (5) to develop a more powerful place in the community of language learners or local people in the host country.

As displayed in Table 4.43 and Figure 4.1, the level of enjoyment for English learning slightly increases for higher level interviewees. Students E and F as advanced English learners were quick to tie one incentive for joyful learning of English in Malaysia to their ambition for building up a more powerful place among local people with whom they worked and among their postgraduate classmates from different nationalities as well. Student F, for instance explained:

> *I really get excited when I express my ideas while other classmates are gazing at me. Actually I have found different friends in my language classes who compliment me on my accent and pronunciation as well as on my speaking skill. This motivates me to do my best for gaining a native like accent.*

Although ESL learners at elementary level reportedly find it demanding to adapt themselves to the new situation for English learning, they think positively of their

development in learning the target language in ESL Malaysia on the whole. Student B for instance said that:

> *I was shocked during the first or second month of my stay here; I couldn't understand the language of the local people, I didn't like local foods, I felt homesick and couldn't accept some aspects of Malay culture. But when I started to attend language classes, things got better, though at first I couldn't understand all that my teacher said in the class. It is still sometimes difficult to get what he says, but I like my language class, friends of different races, and my teacher, and I think one day I will be able to understand all he says in English.*

In order to compare the ESL interviewees' views about language learning before and after moving to and staying in Malaysia for quite a while, they were also asked about their level of enjoyment for learning English while they were back in Iran as displayed in Figure 4.2:

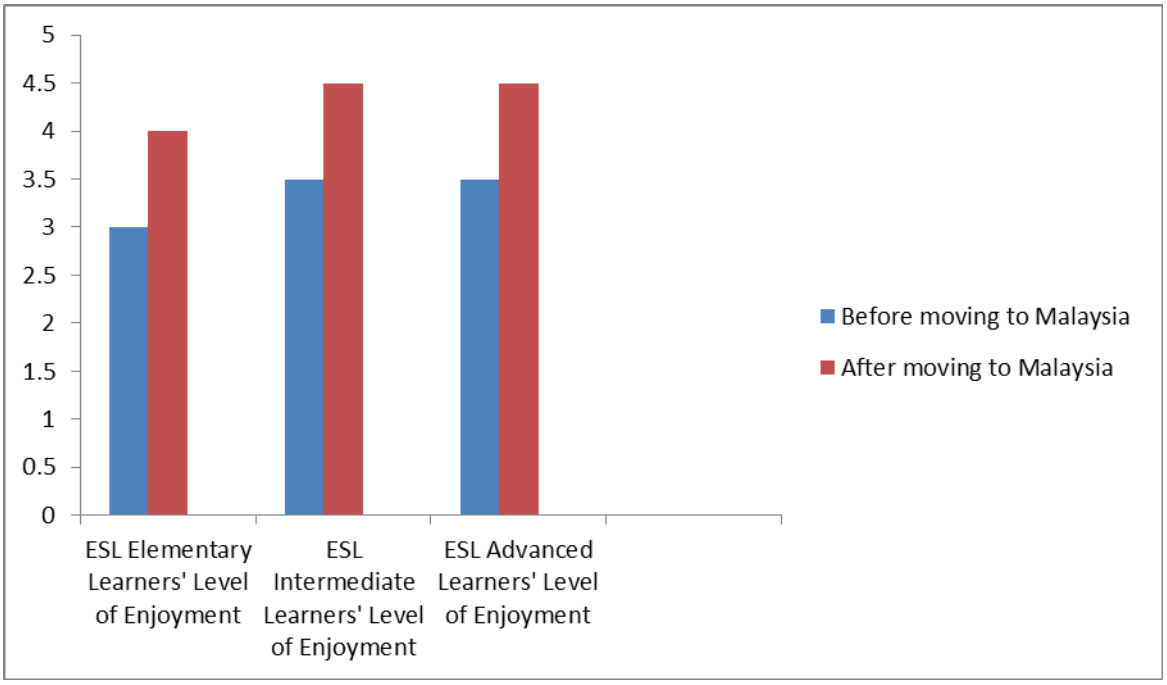

Figure 4.2. ESL Learners' Level of Enjoyment for English Learning before and after Moving to Malaysia.

Interestingly, all the ESL interviewees reported a shift in their attitudes towards language learning experiences and the amount of pleasure they could gain by learning English after staying in Malaysia for some time. In fact, except for Students D and E who selected item 4 meaning "usually enjoyed it", other respondents selected item 3 " neutral or somehow enjoyed it" as an indication of their level of language learning enjoyment when they were back in Iran. There was a unified view among these groups of ESL interviewees that there were not many situations for using English practically in out of the class situations especially in oral terms. Other explanations for not highly ranking this item by these interviewees contained: (1) they did not have enough time to continuously learn English, (2) there were some peers who used to speak Persian in the class, (3) it was a matter of chance to have a language teacher who could create a pleasant atmosphere in the class and motivate their learners, (4) the unique atmosphere existing in Iran which does not motivate people to learn a foreign language. Among the responses, was however a dissenting voice (Student E) which rejected others' view with regard to reluctance for learning English in Iran. Student E as an advanced learner of English who had studied software engineering and also had working experiences as an IT expert in a company in Iran mentioned that:

> *I was really motivated to learn English and I enjoyed it since the more mastery I gained in English, the more I could learn in programming and as a result the more I was promoted in the company where I worked.*

Student D as an intermediate learner who voted for "usually enjoyed it", shared some reasons with other respondents with respect to his not highly enjoying English learning in Iran, but unlike the other dissenting voices, he underscored the role of personal motivation in learning and enjoying English in Iran. He said:

Normally, one cannot expect to immensely enjoy learning English in an atmosphere where everybody around speaks Persian, nonetheless, they can more or less create situations in which they can learn and enjoy English; for instance group learning is one way to enhance the amount of joy in learning English. We can also watch movies together and discuss them among ourselves and learn from each other.

To sum up this section, it can be concluded that both EFL and ESL respondents enjoy learning English in their related settings. EFL learners tie their joyful learning of English to incentives such as their plans for leaving the country and studying abroad or the difference they experienced in the way English was taught in their language institutes. ESL learners mainly relate their level of enjoyment for learning English to the interplay existing between the dynamics of the classroom situations and the communicative use of English outside the classroom. Finally, ESL respondents found Malaysia a better context for learning English than Iran.

4.4.2 The Level of Importance for English Learning

The interviewees in both settings were asked to rate the level of importance for improving their mastery in English on a 5-point scale (1 = not important at all, 2 = not important, 3 = no special feeling, 4 = important, 5 = extremely important).

Most respondents from both settings rated this question a full rank as shown in Figure 4.3 as follows:

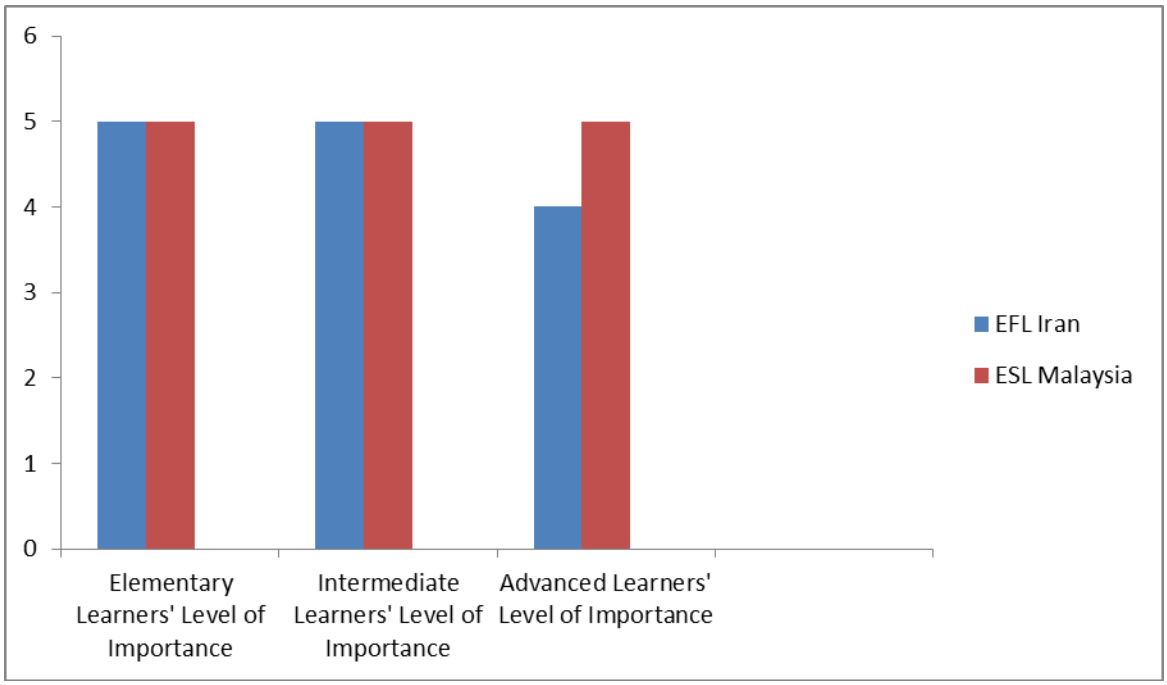

Figure 4.3. EFL/ESL Learners' Level of Importance for Improving Language Proficiency.

Some of the reasons shared among both ESL and EFL respondents for highly rating this question are: (1) I need to improve my English as I am planning to emigrate to an English speaking country where having a mastery in English language is imperative, (2) the more proficient I become in English language, the more I get promoted by my employers at my workplace, (3) I am determined to improve my English as everywhere in the world even in Iran I will have more job opportunities and a high quality life with a good mastery in English, (4) It is very important for me to enhance my mastery in English because I can communicate with other people and cultures around the world, and (5) I am going to attain an IELTS minimum score of 6.5 which is part of the requirements for emigration. Thus, improving my language proficiency level is vital.

Our ESL advanced respondents even went further in explaining the reasons for improving their English mastery. For instance Student E explained:

I have been living in Malaysia for 3 years and I am expecting much more out of myself; I look for opportunities to increase my oral skills, for example everywhere I go in this country I look for native English speakers to talk to because I am expecting to be a native-like English speaker. Soon I will immigrate to Australia where I have received a visa as an IT expert; this multiplies my motivation to improve my mastery in four language skills, but I am much fonder of oral skills.

Student F who, at the time, was studying psychology at PhD level in Malaysia regards improving English as essentially important in his career as a counselor who aspires to work and live in English speaking countries or in countries where English is the second language. He expressed that:

As I am intensely involved in interaction with people of different nationalities as both a psychologist and a counselor, I actually realize the importance of English language not only in English speaking countries but everywhere in the world where people can communicate kind of English. However, for me improving English is of paramount importance in this country since I can better find my way among the local and international people as both a friend and a psychologist counselor. Thus, improving English for me is a matter of must rather than a matter of should.

Out of twelve ESL and EFL interviewees, only the EFL advanced ones (Students 5 and 6) rated the question a 4 or as "important". Student 5 voiced that: *At the moment improving my English proficiency is not extremely essential as I have enough time to prepare myself for the IELTS exam which would be next year, thus I am not in rush to exceed myself.*

Similarly Student 6 noted that:

> *At the present time improving English proficiency is not my ultimate goal. I prefer to learn English so as to keep myself updated until the time I will be preparing myself for the PhD exam that part of which contains language exam, then I will surpass myself to improve it within a rather short period of time.*

To sum up this section, it is concluded that both EFL and ESL respondents highly ranked the level of importance for improving their language proficiency in their related settings. However, Iranian EFL participants at advanced level tend to tie their level of importance for improving their English mastery to very tangible goals such as gaining a passing score while for the advanced participants in Malaysia having a good mastery in English means having more chances for opening up their place among the community of local or international people.

4.4.3 Language Class Activities performed in EFL and ESL Classes

While EFL interviewees were asked to explain activities they performed in language classes they attended in Iran, ESL respondents were requested to explain the activities they did in the Malaysian British Council language classes where they attended and compare them with those they performed back in the Iranian Kish language institute in Iran. This question received a range of responses from the interviewees in both groups, thus in the following part EFL and ESL students' responses are reported in separate parts:

4.4.3.1 Activities Performed in EFL Classes

Students 1 and 2 who were more interested in nearly all the activities performed in their language classes referred to various class activities such as pair and group work activities,

playing games, watching movies and cartoons, listening to English songs, performing conversations in front of other peers, and so forth. When they were asked if they enjoyed all of those activities they answered positively with no hesitation, though Student 2 wished they could have more writing activities in their classes. Students 3 and 4 as intermediate respondents similarly referred to activities such as pair and group talks which were based on the topics raised by the course book, free discussion which appeared either at the beginning of the class or during the last 10 minutes of the class, course book based listening activities, individual presentation, among the other activities. While Student 4 was fond of most of the activities in the class, Student 3 did not seem fully pleased with all going on in their language classes in Iran. He noted that:

> *Of several language institutes I have attended, my current institute is the best one because of its teachers that are highly qualifie., I like my language classes and my teacher very much, but sometimes I lack interest in some of the class activities such as listening to the course book texts and repeating some parts. I prefer activities that challenge my speaking ability. To improve my listening, I can listen to the texts at home and practice it on my own, but I cannot speak English with anyone outside the class.*

Advanced EFL interviewees added to the activities mentioned by the intermediate respondents; they referred to activities such as discussing current political issues around the world, writing activities such as paragraph writing, news reading and working on the political terms. They were also asked if they enjoyed all the class activities performed in their language classes. While Student 6 was more pleased with his class and teacher, Student 5 was rather uninterested in his current class and the activities performed in the class. Student 5 expressed his dissatisfaction as:

During some semesters you have a class with a teacher who might not motivate you enough to willingly perform the activities he assigns to you. Actually, it might be my problem not the teacher's problem that I can't interact with the class or the teacher. Of course my unwillingness might relate to the fact that I have been attending these classes for a few years and I am quite familiar with all the routine going on within each session. I normally enjoy those activities that relate to our oral skills such as free group discussion and watching and discussing English episodes.

In sum, the EFL interviewees at elementary level exhibited more interest in the class activities performed in their language classes. One of the learners at advanced level of proficiency showed reluctance in the class activities which are repetitive and dull. Also, in higher level classes in Iran class activities are mostly learner-centered and tap into the learners' oral communication.

4.4.3.2 Activities Performed in ESL Classes

There was a general consensus among the members of this group of interviewees that language class activities in the British Council Language Centre were of better quality than those performed in Iranian Kish Language Center, nonetheless, most of the class activities they enumerated as being performed in ESL classes were quite similar to those mentioned by EFL interviewees as performed in EFL classes in Iran. Surprisingly, when they were asked to compare the activities they performed in their EFL classes back in Iran with those they were currently doing in ESL classes, they all named the same items. The strong view among them, however was that the classes in the British Council were more interactive than those in Iran. What seemed to be appealing to these ESL respondents were not the various activities they enjoyed in ESL classes but the agreeable atmosphere running in their ESL

classes that might be illuminated in comments made by some of them. For instance, Student A believes that what distinguishes his current language class from the one he took in Iran is the goal set by the two different institutes as in Iran the whole system motivates you to obtain a high score and pass the course while in Malaysia the system motivates you to learn and enjoy your time being in the class. Student B also enjoys his current class better than his classes in Iran as he notes that:

> *Before I moved to Malaysia I didn't have any idea about English learning in the British Council Language Centre and I always thought my English classes in Iran were wonderful, but after I moved here I changed my mind because here I can benefit from friends of different nationalities in the class, and I am more motivated to interact with them; we talk about our countries, foods, families and many more issues which I couldn't talk about in my language classes in Iran. So, I think I can learn many things from my classmates in language classes in Malaysia compared to language classes in Iran.*

Student C also referred to different atmosphere running in his ESL classes in Malaysia, while he added that: *It is true that we could benefit from the same class activities in Iran, but here everything is done in English, while in Iran sometimes students shifted to their mother tongue which in some cases they faced teacher's warning.*

Student D tried to give reasons for the unique interaction he had experienced in his ESL classes as he interpreted:

> *The difference between class activities in this language institute and those in Iran does not very much relate to the teacher, though you can better enjoy native accent of the teachers here; rather the difference lies in the fact that there is a special culture in Iran which segregates girls from boys, women from men. This culture*

rules in almost all Iranian educational centers containing Kish Language Center which is probably the most reputable language center in Iran. Honestly speaking, here we are more motivated to involve in the class activities as we can do the pair works with both male and female classmates.

What seemed to be more attractive to ESL advanced respondents were the oral aspects of the class activities in their current class as is evident in the viewpoints of Student F as:

My current teacher is a young British man; he speaks English with a beautiful pronunciation and accent which I had never seen before. Actually when he assigns a task to us, I am very eager to finish it soon so I can have his feedback; this way I can have more interaction with him.

Student E added that:

In Iran if you don't like your English class or teacher, it is very difficult to go up to the higher level classes. Although I liked my language classes and teachers back in Iran, I was not very interested in all language activities we performed there not because of the teachers or the kinds of activities performed there but because of the habitual way of learning there. In fact at the beginning levels of your education you might feel motivated and up; however, after a few semesters everything turns lackluster and repetitive. This as far as I know does not relate to the kinds of class activities there, rather it has much to do with the atmosphere both in and outside the class; for example, lack of international students, lack of coed classes as well as lack of English use especially in oral terms in the society at large.

In short, all ESL participants believe that there is not a big difference between class activities in EFL and ESL classes. The difference they mentioned to be in the atmosphere

running in the ESL environment where they can experience learning from native teachers or peers of different cultural background. Also a part of the difference they experienced relates to the system of education in Iran that is both politically and ideologically oriented; a system that segregates males from females.

4.4.4 English Use in EFL Iran vs English Use in ESL Malaysia

The interviewees were asked to explain the way they used English in out of the class situations in their related setting. As ESL respondents had been exposed to both EFL and ESL settings, their views could shed more light on the differences in learning English among learners of the same nationality relating to setting differences, thus, their comments will be separately reported after the EFL students' remarks in the following section.

4.4.4.1 English Use in Iran

The general consensus among EFL respondents is that there are not many situations for oral use of English outside language classes in Iran as English is neither used as a medium of communication in the society nor is it used as a medium of instruction in Iranian public or private organizations. Additionally, as Students 3 and 5 mentioned, due to sociopolitical conditions existing in Iran, the country has not played host to international visitors at large, therefore there is little chance to use English outside the class especially in oral terms. All the six EFL interviewees referred to almost the same activities they used to do outside the class as manifestation of English use such as doing homework assignments, exchanging emails in English, online chatting, and watching English programs, movies, and so forth. What was very appealing to these English learners was using English to use the Internet for doing myriad of activities such as exchanging emails, reading English texts, finding foreign

friends and using some social networking sites such as Facebook and Skype for communicating with friends or having fun. Small differences in their English use however were reported partly due to their proficiency level and partly related to the type of task they were currently doing at their workplace.

While Student 1 pointed to his job as an opportunity that involved him in exchanging emails in English, Student 2 referred to note taking in the forms of flash or reading cards as a way of learning new English words and working on their dictation. What distinguished elementary interviewees from the other respondents in the group was their interest in listening to English songs and memorizing them; they were also more interested in doing their homework. For example Student 1 expressed his interest as: *Before I do my homework assignments, I try to play my favorite music and sing along with it. I prefer to listen to those songs that their texts could be found on the Internet.* Intermediate and advanced members of the EFL group similarly pointed to watching English movies as their main source of knowing about the culture of English speaking countries. They also pointed to English short stories and some noted reading journals such as "Reader's Digest" as well as Internet texts as their main sources for English learning and using. Reportedly, for these EFL learners receptive skills especially reading are the main source for language improvement, whereas productive skills play minor roles in helping them improve their English mastery. To support this claim Student 4 mentioned that:

> *Unfortunately, in Iran unlike many other countries, there is not much of a chance to orally use English outside English classes; as a result, English learners including me try to compensate for this lack by creating an atmosphere so that they can be exposed to English materials. For instance I watch one or two episodes of 'FRIENDS' every night and put down its phrases on a piece of paper and review*

them the following days. But when you cannot use these phrases in your daily conversations, they will be removed out of your memory after a while.

Student 6 referred to writing as a main source for him to put his English in to use for a part of his graduation requirements contained publishing a few journal articles. He voiced that: *During my previous semesters it was not very important for me to work on my writing skill; rather I mainly used my English knowledge to read texts on the Internet related to my academic major or for fun. However it came time for me to use my English for writing articles and at the beginning it was really demanding to produce well structured writing texts. Then I tried to seek assistance from my English teachers who normally work on writing skill less than other skills in language classes.*

Briefly put, EFL interviewees do not encounter many ready-made situations outside their language classes for L2 use especially regarding the oral aspect of the language. The main source of language learning or using for these learners is the Internet and social networking sites. While elementary learners are willing to listen to English music and doing their homework assignments, higher level participants tend to watch English movies and work on their writing skills. Finally, English use in EFL Iran is somehow case sensitive and goal oriented especially at higher levels of proficiency

4.4.4.2 English Use in ESL Malaysia

The ESL interviewees were also asked how they used English in out of the class situations in Malaysia. The strong view among all these respondents is that English is the medium of communication for them and they frequently put their English knowledge into practice to meet their daily needs. Included in many areas of English use they referred to, were

shopping, exchanging emails, taxi renting, greeting with foreign friends containing Malaysian and international ones, watching English TV programs and movies, doing academic tasks, going out with friends, reviewing their lessons, summarizing, taking notes, reporting in English, providing flash cards, and using the Internet for different purposes including doing academic searches. Nonetheless, differences in using English among these ESL interviewees could be observed due to their occupation and level of proficiency. Elementary learners mainly referred to using English as a means of communication and doing their academic tasks, while learners of higher proficiency level reportedly, not only put their English knowledge into practice through communicating with other people including the college academia for handling their academic tasks, but they also used English to establish stronger relationship within the community of friends or workmates (Malaysian or international) whom they worked or lived with. For instance Student E who was currently studying IT and at the same time was working in a local company as an IT expert claims:

> *In the company where I work I am noticeable for speaking English well and the more I gain mastery in English the more I get promoted and respected by my local employers. In fact as a qualified programmer I have recently received a promotion and as a result an increase in my salary; this in turn makes me even more motivated to work on my English. At work place my local friends and I have tied good relationship together and sometimes we talk about the movies we have recently watched, we sometimes go out to eat together. I have been invited to their special ceremonies a couple of times. For instance, last month I attended a female friend's wedding ceremony in which I learned more about their customs and culture.*

Student F also regards his working conditions as bringing him opportunities to immensely use English. He notes that:

> *Here you need to use English almost in every aspect of your life, including doing your daily routine, opening a bank account, renting a taxi, checking emails, greeting with friends, and many more. Additionally, if your job requires using English which in most cases it does, you need to inevitably improve your English. As a psychologist and a counselor I must use English as perfectly as I can to develop my working area which in turn brings me more funds.*

Intermediate respondents who were currently working on their master's research but currently were not holding a job referred to other domains of English use which were related to fulfilling their academic project. Student C for example voiced that:

> *A part of my research contains collecting data through distributing questionnaires to local people in a few related companies that establish my study sample. Therefore I need to go to those companies, meet different people, and explain to them about the purpose of doing such study and many other things which make me vastly use English.*

Student D regards English use as a necessity when he tries to give one example related to his special case as:

> *I have applied to get my visa for Australia as I am planning to move there next year. I had to use English to fill out all the forms, to call the bank and ask them to provide a statement of my bank account, to talk to immigration experts for consultation about Australia.*

Shortly put, ESL participants, regardless of their proficiency level, find abundant ready-made situations for English use outside the classroom. Low proficient interviewees

use English in every day communication with people and for doing academic tasks as well. Learners at higher levels of proficiency believe their involvement in various social settings such as workplace provides them with multiple chances for using English.

4.4.5 Obstacles to Learning or Using English in EFL/ESL Settings

Both groups of interviewees were asked about the obstacles they saw in their path to learning and using English outside language classes in their related setting. In the following section, their comments are separately reported for the ESL respondents have been exposed to both EFL and ESL settings; hence, their ideas may better help unveil the differences in language use among Iranian English learners due to setting differences.

4.4.5.1 Obstacles to Learning and Using English in Iran

This question received almost the same reaction from all the EFL respondents without any noticeable dissenting voice. They agreed on the fact that in Iran, a great deal of learning and using English outside language classes takes place through reading, while listening and writing play second and third roles respectively with speaking which plays negligent role in learning and using English for Iranian language learners. Since part of the answer received by means of this question overlapped with those previously obtained from the respondents, here appear only the parts which are both necessary and unrepeated with a focus on language use. All the EFL respondents pointed to the lack of situations for English use outside the classroom and that they cannot effectively put oral aspects of their language knowledge to use. They strongly held the view that English is not the instrument for survival in the society, thus people are not forced to use English to meet their needs.

Student 5 explained that:

> *As an advanced English learner I am very determined to improve all the language skills; I read different texts especially using the Internet, I exchange emails in English to improve my writing, I listen to English texts or watch English movies to improve my listening skill, but unfortunately I don't find any situations to work on my speaking ability outside the class which sometimes makes me disappointed.*

Student 2 said that:

> *At home I try to sing English songs that I have learned and I see other members of the family look at me from the corner of their eyes and they sometimes burst to laughter because it seems very funny and odd to them.*

Student 1 added that:

> *In Iran you have to study English from the first year of junior high-school to your last year of senior high-school but you cannot use it to speak in or outside the class, because at public schools English classes are held only once a week, the teachers mostly teach grammar and words and the course books are grammar-based, therefore you do not learn to speak English.*

Other EFL interviewees gave the same examples indicating unpopular oral use of language in the society which alludes to the very significant fact that in Iran still many families are unable to partly identify themselves in terms of English despite the fact that it is a subject taught in all Iranian public and private schools at most levels of education. However this does not mean that people are unaware of the significance of English language as many of them, especially those living in the capital city or in other big cities of the country are sending their children to language centers for they have realized the importance of English for the future of their children.

4.4.5.2 Obstacles to Learning or Using English in Malaysia

The differences in the ESL respondents' viewpoints regarding the obstacles to learning and using English in Malaysia are partly due to the interviewees' level of language proficiency as well as to their length of residency in the country. While elementary learners felt that overcoming the obstacles related to their being exposed to a new country with different cultures and people was not an easy task, intermediate and advanced learners with longer period of residency seemed to be more adapted to the culture and people of the host country. Student A for example said that after six months of staying in the country he still feels homesick and is unable to cope with some aspects of the Malaysian culture, included in them, is the language used by local people (Malay or English). Another obstacle seems to originate from the community of Iranian people who do not tend to speak English with each other. To support this claim, respondent B said that:

> *There are a few Iranian friends in my English class. We speak with each other in English as long as we are in the class, but outside the class we rarely speak in English. Actually, we are more comfortable with Persian than with English as we can say what we truly mean.*

Other interviewees at intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency indicated making a distinction between the obstacles coming from the community of Iranian students in the host country and the ones originating from the environment of language use in Malaysia. As related to the former, Students C and E pointed out that it seems odd to talk to Iranian people in a language other than Persian unless you are close friends in which case Persian is still the predominant language. Student F added that:

> *In some occasions when one or more local friends join our get-togethers, we inevitably use English to let our Malaysian friends feel comfortable and share ideas*

with us which in fact is very much to our benefit since we have to speak in English. However these occasions are not abundant unless you work in a local company where you can find many local friends or live with local roommates.

As related to the latter, there was a strong view among all the ESL respondents that inappropriate use of English by local people in the country was a main obstacle placed in their path to using and learning English especially with regard to oral aspects of the target language. Advanced respondents for example were quicker than elementary and intermediate ones to point that it is not always easy to find native English speakers around to whom one can put his English into practice. The reason they mentioned was that many Iranian students live in condominiums which are close to their universities and in most cases they are located in areas far from the central parts of Kuala Lumpur where they can normally communicate to native English speakers. Therefore one main obstacle to using and learning English for these respondents is the unavailability of any basic standard variations of English such as standard British or American English.

One advanced respondent explained the obstacle by giving an example. He said that:

Many less educated Malaysians infrequently use English in their daily interactions with each other. This must be the reason for their being unable to speak any acceptable sort of English when they face international people from various nationalities. Recently, I went to a tailor's to get the legs of my trousers fixed. As I realized the guy's English was not good, I applied all I had in my tongue to let him get my point while he was still gazing at me indicating his penny hadn't dropped yet. I had to use a very simplified and to some extent a deviant version of English to let him know what I meant. Like many other local people he used strange structures

like 'also can' and frequent improper use of the word already. Anyway, when I returned after a while to get my trousers, I found my trousers spoiled on the leg.

Likewise, other respondents especially those at higher levels of proficiency felt disappointed when they had to lower their level of English to fit the situations of talk in their interactions with many local people in the country. In the same line, Students D and F as intermediate and advanced English learners referred to their difficulty in working on English pronunciation and intonation which as they felt was related to mispronunciation of some English words by the local people around them. They kept explaining that a part of their difficulty in pronunciation arises from the fact that in Malaysia they are mainly exposed to a version of English (articulated by local people) which is dissimilar to other versions of English used in native English speaking countries. Student F explains that:

I find myriad situations to use English at work or in everyday life, and I am committed to using well-structured sentences in my interactions with local people among whom are those who can speak English well, however, in terms of pronunciation they do not add anything to my knowledge of pronunciation. In fact, I feel disappointed in many cases in which I should pronounce words in a way understandable to them but below my level.

In sum, it could be concluded that Iranian students with longer period of residency and higher level of proficiency are more sensitive to the obstacles arising from the unique environment of language use in the country which in their opinion remains the main source of difficulty placed in their path to learning and using oral aspects of English.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study was the author's attempt to investigate and compare Iranian college level English learners' pattern of LLS use across EFL and ESL (Tehran and Kuala Lumpur) settings within different proficiency groups. In other words, this study aimed at finding out the probable effect of EFL/ESL settings, language proficiency and the interactive effect of the two on the overall using of the Oxford's (1990) SILL as well as on the application of all the SILL categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) by Iranian students who were learning English in Tehran and Kuala Lumpur, the capital cities of Iran and Malaysia respectively. Exploring the participants' views on some critical language learning issues such as English use outside the class and their learning obstacles within both EFL and ESL settings was another purpose of this study. Two instruments were used to collect data from the students: (1) the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) inquired about participants' frequency of LLS use through elementary, intermediate and advanced groups of proficiency; and (2) semi-structured interviews that explored interviewees' views on some language learning related issues in either setting. A total of 157 Iranian students, including 96 students who were living in Tehran (EFL setting) and 61 students who were living in Kuala Lumpur (ESL setting) participated in the SILL survey during the investigation period. Twelve Iranian students, six from the EFL group and six from the ESL group, participated in the interviews. The purpose of their participation was to answer the nine research questions of this study as follows:

1. Are there any significant differences between the mean scores of the SILL six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) as reportedly used by the whole population in the study?

2. Is there any significant difference in the means of the overall language learning strategies of ESL and EFL groups in this study?

3. Are there any significant differences between EFL and ESL groups' mean scores in using six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies)included in the SILL?

4. Does language proficiency factor affect the use of the overall language learning strategies of Iranian language learners in (1) the whole population, (2) the EFL group and (3) the ESL group?

5. Does language proficiency factor affect the use of any of the six categories of language learning strategies in (1) the whole population, (2) the EFL group and (3) the ESL group in this study?

6. Regarding 50 individual strategy items included in SILL, a) What are the most and least frequently used strategies of Iranian learners in (1) the EFL group, (2) the ESL group? b) How comparable are EFL and ESL groups regarding their most and least favored strategies?

7. Does the interaction of settings (ESL/EFL) and proficiency affect the application of the overall language learning strategy use of the participants in the study as revealed by the Strategy Inventory for language learning (SILL)?

8. Does the interaction of setting (ESL/EFL) and language proficiency factor affect the application of the six categories of language learning strategies (containing memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies) on the SILL?

9. What may be the similarities and differences between Iranian EFL and ESL learners in terms of English learning as experienced by the participants in this study?

5.2 Findings and Discussion

In interpreting the study results, I tried to conceptualize strategies to include cognitive, social and affective aspects of learning as suggested by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995). I also attempted to triangulate the qualitative data, to a possible extent, with the data gained by the survey to see how setting differences might affect learners' use of LLSs and their language learning experiences such as English use outside the classroom as well as the obstacles they encounter while learning and using English in either setting. This study is heavily grounded in psychological (cognitive) aspects of LLSs or SLA research as the study is mainly a cross-sectional survey and has utilized quantitative techniques in collecting and interpreting the major part of the data. However socio-political explanations have been offered in interpreting the study results as needed.

5.2.1 Finding 1:

Iranian EFL/ESL students perceived themselves as medium strategy users with metacognitive and social categories of strategies as being their most favored and memory and affective categories of strategies as being their least favored ones;

Iranian participants in this study gained the overall strategy mean score of 3.31 which marks them as medium strategy users. The results of the multivariate analysis of

variances test (MANOVA) along with follow-up post-hoc comparison tests indicate that there are significant differences (F (2, 152) = 120.48, p = .000 < .05) between the mean scores of the six categories of strategies in SILL. Accordingly, with respect to their most and least favored categories of strategy, social (M = 3.82, SD = .70) and metacognitive (M = 3.79, SD =.70) categories were most frequently used by the whole EFL/ESL participants in the study and significantly (p = .000 < .05) gained higher mean scores than all the other categories in SILL (Table 5.1). Affective category (M = 2.76, SD = .61) as well as memory category of strategies (M = 2.90, SD =.66) were the least frequently used ones by the whole population and were significantly different (p > .05) from all the other categories in SILL regarding their mean scores. At the middle of this hierarchy, that is, after social and metacognitive and before memory and social categories are located compensation (M = 3.42) and cognitive (M = 3.26) categories.

Likewise, these two categories of strategies are significantly different (p > .05) from the other categories on the one hand and only slightly different from each other in a significant way (p = .027 < .05) on the other hand in their mean scores. Obviously, based on the results displayed in Table 5.1, social and metacognitive categories fall within a high range of use, while the other categories are in a medium range of use.

Table 5.1

Descriptive Statistics Categories of SILL (Whole Participants)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social	157	2.0	5.0	3.821	.6996
Metacognitive	157	1.3	5.0	3.793	.7033
Compensation	157	1.8	5.0	3.421	.7042
Cognitive	157	1.4	4.6	3.261	.6076
Memory	157	1.1	4.6	2.896	.6640
Affective	157	1.5	4.8	2.756	.6169

The results of the study show strong similarities and slight differences with the results of many similar studies with English learners of Asian background including Iranians as the participants. For instance, Park's (1997) study on Korean university students revealed that all strategy groups were used at a medium level with metacognitive strategies being used the most and social and affective strategies being at the bottom. Peacock and Ho (2003) reported that their Chinese participants perceived using memory and affective strategies least frequently and compensation category the most. In a similar Korean project, Ok (2003) also investigated the strategy use of Korean secondary school students. He reported that compensation strategies were used most frequently (at a medium level), followed by social, cognitive, memory, metacognitive, and affective strategies (at a low level).

Riazi and Rahimi (2005) studied the pattern of strategy use among 220 Iranian university male and female English major EFL students. The results of their study showed that metacognitive category of strategies gained the highest rank (M = 3.72) and was significantly applied more than the other categories in the SILL. They reported that memory (M = 3.12) and social (M = 3.16) categories were least favored by the participants of their study. However, the participants of their study were English major EFL learners who were teacher trainees ready to graduate; hence, they could not be the representative of Iranian English learners without this background who, in fact, form the majority of the Iranian EFL learner population.

In a more recent project Chang (2009) studied Taiwanese ESL/EFL learners of English and found social strategy as being most favored by their participants and memory and affective strategies as being least frequently used by them. Yang (2010) studied the strategy pattern of 288 Korean university students. The findings indicated that Korean university students used a medium range of strategies. Compensation strategies were used

most frequently whereas memory strategies were used least frequently by the Korean participants in the study. In an Iranian study, Nikoopour et al. (2011) reported that Iranian students are high users of metacognitive strategies while memory strategies are least favored by them. Meanwhile, the participants of their study perceived themselves as moderate strategy users. The result of a study by Zare (2010) indicated a similar result; Iranian EFL learners are generally moderate strategy users with metacognitive strategies being their most favored and memory and affective strategies being their least favored ones. The studies presented above generally suggest that nationality is a significant factor influencing the use of learner strategies. In sum, the results of the present study as well as the results of the studies reviewed above can be summarized as follows: Firstly, Asian EFL participants perceive themselves as medium strategy users. Second, metacognitive, and compensation, strategies are reportedly most frequently used by EFL learners while affective and memory strategies are their least favored ones.

Likewise, Iranian participants in this study perceived themselves as medium strategy users with metacognitive category of strategies being most favored by them. This is in conformity with the results gained on individual strategy items; among the 50 items in the SILL, item 32 (M = 4.24) (I pay attention when someone is speaking English), item 33 (M = 4.04) (I try to find out how to be better learner of English), and item 38 (M = 4.06) (I think about my progress in learning English) which are all metacognitive strategies show the highest mean scores as perceived to be used by Iranian language learners in the study. High use of metacognitive strategies by EFL learners including Iranian English learners could be linked to the lack of natural English use in settings where they are living or learning English. Additionally, in some cultures such as Iranian culture implicit instruction is not regarded as teaching and learners expect to be fed with explicit rules even in the

presence of namely communicative approaches of teaching in their English classes. As a result, they can hardly pick up the target language as they heavily rely on their conscious skills and strategies (metacognitive behavior) for learning the target language.

Revolving around the issue of consciousness, nevertheless, it should be mentioned that by definition, a strategy (regardless of its type) according to Cohen (2007) must be at least conscious to some degree. In other words, consciousness is not a characteristic of metacognitive strategies only, but is much of their feature. In the same line, Griffiths (2008) defines strategies as activities that learners choose consciously for the purpose of regulating their own language learning.

High use of metacognitive strategies by Asian EFL learners, especially Iranian ones, might come in the light when they are linked to learners' autonomy and success in language learning by some researchers such as Griffiths (2008) in the field. She regards metacognition as a guide for choosing, monitoring, combining and evaluating approaches for learning languages without which learners have no direction. She also regards metacognitive behavior of the learner as "an essential element of autonomy" which enables them to take charge of their learning even in the absence of appropriate teaching schedules and programs. Thus, it is not unusual to observe high use of metacognitive strategies by Iranian learners of English, who strive to learn the language in spite of the existence of mainly grammar-based approaches of teaching English in many Iranian public or private language institutes that provoke mainly conscious processes on the aspects of Iranian language learners' strategy use.

The participants in this study also resemble many Asian EFL participants in other studies (reviewed above) with respect to their lower use of affective and memory strategies. Affective strategies, in fact, enable learners to control their emotions, attitudes, and

motivations in language learning processes. Lower use of affective strategies by the participants of this study could be due to their difficulty in managing their emotions and anxiety to use the target language especially in the form of a presentation or a lecture or even a simple talk in front of other students in the class. Their fear of using the target language might relate to the fact that English is not used beyond the walls of the classroom especially in spoken forms. As a result Iranian learners hardly build up second language identity required for taking roles, interacting in English and many other activities which involve using the target language for self expression.

Another likely explanation for the lower use of affective strategies is the existence of some odd strategies in the SILL that might not gain a high score even by good language learners which, in turn, might affect the total category mean score. For instance, strategy items 41, 43, and 44 respectively shown up as "I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English" or "I write down my feelings in a language learning diary" or "I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English" were least favored by the participants in this study and gained the lowest mean scores (M = 2.21, 1.61 and 2.45 respectively) among almost all the SILL items.

Likewise memory strategies were least favored by the participants in this study as well as by the Asian participants in the above mentioned studies. Memory strategies enable learners to create mental linkages, group, associate, elaborate and place new words into a context. They also let learners make connections between images and sounds. Some strategies in this category enable learners to use keywords and represent sounds in memory, while some other memory strategies entail reviewing which enables students to do structured reviewing. Finally, employing action using physical response is another technique in this category. One explanation for the lower use of these strategies as Oxford

(1990) claims is that language students rarely report using memory strategies, which may also be the case in the present study. Oxford believes that language learners might not be aware of how often they actually employ memory strategies. It is likely that the participants in the present study just underestimate how often they use Memory Strategies. Another likely explanation for the lower frequency of using memory strategies according to Riazi and Rahimi (2005) might be due to the fact that traditional rote memorization strategies that Asian learners once were reported to prefer might differ from the specific memory strategies reported in Oxford's (1990) SILL. This interpretation is in conformity with the results gained on individual memory strategies by the participants in this study. Of 50 items in the SILL, item 5 (I use rhymes to remember new English words, $M = 2.24$) and item 7 (I physically act out new English words, $M = 1.96$) are memory strategy items which gained the lowest mean scores among almost all the SILL items.

The participants in this study reported using compensation ($M = 3.42$) and cognitive (3.26) categories of strategies at a medium level. They used these categories significantly higher than affective and memory categories but significantly lower than metacognitive and social categories of strategies. With respect to compensation strategy category, the results of this study resemble the results of some other studies with Asian EFL learners who reportedly applied compensation strategies at a medium level (Chang, 2009; Green, 1991; Oh, 1992; Nikoopour et al., 2011; Park, 1997; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005; Zare, 2010), but are in contrast with the results gained in other studies indicating a high use of compensation strategies by Asian EFL learners (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Bremner, 1999; Chang, 1991; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Yang,1994, 2010) to name a few. On the whole, participants in the present study applied compensation strategies at an acceptable rate ($M = 3.42$) and significantly higher than affective, memory, and cognitive strategies. Of the SILL's 50

individual strategy items, too, item 29 (If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing, $M = 4.01$) as a compensation strategy was among the top ten strategies favored by the participants in the study. Higher use of compensation strategies as Bedell and Oxford (1996) argued is typical of Asian English learners.

Compensation strategies enable learners to guess intelligently using linguistic cues and other cues. Some of these strategies enable learners to overcome limitations in speaking and writing; they switch to their mother tongue, get help, use mime or gesture, avoid communication partially or totally, select the topic, adjust or approximate the message, coin words, and use circumlocution or synonyms (Oxford, 1990). High use of compensation strategies usually (but not always) characterizes the learners who struggle with lower competence. In fact, what has been long emphasized in relation to a compensation strategy definition by many people in the field is its connection to a deficit in the learner's competence. However, as Cohen (2007) stated, learners can be highly strategic in an area where they actually do not have a problem or deficit. Iranian students like other Asian EFL learners may frequently use compensation strategies to both compensate for the gap in their target language knowledge and act strategically to make progress in language attainment.

Another area of great similarity between the present study and several other studies with Asian background English learners (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Bremner, 1999; Chang, 1991, 2009; Nikoopour et al., 2011; Park, 1997; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005; Yang, 1994, 2010; Zare, 2010) is in moderate use of cognitive strategies by Asian background students. In the present study Iranian learners perceived using cognitive strategies ($M = 3.26$) at a medium level and significantly ($p < .05$) higher than affective and memory strategies as was also the case in many other EFL studies such as the ones mentioned above. Oxford (1990) regards cognitive strategies to be responsible for

understanding and producing the target language. They are central to learning as they involve direct manipulation of the target language; thus, failure or poor performance in language learning can be linked to low use of these strategies. Accordingly, moderate use of cognitive strategies by Asian background EFL learners can lead us to conclude that Asian EFL learners generally are not poor achievers in the course of language learning, though they could not be regarded as top achievers. Thus, it can be concluded that strategies such as repeating, practicing English sounds, finding patterns, analyzing, reasoning, and summarizing the target language information are used by Asian background English learners at an average rate. In other words average use of cognitive strategies is typical of Asian EFL learners including Iranian EFL learners.

Finally, Iranian learners in this study perceived themselves as high users of social strategies (M = 3.82). Indeed, the results gained by the present study support the results of a few similar studies (Chang, 2009; Wharton, 2000) with Asian non-Iranian language learners as the participants. Iranian English learners reported to highly use social strategies in some other studies. For instance, Kafipour et al. (2011) studied the strategy use pattern of 156 Iranian post graduate students majoring in art and science and found that their participants applied social strategies at a high level. In another study on Iranian English learners, Sadighi and Zarafshan (2006) also reported high use of social strategies by their participants. By contrast, the results of the present study are dissimilar to the results obtained in several other studies (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Bremner, 1999; Chang, 1991; Oh, 1992; Park, 1997; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Yang, 1994, 2010), in which non-Iranian Asian English learners reported to use social strategies at a medium range. Also, in a very few studies Asian English learners perceived themselves as low users of social strategies. For instance, Noguchi (1991) administered SILL to Japanese university students and

revealed that they were moderate strategy users, overall, and used all strategy categories between low to medium ranges. Social category turned out to be least favored among this group of Japanese students.

Based on Oxford's (1990) definition, social strategies help students learn through interaction with others. Strategies in this category mainly entail asking questions for correction or clarification, cooperating with other proficient language users, and finally developing cultural understanding. Logically, one might expect low use of social strategies by EFL learners, specifically by Iranian ones as Iran is an EFL context where learners do not have abundant opportunities to communicate the target language in out of the classroom settings. However, the results of the study contradict the notion for at least one reason; individual social strategies in SILL do not differentiate between EFL and ESL learners. A glance over individual social strategies and the scores the participants gained on them reveal that except for item 46 (I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk) which is usually more applicable in settings where there are native users of the target language outside the classroom, other items included in this category could be employed both in and out of the classroom. For instance, item 45 (If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down and say it again), item 48 (I ask for help from others who can speak English well) and item 49 (I ask questions in English) gained the highest mean scores (3.94, 4.02, and 4.35 respectively) among almost all the SILL items and obviously were perceived to be employed most frequently by the participants of this study in classroom settings where their teachers and more knowledgeable peers are essential sources for correction, clarification, verification and cultural understanding.

To sum up this section, it could be concluded that Iranian EFL learners as a big nationality show striking similarities in terms of strategy use pattern to other Asian EFL

learners. However some differences are noticeable especially with respect to the application of social strategies. The differences and similarities in the strategy use pattern of Asian EFL learners could also be traced to their cultural as well as learning style differences that were discussed in the literature review section of the study in detail.

5.2.2 Finding 2:

Iranian ESL learners significantly perform better than Iranian EFL learners on the overall SILL, on the six categories of the SILL, and on individual strategies listed in the SILL;

Although both groups showed almost the same pattern in their preference for the strategy categories, that is, they both favored metacognitive and social categories of strategies the most and memory and affective categories the least with compensation and cognitive categories being in the middle of the hierarchy, the results of the independent *t*-test (t (98) = 2.65, p = .009 <.05) indicate that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the EFL and ESL groups in overall use of the SILL. On average the ESL students (M = 3.45, SD = .59) show a higher mean score on the overall language learning strategies than the EFL group (M = 3.22, SD = .42). Higher use of the overall strategies by the ESL students is in conformity with their higher performance in all the SILL strategy categories as evident in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Descriptive Statistics of Categories of Learning Strategies by Setting

Dependent Variable	SETTING	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
MEMORY	EFL	2.780	.066	2.649	2.911
	ESL	3.078	.083	2.914	3.243
COGNITIVE	EFL	3.179	.061	3.058	3.300
	ESL	3.390	.077	3.238	3.542
COMPENSATION	EFL	3.347	.071	3.206	3.488
	ESL	3.538	.090	3.361	3.715
METACOGNITIVE	EFL	3.693	.071	3.553	3.833
	ESL	3.949	.089	3.773	4.125
AFFECTIVE	EFL	2.651	.062	2.529	2.773
	ESL	2.921	.077	2.768	3.074
SOCIAL	EFL	3.760	.071	3.620	3.901
	ESL	3.915	.089	3.739	4.092

In statistical terms, Iranian ESL learners significantly performed better than their EFL counterparts in memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective categories of strategies ($p < .05$), while they did not show significant differences ($p > .05$) in their mean scores regarding the use of compensation and social strategy categories

Exploring the differences of strategy use among ESL and EFL learners from the same nationality has also been the focus of a few studies. For instance, Riley and Harsch (1999) compared the strategies of 28 Japanese ESL students entering two language programs in Hawaii with the strategies used by 28 of their Japanese EFL counterparts attending a university in Japan. The researchers found that the two groups used variant strategies with ESL learners showing higher frequency of strategy use; hence, they argued that the environmental differences could play a significant role when learning another

language. Riley and Harsch suggested that ESL learners were more willing to take advantage of the availability of the English speaking sources that surround them.

A more recent related study belongs to Chang (2009) who looked at the patterns of strategy use of Chinese ESL/EFL college students studying in the U.S and Taiwan respectively. Chang found no significant difference between the two groups of participants in terms of five strategy categories in the SILL. However, he showed that ESL groups of participants used significantly more Social Strategies than their EFL counterparts.

In this study Iranian English learners in ESL Malaysia perceived to employ cognitive (M = 3.39) and memory (M = 3.07) strategies significantly ($p < .05$) higher than Iranian students in EFL Iran (cognitive mean = 3.17 and memory mean = 2.78). The results of individual items analysis also support the above results; ESL learners gained higher score over all the nine memory strategies listed in the SILL, though only item 7 (I physically act out new English words) and item 8 (I review English lessons often) were more significantly ($p < .05$) applied by ESL learners. Likewise, of 14 cognitive strategies listed in the SILL, ESL learners gained significantly better scores on items 10 (I say or write new English words several times), 17 (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English) and 20 (I try to find patterns in English). Cognitive and memory strategies are regarded as direct strategies based on Oxford's (1990) classification, which entail all kinds of activities or techniques employed by the learner to directly manipulate the target language. Thus, it can be concluded that, on average, Iranian ESL learners more actively apply strategies such as employing action using physical response and mechanical techniques (item 7), reviewing (item 8), formally practicing with sounds and writing system of the target language (item 10), receiving and sending messages (item 17), and finding target language patterns (item 20) than Iranian EFL learners.

One likely explanation for higher use of memory and cognitive strategies by ESL participants could be the availability of abundant target language input in the Malaysian ESL context which, for processing, taps into the learners' strategies required for direct manipulation of the target language. The interviewees' portfolio also supports the above notion. Iranian ESL interviewees were generally reported to take advantage of the target language resources surrounding them. They explained that English was the only means for academic survival in ESL Malaysia as they needed to communicate with their teachers, peers and academia in English. In outer- college settings, too, they needed to communicate in English with people around them. Nearly all of them reported to perform activities or strategies as reviewing their lessons, summarizing, taking notes, reporting in English, providing flash cards, sending emails in English and many other activities which all characterize memory and cognitive strategies. In EFL Iran, by contrast, the activities mentioned above were less frequently applied as reported by the EFL interviewees.

ESL participants in this study also reported to apply metacognitive category of strategies (M = 3.04) more significantly ($p < .05$) than their EFL counterparts (M = 3.69). This is also in conformity with the results gained by individual strategy item analysis; of 9 metacognitive strategy items in the SILL, ESL learners significantly ($p < .05$) gained higher mean scores on item 31 (I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better; ESL M = 3.92, EFL M = 3.46), item 34 (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English; ESL M = 3.77, EFL M = 3.08) and item 35 (I look for people I can talk to in English; ESL M = 4.16, EFL M = 3.67). The results generally suggest that ESL students pay more attention to their target language mistakes (item 31) or evaluate themselves by self-monitoring, and are more focused on their language learning plan (item 34) while they consciously look for people to talk to in English (item35) which

is normally more applicable in the Malaysian ESL context where English is widely used by local and international people.

Affective category of strategies is another domain where the ESL learners significantly ($p < .05$) performed better than the EFL learners (ESL $M = 2.92$, EFL $M = 2.65$). Regarding individual strategies in the affective category, too, the ESL group gained higher scores over all the six individual strategies listed in the SILL. However, in statistical terms, only item 41(I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English; ESL $M = 2.56$, EFL $M = 1.99$) showed significant difference ($p > .05$) between the ESL/EFL groups. Possibly, ESL students can better manage their emotions and anxiety in terms of learning English as they frequently use the target language both in and out of the classroom.

One reason for less frequent use of affective strategies by EFL students might be that they rarely encounter situations in out of the class settings where they can orally communicate the target language; hence, they are unlikely to "talk to someone else about how they feel when they are learning English" (item 44) or they hardly have any chances to "encourage themselves to speak English even when they are afraid of making a mistake" (item 40). Similarly, in classroom settings they are afraid of making a mistake in front of their teachers or peers which in turn prevents them from orally communicating the target language especially when they are tense or nervous.

Unlike the four categories mentioned above, Iranian ESL and EFL learners in this study did not show significant differences in using compensation and social categories of strategies ($p > .05$) though, on average, the ESL mean score was higher than the EFL one over the two categories. Both groups reported using compensation strategies between moderate to high levels (ESL $M = 3.53$, EFL $M = 3.34$). The results of this study support

the results gained in some similar studies. Bedell (1993), for instance, compared LLSs of Chinese students studying in China with that of Chinese students studying in the US. He concluded that compensation strategies were high frequently used among both groups of students in different settings. Bedell and Oxford (1996) in a study of 353 Chinese EFL university students found that compensation strategies were highly used by their participants. They suggested that it was also true with Chinese students studying in Taiwan and the U.S. In a recent study, Chang (2009) found similar pattern in Chinese ESL and EFL learners' use of compensation strategies; they both reported a moderate use (ESL/EFL M= 3.34) of compensation strategies. Thus, it could be argued that higher use of compensation strategies is typical of both ESL and EFL Asian background learners. Additionally, ESL and EFL learners do not significantly differ from each other in using compensation strategies.

Revolving around social category of strategies, the ESL group (M = 3.91) showed a higher mean score than the EFL group (M = 3.76) which was normally predictable regarding the abundance of ready-made situations for target language use by Iranian students in ESL Malaysia. However, in statistical terms, ESL learners did not show significant differences (p > .05) in using social category of strategies from their EFL counterparts. As discussed in the previous section (finding one), except for item 46 (I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk) which is usually more applicable in settings where there are native users of the target language out of the classroom, other items included in this category could be employed both in and out of the classroom. In other words, individual social strategies included in SILL do not seem to differentiate ESL learners from EFL ones. The results gained by the interviews analysis also support the claim as nearly all the ESL interviewees reportedly enjoyed using the target language both

in and out of the classroom settings as a means of communication. By contrast, EFL interviewees' main obstacle in learning and using English turned out to be the lack of situations for English talk beyond the classroom walls.

In sum, Iranian ESL learners significantly differed from their EFL counterparts in using the overall SILL, in using several individual strategies listed in SILL and in applying several categories of strategies included in SILL. This finding of the study underscores the influence of social settings as key element on the participants' language learning in general and on the application of language learning strategies in a specific way. From this vantage point, LLSs are linked to both cognitive stance of learners and social settings in which they occur. Lave and Wenger (1991) taking a sociocultural stance argued that tasks, activities, functions, and understandings do not exist in separation, but are built on complex systems of relationships developed within social settings. The individual learner is both defined by, and defines these relationships. Along the same line, some researchers (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Gao, 2006; Lantolf & Apple 1994; Norton & Toohey 2001) influenced by the work of Vygotsky and others, maintained that the development of language learner strategies is highly affected by the social context.

Success in target language attainment after moving to an ESL country could also be observed in other studies (See e. g. Gao, 2006; Norton, 2000; Toohey, 2000, 2001). These studies are longitudinal in nature and are located within the study abroad research framework; nevertheless, they could be compared with the present study in terms of social context. The authors of those studies have also looked at the strategies of their participants in a different country, though strategy investigation has been only a part of their concern. Gao (2006) investigated changes in 14 Chinese learners' use of language learning strategies

after they moved from mainland China to Britain. The analysis of the learners' experiential narratives led him to conclude that the popular language learning discourses, assessment methods, and influential agents had been influencing the learners' frequency and choices of strategy use in China, but their mobilizing forces disappeared or were undermined in Britain and hence lost their past mediation effects on the learners' strategy use. In other terms, Gao indicated that the participants' strategic behaviors drastically changed after moving to an ESL context due to their encounter with different sociocultural mediators.

In a joint review of their studies, Norton and Toohey (2001) conclude that an explanation for Eva's (one of the five cases in their study) outperformance lies in the extent to which she was able to negotiate entry into the Anglophone social networks in her workplace (Munchies) despite initial difficulties. They argue that what made Eva and Julie (one of the six young English learners) successful second language learners had to do only partly with their own actions. Central to their success was the fact that they both gained more and more access to the social and verbal activities of the target language community of practice.

In terms of the EFL and ESL learners' differences regarding various categories of learning strategies and language use, what could be drawn from the results of this study is that EFL learners were not as eager as their ESL counterparts to establish strong second language communities outside their language classes in EFL Iran. Oral use of the target language is limited to English classes in private language institutes only. In other words, in Iranian EFL context, Learning English is not socially situated beyond the walls of the classroom unlike other EFL contexts such as Vietnam and Japan where people have some extent of exposure to English in the society. One reason is that in many Iranian educational settings such as schools and universities where students meet English classes only once a

week reading is the only skill which is given priority. In such educational system, reading is a more realistic goal and most English tests at schools and universities measure students in terms of reading ability.

In reality, despite the emerging patterns of interaction in the form of cultural and trade exchanges in many ESL/EFL contexts, the social fabric of the Iranian society is still quite traditional to a great extent. In such societies, people mostly identify themselves in terms of family and religious values and very less likely in terms of English language.

By contrast, ESL learners' growing involvement in various social settings such as their language classes, work places and colleges provides them with numerous chances to use English in all aspects of their daily life. This involvement, in turn, offers them strong incentives for gaining a better mastery of the target language. In reality, it is hard to imagine the ESL learners' activities such as going out together, discussing their unique cultural references, working together, and many others without any influence on their language learning and LLS use. This is reflected in the responses of some ESL interviewees regarding their consciously looking for people to talk to, monitoring themselves, and their willingness to be accepted and respected by the members of their communities. Nevertheless, these ESL respondents had to cope with some obstacles while learning and using the target language; the main one being erroneous use of English by less educated local people in ESL Malaysia.

5.2.3 Finding 3:

While language proficiency seems to significantly affect the ESL learners' both overall use of SILL and the application of six categories included in SILL, it does not significantly

differentiate between low, intermediate and advanced EFL learners with respect to overall use of SILL and its six strategy categories;

The advanced EFL students (M = 3.33, SD = .42) show a higher mean score in using the overall SILL than the intermediate (M = 3.20, SD = .34) and elementary (M = 3.13, SD = .35) EFL groups. However the results of one-way ANOVA (F (2, 93) = 1.84, p = .164> .05) indicate that there are not any significant differences (p > .05) between the mean scores of the advanced, intermediate and elementary students in using the overall SILL in the EFL group. Similarly, although EFL learners show higher mean scores in intermediate and advanced groups on the application of the SILL six categories, the results of MANOVA indicate that there are not significant differences (p > .05) between low, intermediate and advanced EFL learners in using SILL six strategy categories. By contrast, advanced ESL students (M = 3.76, SD = .59) show a higher mean score in using the overall SILL than the intermediate (M = 3.52, SD = .48) and elementary (M = 3.07, SD = .56) ESL groups. Also, the results of one-way ANOVA (F (2, 58) = 8.03, p = .001< .05) indicate that there are significant differences between the mean scores of the advanced, intermediate and elementary ESL students in using the overall SILL. Accordingly, follow-up post-hoc Scheffe tests report that: 1) Advanced and elementary ESL groups significantly differ from each other in using the overall SILL (p =.001 < .05), 2) Intermediate and elementary ESL groups also statistically differ from one another in a significant way (p = .029< .05) in using the overall SILL, and 3) There are no significant differences between advanced and intermediate ESL groups in overall use of the SILL

Likewise, with regard to SILL six categories, the results of MANOVA revealed that proficiency group had a significant effect (p < .05) on the ESL learners' performance on the

application of cognitive, compensation and metacognitive categories of strategies. By contrast, the MANOVA test did not show significant differences between low, intermediate and advanced ESL learners in using memory, affective and social strategy categories. Additionally, follow-up Scheffe tests results showed that the advanced and intermediate ESL groups significantly differed from the elementary ESL group in applying cognitive and compensation strategy categories ($p < .05$) whereas advanced and intermediate groups did not significantly ($p > .05$) differ from each other with respect to the application of these two categories. Regarding the application of metacognitive category of strategies, the Scheffe test results indicated that only advanced ESL learners were significantly different from elementary ESL students and other proficiency groups did not show significant differences in using metacognitive strategies.

Many studies carried out on the role of proficiency point to its positive effect on the learner's strategy use (Khalil, 2005; Oxford, 1996; Park, 1997; Phillips, 1991; Rahimi, 2004; Rost & Ross, 1991; Takeuchi, 1993; Yang, 2007; Yang, 2010). Most of these studies were carried out in EFL contexts using Oxford's SILL. By contrast, there are several studies reporting very low correlation between proficiency and SILL strategies (Mullin, 1992; Nisbet et al. 2005; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985) to name a few. The results of the present study both contradict and support the results gained by similar studies in the field. As it turned out by the present study, while proficiency affected the ESL learners both in overall use of SILL and in applying SILL six strategy categories, it did not seem to influence the EFL learners' overall strategy use nor did it have a significant impact on their application of SILL six strategy categories.

The reason some studies yielded strong relationship between proficiency and strategy use of the learners while others did not, has not been fully uncovered. Takeuchi et al. (2007) enumerate some possible reasons for this contradiction. Firstly, they refer to Scarcella and Oxford (1992) as arguing that it is possible that other variables may overshadow strategy use, such as self-esteem, tolerance of ambiguity, field dependence/ independence, and motivation. Second, they argue that contradictory results may relate to the type of instrument selected to measure proficiency. For instance, according to Nisbet, Tindall, and Arroyo (2005) it is likely that learner strategies correlate more strongly with more communicative measures of proficiency which are different from TOEFL which is designed to assess mainly cognitive/academic language proficiency. Thirdly, as Nisbet et al. (2005) argued, learners might have used strategies other than those reported on the SILL. Finally, one explanation is that what determines learning outcomes is not the frequency of strategy application, but the flexibility in using strategies in a specific context (Takeuchi et al., 2007).

It could be argued that any explanation for the relationship between proficiency and strategy use should have in its centrality the interplay between cognitive stance of the learner and social settings where learning takes place. Similar to the last explanation presented above, the author believes cognitive behavior of the learner is constituted within the social settings where learning takes place. In other words, LLS use of the participants is affected by EFL and ESL settings that are, in turn, characterized by the interplay between the dynamics of the classroom situations and out-of-the-class use of English. The interviewees' portfolio indicates that EFL learners in the present study were not as eager as their ESL counterparts to establish strong second language societies out of the classroom settings in EFL Iran where the target language is not communicated by the members of

Iranian society. Thus, it is unlikely that EFL learners share their language strategies among themselves or learn from each other outside the classroom. In other words, EFL learners do not significantly change in their strategy pattern while enrolling in higher-level classes.

The notion is more illuminated when we refer to the responses ESL interviewees gave when asked about their incentive for learning the target language. ESL interviewees at higher levels of proficiency were more willing to develop a more powerful place in their language or college classes, or among the members of the academia in Malaysia. The reason they voiced was to gain a better mastery of English for fulfilling their aims, including writing journal articles, communicating with the academia, graduation and in sum using English in a variety of situations. Among the responses was the wish to gain the attention of other members of their classroom community. More proficient ESL learners more significantly used cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies than less proficient ESL learners while EFL learners across different groups of proficiency did not significantly differ from each other in using language learning strategies.

Taking a view which embraces both cognitive and social aspects of strategies, it could be concluded that Iranian ESL learners' growing participation in activities performed in various social settings enabled them to increasingly apply strategies to efficiently understand and manipulate the target language (cognitive strategies), to consciously look for the ways to become good language learner (metacognitive behavior) and to control their fear or anxiety of learning or using the target language in a variety of situations (affective strategies) in the Malaysian ESL context as they gained more and more mastery in the target language.

5.2.4 Finding 4:

The interaction of setting and proficiency factor shows significant effect on the learners' overall strategy use, though the interactive effect of the two variables seems to significantly affect only compensation strategy use of the learners;

Results of statistical two-way ANOVA reveal a significant interaction between setting and language proficiency on the learners' overall use of SILL (F (2, 151) = 3.63, p = .029 < .05). Additionally this significant difference is of moderate effect size (partial η^2 = .046). While ESL students in intermediate (M = 3.52) and advanced (M = 3.76) groups outperformed the intermediate (M = 3.20) and advanced (M = 3.33) EFL participants on the overall SILL, Iranian elementary EFL learners showed higher mean score (M = 3.13) on the overall SILL than the elementary ESL participants (M = 3.07).

The reason elementary EFL learners reportedly performed better than elementary ESL learners on the overall SILL might come in the light with reference to Griffiths (2004) as arguing that when learners migrate from X to Y (from Iran to Malaysia in this study) and move from one educational setting in to another (from Iranian language centers to Malaysian language institutes in this study), not only do they face different outer classroom settings but additionally, they have to find out about the underlying rules, values, and beliefs. The results of the present study indicate that for the elementary ESL learners exploring the underlying rules and practices of their new setting does not occur in a timeframe as short as a month or so; rather it takes time for our novice ESL learners to reach a point where they can benefit from the target language resources surrounding them.

Also, as Lafford and Collentine (2006) argued, there is a growing consensus among SA (study abroad) researchers that there is a threshold which learners must reach to fully

benefit from the SA context of learning. Similarly, the ESL learners turned out to be lagging behind their EFL counterparts in using overall SILL as they had not reached this threshold to fully benefit from their cognitive and metacognitive potentials or strategies. Interestingly, ESL learners in this study in intermediate and advanced groups of proficiency outperformed the intermediate and advanced EFL learners probably because they had reached and passed the given threshold to fully benefit from the target language richness in their ESL context. However, it is noteworthy that comprehensive exploration of the interaction between cognitive mechanisms affecting acquisition and the external sociolinguistic mechanisms, as well as the sociocultural issues of second language acquisition in a study abroad context of learning is beyond the scope of this study since these studies are mostly longitudinal in nature, hence; this study leaves room for the exploration and discussion of the issues by further studies.

With regard to the SILL six strategy categories, it turned out that, on average, the elementary EFL learners performed slightly better than the ESL participants on cognitive, compensation and social categories of strategies, while elementary learners in the ESL group gained higher mean scores on memory, metacognitive, and affective categories of strategies than the EFL learners. The results of the interview analysis also support the above quantitative finding; elementary EFL interviewees reported frequent use of strategies such as writing notes, messages, and summaries or watching English cartoons or listening to simple English songs which are cognitive in nature.

Similarly, the strategies such as asking questions and seeking for help from teachers or peers when encountering problems (social strategies) were frequently reported by the EFL interviewees. As previously discussed, a likely reason for the fact that the ESL learners did not outperform the EFL students in using strategies of different categories

might be that it takes time for the novice ESL learners to discover the underlying rules and values of their new physical and sociocultural settings. Additionally, ESL learners need to reach a proficiency 'threshold' similar to that proposed by Lafford and Collentine (2006) to fully benefit from the richness of the target language input surrounding them. Then they would use more and more of their cognitive and metacognitive potentials or strategies for language development. Meanwhile, it is worth mentioning that the EFL interviewees at elementary levels of proficiency expressed great enthusiasm for learning the target language which might be another reason for their better performance both on overall SILL and on three out of SILL's six strategy categories.

The EFL interview analysis indicated that EFL learners at elementary level are more motivated to learn the target language than those at higher levels of proficiency. However, ESL learners at intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency gained higher mean scores on all the strategy categories listed in SILL than their intermediate and advanced EFL counterparts. Similarly, the results of the interview analysis revealed that ESL learners at higher levels of proficiency, compared to the EFL interviewees, were more concerned about their progress in language learning as it was directly related to their success in academic achievement. They believed that being able to skillfully use the target language especially in spoken form enabled them to gain access to the knowledge resources required to fulfill their academic tasks or gain a more powerful place in their college classes or language classes where they could attract the attention of their teachers and other international peers.

In statistical terms, nonetheless, the result of MANOVA revealed that the interaction between types of setting (ESL/EFL) and language proficiency group of the participants had a significant effect only on the learners' use of compensation strategies (*F*

(2, 152) = 9.74, p = .000 < .05,). This interaction was of moderate to large effect size (Partial η2 = .114). Thus, while the ESL students showed higher means in intermediate (M = 3.66) and advanced (M = 4.12) groups on compensation strategy category compared to intermediate (M = 3.43) and advanced (M = 3.38) EFL learners, the EFL students in elementary group (M = 3.22) showed a higher mean than elementary ESL (M = 2.82) students on compensation category of strategies. Setting and proficiency group as separate variables turned out (findings 2, and 3) to significantly affect Iranian learners both in overall use of the SILL and in using SILL six categories, however the interaction of the two only significantly affected learners in using compensation category of strategies. This might relate to the statistical technique (MANOVA) the author has used to answer the related research question (question 8), i.e. as there are two independent variables with multiple layers (setting and proficiency group) and six dependent variables (SILL six categories), SPSS plays a more restrictive role to let us reject the null hypothesis. Another possible explanation is that in many strategy studies learners report to be moderate strategy users regardless of their proficiency level.

According to Riazi and Rahimi (2005), with regard to the fact that SILL uses the Likert scale, it is likely that there is an underlying "regression toward mean" effect in using this strategy inventory which might affect its validity. In statistical terms, the ESL participants at higher levels of proficiency significantly performed better than the intermediate and advanced EFL participants on compensation category of strategies. This finding weakens the claim that compensation strategies are more frequently used by learners who struggle deficiency in their competence to some degree, since the ESL learners in this study generally turned out to be more successful in language learning than their EFL counterparts. Thus, it is possible that learners' frequent use of compensation

strategies (at least those listed in SILL) might relate to learners' self regulation behavior rather than to their low language competence only.

5.2.5 Finding 5:

Both EFL and ESL groups highly ranked the level of enjoyment for learning English; however, there was an increase in the ESL interviewees' level of enjoyment for language learning after moving to Malaysia;

On average, both EFL and ESL respondents in different groups of proficiency highly ranked their level of enjoyment for English learning in their related settings (Iran and Malaysia) where they were living and learning English (Figure 5.1).

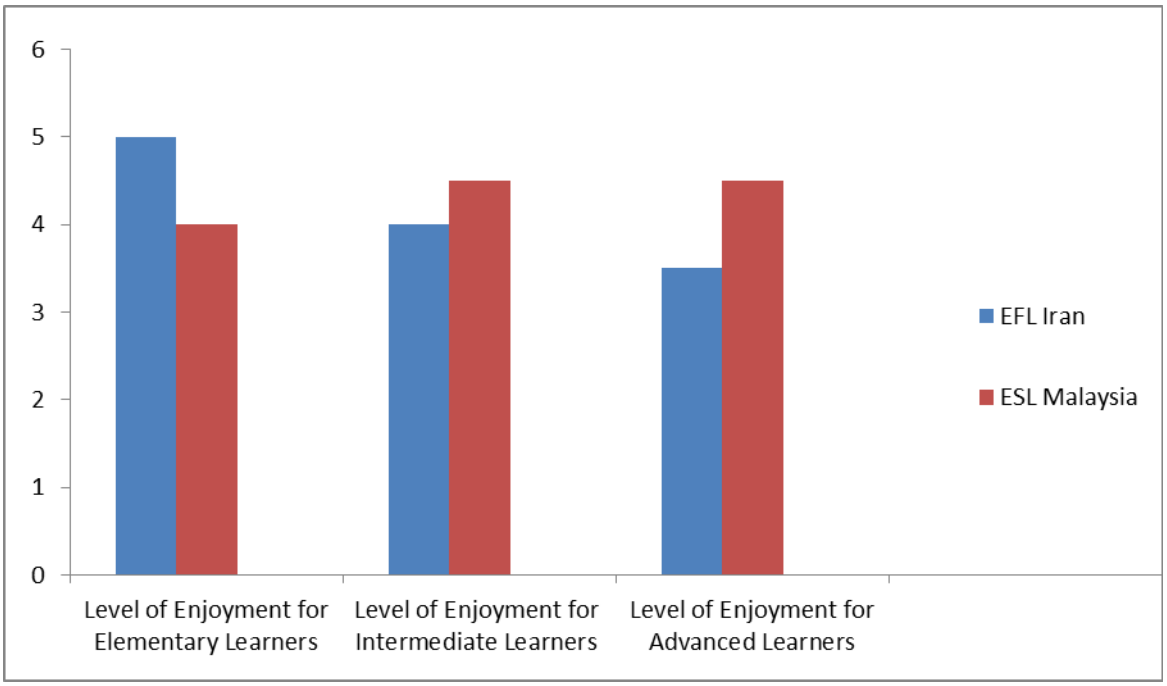

Figure 5.1. EFL/ESL Learners' Level of Enjoyment for English Learning.

Both EFL and ESL groups shared in some of the reasons they offered for joyful language learning such as interacting with other people or cultures especially using the Internet, watching and understanding English movies or programs through which they both

could improve their English and learn about other nations' culture. According to the views expressed by the EFL respondents, the level of enjoyment for English learning in Iran is tied with the learners' incentives or motivations for improving their English mastery.

In other words, despite the fact that in Iran English is not communicatively used outside the classroom, learners still aspire to learn it and indeed gain pleasure while learning it for they regard the language as a power tool to fulfill their variant purposes including helping them with some academic tasks, knowing about the world and interacting with other people especially using the internet, and fulfilling their dreams of living and studying abroad. In terms of proficiency effect, elementary EFL respondents were more motivated in learning the language than higher level interviewees in their group as they fully ranked the item (5 out of 5) related to their level of enjoyment for language learning. The reason for the higher level learners' being less interested in English learning than elementary respondents as offered by Student 5 might be due to the same routine for learning English in language classes in Iran which as he believes becomes dull in time.

The ESL interviewees on the other hand voiced some variant reasons for their high level of enjoyment in learning English in Malaysia which contained (1) to take advantage of native English speaking teachers in the British Council Language Institute, (2) to have ample opportunities for English use in out of the class situations, (3) to meet students from various nationalities in and out of the class to whom one can interact using English, (4) to continuously learn and use English in Malaysia, and (5) to develop a more powerful place among classmates or local people in the host country. Based on some thoughts expressed by these ESL respondents, while learners at elementary levels of proficiency in Malaysia seek enjoyment in understanding the language of the local people and the type of English used in their language classes by native English teachers, more proficient interviewees'

main reason for joyful language learning reportedly is their ambition for building up a more powerful place among the local or international people with whom they work or live, or in their language or university classes where English is the medium of instruction.

The majority of the ESL respondents reported a shift in their attitudes towards the amount of pleasure they could gain in learning English after staying in Malaysia for some time (Figure 5.2). While their average score for their level of enjoying English learning in EFL Iran was 3.33 (out of 5), they gained the total score of 4.33 as indication of their level of enjoyment in learning English in Malaysian ESL context. The strong view among this group of ESL interviewees was that in Iran there were not many situations for using English practically in out of the class situations especially with regard to oral aspects of English use. Unlike other ESL respondents, students D and E who ranked the item a 4 or 'usually enjoyed it' offered some personal reasons for their level of enjoyment of English learning in Iran such as job promotion and being actively involved in learning it.

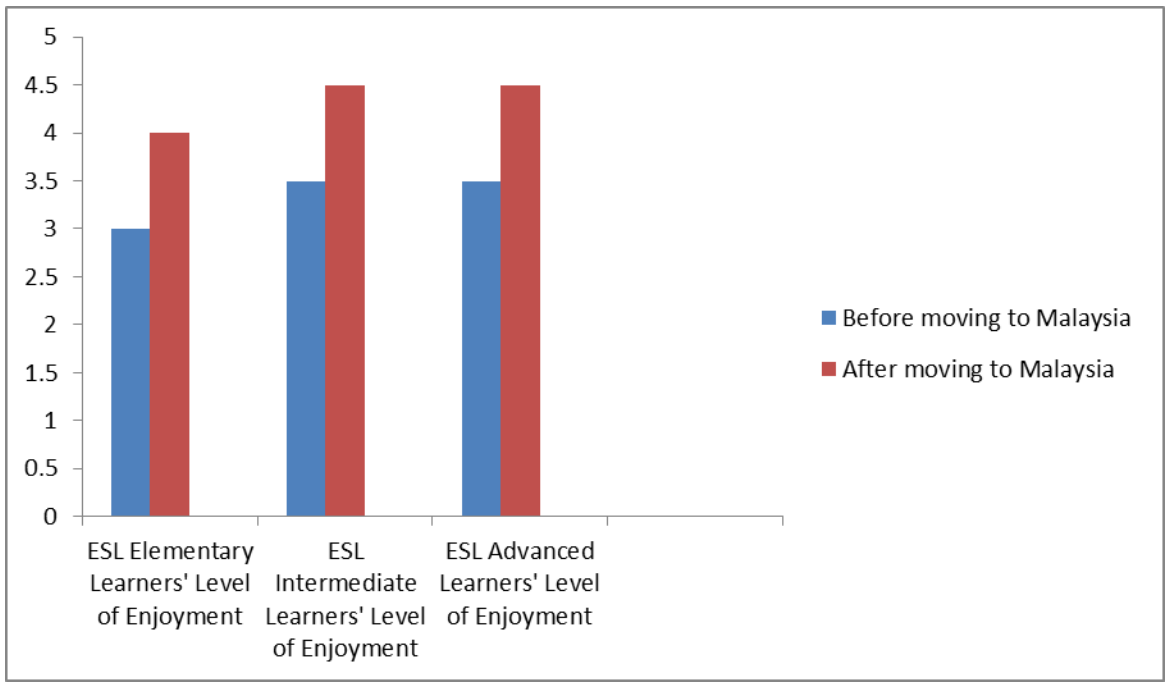

Figure 5.2. ESL Learners' Level of Enjoyment for English Learning before and after Moving to Malaysia.

The main reasons expressed by respondents A, B, C, and F for their lower level of enjoying English learning in Iran were: (1) they did not have enough time to continuously learn English, (2) there were some peers who used to speak Persian in the class, (3) it was a matter of chance to have a language teacher who could create a pleasant atmosphere in the class and motivate the students, (4) the unique atmosphere existing in Iran which does not highly motivate people to learn a foreign language.

5.2.6 Finding 6:

Improving language proficiency is highly important for both Iranian ESL and EFL learners; Most respondents from both settings rated this question a full rank as shown in Figure 5.3 as follows;

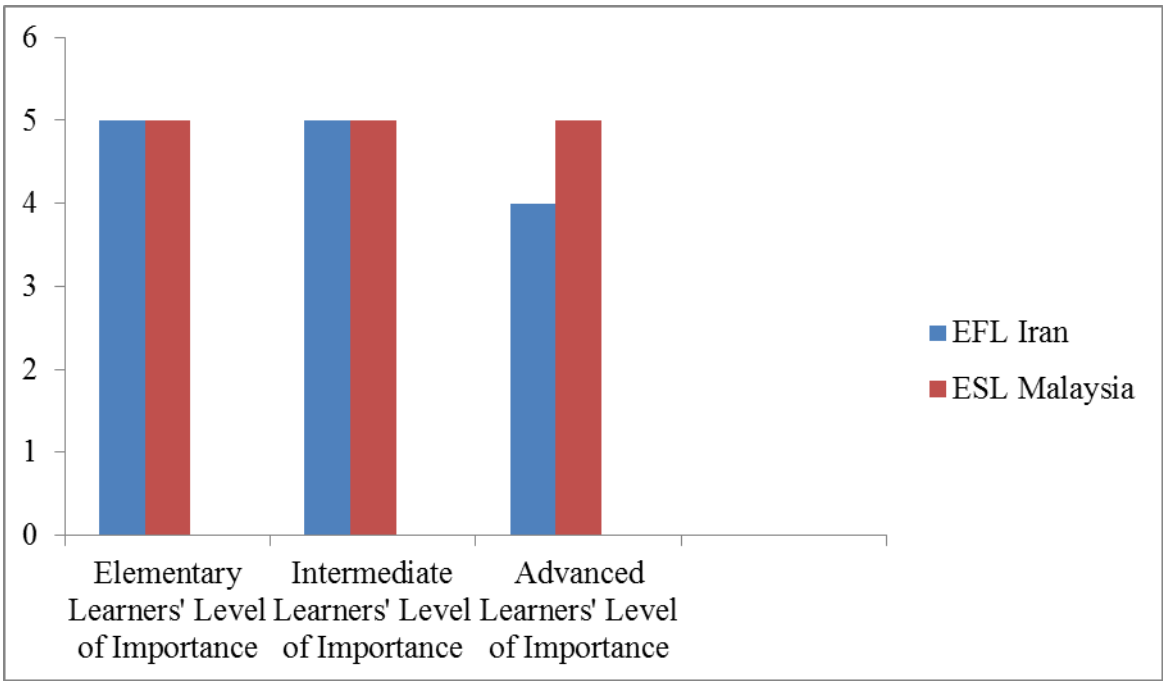

Figure 5.3. EFL/ESL Learners' Level of Importance for Improving Language Proficiency.

Many of the reasons offered by both ESL and EFL respondents for improving language proficiency in either setting indicate extrinsic incentives of these English learners regardless of their level of proficiency. Some of these reasons are: (1) to live and study in an English speaking country where having mastery in English language skills is imperative, (2) to get a job promotion, (3) to improve the quality of their life economically, and (4) to obtain IELTS or TOEFL minimum scores as part of their emigration requirements. Nonetheless there were a few reasons expressed by advanced ESL respondents indicating both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for improving their mastery in the target language.

As Students E and F said gaining a native like mastery especially with regard to oral aspects of the target language would create opportunities for joyful application of the language and bring them chances to develop a more stable place among local or international people living in the country which in turn would change their life economically. In fact what these learners think and do are illuminated with reference to

Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) as describing L2 learners as agents whose actions [strategies] occur in specific social settings and are affected by learners' dynamic identities which relate to nationality, ethnicity, educational experience, class, gender, age and so on.

5.2.7 Finding 7:

ESL classes were reportedly more interactive than EFL ones;

Although ESL respondents agreed that their ESL language classes in Malaysia were more interactive than those in EFL Iran; no noticeable difference was viewed in the nature of activities mentioned by them as being performed in EFL and ESL classes. Some of the class activities contained pair and group work activities, playing games, watching movies and cartoons, role taking, writing activities such as paragraph writing, acting out the conversations, free discussion and so forth. While elementary EFL respondents reported to highly enjoy most of what they perform as language activities in their class, respondents in higher groups of proficiency (Students 3, and 5) seemed not to be highly pleased with some of their class activities. While Student 3 was uninterested in some listening activities performed in the class and wished they could enjoy more speaking activities, student 5 was unsure of the reason for his lack of interest, and he tended to blame his teacher and the joyless routine going on in his class for his lack of interest. Similar to Student 3, he said that he enjoys those activities that challenge his speaking ability such as free group discussion.

On the other hand, what seemed to be appealing to the ESL respondents were not merely the various activities they enjoyed in ESL classes but the variant atmosphere running in their ESL classes for they referred to almost the same activities performed in both EFL and ESL classes when asked to compare these two settings. The reasons offered

by the ESL respondents for the difference they felt as existing between their language classes in Iran and Malaysia are (1) in Iranian language centers the whole system motivates you to obtain a high score and pass the course while in Malaysian language centers the system motivates you to learn and enjoy your time being in the class, (2) in ESL classes learners can benefit from interaction with classmates of different nationalities, and they are more motivated to have conversations with international peers about their countries, foods, families and many other issues that are motivating for them while in Iran these issues do not seem to persuade peers to interact in the same way especially at higher levels of English learning; as a result ESL respondents think they can learn many things from peers in language classes in Malaysia compared to language classes in Iran, (3) although many of the class activities performed in the EFL and ESL language classes are the same, in the latter everything is done in English, while in the former sometimes students shift to their mother tongue, (4) in the ESL classes Iranian students are highly motivated to interact with both male and female classmates while they lack such chance in EFL classes in Iran because of the unique sociopolitical system in Iran that segregates girls from boys, women from men in many Iranian educational centers including language learning centers (5) ESL respondents at intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency believe that higher level language learners in Iran are more probable to lack interest in language activities or classes.

Their lack of interest as one respondent explained does not much relate to Iranian language teachers; rather it has much to do with the atmosphere both in and outside the class; for example, lack of classmates of different nationalities, lack of coed classes as well as lack of English use in the society at large. We might be able to shed some light on the ESL interviewees' responses with reference to Lave and Wenger (1991) who, taking a sociocultural stance, argued that tasks, activities, functions, and understandings do not exist

in isolation, but are built on complex systems of relationships developed within social settings. The individual learner is both defined by, and defines these relationships. Pertinently, Iranian EFL learners as previously discussed are not willing to form any forms of target language societies outside their language classes because English is not communicated in the society and people do not identify themselves in terms of English use. Consequently, there is no interplay between the dynamics of the classroom situation and the language use outside the class. In short, learners in EFL classes might not fully appreciate their language class activities since they do not realize a match between what they do inside the class and what they observe in society.

5.2.8 Finding 8:

There are differences in English use among our Iranian language learners due to EFL/ESL setting differences;

EFL respondents generally believed that there are not many situations for English use outside language classes in Iran and with respect to oral use of English there is almost no chance to speak English in the society. By contrast, ESL respondents reported enjoying numerous situations for L2 use in all aspects outside their language classes in Malaysia. Number one area for language use for our EFL respondents outside their language classes is the Internet, by means of which they do numerous activities such as exchanging emails, reading English texts, watching English video clips, finding foreign friends and using language learning websites. Apart from using the internet, all that EFL learners in Iran reportedly could do as manifestation of English use is doing English homework assignments, watching English movies or satellite TVs and reading English texts related to

their academic tasks. Small differences were viewed in English use among EFL respondents related to their proficiency level as well as to the types of task or job they were currently doing.

As related to the latter, it seems that students' job might involve them to highly use one skill and as a result they get a better mastery in that skill as was also the case with Student 1 whose job involved him in exchanging emails in English. Similarly, Student 6 referred to writing as a means to put his English in to use for a part of his graduation requirements involved writing and publishing a few journal articles. Therefore it could be concluded that although Iranian EFL learners share a lot in the ways they use English which are mainly through reading channel, there are still extreme forms of using English outside language classes which are case sensitive. As related to the former (language proficiency), what distinguished elementary interviewees from the other respondents in the group was their interest in listening to English songs and memorizing them. Furthermore, they were more interested in doing their homework assignments and activities such as note taking. Intermediate and advanced members of the EFL group similarly pointed to watching English movies as their main source of knowing about the culture of English speaking countries. They also pointed to English short stories and some noted reading journals such as "Reader's Digest" as well as Internet texts as their main sources for English learning and using.

In the ESL group, however the strong view among all the respondents is that English is the medium of communication for them and they should frequently put their English knowledge into practice to meet their daily needs. Included in many areas of English use they mentioned, were shopping, exchanging emails, taxi renting, interacting with local and international friends, doing their academic tasks, watching English TV

programs and movies, going out with friends, and using the Internet for different purposes including doing academic searches. Nonetheless, differences in using English among these ESL interviewees could be observed due to their occupation and level of proficiency. Elementary learners mainly used English as a means of communication and doing their academic tasks while learners of higher proficiency level reportedly, not only put their English knowledge into practice through communicating with other people including the college academia for handling their academic tasks, but they also used English to establish stronger relationship among international or Malaysian friends with whom they worked or lived. As explained by Students E and F both of whom were currently working with local people in Kuala Lumpur, merging with local people in a framework of job or friendship had brought them opportunities for skilful use of English as they were learning English from the experienced English users within their community. Additionally, their job had caused them to want to skillfully use English as the more mastery they gained in using the language, the more respect and funds they could earn by their local employers in the community.

Other respondents especially at higher levels of proficiency who in fact had stayed in the country for a longer period, felt that any forms of interaction with local people, especially the educated ones, could lead to a more skillful use of the language, as for example expressed by Student C whose research project made him go to a few related companies, meet some local people, and explain to them about the purpose of doing his research and many other things that made him use English. In sum, what really motivates these ESL learners to use English and to want to skillfully use English in Malaysia is the desire to develop a more powerful place in different social settings in the host country, including their college or university classes, work places and in the society at large.

Finally, the reason that ESL respondents were more actively involved than their EFL counterparts in using English might come in the light with reference to Green and Oxford (1995) as suggesting that the key element for active use of strategies contain naturalistic practice, particularly in an environment where the opportunities for such practice are widely available.

5.2.9 Finding 9:

EFL participants seem to tackle more obstacles than the ESL ones for learning and using English due to sociopolitical conditions in Iran;

All the EFL respondents pointed to the lack of situations for English use outside their language classes. They strongly held the view that English is not the instrument for survival in the society, thus people are not forced to use English to meet their needs. Consequently, as they believed, a great deal of learning takes place through reading as the main channel for Iranian students to learn and use English outside the classroom. Additionally, our EFL respondents pointed to the fact that English is not communicatively taught in Iranian public schools which in turn naturally drive them to improve their reading skill and give negligent attention to other skills.

A main source of these obstacles relates to the Iranian revolution in 1979 that resulted in major restructuring in the English language programs implemented in the country to fit the new fabric of the society afterward. But none of the programs were successful due to some sociopolitical hurdles including the long lasting war between Iran and Iraq. So far, the country has not played host to the world's people at large. The consequences have been isolation of the country and lack of interaction with the world despite the emerging pattern of interaction in the global village. English was no longer a

means of communication in the country and was limited to schools, universities and language classes, where still it could not be learnt communicatively due to the lack of interplay between the classroom features and the language application outside the classroom in the society. In the aftermath of such phenomenon, Iran has remained a unique EFL country where English is not communicatively used beyond the walls of language classes. Accordingly, despite the emerging patterns of interaction with the outside world in the form of cultural and trade exchanges in many ESL/EFL contexts, the social fabric of the Iranian society has remained still traditional to a great extent where people mostly identify themselves in terms of family and religious values. Thus, it is not unusual to hear Student 2 as referring to his family's strange reaction when he orally uses English at home.

In the ESL group, however, while elementary learners felt that overcoming the obstacles related to their being exposed to a new country with different cultures and people was not an easy task, intermediate and advanced learners with longer period of residency seemed to be more adapted to the culture and people of the host country. Nonetheless, what remains the main obstacle for the more proficient Iranian English learners to using and learning English in Malaysia is the incorrect use of English by local people who do not have high level of schooling. This does not mean that local people with high level of education always use correct English. This as one advanced respondent explained is due to the fact these people do not tend to frequently use English in their daily interactions with each other.

This issue might come in the light with reference to the fact that Malaysia is home to various races and cultures, included in them are three major races of Malay, Chinese, and Indian with Malay being the majority. Malay is the main lingua franca spoken among people of different races with Mandarin, Tamil, and Hindi as other languages in the country

that are normally used only among the members of these races and are not the common languages of people of all races in the country and are not spoken in the society at large. English is another lingua franca used by these people. What determine English use among local people of different races are their social class, their proximity to the central parts of the country where there are many international people and their level of education. In the capital city of Kuala Lumpur many of these local people could use a kind of English, though uneducated people do not see it urgent to use English among themselves, and most of the time they use Malay to communicate with each other. This could be a main obstacle ESL learners encounter when they need to communicate with less educated people in the country since the English variation these people use is difficult to understand by international people.

However, in all international schools and universities in Malaysia English is the medium of instruction and it is the first lingua franca when people of different nationalities (non-local) meet each other. But, as felt by these ESL respondents, it is not always easy to find native English speakers around with whom one can put English into practice. Therefore one main obstacle for them is the shortage of any basic standard variations of English in the country. For some of our respondents this obstacle is more tangible when it comes to the pronunciation aspect of the target language as also evident in one respondent's view as saying "I feel disappointed in many cases in which I should pronounce words in a way understandable to local people but far below my expectations".

Finally, another obstacle seems to originate from the community of Iranian people who do not tend to speak English with each other. According to some respondents, the communities of Iranian students in Malaysia rarely use English in their daily interactions with each other unless there are a few local or international friends among them who

normally can join the group talk using English. In sum, it could be concluded that despite the existing obstacles in the ESL Malaysia for learning or using the target language as experienced by the ESL interviewees, Iranian students find Malaysia a better context than Iran for improving their language mastery.

5.3 Implications of the Study

This study was an attempt to investigate and compare Iranian college level English learners' pattern of LLS use within EFL and ESL (Tehran and Kuala Lumpur) settings through different proficiency groups. In interpretation of the study results the author tried to conceptualize both cognitive and social aspects of strategies. From this vantage point there are some recommendations for other researchers in the field. Additionally, as within the broad sociocultural and sociopolitical EFL/ESL settings the author constituted his sample using smaller educational settings (language classes), there are recommendations for language learners, teachers, and policy makers.

5.3.1 Recommendations for Researchers

The literature on English learners' use of language learning strategies within an ESL or EFL environment is abundant. Nonetheless, in a few studies researchers have looked at the differences between language learning strategies used in English as a foreign language (EFL) setting versus English as a second language (ESL) setting by learners of the same nationality or with the same language background (Riley & Harsch, 1999). Additionally, the dearth of studies investigating the success or failure of the study-abroad learners due to their studying in unique ESL context (such as Malaysia) where English is not the first language among different linguistic groups calls for exploration in the field of second

language acquisition. This study was one of the few attempts made to shed some light on the issue.

The results of this study revealed that learning English within a domain of ESL context where English is not the first language of the indigenous people has yet remarkable influence on learners' language attainment. Other researchers are recommended to conduct studies within other similar contexts such as Singapore, Hong Kong, India, and the Philippines where English is deemed as a second language but not the first language of the native people. The study results indicated that differences in learning environments have significant effect on the choice of strategies made by the learners who belong to the same nationality and the same language background. Iranian ESL learners significantly perform better than Iranian EFL learners on the overall SILL, on the six categories of the SILL, and on individual strategies listed in the SILL. Regarding the fact that many strategy studies have merely adopted a psychological or cognitive perspective in their theoretical foundation for their exploration in language learning strategy field with giving scant attention to sociocultural perspectives of LLSs, researchers are recommended to combine and reconcile psychological perspectives of LLSs with their sociocultural views in research endeavors to enhance our understanding about LLSs and the ways they could be fostered among language learners.

In this study, using social settings for investigating LLSs of Iranian English learners, the researcher argued that learners' actions or strategies can change due to the their level of proficiency, length of residence in a setting, their amount of exposure to English in the society at large and their growing use of English in various social settings in which they live or learn English. This might explain why Iranian ESL learners in Malaysia reported using more strategies in higher proficiency groups and were more involved in

active learning and using the target language than Iranian ESL learners at lower levels of proficiency in the same country, or why low, intermediate and advanced proficiency groups in the EFL setting did not significantly differ from each other in using language strategies. This is also supportable by the responses given by some ESL interviewees regarding their willingness to be accepted and respected by the members of their class or work place communities in spite of the existing obstacles on their way to learning and using the target language such as erroneous use of English by less educated local people in ESL Malaysia.

Other reasons might unfold using both cognitive and sociocultural frameworks in such investigation which is recommended by the present author. Finally, comprehensive exploration of the interaction between cognitive mechanisms affecting acquisition and the external sociolinguistic mechanisms, as well as the sociocultural issues of second language acquisition in a study abroad context of learning was beyond the scope of this study since these studies are mostly longitudinal in nature; hence this study leaves room for such research endeavors.

5.3.2 Recommendations for English Learners

In a practical sense, EFL learners can benefit from the availability of the target language input within a domain of ESL contexts such as Malaysia where English is not deemed as the first language of the native people despite some learning obstacles placed in the path of these study abroad learners. Regarding erroneous use of English by less educated local people in Malaysia as the main obstacle ESL learners in this study encountered on their way to using English, it is recommended that they actively involve themselves in participating in the activities of various communities of target language users that could be a combination of local, Iranian, and international people especially in their academic

settings where they can be exposed to acceptable English variations. They should keep in mind that they inevitably need to meet their daily needs through interacting with so called less educated people whose English might be odd or difficult to understand in the host country. Nonetheless, they can do their best to produce output which is grammatically correct and comprehensible.

Based on the findings of this study, memory (M = 2.89) and affective (M = 2.75) strategy categories were least favored by Iranian English learners as the whole nationality in both settings. Related to lower use of memory strategies by Asian EFL learners, particularly by Iranian students, they are recommended to work out new ways to enhance their memory strategies which probably play the most significant role in improving their language knowledge. Memory strategies are vitally important for the language learner and based on Oxford's (1990) definition, they enable learners to create mental linkages, group, associate, elaborate and place new words into a context. Apart from the strategies listed in SILL English learners can benefit from numerous other strategies that enable them to establish strong connections between sounds and meanings of the words they come across. Additionally, learners can ask their teachers to teach them these strategies and the ways they could be fostered in different contexts.

As related to the affective domain of strategies, learners' fear of using the target language might relate to the fact that English is not used outside the classrooms especially in spoken forms and as a result Iranian EFL learners hardly build up second language identity required for taking roles, interacting in English and many other activities which involve using the target language for self expression or controlling their emotions. One suggestion is that learners especially the EFL ones create situations of talk especially outside the classroom by forming their own communities of target language users so that

the community members can regularly meet each other and freely express their ideas and learn from one another. They can arrange to go out together and set rules to speak English regardless of what other people might feel or how they might react.

The results of the present study also show that the ESL students (M = 3.45, SD = .59) obtained a higher mean score on the overall language learning strategies than the EFL group (M = 3.22, SD = .42). They also significantly performed better than their EFL counterparts in memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective categories of strategies. This is consistent with the results of their interview analysis which indicated that ESL participants were more involved in active learning and using the target language as it was an instrument of survival for them in the host country where they consistently put their English knowledge into practice to perform a myriad of activities outside the classroom. Certainly, such situations do not exist for the EFL learners in Iran in the same way, but fortunately today's information technology developments have created abundant situations for communication among the world's people. For instance, EFL learners can use social networking sites such as Facebook and Skype to interact with English speaking people or other English learners on a regular basis and work on different aspects of the target language.

The study results also revealed that EFL learners in Iran obtain less benefit from their writing skill compared to reading skill. They can improve their writing skill by growing sensitivity to the words and structures they use on line in their written communication and by constantly using English when communicating with friends who belong to the same community of English learners. Finally, both Iranian EFL and ESL learners could lead themselves to be autonomous and self-directed in terms of language learning if they grew their knowledge of strategies.

5.3.3 Recommendations for Language Teachers

Takeuchi et al. (2007) argued that what determines learning outcomes is not the frequency of strategy application but the flexibility in using strategies in a specific context. In the same line, Brown (2007) suggested three steps for English teachers to assist their language students in adopting learning strategies for their optimal language attainment. First, teachers can assist students to become acquainted with and apply task-appropriate strategies. Second, English teachers can help their students apply strategies to expanded language activities and materials so that students can use strategies independently. Finally, teachers ought to know that some strategies may be more suitable to some learners than to others. Therefore, teachers should aid their students in acquiring strategies which are appropriate to them.

In the present study, most of the EFL interviewees reported that they liked their English classes and teachers in the language institutes they attended in Iran. This removes part of the worry about Iranian language teachers; however, one EFL interviewee and two ESL ones inclined to partly attribute their lack of interest in some class activities to their teachers in Iran. For instance one of the ESL respondents voiced that they enjoyed topics for pair and group interaction in their ESL classes better than those in their EFL classes since the topics such as food, culture, people, and family relations came from authentic and real world situations. Although ESL respondents reportedly used almost the same topics for interaction in their EFL classes back in Iran, these topics lacked their attraction in time in EFL classes where students had to do the same routine with peers who were all male learners of English and who shared the same cultural background. The reason for more joyful learning in their ESL classes as one respondent explained was due to the presence of international male and female classmates with whom they could exchange information

about the issues arising during their interactions. Therefore one recommendation for Iranian teachers is that they try to benefit from various class activities which come from the real world including the ones which are new, innovative, and interculturally bound that can help to boost learners' level of enjoyment.

The study results indicated that Iranian EFL learners in the elementary group showed a higher level of enjoyment than those in higher proficiency groups. Thus, teachers need to be innovative in the types of activities they utilize in their language classes and avoid lackluster topics at higher level classes. Accordingly, Iranian teachers can do small scaled action research in their classes to know about issues, topics and language activities that are interesting to their students and enhance their level of enjoyment.

Regarding lower use of memory strategies by Asian EFL learners, especially Iranian ones, language practitioners can involve their learners in activities and tasks which tap into their memory strategies such as the ones used to establish connections between new words and their sounds and meaning. Similarly, based on the study results, affective strategies are used less than other strategies by Asian EFL learners. Thus, the instructors should pay particular attention to these rather neglected strategies by providing their students with situations in their classes so they can freely express themselves using the target language despite their fear and anxiety that normally abound in EFL contexts such as Iran where English is not widely used beyond the classroom walls.

Public schools in Iran were not the focus of this study, nevertheless, a source of the obstacles in learning and using English for our respondents turned out to be rooted in the course books and teaching approaches adopted by their language teachers in public schools they attended during their school years. Course books and teaching approaches in Iranian

public schools are mainly grammar based to accord with the current assessment system in the country that mainly assesses students' reading, vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. Despite the limitations that such system imposes on school teachers, they can be innovative and include activities or supplementary materials in their lesson plans to enhance their students' level of enjoyment as well as their language learning strategies. Probably, the most crucial role of an enlightened teacher within such system is to teach their learners strategies that could be applied both inside and outside the classroom despite the learning obstacles that normally abound within the Iranian EFL context.

Based on the above discussion, in the following part, using Brown's (2001) scheme, the author suggests some guidelines for teachers who might teach in either EFL or ESL settings similar to the ones under investigation in this study.

When you plan a lesson in an ESL context such as Malaysia where there are ready made contexts for communicative use of the target language outside of the classroom, you can utilize the following guidelines to have your students seize the advantage:

- Encourage them to seek out opportunities for practical use of the language.
- Assign them specific tasks which involve using the target language outside the classroom, for instance writing a letter to their college dean, reading an article and summarizing it, talking to a tourist and providing a report for the class and etc.
- Invite native English speakers to your class and give your students chances to freely talk to them.
- Encourage your students to establish or join new target language communities outside their language classes.

- Ask them to provide diaries in which they can write about their language learning experiences, the members of their communities and the obstacles they see on their way to using or learning the target language.
- Use class time to encourage the students to talk about and discuss their outer class learning issues or obstacles and have both their teacher and peers' suggestions.

When you plan a lesson in an EFL context such as Iran where immediate use of the language seems far removed outside the classroom, the following guidelines may help you compensate for the lack of ready-made situations for communicative use of the target language by your students:

- Take class time for working on the activities that cannot be done as homework.
- Teach your students learning strategies that could be applied both in and outside the class.
- Use authentic language inputs which are culturally bound and motivating in order to boost interaction between peers and their level of enjoyment for learning the language.
- Assign your students a plethora of extra-class activities which involve them in active use of the target language outside the class, such as having them watch a movie and write a report for the class, write a journal on their learning progress, send emails to other peers and so forth.
- Encourage your students to form language communities and schedule regular activities.
- Help learners to find out more intrinsic factors for language learning.

- De-emphasize the role of language tests and emphasize genuine use of the language and interaction.

5.3.4 Recommendations for Policy Makers

Iran is a distinctive EFL country where English is neither used as a means of communication in society nor used as a medium of instruction in Iranian educational centers such as colleges or universities. While English is a subject taught from the very beginning level of education in public elementary schools through high levels of education at universities or colleges, it is not learnt by many to be communicatively used in everyday life. One reason as previously mentioned relates to the Iranian revolution in 1979. In the aftermath of such phenomenon several language programs were proposed by the policy makers to accord with the newly shaped fabric of society. Unluckily, none of the programs could be implemented in educational centers such as public schools, universities and even private language centers due to some sociopolitical hurdles including the long lasting Iran-Iraq war and the country's isolation from the world. Consequently, Iran has remained a unique EFL country where English is still not used for communication even in small scope in the society.

Even in language institutes, as Riazi and Rahimi (2005) claimed, much emphasis is put on explaining about the language and making language learners conscious of the process of learning even in cases where a communicative approach of teaching is claimed to be adopted. A source of these obstacles as also viewed by some of the interviewees is the grammar based approaches of teaching and the course books used in Iranian public junior and senior high schools which have been designed to accord with the assessment system in those settings. More specifically, the main objective of these course books is to prepare

students for the university entrance exam which assesses reading ability, vocabulary and grammatical knowledge without paying attention to written and oral skills. From a broad socio-political stance, a major source of these problems as stated by Atai and Mazlum (2013) relates to the fact that politico-ideological beliefs of material developers are as important as their expertise. Also, communication channels between planning and practice levels are of a top-down nature. In other words, they believe that a number of individuals are involved in ELT policy and decision making and after official documentation of such decisions, teachers are expected to implement and deliver the curriculum as planned. Atai and Mazlum (2013) conclude that such a top-down policymaking nature of Iran's ELT curriculum development means that practice-level realities are neglected, resulting in a planning-practice gap. The gap between these two layers will continue to grow as long as Iranian teachers are not involved in making ELT curriculum decisions.

Policy makers should also include students' perspectives within the curriculum and give learners incentives to learn English and enjoy it rather than merely studying it as a subject. One way is by including more communicative based course books in the curriculum and encouraging teachers to foster students' motivation and strategies by actively involving them in communicatively using the target language in the classroom. They should also provide teacher's training programs to increase language teachers' knowledge and skills and encourage their awareness of the latest pedagogical knowledge in the field.

Language learning is a meaningful context-sensitive process. It is socially constructed and dependent on historical, sociocultural as well as sociopolitical variables. Hence, policy makers should not prescribe the same curriculum or guidelines for multiple educational centers in the country; rather the curriculums ought to be dynamic, context-

sensitive and cyclical. Additionally, language knowledge should not be seen as a pre-given transferable commodity which could be conveyed to students by teachers through repetition; hence, policy makers should include language literacy programs aimed at producing teachers and students as intellectual transformers of literacy.

5.4 Conclusion

This study was the author's attempt to compare Iranian college level English learners' pattern of LLS use within EFL and ESL (Tehran and Kuala Lumpur) settings through different proficiency groups using Oxford's (1990) SILL and to explore their views on some critical language learning related issues within those settings. Two forms of instrumentation were used to answer the nine research questions of the study: (1) Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire, and (2) semi-structured qualitative interviews. The results of statistical analyses, applying t-test, one-way and two-way ANOVA, MANOVA, revealed that Iranian ESL learners significantly perform better than Iranian EFL learners on the overall SILL, on the six categories of the SILL, and on individual strategies listed in the SILL. While language proficiency factor seemed to affect the ESL learners' both overall use of SILL and the application of six categories included in SILL, it did not significantly differentiate between low, intermediate and advanced EFL learners' overall use of SILL and its six strategy categories.

Finally, the result of statistical Two-way ANOVA revealed that the interaction of setting and proficiency factors has significant effect on the learners' overall use of the SILL. However, the results of MANOVA test revealed that the interactive effect of the two variables seemed to significantly affect only compensation strategy use of the learners. The results of the interview analysis indicated that both EFL and ESL groups had joyful

language learning experiences in their related settings, and they both enjoyed almost the same language activities in their language classes. Nonetheless, they considerably differed with regard to using language outside the class and the obstacles they faced in learning and using the target language both inside and outside the classroom in their related settings. Probably, the most significant contribution of this study is discovering that EFL students who come from unique EFL countries such as Iran where there are no ready-made contexts for communicative use of English outside language classes, can benefit from the availability of the target language input surrounding them in a specific domain of ESL context such as Malaysia where English is not the mother tongue of the native people while being an accepted lingua franca which is widely used by local people of diverse linguistic groups. Finally, although this study is heavily grounded in psychological aspects of language learning with using the SILL questionnaire, a concern was to take advantage of social views in SLA, to a possible extent, for interpreting the study results as well. I would like to end with a few words from Bakhtin (1998) who called the psychological and sociocultural perspectives two voices or dialects in the current world conversation about LLSs. Despite the differences of the dialects or voices, we can have an ongoing dialog, which involves responding to, relying on, supporting, presupposing, rejecting, or affirming others in an open interaction.

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Appendix 1

PERSONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

به سوالات زیر نیز پاسخ دهید. (بدون تکمیل این قسمت پرسش نامهٔ شما ناقص است). لطفا

Name : نام …….. 2. Gender:1. Male (مرد) 2.Female (زن)3. Occupation (job) شغل …… 4.Age (سن).....

5. Your residency in this country…….....مدت اقامت شما در این کشور تا کنون

5. Your Level of Language Proficiency: (please circle) سطح زبان شما(لطفا دقیقا مشخص نمایید)

1. Starter/beginner: B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 2.Elementary: E1 E2 E3 E4

3. Pre intermediate : PI1 PI2 PI3 PI4 4. Intermediate: I1 I2 I3 I4

5. Upper intermediate:UI1 UI2 UI3 UI4 6.Advanced : A1 A2 A3 A4

6. How long have you been learning English professionally (i.e. in an institute)?.....

جه مدت مشغول یادگیری انگلیسی به شکل اموزشگاهی بوده اید؟

7.How long have you been learning English professionally in this institute?.....

چه مدت مشغول یادگیری انگلیسی به شکل حرفه ای(اموزشگاهی) در این اموزشگاه بوده اید؟

Appendix 2

THE SILL Questionnaire

This questionnaire serves to find out Iranian students' language learning strategies. It is hoped that the respondents provide reliable and valid information for this research. All information gained from this questionnaire is confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

این پرسشنامه به منظور کشف و شناخت استراتژیهای زبان آموزی دانشجویان ایرانی مورد استفاده قرار می‌گیرد.امید است پاسخ دهندگان اطلاعات معتبر و قابل اعتمادی در این تحقیق ارائه دهند.اطلاعات بدست آمده از این پرسشنامه فقط به منظور انجام این تحقیق بکار خواهد رفت.

Certification of consent:

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

من از ماهیت این تحقیق آگاه هستم و بدین وسیله رضایت خود را جهت همکاری در این تحقیق اعلام مینمایم.

Signature: _____ my language Level……..

Important note:

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. This usually takes about 30 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, let your teacher know immediately.

لطفا به نوعی پاسخ دهید که عبارات شما را توصیف میکنند نه اینکه چگونه باشید بهتر است یا دیگران چگونه هستند.پاسخ صحیح یا غلط وجود ندارد.با احتیاط و البته سریع پاسخ دهید.جهت کامل کردن این پرسش نامه حدودا ۳۰ دقیقه زمان نیاز دارید.اگر سوالی پیش آمد از استاد خود کمک بخواهید.

Instruction: Please mark (✓) on one of the provided numbers to reflect your answers.

برای نشان دادن پاسخ خود،فقط یکی از شماره‌های ۱-۵را بکار ببرید. (جهت سهولت خواندن،ترجمه جملات نیز ارائه شده است)

برای پاسخ دادن به سوالات داخل جدول یکی از موارد زیر را بکار برید. *(کافیست شمارهٔ مورد نظر را تیک بزنید)*

1. Never or almost never true of me	1به ندرت در مورد من صحت دارد یا هرگز صحت ندارد
2. Usually not true of me	۲.معمولاً در مورد من صحت ندارد (کمتر از ۵۰ درصد صحت دارد)
3. Somewhat true of me	۳. تا حدودی در مورد من صحت دارد(حدود ۵۰ درصد صحت دارد)
4. Usually true of me	۴. معمولاً در مورد من صحت دارد.(بیشتر از ۵۰ درصد صحت دارد)
5. Always or almost always true of me	5. همیشه یا تقریبا همیشه در مورد من صحت دارد

SECTION A						
1.	I think of relationship between what I already know and new things I learn in English. آنچه در انگلیسی یاد میگیرم را با آنچه از قبل میدانم مرتبط میسازم.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them. من کلمات جدیدی که در انگلیسی یاد میگیرم را در جملات بکار میبرم تا آنها را به خاطر بسپرم.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word. من بین تلفظ یک کلمه و تصویر آن کلمه رابطه برقرار می‌کنم تا آن را به خاطر بسپارم.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used. من با ایجاد تصویر ذهنی از موقعیتی که یک کلمه در آن بکار میرود سعی می‌کنم آن را به خاطر بسپارم.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I use rhymes to remember new English words. من برای به خاطر سپردن کلمات در انگلیسی از کلمات هم قا فیه استفاده می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I use flashcards to remember new English words. من برای به خاطر سپردن کلمات جدید در انگلیسی فیش برداری می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I physically act out new English words. برای یادگیری کلمات جدید از حرکتهای نمایشی استفاده می‌کنم.(عمل ان کلمه را نمایش میدهم)	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I review English lessons often. من اغلب, دروس انگلیسی را دوره می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on the street sign. من کلمات و عبارت انگلیسی را با به خاطر سپردن موقعیت آنها در صفحه،روی بورد، یا روی تابلوهای خیابانی به خاطر میسپارم.	1	2	3	4	5

	SECTION B					
10.	**I say or write new English words several times.** **من کلمات جدید انگلیسی را چندین بار تکرار می‌کنم و مینویسم.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11.	**I try to talk like native English speakers.** **من سعی می‌کنم، مانند انگلیسی زبانها حرف بزنم.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12.	**I practice the sounds of English.** **من صداها ی انگلیسی را تمرین می‌کنم.(تمرین تلفظ)**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13.	**I use the English words I know in different ways.** **من کلماتی که میدانم را به شیوه‌های گوناگون بکار میبرم.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14.	**I start conversations in English.** **من مکالمه‌ها را به زبان انگلیسی آغاز می‌کنم نه فارسی(در کلاس).**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
15.	**I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.** **من برنامه‌های انگلیسی زبان تماشا می‌کنم یا به دیدن فیلمهای انگلیسی میروم.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16.	**I read for pleasure in English.** **من درانگلیسی خواندن تفریحی نیز دارم. (مثل کتاب داستان یا روزنامه)**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17.	**I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.** **من به انگلیسی یاداشت،پیام، نامه و گزارش مینویسم.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
18.	**I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.** **من ابتدا به سرعت یک متن انگلیسی را مرور می‌کنم،سپس بر می‌گردم و به دقت می‌خوانم.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Section C					
19.	**I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.** **من در یادگیری لغات جدید انگلیسی به جستجوی لغات مشابه در زبان فارسی نیز میپردازم(لغات هم ریشه)**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

20.	I try to find patterns in English. من در زبان آموزی سعی در یافتن الگو ها(مثا لها) دارم.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand. من برای پی بردن به معنی یک کلمه در انگلیسی آن را به اجزیی که میدانم تقسیم می‌کنم	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I try not to translate word-for-word. من سعی مي کنم از ترجمهٔ کلمه به کلمه خود داری کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English. من از اطلاعاتی که در انگلیسی می‌شنوم یا می‌خوانم،خلاصه برداری می‌کنم	1	2	3	4	5
24.	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses. برای فهمیدن کلمات نا آشنا در انگلیسی حدس میزنم.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures. وقتی در طول یک مکالمه کلمه ای به ذهنم نمیرسد از حرکات بدن استفاده می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I make up new words when I do not know the right one in English. وقتی کلمه ای را بلد نیستم،کلمهٔ جدیدی سر هم می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I read English without looking up every word. من انگلیسی می‌خوانم بدون اینکه همهٔ کلمات جدید آن متن را را با استفاده از فرهنگ لغات بیابم.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English. من سعی می‌کنم کلمه یا جملهٔ بعدی را که طرف مقابل میخواهد بکار ببرد را حدس بزنم.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing. اگرهنگام استفاده از انگلیسی نتوانم کلمه صحیحی بیابم از کلمهٔ یا عبارت هم معنی آن استفاده می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
	SECTION D					
30.	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English. من سعی می‌کنم راه‌های زیادی برای استفاده از انگلیسی بیابم.	1	2	3	4	5

31.	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better. من به خطاهای زبانی خود واقفم و از آنها جهت یادگیری بهتر بهره میبرم.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I pay attention when someone is speaking English. وقتی کسی انگلیسی صحبت می‌کند،من توجه می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I try to find out how to be better learner of English. من سعی می‌کنم بفهمم که چگونه می‌توان زبان آموز بهتری شد.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English. من برنامهٔ خود را به گونه ای طراحی می‌کنم که وقت کافی برای مطالعه انگلیسی داشته باشم.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I look for people I can talk to in English من به دنبال افرادی هستم که بتوانم با آنها انگلیسی حرف بزنم.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English. من به دنبال موقعیت‌های هستم که تا جائی که ممکن است متون انگلیسی بخوانم.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I have clear goals for improving my English skills. من اهداف مشخصی جهت ارتقای مهارت‌های زبانی خود دارم.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I think about my progress in learning English. من در مورد پیشرفت خود در زبان تفکر می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
	SECTION E					
39.	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English. هر وقت در به کار بردن انگلیسی احساس ترس دارم، سعی می‌کنم خونسرد باشم.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake. من خودم رو تشویق به انگلیسی حرف زدن می کنم حتی زمانی که ترس از اشتباه کردن داشته باشم.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. هر وقت در انگلیسی خوب عمل می‌کنم یه پاداش به خودم میدم یا خودمو مهمون می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5

42.	I notice when I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English. هنگام مطالعه یا استفاده از انگلیسی،هر گاه عصبی میشوم،به آن واقفم.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary. من احساسات خود را در دفترچه زبان خود یاد داشت می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English. من در مورد اینکه به هنگام یادگیری چه حسی دارم با شخص دیگری صحبت می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
	SECTION F					
45.	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down and say it again. وقتی متوجه مطلبی نمیشوم از طرف مقابلم می‌خواهم آهسته تر صحبت کند یا دوباره بگوید.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk. من از انگلیسی زبانها می‌خواهم هنگامی که من حرف میزنم،اشتبا ها ت مرا اصلاح کنند.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I practice English with other students. من با دیگر دانش آموزان انگلیسی تمرین می‌کنم.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	I ask for help from others who can speak English well. از کسانی که خوب می توانندانگلیسی حرف بزنند کمک می گیرم.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I ask questions in English. من به انگلیسی سوال می پرسم.(در کلاس)	1	2	3	4	5
50.	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers. من سعی می‌کنم در مورد فرهنگ انگلیسی زبانها یاد بگیرم.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 3

Interview Questions for the EFL Group

1. How much do you enjoy learning English in this country? 1. Do not enjoy at all 2. Rarely enjoy 3. Neutral (somehow enjoy) 4. Usually enjoy 5. Extremely enjoy, Please explain.

2. How important is it for you to improve your English proficiency level? 1. Not important at all 2. Not important 3. No special feeling (somehow important) 4. Important 5. Extremely important, please explain.

3. What language activities do you perform in your English class? Do you enjoy them all? Please explain.

4. How do you use English in out of the class situations in Iran? (interacting with people, interacting with international people, exchanging emails in English, doing your homework assignment, note taking, writing journal articles, watching English movies, shopping, finding foreign friends, and etc…) please explain.

5. What prevents you from learning or improving your English in Iran?

6. What motivates or encourages you to learn or use English in Iran?

Appendix 4

Interview Questions for the ESL Group

1. How much do you enjoy learning English in Malaysia? 1. Do not enjoy at all 2. Rarely enjoy 3. Neutral (somehow enjoy) 4. Usually enjoy 5. Extremely enjoy, Please explain.
2. How much did you enjoy learning English when you were attending language classes in Iran? 1. Did not enjoy at all 2. Rarely enjoyed 3. Neutral (somehow enjoyed) 4. Usually enjoyed 5. Extremely enjoyed, Please explain.
3. How important is it for you to improve your English proficiency level? 1. Not important at all 2. Not important 3. No special feeling (somehow important) 4. Important 5. Extremely important, please explain.
4. How are in-class activities in your English institute in Malaysia different from class activities in Iranian English institute where you attended in Iran?
5. How do you use English in out of the class situations in Malaysia? (interacting with Malaysian people ,interacting with international people, exchanging emails in English, doing your homework assignment, note taking, writing journal articles, watching English movies, shopping, finding foreign friends, and etc…)please explain
6. What prevents you from learning or improving your English in Malaysia?
7. What motivates or encourages you to learn or use English in Malaysia?