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Using Language Learning Strategies in Enhancing the Writing Skill
The Case of EFL Learners at the Intensive Language Teaching
Centre of Mostaganem University

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Dedication

To the memory of my father

To my mother

“My guide”

To my son Majd

“My love, my life”

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Abstract

Since the 1970s, research on language learning strategies (LLSs) has been prolific, varied and diverse. Despite the huge body of research in the field of LLSs in relation to language proficiency, little has been paid to their usefulness in improving the writing skill. For this reason, the first part of this study aims to examine LLSs used by Algerian EFL learners in relation to their level of proficiency at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem University. It also focuses on whether EFL learners use writing strategies when they compose in English. The results show that EFL learners are medium users of LLSs and no significant difference is found between learners of different levels of proficiency. The findings also reveal that elementary, intermediate and advanced learners use writing strategies in a similar way and the difference is insignificant. The second part of the investigation is devoted to integrate some strategies, such as cooperative learning strategies, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies in paragraph writing through implementing Strategy Based Instruction (SBI) and De Silva (2010) Writing Strategy Instruction Circle to help student writers regulate and improve their writing. Quantitative analyses follow the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (2003) writing rubrics. Qualitative analyses adopt Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Sercombe (2002) frameworks that include the sentential and intersentential aspects of the text. Quantitative results reveal students' improvement of paragraph writing after implementing SBI; while, qualitative results show that learners' writings suffer from many sentential and intersentential problems. To triangulate this study, interviews were conducted to assess their knowledge and use of writing strategies. All students were positive towards SBI and favoured the usefulness of LLSs in improving the writing skill.

Résumé

Depuis les années 1970, les stratégies d'apprentissage des langues ont été prolifiques et variées. Malgré l'énorme corpus de recherche dans le domaine des stratégies d'apprentissage en ce qui concerne la maîtrise de la langue, on a peu prêté attention à leur utilité pour améliorer les compétences de rédaction. Pour cette raison, la première partie de cette étude vise à examiner les stratégies utilisées par les apprenants Algériens en relation avec leur niveau de compétence au Centre d'Enseignement des Langues Intensives de l'Université de Mostaganem. Il se concentre également sur la question de savoir si les apprenants utilisent des stratégies d'écriture lorsqu'ils composent en Anglais. Les résultats montrent que les apprenants sont des utilisateurs moyens des stratégies et qu'aucune différence significative n'est constatée entre les apprenants de différents niveaux de compétence. La deuxième partie de l'étude consiste à intégrer des stratégies cognitives, de compensation, métacognitives, affectives et sociales dans la rédaction de paragraphes, en mettant en œuvre la stratégie d'écriture De Silva (2010) pour aider les écrivains à réguler et améliorer leur écriture. Les analyses quantitatives suivent les rubriques d'écriture du CECR (2003) Les analyses qualitatives adoptent l'exemplaire de Grabe et Kaplan (1996) et de Sercombe (2002) qui incluent les aspects de l'instruction basés sur la stratégie. Les résultats qualitatifs montrent que les écrits des apprenants souffrent de nombreux problèmes sentencieux et inter-sentencieux. Pour trianguler cette étude, des entretiens ont été menés pour évaluer leurs connaissances et leur utilisation des stratégies d'écriture. Tous les étudiants étaient positifs envers l'intégration des stratégies et ont favorisé l'utilité des stratégies d'apprentissage dans l'amélioration des compétences d'écriture.

ملخص

منذ السبعينيات ، كانت استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة غزيرة ومتنوعة. وقد تم البحث على نطاق واسع .على الرغم من المجموعة الضخمة من الأبحاث في مجال استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة فيما يتعلق بالكفاءة اللغوية ، لم يسلط الضوء على فائدتها في تحسين مهارة الكتابة. ولهذا السبب ، يهدف الجزء الأول من هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة المستخدمة من قبل متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في الجزائر فيما يتعلق بمستواهم من الكفاءة في مركز تدريس اللغة المكثف في جامعة مستغانم. كما يركز أيضًا على ما إذا كان متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يستخدمون إستراتيجيات الكتابة عند الإنشاء باللغة الإنجليزية. تظهر النتائج أن متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية هم مستخدمون متوسطون لـ استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة ولا يوجد فرق كبير بين المتعلمين من مستويات مختلفة من الكفاءة. وتكشف النتائج أيضًا عن أن المتعلمين في المرحلة الابتدائية والمتوسطة والمتقدمة يستخدمون إستراتيجيات الكتابة بطريقة مماثلة والفرق غير مهم. الجزء الثاني من الأطروحة هو دمج بعض الاستراتيجيات ، مثل استراتيجيات التعلم التعاوني ، والاستراتيجيات المعرفية ، والتعويضية ، والعاطفية والاجتماعية في كتابة الفقرات من خلال تنفيذ دائرة إرشاد كتابة الاستراتيجيات لدي سيلفا (2010) لمساعدة كتاب الطلاب على تنظيم وتحسين مهاراتهم الكتابية. تتبع التحليلات الكمية نماذج كتابة الإطار الأوروبي المرجعي الموحد للغات (CEFR) (2003) تكشف النتائج الكمية عن تحسن الطلاب في كتابة الفقرات بعد تنفيذ التعليمات القائمة على الإستراتيجية. تشير النتائج النوعية إلى أن كتابات المتعلمين تعاني من العديد من المشاكل المتعلقة بالجملة و ما بين الجمل. لتثليث هذه الدراسة ، أجريت المقابلات لتقييم معرفتهم واستخدام استراتيجيات الكتابة. كان جميع الطلاب ايجابيين نحو تعليم الاستراتيجيات و فضلوا استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة في تحسين مهارة الكتابة.

List of Abbreviations

CLA: Communicative Language Teaching

CL: Cooperative Learning

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

L2: Second Language

LLSs: Language Learning Strategies

SBI: Strategy Based Instruction

SILL: Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

WSI: Writing Strategy Instruction

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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Applied linguistics research has constantly dug into second and foreign language learning to discover what teaching methods might be designed to facilitate rather than hinder the learning process. Therefore, among the techniques students may use to improve their ability to learn, remember new information and write effectively as well is the use of language learning strategies. Many studies have been investigated in the field of LLSs. They have been a question of a great interest in a wide range of fields. Oxford (2011) recapitulated those attempts and stated that these strategies help learners be self-regulated and monitor their own learning so as to be effective.

Thus, since the 1970s, research on LLSs has been prolific, varied and diverse. Studies in the field of language learning have been thoroughly attempting to boost teaching methods and strategies to increase language instruction. However, a great number of researches have been concentrating on how learners learn languages differently. Some researchers proposed different reasons to explain those individual differences in language learning, such as age, motivation, gender, culture, language proficiency, etc.

Studies on LLSs have been fundamentally concentrating on the qualities of good L2 learners and the strategies they employ in the learning process (Stern, 1975; Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1990). These studies have generated a solid background on how and what successful learners do to acquire the target language. Some learners exhibit much success in second or foreign language learning than others, and some are distinguished by individual learning behaviours that others do not possess.

Therefore, such discrepancies have elaborated a hot topic for researchers to continue investigating in the area of second language acquisition. Among these behaviours are LLSs and their use to improve the target language. Moreover, research has demonstrated behaviours or strategies of good language learners through focusing on the cognitive learning process of those successful learners who employ LLSs consciously or unconsciously, and how these learners store and retrieve the information learnt (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Oxford and Nyikos, 1993).

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Interestingly, McIntyre (1994) saw that LLSs research as “one of the most fertile areas of research in language learning in recent years” (p.185). Hence, learners’ individual difference has been widely investigated. Research studies were carried out on the belief that a learner’s individual characteristics had an impact on language learning either directly or indirectly, such as gender (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), motivation (Cohen & Dornyei, 2002; McIntyre, 2002; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), learning styles (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990) and language proficiency (Anderson, 1991; Green & Oxford, 1995; Wharton, 2000) which is the main concern of this dissertation.

Admittedly, recent studies on LLSs have demonstrated extensive zeal and enormous interest for both second and foreign language contexts. The larger part of this examination revealed that using LLSs appropriately yields change in foreign language proficiency as their employment has a positive connection with language and proficiency accomplishment.

For this reason, the present part of the study aims at detecting LLSs used by EFL learners of different levels of proficiency at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem. The second part focuses on the usefulness of different strategies in improving students’ writing paragraphs, namely, Oxfords’ learning strategies and cooperative learning strategies through implementing SBI.

Writing is deemed as the most laborious skill to master. It requires the application of more than one approach and more than one process to sketch students’ writing procedures. Therefore, instructors accumulate different approaches and processes to get accurate responses to the way student writers generate ideas, use a b wide range of vocabulary and organise writing.

Instructors have recently queried about the writing process and a shift from asking students how to write instead of what to write has been the bulk issue in that field. Therefore, researchers started developing new teaching methods to help learners prevail over writing difficulties and develop their way of composing.

Our society becomes more and more global in this age of technology development. Accordingly, the 21st century witnessed many educational challenges; hence, learners are now preparing for new interesting vocational experiences that

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were not known 20 years before. Moreover, learners are in need to think critically and have confidence in their ability to understand and solve problems. Thus, without adequate writing skills, our students will be unable to express themselves and communicate effectively in our global community.

As a result, the need for research in the field of writing is apparent that is vital for academic and professional life. Many fascinating questions still remain unanswered regarding the complexity of the writing skill. Teaching writing which focuses on the process rather than only on the product approach is an example of a recent paradigm shift. Such a shift prompts diverse questions regarding the development of the writing process as a communication tool in our universities.

More significantly, it should be noted that learning takes place through negotiating and interacting cooperatively. Thus, the objective of teaching instruction is to connect learners to real-life situations and active classrooms where activities and discussions in groups are emphasised. Cooperative learning helps the learner get transformed from a passive observer to an active participant through building interpersonal skills, critical thinking, self-confidence and promoting autonomy.

Interactive and communicative skills between students while working cooperatively in completing a particular task in writing are essential. Each student is responsible for writing the assigned topic, and thus, the success of one student hinges on the success of the whole group. However, such strategy is not easy to implement especially when meeting reluctant, unmotivated learners.

Students working together in small groups or pairs, thinking together, sharing ideas, writing, revising and editing will develop a social integrated pattern for learning. These strategies will also diminish and eventually extinguish the writing problems. Moreover, these strategies will not only develop writing proficiency, but also they will considerably serve the learners beyond the university settings as what the following quote indicates:

Coming together is a beginning

Keeping together is progress

Working together is success

Henry Ford

General Introduction

Despite an extensive body of research in the field of writing skill and LLSs in relation to language proficiency level for native speakers of English (Hayes & Flower, 1980); and in the ESL context (Ardnt 1987, Zamel, 1983, Silva, 1993) and the EFL context (Hu & Chen, 2007 ; Boudaoud, 2011; Farrah, 2011, Al Alami, 2013; Radwan, 2011; Shamais, 2013), scant attention has been given to EFL Arab and Algerian learners in that field of research. Up to now, far too little attention has been paid to the usefulness of learning strategies in improving the writing skill, namely, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, compensation, social and cooperative strategies. They rather investigated the process of writing in terms of planning, revising and reviewing steps in relation to many variables such as motivation, gender and attitudes.

Moreover, the writing skill is not given much importance for most educational systems in terms of the time allotted and the methods used. That is why, many Algerian learners produce weak pieces of texts. In spite of the wide range of vocabulary and grammar rules they acquire, they are unsuccessful to write appropriately, cohesively and coherently.

In most Arab EFL contexts, learners use English only in classrooms and write mainly for academic success i.e., to get good grades and pass the examination. They neglect the pivotal role to write for other purposes and audience i.e., to endure a long-life societal goals. They consider writing as a painstaking task that requires deep thinking, organisation, and focus on grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. Thus, learners' ability to understand others and express themselves is significant for EFL learners at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem. Those learners who have difficulties with written expression are at risk for their level's failure.

Due to technological development, cultural, social and political reasons, a huge number of learners are biased towards learning different languages, but most precisely, English. It is regarded as a foreign language; however, it is of paramount importance for tourism, business, scientific research and communication. Thus, learning English is the objective of almost everyone who comes to the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem University for enrolment.

The study addresses the issue of how to improve learners' ability to think effectively in English and structure their ideas in writing. Students who enter the centre are lacking the basic skills in writing. They possess limited knowledge of

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English and exhibit flaws in sentence structure. They struggle with organising ideas, developing the topic sentence, writing details to support the topic sentence, facing problems with grammar, punctuation and the use of correct vocabulary to develop paragraph writing. These students have not manifested the knowledge and skills needed for success in paragraph writing in English. Therefore, they need the necessary strategies to practice and become proficient writers.

To the best of my knowledge, no significant research has been found in the correlation between LLSs and language proficiency in the written texts of Algerian students. Moreover, although many research studies have validated the benefits of cooperative learning, there was a lack of research found on the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the writing performance of EFL learners of different levels of language proficiency. Learners lack adequate information about LLSs and how they are employed in the process of writing. Thus, it is an urge to examine whether writing strategies are used by EFL learners and how their use has an impact on their writing compositions.

Investigating this research emanates from my experience as a teacher of written expression at the department of English for four years. It was an opportunity for me to observe how foreign language learners dealt with paragraph writing, how poor were their writing productions, their lack of motivation and organisation, their lack of interest and interaction with peers and their hatred towards writing in English. All this is but due to their lack of being strategic.

Furthermore, teachers of written expression were given a syllabus to follow strictly which dealt with theoretical aspects of writing through focusing mainly on the product approach and the objective was to expect clear, correct and well-written texts, leaving aside how to make writing interesting and how to assist learners in that process through writing instruction strategies. A common writing class started with the teacher explaining how to write any type of paragraphs by providing a model, then assigning a topic to write about individually and students were supposed to complete their task by the end of the class. After that, each student read his paragraph aloud so as to be evaluated by the teacher who made some corrections that were mostly grammatical.

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Therefore, failure might be due to time constraint, no practice, no peer feedback and most importantly the lack of strategies. The results of this restricted programme were shown when students were asked to write their final dissertation to obtain their master degree. Thus, they produced poor writing characterised by the lack of coherence and cohesive devices. Consequently, these inconsistencies pushed the researcher to constantly seek for methods and teaching instructions to apply and help EFL learners overcome these obstacles and ameliorate their writings.

The current study intends to fill a major research gap by examining learners' level of proficiency in relation to LLSs and the writing skill at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem. At this centre, learners are highly motivated and writing is part of their final exam that tests their level of competency. The small number of students in each level helped me control them and carry out my experiment in a very calm and motivated atmosphere.

The main important reason of learning and teaching English at the centre is to enhance learners' ability to communicate effectively, to provide knowledge about the target language be it spoken or written and to reinforce and increase students' awareness of the importance of the English language. Four language skills are emphasised: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The participants of the study are learners who came to the centre to learn English so that they use it for different purposes, among them, communication, at the workplace, sending emails, attending conferences, writing papers and many more besides. They study English six hours per week. They have learnt English formally for six years. Their focal objective is to develop their communication. Thus, a great emphasis is put on the four skills. Teaching grammar and vocabulary is done in the context of teaching the four skills. A total of 120 students took part in this investigation. They were divided into 3 groups based on their English Placement Test examination that students sat in 2015/2016- 2016/2017.

Writing is an exhausting task which needs a tough investigation by taking into consideration all the obstacles students encounter in composing appropriately. Most EFL learners face deficiencies in writing that involve mainly the sentence structure, elaborating ideas, linking them efficiently and creating a smooth transition of the whole text. Therefore, the questions that can be raised are: why does this happen? Is it

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linked to students' level of proficiency? Is it because of translation? Or is it related to the lack of employing writing strategies? Answering these questions requires developing the research repertoire of EFL learners in that vast area of the writing process so that researchers find interesting results to solve these above-mentioned questions.

The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, it aims at analysing LLSs used by EFL learners of different levels of proficiency. Second, it examines the use of strategies, more precisely, cooperative leaning strategies and Oxford's LLSs in improving students' argumentative paragraph writing through implementing SBI. Thus, the present study tries to recognise, carry out and analyse the writing processes of EFL learners. It focuses on the pivotal role of writing strategies in the written product of EFL learners. By analysing students' paragraph samples, this dissertation attempts to examine the writing problems students suffer from. Our purpose is to help learners be aware of the strategies they use to improve their writing skill and enhance overall writing performance.

More importantly, the study addresses six research objectives: (1) to identify LLSs used by students of different levels of proficiency in learning the English language, (2) to analyse if these students use writing strategies when composing, (3) to study the effects of cooperative learning strategies and Oxford's strategies in improving the writing skill, (4) to identify how SBI can be of a great assistance for the development of learners' paragraph writing, (5) to identify errors most frequently made by learners, (6) and finally and to see students' attitudes towards this training programme.

In order to fulfil these objectives, the study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. Do learners of different proficiency level use LLSs to learn English at the Intensive language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem?
2. Is there any significant difference in most frequently used strategies between elementary, intermediate and advanced learners?
3. Do students use writing strategies in developing paragraph writing and is there any significant difference among these learners?
4. Does SBI help learners improve their writing skill?

5. What are the most common errors made by EFL learners?
6. How do learners comprehend that writing strategies have been of a great assistance in improving their writings?

This research tests the following hypotheses.

1. Students employ different kinds of LLSs.
2. There is a significant difference in most frequently used strategies between learners of different levels of proficiency.
3. Learners use writing strategies differently.
4. SBI has positive effects on the development of students' paragraph writing.
5. Learners have deficiencies in writing with regard grammar, vocabulary, form, content and organisation.
6. Learners positively react to SBI.

This study will serve as a means of not only finding the suitable and effective strategies to enhance writing but also identifying ways to self-motivate foreign language learners to learn. Thus, it is a way of indicating how writing can be considered as a mode of learning. Moreover, the growing interest in the English language has been increasingly emphasised by learners who need the language for different personal purposes. Consequently, they have to develop autonomy and self-directed strategies in learning English beyond the classroom context.

This research caters for pedagogical implications to both teachers and students. Teachers will be given considerable information about LLSs used by EFL learners which help them approach their teaching methods accordingly. Therefore, they will be aware of the teaching materials to be given to students in relation to their proficiency. It also allows teachers to integrate LLSs in classroom instruction and help learners know how, when and where they should apply them. Therefore, learners will be more aware of learning and become autonomous.

The findings showed that SBI was successful on the whole. It helped learners change their views about writing which was considered as a tough skill, and have positive attitudes towards writing in English. It also enhanced students' writing performance and how to use different strategies in each stage of the writing process.

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The programme was workable, desirable and practical to intensify the writing abilities and confidence. In addition, the study provides insights to English teachers and curriculum planners regarding the overall patterns of English LLSs of the Algerian EFL learners at the university level. It also identifies how LLSs are affected by learners' English proficiency.

Furthermore, in the light of the results of this investigation, educators and EFL students are helped to improve a better comprehension of the connection between LLSs use and proficiency in the target language. Besides, the findings may motivate instructors to improve more proper teaching instructions. Since the teaching context of writing in Algeria is still product-oriented, these findings pave the way to more research in the field of pedagogy that reinforces the use of writing strategies in creating independent, strategic and autonomous learners and eventually strengthen learner centeredness.

Admittedly, the current study will help fill the gap in the existing knowledge and introduce teachers to new methodology in teaching writing and improving students' academic writing. I do assume promoting both autonomous and collaborative learning in language classrooms. These implications could be a change in the approach of teaching and learning the English writing in the Algerian context through designing new teaching syllabuses which would stress the strategic teaching of English writing in the future. We hope this research will add to the literature of this topic and prompt further research for the Algerian context.

As with any research, there were some limitations and obstacles. First, the use of SILL questionnaire posed some constraints as it was the first time students had completed such a long survey. Therefore, there were some misunderstandings in some questions and the five-likert scale answers which were reduced to three. However, the researcher was there for help to make it easy and comprehensible.

Moreover, the findings are circumscribed only to the small population used in this study, since it is concerned with a group of learners belonging to different levels of proficiency whose classes require a small number of students who study various sorts of skills. While collecting data, another limitation was that difficulty of getting students present all along the experiment which led the researcher to gather fewer written samples. It was also supposed to make a comparison of the written samples of

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three levels of proficiency; however, the small sampling prevented me from carrying out such comparison. Besides, students' engagements with work and their studies hindered, in some ways, the experimental study to be successfully done in the right time.

This dissertation is organised into four chapters. The first chapter presents an overview of the literature review in the field of LLSs and outlines prominent theoretical contributions introduced by the pioneers in the field through focusing on LLSs definitions, classifications, and their importance in learning the target language. It also examines research studies that investigated the interrelation between strategy use and the variables that affect them.

Chapter two deals with literature review on academic writing. It describes the writing skill and its different approaches. Besides, writing strategies and their importance are explained in details. It also takes into consideration theoretical background on the usefulness of cooperative learning strategies in developing students' comprehension skills, motivation and knowledge in general.

The third chapter describes the methodology and context of the research through presenting the methods of data collection and analysis. It also answers the first three research questions. Thus, to answer research questions number one and two, Oxford's (1990) SILL questionnaire was used to investigate students' use of LLSs and whether they are affected by proficiency level. To answer research question number three, Pétric and Czarl (2003) questionnaire was given to students to detect if and how learners apply writing strategies when composing and whether there is a significant difference in their use in relation to their proficiency level.

The last chapter challenges putting into practice SBI for EFL learners. An overt explanation of how writing strategies, cooperative strategies, Oxford's strategies, De Silva (2010) Writing Strategy Instruction Circle are illustrated. Qualitative and quantitative analyses are used based on CEFR writing rubrics and Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Sercombe (2002) frameworks, followed by interpretation of the findings. To triangulate this study, an interview was conducted to see students' attitudes towards SBI. To conclude, some limitations and suggestions are provided for further research in the field of LLSs, writing strategies and cooperative learning strategies.

Chapter One

I.1. Introduction

Amid the late 1970s and mid 1980s, the field of language learning encountered an extraordinary change in the learning process and developing enthusiasm for learner centeredness. Hence, such concern drove numerous instructors to defocus on educators and educating, and put more noteworthy emphasis on students and learning. It pushed students to deal with their own learning, in the meantime, to elucidate the instructor's assignments inside the classroom. In this chapter, I attempt to reveal insights into speculations and research on LLSs. I will exhibit a review of their improvement, and outline major theoretical contributions introduced by driving scholars in the field, by concentrating on definitions, taxonomies, types, and their significance in learning. It also reviews empirical studies that investigated the connection between strategy use and the variables that influence them.

I.2. Language Learning Strategies Development

I.2.1. Language Learning Theories in FLT

Any learning theory gives a hypothetical premise to methodology that helps students understand the process of learning. Notwithstanding, before diving further into the distinctive language learning theories, one thinks that it is important to define first the idea of learning. Kimble and Garmexy (1963) described learning as *“a relatively permanent change in a behavioural tendency and is the result of reinforced practice”* (as cited in Douglas, 2000, p.7). Thus, this learning behavioral change is the consequences of noticeable exercises and internal processes. As demonstrated by Douglas (2000), learning can be separated into various segments. Learning is *“an acquisition, a retention of information or skill that implies storage systems, memory and cognitive organisation. It involves active, conscious focus, it is relatively permanent but subject to forgetting; it involves practice and it is a change in behaviour”* (Douglas, 2000, p.7).

Likewise, these segments can prompt various subfields inside the discipline of psychology, in particular, acquisition process, memory recall, consciousness, learning styles, and learning strategies which are the fundamental concern of this dissertation. Clarification of what happens when these activities occur is known as learning theories.

These incorporate behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism and socio-constructivism. Relating these theories to language learning strategies, one may perceive how LLSs are affected and elaborated by language learning theories for language teaching. The following part focuses on the different language learning theories.

I.2.1.1. Behaviourism

It is worth mentioning that behaviorism has its underlying foundations in the late nineteenth century and mid twentieth century when the American Watson worked in the realm of the new psychology research and was acknowledged as one of the backers of behaviorism. He stated that psychology could be a science in the sense that it was considered as a process of objective observation and scientific measurements. Along these lines, these two ideas became noticeably vital in the work of behaviorists.

Pritchard contended that: “*Behaviourism is based around the central notion of a reaction being made to particular stimuli*” (Douglas, 2000, p.7). Here, we consider Pavlov's work amid the twentieth century who rang a bell at whatever point nourishment was exhibited to the dogs. They, at that point, were molded to salivate at the sound of the signal. In this way, the dogs were made to react to that sound by producing saliva. This type of behaviour is called *classical conditioning*, which involves the reinforcement of natural behaviour that takes place as a response to particular stimuli.

However, the stimuli-response relationship is also noticed in humans. As a result, behaviorism depends on that relationship, which is the reason the behaviorist theories are frequently referred to as stimulus-response theories. Taking the learning procedure for instance, behaviorism is, as pointed out by Pritchard, “*a theory of learning focusing on observable behaviour and discounting any mental activity. Learning is defined simply as the acquisition of a new behaviour*” (Douglas, 2000, p.7).

Such strategy for learning is credited as *conditioning*. The main *conditioning* is named *classical conditioning*. The second one, which is the most imperative sort of behaviorist learning, is named *operant conditioning*. It is coordinated towards strengthening a specific behaviour by giving a reward. Skinner is the most eminent psychologist in that field of *operant conditioning*. Instructors, at that point, find that

rewarding is workable in the classroom since it makes students inspired and it diminishes bad behaviours as well. The instructors' capacity, as indicated by the behavioural language theory is to make use of negative support to end undesirable conduct and positive support to strengthen needed behaviour. The main thing required by students is the role of dynamic responders. They should have the capacity to react to any reinforcement used by the instructor and eagerly change their conduct to empower learning.

Importantly, in such behaviorist theory of learning, repetition is basically the fundamental technique in certain learning situations. It is possibly connected with the learning of fundamental skills. It is worth focusing that behaviorism is based on the idea that learning is a change in behaviour and that change depends on the stimulus that modifies the response correspondingly. Relating behaviorism to some kinds of strategies, one may take composing a word or repeating utilizing information many times to be recalled, for instance, which go with memory strategies, is for the most part in relation with drilling and repetition.

I.2.1.2. Cognitivism

Cognitivism is impacted by Piaget's developmental psychology whose attention is on the maturational components that influence understanding. It is noteworthy that Piaget (1952) posited that the process of intellectual and cognitive development is likened to biological act. To have better understanding, it is sine qua non to comprehend four different ideas that Piaget has proposed, in particular, *schema*, *assimilation*, *accommodation*, and *equilibrium*. A *schema* is used to represent mental or intellectual structures and the associations one conjures up in his/her mind when hearing or reading a word or a sentence. A schema can include objects, abstract ideas, feelings, events, actions, etc. A schema is not only limited to objects, concepts and so forth, but also to the way of processing information.

Second, the way toward incorporating new data with earlier existing information is conceptualized by Piaget as *assimilation*. Students, for example, might be confronted with new learning circumstances, along these lines, they may utilize their current information to make the new experience reasonable. This is assimilated with memory

strategies while connecting new data with what a student has already learnt, and cognitive strategies while reviewing data that has been examined. Here, earlier learning is recreated to make that data fits with the recently shaped pattern. That change which happens in the mental structure is credited as *accommodation*. *Equilibrium*, however, is the sequential and successive series of related assimilations and accommodations that are attained through changes in one's ability to internalise and organise prior knowledge with new information. (Zhang, 2015)

Thus, cognitive theory sees learning as an acquisition of information and cognitive structures, which are caused by information processing that concentrates on the mind i.e., the memory. In this manner, the student is seen as a data processor, correspondingly to a computer. The cognitive theory, at that point, depends on three primary assumptions. In the first place, there are two separate channels: sound-related and visual for preparing data; second, there is a restricted channel limit; third, learning is a dynamic procedure of filtering, choosing, sorting out and incorporating data. (Zhang, 2015) Likewise, Chamot and O'Malley (1986) saw that in the cognitive academic language approach, students are taught to use learning strategies that are derived from a cognitive model of learning as a support to comprehension and retention of conceptions in the subject matter area.

It ought to mention that there is a general understanding among the researchers of LLSs that can be grounded and tied to Anderson's (1983-1985) *information processing theory* of learning. Providing scaffolding of how LLSs function in which information is handled and learnt, he focused and recognised two sorts of data saved in long and short- term memory. He distinguished information as being of two sorts: declarative and procedural. As expressed by Tonkyn (2011),

Anderson's declarative knowledge deals with that language that we can verbalise, grammar and pronunciation rules. On the other hand, procedural knowledge is concerned with putting into action these rules, it has to do with behavioural routine. Thus, declarative knowledge is the knowledge about; whereas, procedural knowledge is the knowledge of how to.

(Tonkyn Seminar, 2011)

Besides, Yang (2010) stated that: "*declarative knowledge deals with factual information stored in memory, while procedural knowledge implies knowing how to find*

ways to perceive and apply factual information. It is, then, strategic” (Yang, 2010, p. 17).

More precisely, Anderson depicted declarative knowledge as

prepositional, conceptual, knowledge which is stored as structural relationships.... often it is learned in an explicit manner, but is always passed to long-term memory where it is accessed on the basis of stimulus and input. Procedural knowledge is unanalysed, automatic knowledge of how to do things. It is this knowledge which underlies the numerous cognitive skills we have in solving a multitudinous number of everyday problems.

(Grenfell & Harris, 2002, pp. 43-4)

Consequently, declarative knowledge consists of actualities, guidelines, definitions and is put as *nodes*; while, procedural knowledge includes abilities, the application and utilization of rules, and subsequently, it is put as *production system*.

I. 2.1.3. Constructivism and Socio-constructivism

A current way to deal with language teaching strategies considers individual's knowledge, to bring Piaget, Doise and Mugny(1984) words, as determined by its social development. This approach is known as socio-constructivism. Its actual starting point lies in constructivism and the rationality of learning that support the presumption that all information is made by means of engagement with human mind. As a matter of fact, constructivists' focal thought is that human learning is developed and that students fabricate new information upon the current and the establishment of the previous learning. Under this soul, Kanselaar et. al., (2002) wrote:

Constructivism implies that learners are encouraged to construct their own knowledge instead of copying it from an authority, be it a book or a teacher, in realistic situations instead of decontextualised formal situations, and together with others instead of their own.

(Kanselaar 2002:01)

Imperatively, an extremely discernible viewpoint in constructivism, the argument would run, is a set of educational beliefs about instructional methods. For example, teachers should allow students to identify their own learning goals, that knowledge comes from constructive interaction between the teacher and the student or

between collaborative learners. In this manner, constructivist learning depends on students' dynamic interest in problem solving and having critical thinking with respect to a significant learning action. Compatible with constructivism, students build their own particular knowledge by utilizing and testing thoughts derived from their former learning and experience.

Strikingly enough, all through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, socio-constructivism has been improved and acknowledged as a variable and productive learning theory to be embraced in teaching methods. Fosnot (2005) catered for an extensive meaning of socio-constructivism which is as follows.

An approach to teaching that gives learners the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experience through which they can search for patterns, raise questions; and models, interpret and defend their strategies and ideas. The classroom in this model is seen as a mini-society, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse, interpretation, justification, and reflection.

(Fosnot, 2005, p. 26)

Socio-constructivism is championed by numerous educationalists who favour student-centred orientation and the capacity to bring out important learning. With its accentuation on knowledge construction, socio-constructivism is regarded to improve students' democratic learning. As a matter of fact, it should be noticed that social strategies draw similar viewpoints from the two theories, especially, when students participate with each other and practice English collegially. Along these lines, any language learning theory gives an arrangement of different techniques that instructors embrace in their teaching process, this is, then, what the following point will consist of.

I.2.2. Approaches and Methods in FLT

Language teaching methods have consistently changed since the beginning of the twentieth century. This change has come either in light of new needs, drawbacks in the officially recommended techniques, or due to the impact of theories on language acquisition and learning brought out by linguistics, psycholinguistics or all the more recently sociolinguistic observations.

In fact, language teaching approaches and methods have succeedingly underlined distinctive language skills relying upon the language they advance. Accordingly, focusing on one language skill or the other has unendingly fallen as a reaction to the disappointment or inadequacies of the previous one. To put it plainly, a few and diverse language teaching methodologies have been embraced, then, given less significance or totally set aside since the grammar translation method.

Foreign language teaching is regularly connected with terms like approach, method and technique (Antony, 1963), which were marked by Richards and Rodgers (1986) as approach, method and technique. However, before tackling the different methods and approaches in the teaching process, it is sine qua non to explore the relationship between an approach, method and language teaching techniques briefly. According to Antony (1963), an approach is

a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic, it describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith-something which one believes cannot necessarily prove.

(Allen, 1972, p.95)

In this way, an approach is the total of suppositions, possibilities, theories that specialists make about language and language learning drawing on linguists' psychologists' and sociologists' viewpoints about language. A method, however, is

an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based on, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural within one approach, there can be many methods.

(Allen, 1972, p.95)

Along these lines, a method represents practical aspects that are drawn from the theoretical principles underlying the approach. They are the content, its selection, organisation and grading, the lesson plan and any decisions about language teaching that are taken outside the classroom. Besides, Antony (1963) characterised a technique as

implementational that actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective.

Techniques must be consistent with a method and therefore in harmony with an approach as well and on the composition of the class.

(Allen, 1972, p.95)

Therefore, techniques represent all the tricks and explicit procedures that are utilized to fulfil a particular goal. In whole, an approach may give birth to one or more methods, which in turn, require specific techniques to accomplish the set and recommended objectives.

I.2.2.1. Grammar Translation Method

Grammar Translation Method was first used in teaching Latin and Greek. In this vein, Douglas maintained “*in Western world, foreign language learning in schools was synonymous with the learning of Latin and Greek*” (2000, p.15). At that period, teaching was based on reading and translating to make sense of well-known texts of Latin and Greek literature or philosophy. This classical method, as it was named, was especially powerful in the nineteenth century and endured for long time. Its primary standards were that language was an arrangement of related components; the general principles administering the written language had to be mastered; translation was used to promote the learner’s lexis; it sorted out literary texts and accentuated accuracy. In this way, reading and writing were the foremost skills concentrated on.

In this association, Richards and Rodgers put forward:

Grammar Translation Method is remembered with distaste by thousands of school learners for whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorising endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose.

(Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 4)

However, this method has no connection with issues in psychology, linguistics or educational theory. As it is indicated by Richards and Rodgers (1986): “*Grammar Translation Method has no advocates. It is a method for which there is no theory*” (Ibid). Albeit this method was effective, many critiques were reported, among them, the prevalence of the written mode over the spoken one; pronunciation, intonation, and communicative skills were deserted. Hence, new techniques were exhibited seeking out

better approaches for teaching that give importance to the oral skill since communication was and is still of vital significance and thus the spoken language was essential. The reformers, at that point, see that words and sentences ought to be rehearsed in context, no focus on translation and grammar should be instructed inductively. Associating LLSs with this method, although they had scant attention, one may state that memory and cognitive strategies can be gathered under its heading. Proposals for how to recall vocabulary lists by utilizing repetition, grouping, mnemonics are per se strategies used within the grammar translation method.

As a response to the breakdown of the Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method came to light to enhance learners' knowledge about what natives actually said, and how they said it. Its primary objectives – an active native like command of language with stress on oral skills—are better accomplished through direct relationship amongst forms and meaning in the target language. However, this method was also superseded by the audio-lingual Method, as the following point will indicate.

I.2.2.2. The Audio-Lingual Method

With the entrance of the United States into World War Two, the Americans needed to become orally proficient in the languages of both their allies and enemies. Thus, the Americans' armed forces were provided intensive courses that concentrated on the aural and oral aptitudes. Such sort of courses came to be known as the Army Specialized Training Program referred to as the Army Method. Afterward, this technique incited the educational institutions to approve it and came to be named in the late 1950s the Audio-lingual Method.

The method is the result of two driving theories, to be specific, Structuralism –as created by Bloomfield and Fries– and Behaviourism or skinner's Stimulus response Reinforcement theory. For the structuralists, language is chiefly viewed similar to the spoken and not the written mode. The structuralists categorised the means of learning any foreign language as follows: listening, speaking, reading then writing. From a similar token, structuralists consider that no two languages are the same, they vary in sound systems (phonology), word formation (morphology), grammatical structures (syntax) and even meaning (semantics). All these features were adopted by the

structuralists to avoid any native learner's language interference which was the case of Grammar Translation Method as already mentioned. (Douglas, 2000)

Following a similar line of thought, Moulton stated: *"language is speech, not writing...teach the language not about the language... A language is what its native speakers say, not what one thinks they ought to say... languages are different"* (Moulton, 1961, pp. 86-90).

As expressed above, the Audio-lingual Method was likewise affected by the American psychology known as Behaviourism. According to this school, learning is a habit formation process in terms of stimulus-response i.e., each time the individual is presented to a similar stimulus, a similar reaction happens.

It is worth mentioning that this theory was applied in language learning and first presented in Skinner's book "Verbal Behaviour" with the concept of echo through imitation, redundancy i.e., the speaker reproduces what is said in echoic manner. As a matter of fact, the stimulus is sound-related and the reaction is vocal. Conversation, memorisation through rigorous repetition, substitution, pattern drills, and rewording were the primary strategies of the Audio-lingual method. This, then, is incorporated with cognitive and memory strategies. Nevertheless, Audio-lingualism had diverse deficiencies, strong among them, the way that discourse was produced at the expense of different skills and limited contexts i.e., restricted creative use of language. Like any other approach, Audio-lingualism was uprooted by different methods, to be specific, the Communicative Language Approach.

I.2.2.3. Communicative Language Approach (CLA)

In the early 1970s, there emerged a new way to deal with language learning which came to be known as the Functional-Communicative Approach. It stemmed from the work of such outstanding linguists as D. Hymes and Halliday who viewed language as no more than a set of independent elements to be learned but as a whole system of communication. CLA was a reaction against the structural approaches that are based on linguistic competence. Developing communicative competence instead of the linguistic one, as suggested by Chomsky (1975) and the cognitive movements, argued by Hymes

(1972), would really put up students' capacity to choose proper discourses, employed in particular contexts to express specific meanings.

Thus, teachers of English embrace the communicative approach asserting that syllabus design and content choice are to be sorted out in terms of functions and notions since the real intention is communication. As advocated by Searle (1969) in Chomsky "*the purpose of language is communication in much the same sense that heart is to pump blood*" (1975, p. 20). Thus, priority to context is given and the grammatical form is taught through meaning. CLA promotes teaching values of language items and how they are used to perform different communicative acts to convey the meaning that is appropriate to context, participants, and the topic that invariably influence our linguistic choices. Teachers should build up students ability to recognise their learning goals in order to attain successful communication, in other words, the objectives are not to develop perfect mastery of the language straight from the beginning, but to develop true communicative language use.

What is more vital is to make the teaching and learning process authentic. Actually, students ought to have communicative strategies in order to interact. Adopting Hymes (1972) Communicative competence, TEFL teachers endeavour to take the communicative fact of language into account right from the start without leaving aside its syntactic and situational factors. Hymes' Communicative Competence, the argument would run, refers to a student's capacity to apply and use grammatical rules, as well as to form correct utterances based on knowing how to use them appropriately in different contexts. As pointed out by Douglas (2000): "*Hymes referred to communicative competence as that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts*".

(Op. Cit, p. 246)

What is required for fruitful communication, Hymes proposed, is four sorts of learning, to be specific, *plausibility, feasibility, appropriateness and attestedness*. In the first place, plausibility needs to do with what is formally conceivable in a language. A communicatively skilled speaker knows whether an instance conforms to the rules of grammar or not, for instance, "me take rest now" goes astray those rules, while "I am going to take rest now" does not. Second, feasibility, a psychological concept, is concerned with limitations to what the mind can possess. For example, the rules of

English grammar make it possible to expand a noun phrase and make it more specific and wider by adding a relative clause. Along these lines, “the rat” can become “the rat the cat chases”; likewise, “the cat” can become “the cat the little girl possesses.

In any case, feasibility has some vital outcomes for it bears upon the critical issue of making data effortlessly available. Third, *appropriateness* concerns the relationship of language or behaviour to setting. Its significance is clear in the event that we consider its inverse inappropriateness, for examples, calling a teacher "sweetheart", laughing loudly during a conference are inappropriate to a particular relationship. *Appropriateness* concerns adjustment to social context. And finally, attestedness, in other words if something is well done; whether all the aforementioned three types are well accounted by the speaker. Therefore, to communicate successfully, one must follow or pass through all the four components.

Afterward, Hyme's communicative competence was produced by Canale and Swain (1980) into four recognized components, namely, grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is that ability that includes lexical, grammatical, morphological, phonological, and semantic knowledge. Discourse competence alludes to the capacity to relate stretches of speech, to deliver important expressions, and to contribute successfully in a discussion. Here, cohesive and coherent utterances are needed. Talking about sociolinguistic competence, one needs to comprehend the social settings, the participants, and the mutual data so as to produce utterances appropriately. The fourth part is strategic competence. Canale and Swain (1980) described strategic competence as: “*the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence*” (Ibid, p. 247).

To sum up, strategic competence is the skill that underlies one's capacity to repair, to help correspondence through rewording, repetition and speculating so as to achieve the required objectives. Strategic competence has a great deal in understanding communication and is deeply related to compensation strategies where switching to the mother tongue, using synonyms, using mimes and gestures are used to achieve communicative purposes. Besides, social strategies are additionally interrelated with CLA, since collaborating with others, asking for correction and developing cultural

understanding are, in fact, ways to get better communicative goals. Such was the theoretical background of LLSs. The following points will develop LLSs in depth.

I.3. Language Learning Strategies (LLSs): Definitions and Classifications

Before tackling LLSs in depth, a couple of words are to be said in order to elucidate the disparity amongst styles and strategies since there has been a confusion in the utilization of these two terms, in this manner, it is so essential to clear up them at the start. As indicated by Douglas (2000) styles are

those general characteristics of intellectual functioning that pertain to you as an individual and differentiate you from someone else. For example, you might be more visually oriented, more tolerant of ambiguity, or more reflective than someone else.

(Op. Cit, p. 113)

Accordingly, styles allude to the individual, constant and natural way of retaining new data and aptitudes, they are, at that point, oblivious. Despite what might be expected, strategies are “*specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned, designs for controlling, manipulating certain information*” **(Ibid)**.

Moreover, strategies “*vary intra individually; each of us has a number of possible ways to solve a problem and we choose one -or several in sequence- for a given problem*” **(Ibid)**. Macaro (2004) stated that “*strategies are not simply knowledge but contain a mental action that can be described. It is almost self-evident that the action component of a strategy of a strategy ought to be describable by someone, especially a teacher or researcher*” **(Yang, 2010, p.15)**. Strategies refer to the way you like to learn. They are put into action by specific learning strategies **(Ehrman, 1996)**. Learning style is “*the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others*” **(Dunn and Griggs, 1998, cited in Cohen and Weaver, 2005, p.8)**. Learning styles according to Oxford and Anderson (1995) have six interrelated aspects:

1. The cognitive aspect includes preferred or habitual patterns of mental functioning (usually referred to as cognitive styles).
2. The executive aspect is the extent to which learners look for order, organization and closure in managing the learning process.
3. The affective aspect consists of the attitudes, beliefs and values that influence what learners focus on most.
4. The social aspect relates to the preferred degree of involvement with other people while learning.
5. The physiological element involves what are at least partly automatically based sensory and perceptual tendencies of the learner.
6. The behavioural aspect concerns the learner's tendency to actively seek situations compatible with their own learning preferences.

(cited in Cohen and Weaver, 2005, p.8).

It is noteworthy that strategies are conscious steps towards specific goals; whereas, styles are unconsciously used. The fact that learners may use LLSs differently leads many researchers to assert the consciousness of LLSs. The term "strategy" is derived from the ancient Greek "*strategia*" which refers to the art of war. In other terms, strategy involves management, planning, manipulation and movement towards a goal. It entails how troops, ships or artefacts are managed and planned. In such context, tactics is also used. However, it is different but related to strategies since both encompass planning, competition and actions which are done to achieve particular purposes. In different settings, a strategy indicates a step for accomplishing particular goals. Similarly, Schemeck (1988) contended that "*a strategy is the implementation of a set of procedures (tactics) for accomplishing something*" (Ching-yi et. al., 2007, p. 230). In a similar line of thought, MacIntyres (1994) argued that "*the term strategy implies active planning in pursuit of some goal, which was nothing that would automatically occur*" (Ibid: 239-40).

Shapira and Lazarowitz (2005) defined strategy as "*actions and behaviours used by the writer to solve problems in the writing process. These actions and behaviours reflect four clusters: metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective processes*" (cited in Alharthi, 2011, p.74). Similarly put, Alharthi (2011) referred to strategy as "*the actions that are adopted by writers to help them plan, generate, process, and present*

information. It also refers to the strategies that enable students to overcome difficulties and anxiety” (Alharthi, 2011, pp.74-75).

As language instructors moved towards more learner-centred and communicative language teaching approaches, understanding how learners learn and what influences their learning has become as imperative as figuring out what is to be realised. Learners should be given the chance not only providing them knowledge about learning but also showing them how to learn that knowledge.

Significantly, the field of applied linguistics and language education have witnessed a drastic change in the teaching and learning processes. A shift from teacher-centred to more learner-centred approach is noteworthy. Thus, there has been a great focus on learners and learning, which, in turn, has influenced the teachers’ role and their way of teaching. In such manner, numerous research have emphasised how different learners manage to learn by utilizing various types of LLSs. It is worth stressing that studies on LLSs have increased to such an extent that it has been proved that successful learners make use of different types of LLSs in an arranged way than do less successful learners.

Having great teachers and receiving great strategies in the learning procedure are not adequate, students per se are the only ones who may conduct the learning process. There are numerous ways, the contention would run, that add to students’ achievement; however, the most essential ones are understanding and remembering, how to listen and read well, how to manage time and how to take notes efficiently. These are referred to as LLSs. Recently, the proliferation of research into LLSs has been obviously done by numerous researchers. MacIntyre (1994) contended LLSs research as “*one of the most fertile areas of research in language learning in recent years*” (Yang, 2010, p.2).

The identification and classification of language learning strategies of second/foreign language did not come out until the mid 1970s. It mainly highlighted literature reviews in the area of second language learning without focusing on foreign language learning. Later, LLSs have been diversely characterised by numerous specialists of second and foreign language learning. Different specialised terms have encompassed the definitions and scientific categorisations of LLSs as follows: *mental process* (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990); *behaviours and actions* (Cohen and Weaver, 1998; Oxford, 1990); *skills or operations or plans* (Rubin, 1987); *tactics* (Seliger, 1983);

techniques (Stern, 1975) and *thoughts or beliefs* (Weistein, Husman and Dierking, 2000) (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.164)

Stern (1975) started the investigation in the field of language learning strategies by outlining a list of ten strategies that most competent learners use in enhancing their learning, namely, planning, active, emphatic, formal, experimental, semantic, practice, communication, monitoring and internalisation strategies. (Dörnyei, 2005)

Following stern's list, Rubin (1975) claimed that good language learners are good communicators, aware of their own speech, monitors of the others' speech and give much importance to meaning rather than form. In the same trends of studies, many researchers investigated strategies' use not only by good learners but also less successful language learners (Chesterfield & Chesterfield, 1985; Naiman, Stern &Todesco, 1978; O'Malley, Chamot, Stenwe, Manzanares, Russo & Kupper, 1985), leading to the classification of different kinds of strategies, namely, metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies respectively. (Dörnyei, 2005)

An early definition of learning strategies might be expressed by Rigney (1978) as "*operations employed by the learner for acquiring, retaining, retrieving, or performing*" (Griffiths, 2003, p. 368). This definition was fundamentally framed by many significant authors in the field. Rubin and Stern (1975) are considered as the pioneering researchers in the field of LLSs during the mid seventies. Rubin (1975) states that, "*LLSs are the techniques or devices which a learner can use to acquire knowledge*" (Griffiths, 2004, p. 2).

Moreover, Mayer (1986) defined LLSs as "*beahaviours of a learner that are intended to influence how the learner processes information*" (Iqbal, 2010, p. 4717). Weistein and Mayer (1986) likewise suggested that learning strategies are "*behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning and that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process*" (Oxford & Hsiao, 2002, p. 369). According to O'Malley et.al., (1990) "*language learning strategies have been broadly defined as any set of operations or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information*" (1990, p. 23). In a similar string of thought, Chamot (1990) gave that meaning of LLSs: "*techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area of information*" (Ching-yi, et., al, 2007, p. 239).

Oxford and Crookall (1989) stipulated, “*LLSs are steps taken by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage and retrieval of information*” (**Ibid**). LLSs might be utilized intentionally yet they can likewise become habitual and automatic with practice. Congruent with this, Oxford claimed that, “*LLSs are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning*” (**1990, p. 1**). More essentially, she expanded her definition to “*specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferrable to new situations*” (**1990, p. 8**).

In the light of numerous definitions and contentions, LLSs might be characterized as “*specific actions consciously employed by the learner for the purpose of learning language*” (**Griffiths, 2003, p. 369**). Researchers have demonstrated that the regular utilization of LLSs in language classroom ends up being a noteworthy factor in the accomplishment of EFL students. Along these lines, such observable use makes LLSs of vital significance to the achievement of language learners.

When reading the definitions as introduced by the distinctive scholars and researchers, clearly there is little agreement. In any case, various essential qualities are obvious in the general perspectives of LLSs. Generally put, Lessard-Clouston (1997) wholed up some of these elements as follows:

First, LLSs are learner generated, they are steps taken by language learners. Second, LLSs enhance language learning and help develop language competence as reflected in the learners’ skills in listening, speaking or writing the L2 or L1. Third, LLSs may be visible (behaviour, steps, techniques, etc.) or unseen(thoughts, mental precision). Fourth, LLSs involve information and memory (vocabulary, knowledge, grammar rules, etc.).

(Lessard-Clouston, 1997, p. 2)

Furthermore, Lessard-Clouston posited that Oxford (1990) added more characteristics to the above-stated ones. They are as follows:

LLSs become more directed, LLSs expand the role of language teachers; LLSs are problem-oriented; LLSs involve many aspects not just the cognitive; LLSs can be taught; LLSs are flexible, and LLS are influenced by a variety of factors.

(Ibid, p. 3)

Interestingly, Since 1970s, different scholars have contributed to giving distinctive definitions of LLSs. Such remarkable scholars have proposed diverse models

to classify and create a hierarchy of strategies on the basis of how they are related to the learners and the task they employ in the learning process. These models include Rubin's (1975) classification of direct and indirect strategies, O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) four-category strategy Taxonomy and Oxford's (1990) six-category strategy model. These frameworks are considered as being distinct from each other; however, contrasts exist as far as how strategies are classified and named. For example, Rubin (1975) termed monitoring as cognitive process; whereas, in O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) model and Oxford's (1990), it is ascribed as a metacognitive strategy. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) encompass social strategies and affective strategies into one category; while, in Oxford's (1990) model, they are two distinct strategy categories.

Early research in learning strategies began with Rubin and Stern in 1975 when attention to what makes a person a good language learner was given to. For Rubin (1987), students frequently use three sorts of strategies directly or indirectly to language learning. The principal category comprises cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies. She recognized six direct cognitive learning strategies, in particular, classification, verification; guessing, inductive; inference, deductive; reasoning, practice; memorisation and monitoring. On the other hand, metacognitive strategies are used to regulate, control or self-direct language learning. The second classification includes communication strategies that are regarded to be less directly identified with language learning, since the attention is more on the process of taking part in a conversation and getting meaning across. The third category includes social strategies which are used when students are engaged in tasks that give them the chance to practise their knowledge.

Furthermore, in an early report on LLSs, Fillmore (1979) recognizes two sorts of strategies: social and cognitive. Nevertheless, she focuses more on social strategies since they enable students to improve their communicative competence. Later, she included different strategies in her investigation, essentially among them, associative skills, memory, social knowledge, inferential skills, analytical skills, induction, categorisation, generalisation, etc. (**Yang, 2010, p.18**)

Naiman and his colleagues (1978) provided a cognitive classification for LLSs and included perceiving, classifying, relating, analyzing, storing, receiving and constructing a language output. Moreover, they maintained vital strategies good

language learners take up. “*Active task approach as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring of L2 performance*” (Yang, 2010, p.19).

Bialystok (1978) proposed five LLSs, in particular, practice as related to all kinds of language learning activities; formal practice related to communication skills and competence; monitoring related to reflecting linguistic knowledge and avoiding errors in learning, and inference of new information from what learners already have learnt. (Ibid, p.19)

Stern (1992) arranged LLSs into five: management and planning strategies; cognitive strategies; communicative-experimental strategies that include gesturing; repetition, explanation, etc; interpersonal strategies that deal with the evaluation of one’s own learning, and affective strategies that involve controlling one’s own emotions while learning. (Ibid, p.20)

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) broke up LLSs into three categories, in particular, metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies or affective strategies. For them, metacognitive strategies refer to skills’ strategies that require planning for learning, reviewing the task, monitoring learning and then assessing the language production. Cognitive strategies are used to enable students to perform, sort out, outline the information being found out, and apply it to encourage and integrate a new learning task. Social affective strategies, however, include collaboration with other individuals, participation with others for critical thinking, self-talking, rephrasing and questioning for clarification.

Nonetheless, among all these diverse categorisations of LLSs, Oxford's classification has been referred to in many investigations. Oxford (1990) arranged a taxonomy of different strategies divided into two main categories: direct and indirect. The direct strategies are memory strategies such as entering and retrieving information; manipulation of language for reception and production goes with cognitive strategies, and overcoming of limitations in existing knowledge is under the heading of compensation strategies. The indirect strategies deal with organising and evaluating learning; managing and controlling emotions and attitudes and learning a language with the help of others. These represent metacognitive, affective and social strategies respectively.

She defined direct strategies as “*language learning strategies that directly involve the target language which include memory, cognitive and compensation strategies*” (1990: p. 37). Indirect strategies, for her, “*are for general management of learning*” (1990: p. 15). Therefore, the direct strategies are employed for learning the language; whereas, indirect strategies are for using the language. Notwithstanding, Oxford’s classification remains the most comprehensive, systematic and detailed one. That is why, I have purposefully adopted it as a theoretical framework in this thesis.

Dornyei (2005) has recently categorized four main strategies by blending Oxford’s memory strategies with cognitive strategies and therefore classified four LLSs, namely, cognitive strategies used for the transformation of language information (e.g., repetition, summarizing, and using images); metacognitive strategies used for a learning process (e.g., analyzing, monitoring, evaluating, planning and organizing); social strategies used for interpersonal behaviours improving the quantity of practice and communication (e.g., cooperation and interaction with native speakers) and affective strategies used for managing the emotion in language learning.

To sum up, Oxford provided the characteristics of LLSs as:

1) contributing to the main goal, communicative competence, 2) allowing learners to become more self-directed, 3) expanding the role of teachers, 4) being problem-oriented, 5) having specific actions taken by the learners, 6) involving many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive, 7) supporting learning both directly and indirectly, 8) not always being observable, 9) often being conscious, 10) being able to be taught, 11) being flexible and 12) being influenced by a variety of factors.

(Oxford, 1990, p. 201)

The following point, then, looks at the significance of LLSs in rendering and adapting more fruitful, productive and powerful learning.

I.4. Importance of Using Language Learning Strategies

We all know that few students appreciate learning while others portray it as disagreeable and troublesome. Clearly, students do not necessarily learn similarly. It is, then, essential to see how students learn and use information to enhance their written work. This string of thought is coincided with the immense line of research on LLSs

that dated back to the 1970s, when Rubin (1975); Stern (1975); Naiman, Stern and Todesco (1978) investigated different studies on the theme “*what the good language learner can tell us*”. Stern (1975) characterised the good language learner as making use of strategies, such as making inferences, practising, self-monitoring, and using the language in real communication. Rubin (1975) emphasized the most important and widely used strategies by good language learners which are as follows:

- Making an effort to communicate and to learn through communication.
- Finding strategies for overcoming inhibitions in target language interaction.
- Making reasoned guesses when not sure.
- Paying attention to meaning
- Monitoring their speech and that of others.
- Attending to form (i.e., grammar)
- Practicing the language whenever possible.

(cited in Cohen and Weaver, 2005, p.5)

Since 1970s, research has proved that good language learners make use of learning strategies (Chamot & El- Dinary, 1999; Cohen, 2003; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975, 1981; Stern, 1975), and has stressed how consciously and unconsciously language learners perceive, store and retrieve what they learned (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford,1990; Oxford & Nyikos, 1993; Oxford, Nyikos & Ehrman, 1988; Wender, 1986, 1998). According to Grenfell and Harris (1999),

a good language learner is one who takes personal decisions, in an implicit or explicit manner, regarding what to do to facilitate learning in whatever context they find themselves. They know what to focus on and which strategies might apply at any particular stage of the learning experience. They actively seek information, opportunities to practice and assistance from available resources, including people around them and from printed documentation.

(Grenfell and Harris, 1999, p.39)

For decades, researchers have highlighted the essential part LLSs can play in the improvement of students' learning and communication. Oxford claimed, “*language learning strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement which is essential for developing communicative competence*” (1990: 1). Moreover, more competent and proficient

language learners use a “wider range of language learning strategies than do less successful learners” (Ehrman and Oxford, 1990: 312). As it is obviously expressed by Nyikos (1993), “Effective language learners tend to use more strategies and to apply them in a more appropriate fashion than less successful learners” (Oxford, 1996: 229).

Besides facilitating language acquisition and making better students performance, strategies use make students more self-directed and more in charge of their learning. Most researchers have admitted that creating language learning strategies can enable learners to advance their language aptitudes, more precisely the communicative skills, in different EFL contexts. Assumably, studies have demonstrated that learners' success depends on the effectiveness of employing LLSs. Henceforth, learners' language proficiency and self-assuring are associated with strategies use. LLSs are advantageous to both the instructor and the student. Applying different range of strategies has indicated mounting evidence of enhancing both the learning product and process since it improves students' consciousness of how to learn effectively. The following points, then, deal with the six types of language learning strategies.

I.5. Types of language Learning Strategies

In recent years, an increasing evidence of the effectiveness of LLSs has been clarified to undertake particular tasks and acquire knowledge. Researchers have demonstrated that the continuous use of LLSs in language classroom turns out to be the most remarkable factor in the success of EFL learners. Hence, an increasing number of foreign language studies have been directed to LLSs.

The significance that is given to LLSs is anticipated in the several ways they have been arranged. As stated before, O'Malley et, al. (1985) arranged LLSs into Metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective. Chamot (1993) distinguished between those discernible strategies, for example, "taking notes" and she called them behavioural strategies; while, others, for example, retrieving information are not observable. In this way, they are, according to Chamot (1993), “*mentalist*”.

Besides, Oxford (1990) clarified the distinction between the direct and indirect strategies by an analogy from the theatre. When dealing with direct strategies is akin to the performer in a play; whereas, the language learners' use of indirect strategies may resemble to the role of the play's director in regulating and controlling. Remembering vocabulary and understanding new grammar rules can be grouped under the heading of direct strategies; in contrast, planning for learning, cooperating, regulating emotions are involved within indirect strategies.

This research field has become more recognized when Oxford (1990) catered for language learning strategies classification in depth. She lately transferred into a ready-made questionnaire named Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) which is employed in almost all studies related to LLSs all over the world.

A huge number of studies on LLSs using Oxford SILL are investigated throughout the world and classified into three categories. The first category is about studies striving to depict the use of strategies, such as Merrifield (1996) in France; Oxford and Ehrman (1995) in the United States; Lunt (2000) in Australia; Wharton (2000) in Singapore, and Mistar (2001) in Indonesia. Most of these studies show that the learners are moderate in the use of strategies.

The second focuses mainly on how the use of strategies result in the production of more successful learners as gauged either by language proficiency or achievement test (Dreyer and Oxford (1996) in South Africa; Mistar (2006) and Setiyadi (2004) in Indonesia and Park (1997) in South Korea). These studies have found out that learning strategies are substantially related to learning success. The last category includes the investigation of the variables that may have an effect upon learning strategies use. These factors encompass motivation, age, proficiency level, gender, the subject taught and so forth (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; El- Dib, 2004; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Mistar, 2016; Yang, 2007).

As already mentioned, Oxford (1990), in her Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), orchestrated six categories of LLSs, to be specific, memory strategy (e.g., grouping, representing); cognitive strategy (e.g., repeating, analysing); compensation strategy (e.g., switching to the mother tongue); metacognitive strategy (e.g., linking new information with already known one); affective strategy (e.g., lowering anxiety by listening to music, motivating oneself) and social strategy (e.g.,

working collegially). Metacognitive and affective strategies provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other means (Oxford, 1990, p.151). Each of which is developed in the following points.

I.5.1. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies enable learners to restore and retrieve new information. Memory is one of the most important primary mental functions of human beings. Memory is the active mental procedure of retraining and reviewing information or experiences. Memory strategies (previously known as mnemonics) have been found to upgrade recalling through the association of new information with natural words and pictures (Levin, 1983; Mastropieri, Scruggs and Fulk, 1990; Woodfolk, 1993). These strategies include relating the word to be held with some already learnt information, employing some type of symbolism and grouping (Mastropieri, Scruggs, 1991) (cited in Atay, 2007, p. 41). According to Thompson,

Mnemonics work by utilising some well-known principles of psychology: a retrieval plan is developed during encoding, and mental imagery, both visual and verbal is used. They help individuals learn faster and recall better because they aid the integration of new material into existing cognitive units and because they provide retrieval cues.

(Ibid)

Within memory strategies, many steps are offered to help learners build up a more proficient and compelling memory. Students benefit from being given directions in both visual and verbal format. A difficult word might be substituted by a common word; utilizing visual pictures to remember words; the use of handouts to effectively well sort out the information, improving short memory enrolment by making learners underline, highlight or scribble down words; taking a test as a retrieval practice i.e., it is an act of recalling information that has been studied from long-term memory; using cues when developing or storing information, such as acronyms, all these are incorporated within memory strategies.

The utilization of mnemonics, which are memory training devices or ways of making sentences to help remembering, include, rhymes, acronyms or reviewing the

primary letter of each word. Besides, redundancy can also be a method for recovering data, the more circumstances you go over something, the better your memory will be of that information. In this way, each time you find a different angle, by diverging your approach, you will make more associations in long-term memory. Additionally, defining objectives, deciding on personal goals, recognizing motivation behind the tasks, having a particular realistic objective for all sessions are basic in creating powerful memory strategies. For example, one method for learning foreign language vocabulary is to recall new data as indicated by its sound.

I.5.2. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are mental routines or procedures for accomplishing cognitive goals like solving a problem, studying for a test or understanding what is being read. Van Dijk and Kintch (1983) gave an astounding depiction of Cognitive strategies:

Thinking and problem solving are well-known examples: we have an explicit goal to be reached, the solution for a problem, and these may be specific operation, mental steps to be performed to reach that goal. These steps are under our conscious control and we may be at least partly able to verbalise them, so that we can analyse the strategies followed in solving the problem.

(Janice and Dole et.al., 1983, p. 4)

Cognitive strategies are personal strategies that help learners alter and deal with information. Oxford (1990) stated that “*cognitive strategies can be recognized by the use of a dictionary, organizing information, reading out loud, analyzing, summarizing and reasoning*” (Alharthi, 2011, p.75). Weinstein and Mayer (1986) distinguished three kinds of cognitive strategies: “*organization strategies, which recognize information to be learned to make it more meaningful; rehearsal strategies, which include the repetition of the information to be learned; and elaboration strategies, which link new knowledge and previously acquired information*” (Ibid, p.76).

O'Malley and Chamot contended that: “*Cognitive strategy operates directly on incoming information, manipulating it in a way that enhances learning*” (1990, p. 44). Cognitive learning strategies, then, involve rehearsing that includes practising the material being learned, repetition, replicating, posting and underlining; elaborating

through associating a new piece of information with information already learned, shaping mental pictures, rewording, summarising, framing analogies, relating new information to definitely known information; and organising by arranging material into an organised framework, gathering, illustrating and outlining.

I.5.3. Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies involve compensation for missing knowledge. Deneme (2008) contended, “*Compensation strategies allow learners to use the language despite the gaps in knowledge*” (2008, p. 84). Compensation strategies include, for example, approximation by using an alternative term that expresses the meaning of the target lexical term as closely as possible. Moreover, students would make up new words to communicate an idea for which they have not had the required vocabulary yet.

Strikingly, using non-linguistic signals such as mimes, gestures or facial expressions when having difficulties to communicate to help have better understanding, using equivalent words to demonstrate a roundabout expression including several words to describe or clarify a single word are among the methods for using compensation strategies. Besides, students may choose the subject of discussion in light of interest and simplicity of vocabulary. Students may employ an L1 word by changing it to L2 phonology, for instance, adding to it an L2 suffix within L1 morphology. This procedure is called foreignising. Students may also face troubles when composing or communicating; therefore, they code switch into their first language to make their message clear and well understood.

2.3.4. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies involve the awareness and control of one’s thought and ideas. This kind of strategy requires knowledge that is used to interpret ideas, to solve problems, to think, to reason, but most importantly to learn. Self direction, mindfulness and conscious control of one's own reasoning and learning are referred to as Metacognitive strategies. Purpura (1997) postulates:

Metacognitive strategies are used in information processing theory to indicate an executive function, strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension and evaluating learning after an activity is completed.

(Douglas, 2000, p. 124)

Correspondingly, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) affirmed that metacognitive strategies are “*higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity*” (1990, p. 44). They are also

general LLSs, which involve identifying one's own learning style preferences and needs, planning for a L2 task, gathering and organising materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes and evaluating the success of any type of learning strategy.

(Ibid)

Nunan (1999) defined metacognitive strategies as “*learning strategies that encourage learners to focus on the mental process underlying their learning*” (cited in **Mistar et.al., 2014, p.297**). Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) described that monitoring is an internal system of learners to process information consciously. **(Ibid)**

According to Chamot (1987), Oxford (1990), Cohen and dorneyei (2002) and Shapira and Lazarowitz (2005), metacognitive strategies are those general skills that are manifested through students' comprehension, motivation and self-awareness. Wiles (1997) defined them as “*self-management... the ability...to plan, monitor and revise, or ...control...learning* (cited in **Alharthi, 2011, p.75**). Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003) summarised concisely metacognitive strategies that include “*planning on writing, goal setting, preparing for action, focusing, using schemata, activity monitoring, assessing its success and looking for practice opportunities*” (**Alharthi, 2011, p.75**).

In this way, Metacognitive are the way in which a learner plans, monitors and controls his/her reasoning. In the classroom, educators are in charge of helping learners develop better metacognitive skills by joining dynamic reflection through the learning procedure. The educator may assess learners' work to figure out where their strengths and shortcomings lie. Students may also consider their learning and decide how well they have learnt something. They may also use self-questioning to check their own particular information as they are learning. Besides, learners may employ discourse to examine thoughts with each other and their instructor as they may give comments to

their peers by providing feedback to other students about their work in a constructive way.

I.5.5. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies are concerned with managing feelings, inspiration, and attitudes. Along these lines, one's affective traits and knowing how to manage them are identified. As it is stipulated by Deneme (2008), "*affective strategies help regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes*" (2008, p. 84). There is no denying, at that point, that a positive learning condition enables students to boost their learning in general. Cohen and Dörnyei (2002) contended that affective strategies "*serve to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes (for example, strategies for reduction of anxiety and for self-encouragement)*" (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002, p.181).

In fact, lessening anxiety levels with unwinding methods, for example, listening to slow music and profound breathing are one sort of affective strategies. Laughter and the use of humour is also an excellent way to bring down one's tension. Bringing self-talk to the conscious level by reminding oneself of his/her progress and the resources one has available, but more suitably, setting goals for learning; using journals in which one may expound on his emotions to peers; using agenda to quiet nonsensical apprehensions; sharing feelings to a trusted, positive companion are all steps and techniques involved within affective strategies. (Ibid)

I.5.6. Social Strategies

Working with peers, asking for cooperation and gaining from and with the others are on the whole under the heading of social strategies. Douglas, rather, put it vividly as that, "*they have to do with social mediating activity and interacting with others*" (2000, p. 124). They enable learners to learn through connection with others. Social strategies are altogether variations of three essential strategies. Initially, coordinating with others i.e., communicating with companions or individuals proficient in the target language one is learning. Second, making inquiries for help, clarification, explaining for

correctness and lastly, having compassion with others through offering the human experience to others and understanding them.

Cohen and Dornyei (2002) identified three most important social strategies and they include: asking questions, co-operating with others to complete a task, and peer revision (**Ibid, p.180**). Shapira and Lazarowitz (2005) emphasised the importance of interacting with peers so as to overcome learning obstacles and its effects on *“promoting thinking, facilitating the writing process and thus improving writing as a whole” (p.74)*.

Social strategies can be an exceptionally fruitful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of various levels and abilities, use a variety of learning activities to enhance their comprehension of a subject. Each member of a group is mindful of realizing not only learning what is taught but also for helping classmates learn; thus, creating an atmosphere of achievement. Importantly, social learning strategies result in participants striving for mutual benefit so that all group members gain from each other’s efforts and know that one’s performance is mutually caused by oneself and one’s team member.

Interestingly enough, social strategies make use of various techniques to advance students' learning and academic achievement, increase students’ retention, students’ satisfaction with their learning experience, help students develop skills in oral communication, build up learners' social aptitudes, and advance their confidence. More or less, Oxford summarised the diverse sorts of LLSs as follows:

Metacognitive strategies can help students keep themselves on track; cognitive, memory and compensation strategies provide the necessary intellectual tools; and affective and social strategies offer continuous emotional and interpersonal support.

(Abdel Latif, 2006, p. 22)

Clearly, research into LLSs blossomed in the late 1990s with richness in theoretical conceptions. Meanwhile, it also extended in scope as researchers stepped beyond the focus on the use of LLSs to examine learners’ variables and their impact on the use of LLSs. Many factors that affect the choice of LLSs’ use are illustrated in the following points.

I.6. The Effect of Variables on Strategy Use

Many empirical studies have been investigated on the basis of various individual characteristics that have an effect upon language learning either directly or indirectly. These variables include proficiency (Anderson, 19991; Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995; Wharton, 2000), learning styles (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Anderson, 1995; Reid, 1987, 1995), gender (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Sy, 1994), motivation (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002; Ehrman, 1994; Gardner, 1985,2000; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; MacIntyre, 2002; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), anxiety (Gardner, 1985; Horwitz, 1988, 2000, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991), beliefs (Abraham & Van, 1987; Horwitz, 1988, 2000, 2001; Su, 2005; Victor & Lockhart, 1995; Yang, 1999), learning tasks (Oxford, Cho, Leung & Kin, 2004) and cultural backgrounds (Littlewood, 1999, 2001; Oxford, 1990, Peacock & Ho, 2003, Yang, 1996).

The majority of these studies; however, were specific to ESL learners and it has been investigated that these factors affect students' use of LLSs and there has been an over generalization of ESL strategies over EFL contexts. Nevertheless, second or foreign language learning context was described by Anderson & Oxford (1995) as "*inextricably linked*" (cited in Yang, 2010, p.3).

Research on LLSs has produced sufficient findings that relate learners' strategy use and other vital students' factors. Strategy research is flourishing with enormous array of theoretical contributions and a plethora of empirical evidence supporting the connection between student's factors and strategy use. Although different researchers have carried out a clear list of strategies employed by foreign language learners, still are different factors that affect their choice. These factors include motivation, cultural background, type of task, age, learning style, tolerance, ambiguity, personality, teaching methods, etc. A propos, Wharton (2000) tackled the relationship between strategies use and variables, such as motivation, gender, language proficiency level and the language studied. His study encompassed 678 Singaporean university students where the SILL and a self-reported questionnaire were used. ANOVA analysis showed that participants with higher proficiency level used LLSs more frequently. Besides, he found that men used strategies more significantly than women did.

Nyikos and Oxford (1993) directed an investigation of 1200 college students who were learning French, Spanish, German, Russian and Italian at a Midwestern American University. They portrayed the frequencies and sorts of strategies they used. The outcome demonstrated the predominance of specific strategies over the others. For instance, the participants prefer guessing meanings from the context rather than asking a friend or a teacher for clarification. In a similar vein, students' nationality has also assumed a compelling part in detailing learners' disparities in strategies use. It was found that European students used LLSs more as often as possible as learners of different nationalities, particularly those related to reading, vocabulary and cooperation with others.

Riazi (2007) investigated some factors that may influence students' selection and rate of LLSs use, mainly among them, proficiency level, educational background, and motivation. He also examined 120 Arabic talking female students use of LLSs. These learners' outcomes, studying English, showed that they had medium to high frequency of strategies use. Moreover, the frequency ranking of strategies was metacognitive, cognitive, compensation, social, memory and affective strategies from highest to the lowest respectively.

A body of literature has identified differences between what strategies male and female students decide to choose when engaging in language learning tasks. Several studies stated that females used strategies types significantly more often than males. It was essentially shown in the work of the following researchers: Ehrman and Oxford (1988); Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Green and Oxford, 1995. The question that most researchers ask within LLSs studies is “who use LLSs frequently; males or females?” The response for such inquiry was given by numerous researchers in that field, essentially among them, Oxford (1993) who stated that female students use LLSs, such as metacognitive, affective and social strategies more habitually than their males' counterpart.

It must be pointed out that the most tested variable that has been given much significance is gender. The outcomes demonstrated how frequently females use LLSs (Ehrman and Oxford 1989; Green and Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1993). While dealing with the kinds of strategies females used, researchers have found that they were great users of social strategies, others have announced no distinctions in strategy use between them

(Vandergrift, 1997), On the contrary, Wharton (2000) reported that males used more strategies than females did.

Many studies in second or foreign language have showed that female learners are better language users and performers, have positive attitudes towards learning and are motivated than males (Bacon & Finneman, 1990; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Gardner & Rambert, 1972; Reid, 1987; Sung & Padilla, 1998) **(cited in Yang, 2010)**.

Politzer (1983) investigated 90 college students in the US and found that females used social strategies more than males. They were more likely engaged in social interaction with others in and outside the classroom. Moreover, Green and Oxford (1995) carried out a research on 374 Hispanic students at the University of Puerto Rico. They came up with the results that females used more frequently the following strategies: memory, metacognitive, affective and social strategies respectively. Green and Oxford (1995) stated that

gender difference trends in strategy use are quite pronounced within and across cultures and this means that women and men are using different approaches to language learning. This could be related to underlying learning styles, motivations and attitudes.

(Green and Oxford, 1995 p.291)

Hon-Nam and Leavell (2006) found that females employed more affective and social strategies. They are likely to build relationships with others more easily and consistently than male students. Peacock and Ho (2009) stated that females reported a greater use of all six strategies in Hong Kong especially memory and metacognitive strategies. **(Yang, 2010)**

Wharton (2000) conducted an investigation on students in Singapore and found that males used more LLSs than females as opposed to other studies that indicated a stereotype due to socialization of learners in English learning contexts. *“Socialization regarding language use (i.e., previously language learning experience or bilingualism) may be a more influential factor than either gender or race/ethnicity on at least certain types of learning strategy use”* **(Wharton, 2000, pp.235-236)**.

Goh and Kwah's (1997) study in Hong Kong revealed that females employed compensation and affective strategies. *"Trying to relax when afraid, encouraging oneself to use the target language, rewarding oneself, being aware of one's nervousness, writing down the feelings in a journal and telling others how one feels"* (cited in Yang, 2010, p.41).

In Middle East, Kaylani (1996) examined 255 high school students use of LLSs in Jordan and brought to light that memory, cognitive, affective and compensation strategies were more employed by females as a reason to get affirmation from teachers, parents and friends. To conclude, Ehrman et. al., (2003) admitted, *"learners should not be pushed into a gender-stereotyped set of strategies"* (Ehrman et al., 2003, p.379).

Another variable that affects strategies use is language proficiency. It is noteworthy to admit that the word *"proficiency"* has become elusive and not indefinable; thus, it was debatable for many researchers. Farhady (1982) claimed that *"language proficiency is not a one-dimensional phenomenon and learners are not homogeneous in their proficiency in various language skills"* (Yang, 2010, p.32). Canale and Swain (1980) related language proficiency to four communicative competences, namely, grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence.

Many researchers have investigated the correlation between LLS and language proficiency (Bialystek, 1981; Brenner, 1999; Chamot, 1987; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1990, Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Politzer, 1985; Poloitzer & McGroaty, 1985; Rubin, 1975, 1981; Stern, 1983; Su, 2005; Wharton, 2000) (Cited in Yang, 2010).

Language proficiency is seen of a paramount importance since it determines the level of success in language learning especially in communicating fluently. However, a quest for whether language proficiency determines strategy use or this latter affects language proficiency is to be asked. It should be noted, then, that the relationship between language proficiency and LLSs is not clear-cut. According to MacIntyre (1994), the link between strategy use and proficiency is regarded as *"that either proficiency influences the choices of strategies or that strategy use is simply a sign of proficiency"* (cited in Yang, 2010, p.31).

Green and Oxford (1995) carried out a research on university students use of LLSs, who belonged to different levels in Puerto Rico and the effect of language proficiency on strategy use. The results stated that proficient learners made use of a great number of strategies. They contended that *“by far the commonest type of significant variation across courses levels was positive variation, indicating greater strategy use by more proficient, more successful learners”* (cited in Chand, 2014, p.514).

However, Park (1997) emphasized the impact of strategy use and language proficiency and acknowledged that the high use of strategies influenced learner’s proficiency in language learning (Yang, 2010). Bremner (1999) conceived the relationship between language proficiency and strategy use as being reciprocal and put forward *“the notion that strategy use and proficiency are both causes and outcomes of each other, locked in a mutual relationship, complicates the pictures”* (cited in Yang, 2010, p.31). McDonough (1999) contended: *“the relationship between strategy use and proficiency is very complicated. Issues such as frequency and quality of strategy use do not bear a simple linear relationship to achievement in a second language”* (Ibid, p.32).

To gauge students’ language proficiency, researchers have used different methods such as, entrance or placement exams (Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Khalil, 2005); self-rating language proficiency (Badell & Oxford, 1996; Su, 2005; Wharton, 2000), and language achievement and language tests (Bremner, 1999; Ok, 2003; Park, 1994, 1997, Peacock & Ho, 2003). Carrell (1989) investigated LLSs of 45 native Spanish speakers and 75 native English speakers. He found that proficient learners continuously and insistently employed metacognitive strategies (Ibid).

Green and Oxford (1995) conducted a research probing the relationship between the use of strategy and second language proficiency of 374 university students of Puerto Rico. The participants were associated to different levels (intermediate, basic and pre-basic) based on placement test results (English as a second language achievement test). They reported that good language learners used a variety of LLSs than less successful students. *“students who were better in their language performance generally reported*

higher levels of overall strategy use and frequent use of a number of strategy categories” (Green & Oxford, 1995, p.265).

Griffiths (2003) analysed the interrelation between course levels and LLSs frequency employed by speakers of other languages in New Zealand using Oxford’s (1990) SILL which was distributed to 348 students from 21 different countries. The findings obtained showed that there was a significant difference in the use of strategies and course level. Elementary students employed less frequently LLSs than advanced learners.

Hon-Nam & Leavell (2006) investigated LLSs use of 55 ESL learners registered in the Intensive English Program at South Western University by using Oxford’s SILL. They admitted that beginners, intermediate and advanced learners used LLSs significantly. Intermediate students favoured more compensation and metacognitive strategies; beginners employed more metacognitive strategies than advanced learners who chose more social strategies. Therefore, the proficient learners made use of social strategies that helped them gain more practice and interaction to improve their communicative competence. As stated: *“with increased proficiency came increased confidence, allowing the learners to interact with others by practicing their language knowledge to promote communicative skills” (Hon- Nam & Leavell, 2006, p. 411).*

In EFL learning contexts, the relationship between strategy use and language proficiency was also analysed. Bremner (1999) reported a significant difference between the use of strategies and language proficiency using SILL and ANOVA statistics to 149 university students at City University in Hong Kong. Another study was done by Peacock & Ho (2003) on 1006 EAP college students in Hong Kong using SILL, measured the use of Hong Kong advanced level of English examination. It was demonstrated that proficient learners used more frequently cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Yang (2010) investigated LLSs use at Korean University and found that students used mediumly LLSs. They favoured the use of compensation strategies; while, memory strategies were less used. He also found that language proficiency had an impact on overall strategy use.

Reporting the same results, Wharton (2000), in his study on 678 university students who learnt Japanese and French as a foreign language in Singapore, found that proficient learners were better LLS users than less proficient learners. Recent studies

were also conducted in the Middle East countries who were more interested in education and LLSs. Their findings showed that proficient learners used a range of various strategies than intermediate and low proficient learners (**El-Dib, 2004; Khalil, 2005; Shmais, 2003**).

Using Oxford's (1990) Arabic version of SILL, Khalil (2005) studied the impact of proficiency level on LLSs use of 194 high school and 184 university students in Palestine. Consistent with all the other researchers, Khalil (2005) found that highly proficient learners employed most frequently five strategies than less proficient learners, namely, memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social strategies. However, among them all, metacognitive strategies were highly used. It seemed that those proficient learners preferred managing their own learning through planning, organizing, and evaluating the process of learning.

Griffiths (2003) speculated about a positive relationship between course level and the frequency of language learning strategy use. Including 348 students in a private language school in New Zealand, in her investigation, she found that LLSs were frequently used by advanced students than elementary students, which were mainly related to interaction with others, vocabulary, extended readings and to the management of feelings and various available resources. Wu (2008) found that high proficiency and low proficiency learners in Taiwan used different strategies. Hence, successful language learners have been described as those who make use of a wide range of LLSs in an extremely arranged manner; while, less successful language learners can be helped to improve their learning through strategy training. (**Yang, 2010**)

In a similar vein, Bialystok (1981) , Huang and Naerssen (1987) found that strategies identified with useful practice were practically connected with students' proficiency in the target language; whereas, Ehrman and Oxford (1995) found that cognitive strategies such as summarising and speculating were the most valuable and regular strategies employed by successful students. Likewise, Green and Oxford (1995) revealed how frequently higher level students took up a wide range of LLSs than lower level students at the college of Puerto Rico. Identically, Park (1997) concluded the positive relationship between strategy use and language proficiency that was measured by using TOEFL result scores in a study of Korean university students. (Yang, 2010)

To round up the whole discussion, Oxford (1990) has given a great value to the use of LLSs which are a stepping stone to develop English proficiency. She also stressed the importance of being autonomous in the learning process, as she contended “*language learning requires active-self-direction on the part of learners; they cannot be spoon-fed if they desire and expect to reach an acceptable level of communicative competence*” (Oxford, 1990, p.201).

I.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to summarise the improvement of LLSs through language learning theories. It also highlighted individual successful learners and their different ways to approach a specific goal through various LLSs. It also revolves around different definitions and taxonomies of LLSs provided by a number of researchers and pioneers in the field. Various types of LLSs were exhibited by accentuating their significance in improving learning. It has been also admitted that students frequently have obstacles when they learn other languages, more imperatively, when they use LLSs. This is mainly due to many variables that face them and affect their LLSs use. These embrace age, proficiency, motivation, gender, cultural differences, the subject taught and so forth. However, in this study, the effect of proficiency level on strategies use is the central and most important variable to discuss about. The following points tackle in depth the use of LLSs in relation to the writing skill.

Chapter Two

II. Introduction

The second chapter deals with the literature review which embraces the basic definitions of key concepts. It mainly involves the description of the writing skill and its different approaches. Moreover, an overview about studies on writing strategies is explained in depth. Such kind of learning helps learners engage actively in promoting their critical thinking, developing their comprehension skills, boosting knowledge, exchanging and fostering motivation and creating a relaxed atmosphere. It also covers theoretical backgrounds on the use cooperative learning strategies in the writing skill that are more emphasized in the two remaining practical chapters.

II.1. Definition of Writing

Writing is a challenging process whether carried out in the mother tongue or in a second or foreign language. Many studies in L2 writing indicate the complexity of this skill which incorporates the application of many strategies. Nunan (1999) admitted that the most painstaking skill to acquire in a language learning is to know how to produce a coherent, smooth and lengthy piece of writing, but which is more intriguing for second or foreign language learners.

Writing is considered as a process through which writers bring out ideas as an endeavour to produce meaning. It can be conceived not only as a means of communication but also as a problem-solving task, as viewed by Hyland (2008) who contended that writers are in fact in quest of solutions to different kinds of problems. Writing is a complicated cognitive task which is composed of a different number of processes and strategies.

Writing is a tool of thinking, an important constituent in language learning and teaching. It can be used as a mode of learning through which learning takes place when the writer carries over that knowledge of the created ideas to the reader. Nightingal (1991) considers writing as a means of thinking and learning that assists students to learn as they write. He asserted that “*writing in itself is a tool for thinking and learning, when students write to help them learn*” (Nightingal, 1991, p.6). Moreover, Graham et.al., (2012) stated:

Writing well involves more than simply documenting ideas as they come to mind. It is a process that requires that the writer think carefully about the purpose for writing, plan what to say, plan how to say it, and understand what the reader needs to know.

(Graham et.al., p.12)

It is imperative that students should learn how to think clearly in English as a prelude to the development of their writing skill. Many researchers in the field of writing have stressed the interrelation between writing and thinking as the nucleus of the learning process. According to Smith (1990), thinking is related to language as a special mental activity, of which thoughts are influenced by the language as it is expressed. He also assumed that thinking involves the action of using one's mind to produce thoughts within that language. Wells (1986) saw writing as a discovery of one's inner thoughts through the medium of thinking, reasoning and communicating. Thinking also requires organisation of thoughts by which one generates ideas to meet logical reasoning.

The awareness of thinking logically, critically and clearly are parts of cognitive processes in the writing skill. Writing is a tool of thinking and thinking per se involve using one's brain to produce thoughts, generate new ideas and solve problems. This latter is a way to help students cope effectively with the process of learning.

According to cognitive models of learning, writing can be defined as a problem-solving process (McCutchen, Teske & Bankston, 2008) **(as cited in Zsigmond, 2015, p.1698)**. It is a problem-solving task that helps students get successfully engaged in the process of learning. Flower and Hayres (1981) pointed out that writing is a goal-oriented process **(Ibid, p.1699)**. Indeed, while carrying out the process of writing, writers generally may follow a classification of goals that are directed to the process of writing. As is it indicated by Graham et.al., (2012) *"It is a highly complex, cognitive, self-directed activity, driven by the goals writers set for what they want to do and say and the audience(s) for whom they are writing"* **(p.7)**.

The eventual aim of writing is to attract the readers' attention and make the composition comprehensible for the audience. Writing is not only a process of

communicating ideas, but it is also a process of communicating these ideas broadly and successfully. Writing allows students to express themselves, use their own point of views, styles, and vocabularies. It also improves their creative and critical thinking. For Hadley (1993), writing requires composing which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing (**cited in Negari, 2001, p.299**).

Furthermore, Writing is a combination of cognitive and social aspects wherein writers are connected emotionally and intellectually. Compared to other basic skills such as listening, reading and speaking; writing is deemed as the most painstaking skill foreign language learners consider because they struggle with that great amount of the target language background about organisation, language appropriateness and syntax with which they convey meaning to their readers.

Writing is a challenging skill not only for EFL learners, but also for L1 students as contended by White and Arndt (1991) *“people writing in their native language, though they may have a more extensive stock of language resources to call upon, frequently confront exactly the same kinds of writing problems as people writing in a foreign or a second language”* (**p.3**). Hence, since native speakers consider writing coherently and clearly as an exhaustive task, EFL learners will undoubtedly need great efforts and more practice to write appropriately.

Writing is an important component for professional, social community and civic engagements. Besides, the ability to write appropriately is a decisive element of being capable of communicating effectively to a wide range of audiences in different contexts. As stated by Graham et. al., (2012): *“Because writing is a valuable tool for communication, learning and self-expression, people who do not have adequate writing skills, may be at a disadvantage and may face restricted opportunities for education and employment”* (**p.6**).

Learners should know that writing is used to attain a variety of purposes. Through writing, information is conveyed, arguments are made, self-reflection is provided and an experience is shared. Effective, argumentative and persuasive writing are essential to succeed in students' academic career and afterward. Learners remember and organise what they learn through the process of writing. However, all

this process is done through teaching a variety of strategies so that learners become effective writers.

Interestingly, according to Graham (2012), *“Writing is not a linear process, like following a recipe to bake a cake. It is flexible; writers should learn to move easily back and forth between components of the writing process, often altering their plans and revising their text along the way”* (p.14). Writing is a multifaceted process for the writer’s focus is not only on the rules and conventions of grammar, punctuation, capitalisation and spelling, but also his main concern is to produce coherent, meaningful and purposeful pieces of writing. Teaching writing is a meticulous task and a challenging process.

Decoding meaning in a foreign language is, in fact, a challenging task that any learner of English may face. However, transforming what they understand in the written form is more significantly difficult. Writing is a primordial part of thinking and learning in academic context, more importantly, in the light of 21st century where various fields are demanding. As highlighted by Bruning and Horn, (2000), *“writing tasks are a critical tool for intellectual and social development”* (cited in **Andjarwali, 2014, p.227**). Therefore, students’ presentation and organisation of ideas through writing play an important role in their professional and academic success.

Moreover, writing is a means of thinking and communicating in a particular domain, a way of constructing meaning in a designed field of interest. Writing in a language other than one’s first language is a complicated process that includes not only background knowledge and understanding of the topic but also important skills such as mechanisms, syntax, morphology, and lexicon so that students can communicate fluently, appropriately and correctly.

In line with Graham, Harris and Santangelo (2015), Incirci (2016) considers writing as *“ a necessary tool for knowledge, learning and development, because it enables students to understand and develop new ideas and concepts, construct meaning from different reading resources, and develop critical thinking”* (**Incirci, 2016, p.125**).

What is more, writing improves language acquisition when learners are engaged in activities related to words, sentences and so forth that strengthen the

grammar and vocabulary already learnt in class to achieve communicative purposes, as it is regarded as “*an interactive method of communication that takes place between the reader and the writer via a written text*” (Alharthi, 2011, p.36). Teachers require making fundamental changes in how writing should be taught appropriately.

Nunan (2000) significantly stated that writing is one of the most difficult skills for all language learners, be it a first, second or foreign language. He admitted that “*writing is not a natural activity...all people have to be taught how to write* (cited in Alharthi, 2011, p.37). It should be noted that writing is seen not only as a product of an individual but also as a social and cultural phenomenon. As advocated by Hamp-Lyons and Kroll (1997), writing is “*an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience*” (cited in Weigle, 2002, p.19).

Writing is among the important parts of communication. As already stated, thinking, reasoning, discussing, creating, sharing ideas are all components of writing. Writing is a mode of learning and a transmission of creative knowledge through different kinds of strategies (Smith, 1990; Wells, 1986). Where there is transference of creative knowledge and ideas to the reader, the learning process takes place and understanding meanings are obtained.

Graham (2008) examined the objective of learning to write that encompasses communication, transmitting information, convincing others, learning content resources, providing entertainment, a tool for reflection and exhibiting knowledge. Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) postulated that “*Learning to write seems to be a typical example where the components of communicative competence can meet, interact and develop*” (p.407). Writing to learn is a flexible, effective and purposeful versatile tool that can be implemented in different kinds of disciplines.

Writing varies depending on the context and formality. Learners who write business letters or emails need to use formal language; whereas, students who chat to friends or write emails to friends are likely to use more informal language. That is why it is the most difficult productive skill to master that involves many forms, such as letters, academic texts like paragraphs and essays, emails, etc.

Raimes (1993) distinguished two kinds of writing in the EFL classroom, namely, “*writing for learning*” which involves pre-writing, drafting, revision and editing; and “*writing for display*” which is mainly concerned with examination assignment writing. The first kind is so ignored by the learners that they produce poor writing in terms of coherence, unity and conventions. Many students face linguistic and skill-related difficulties to write adequately. It is due to the fact that students are not used to writing in their L1 that is why they are not confident enough to write in a foreign language. They even lack experience and knowledge related to each type of writing that necessitates students to use the right vocabulary and suitable register i.e., writing in a particular genre. Therefore, students’ motivation is affected which is the key element for their success.

Learning how to write is a crucial skill for EFL learners. It is considered as the most challenging, complicated task that needs much reflection, thinking, planning, revising and editing. The most common errors made by EFL learners are those errors related to grammar. They have lots of ideas to write about; however, to put them in well-structured sentences is still deficient. Writers spend much time understanding the topic and organizing ideas. Zamel (1982) defined writing in the second language like the first language as a process of discovering and exploring ideas and constructing them in the framework of a finished product.

Learning how to write may be requesting necessity, particularly, inside EFL settings when introduction to English could be constrained. Learning composing within EFL context need to handle issues like those of picking proper words and expressions, applying right linguistic principles and talking about important thoughts. Moreover, it is high time teachers started to provide an impetus to further develop the writing skill in different contexts and consider different approaches.

II.2. Approaches to Writing

II. 2.1. Product-Based Approach

This approach has been labelled differently: the controlled-to- free approach, the text-based approach and the guided composition (**Raimes,1983; Silva, 1990,**

cited in Tangpormpoon, 2008). It mainly stresses grammatical and syntactical forms through the use of model paragraphs. It is favoured for many teachers since learners are syntactically involved in the writing process through employing pattern-product techniques such as descriptive, narrative and persuasive compositions. What is important also is to know the lexical terms and sentence patterns used in such kinds of writing. Therefore, students' writing awareness is raised through this approach. However, this approach may create many drawbacks to students whose focus is only on the mechanics leaving aside the readers' reactions and their objectives behind their writing compositions. Students may also lack motivation in writing which is due to paying attention to accuracy and neglecting the creation of new ideas for their writing tasks.

Product-Based Approach is the traditional way to teach writing, it is teacher centered. Pincas (1982) admitted that writing in the product approach is “*primarily about linguistic knowledge, with attention focused on the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices*” (Badger and White, 2000, p.153). The teacher plays a role of a guide, the provider of feedback when the final composition is produced.

The product approach mainly deals with mechanical aspects of writing, such as grammar. It is more concerned with correctness and the form of the final product leaving aside meaning, purpose and the audience to whom students write the composition, which is not the case of the process approach where emphasis is put on the content and meaning first then to the form.

Furthermore, the product approach is defined as “*a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analysed at an early stage*” (Gabrielatos, 2002, cited in Kamrul and Akhand, 2010, p.78). According to Steele (2004), product approach model comprises four stages. First, students study model texts and analyse their features in depth. Second, the teacher highlights the most important features. Next, students organise ideas and finally work independently relying on the previously taught structures and vocabulary.

However, this approach fails to stress the importance of the audience, the purpose and the ideas generated during the process of writing. It concerns sentence-

level writing and paragraph-level organisation. Students are often given a model which exemplifies a pattern of rhetorical organisation and asked to fit their ideas into this example. Both the content and the form are checked by the teacher.

To sum up, the product approach mainly deals with mechanical aspects of writing, such as grammar. It is more concerned with correctness and the form of the final product leaving aside meaning, purpose and the audience to whom students write the composition, which is not the case of the process approach where emphasis is put on the content and meaning first then to the form. Thus, this approach was superseded by another which is the process approach.

II.2.2. Process-Based Approach

Many linguists and researchers during the 1970s and 1980s questioned the product-oriented approach and considered writing as a combination of a wide range of processes (**Britton, 1970; Halliday, 1978; 1982 cited in Alharthi, 2011, p.38**). One of the leaders of this perspective was Rohman (1965), who regarded writing as a process of three stages, namely, pre-writing, writing and post writing. In the pre-writing stage, students concentrate on thinking and planning; the writing stage concerns transforming thoughts into writing, and the post writing stage focuses on revising spelling and punctuation.

Current research has proven that the process approach to writing is effective because it emphasizes the way writing is done to accomplish the final product. It has shown the importance and effectiveness of the process approach of writing that accentuates the way writing is done rather than knowing the final product. It is considered as the way writers manage to develop their writing activity from the beginning stage to the end of the writing process. O'Brien (2004) defined this approach as an activity through which learners are encouraged to consider writing not as a competition of grammar tasks, but as a means of transferring meaning and ideas.

The process approach is defined by Kroll (2001) as follows.

The process approach serves today as an umbrella term for many types of writing courses...what the term captures is the fact that students writers engage in their writing tasks through a cyclical approach

rather than a single-shot approach. They are not expected to produce and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback on their drafts, be it from peers and/or from the teacher, followed by revision of their evolving texts.

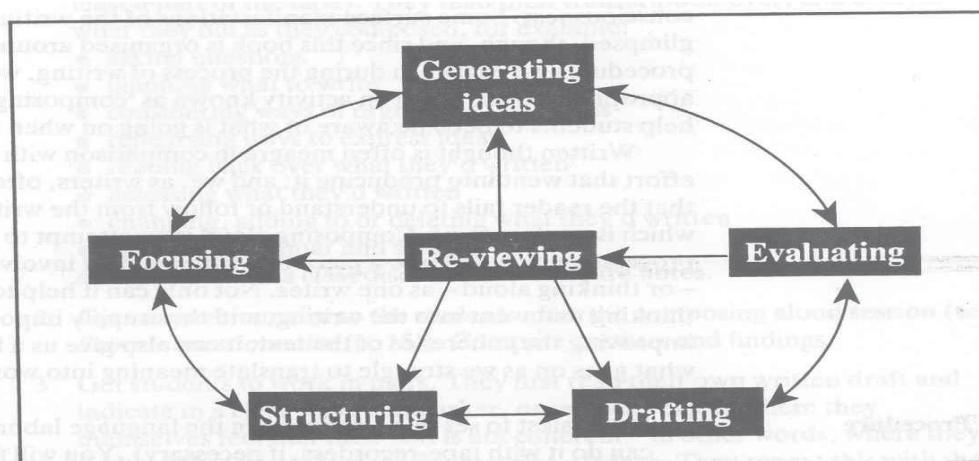
(cited in Kamrul and Akhand, 2010, p.79)

The process-based approach is beneficial for students through which they kill two birds with one stone. They learn how to write appropriate stretches of texts at the same time they learn from each other through providing peer feedback. Thus, they develop autonomy and self-regulation in their studies. Though this process is highly used by instructors, it has some shortcomings that hinder the writing process. In the classroom, students take much time to produce blocks of sentences so that they create a coherent piece of writing. Moreover, students are not provided with an example to write effectively and appropriately in a specific composition type; therefore, they most of the time feel lost of how to proceed along with a particular type of paragraph writing. (Ibid)

White and Arndt (1991) described six procedures that are involved in the process of writing and a sequence of activities, as the following figure demonstrates. This writing model is based on six recursive (nonlinear) procedures, namely, generating ideas, focusing, structuring, drafting, reviewing and evaluating. When generating ideas, writers mull over the topic depending on their schemata so that they produce as many supporting ideas as they have in mind about the topic.

Figure 2.1. Model of Writing (White and Arndt's (1991)

Diagram of Process Writing adopted from Kamrul and Akhand, 2010, p.79



As illustrated by Badger and White (2000), “*writing in process approaches is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure*” (cited in Ho, 2006, p.2). Following this approach, students use different strategies such as planning, drafting, revising and editing which is the focus of this dissertation so that they write without obstacles and thus produce a good piece of writing.

According to Steele (2004), process approach model includes 8 stages. First, brainstorming, in which, students discuss and generate ideas. Second, planning, where, students jot down as many ideas as possible about the topic. Third, mind mapping, through which, students organise ideas in a form of an outline or a scheme. Fourth, writing the first draft where students write in pairs or groups. Fifth, peer feedback where students exchange their drafts. Therefore, raising awareness is a feature that allows all learners to write appropriately since having in mind that their drafts are going to be read by their classmates. Sixth, editing, students get back their drafts to modify them according to their peers’ feedback. Seventh, the final draft, students and for the last time, write again their final draft and finally comes evaluation and teacher’s feedback.

The table below indicates a comparison between product-based and process-based approaches.

Table 2.1. Product and process writing: A comparison, Steele 2004

Process Writing	Product Writing
Text as a resource for Comparison	Imitate model text
Ideas as starting point	Organization of ideas are more important than ideas themselves
More than one draft	One draft
More global, focused on purpose, theme, text type i.e. reader is emphasized	Features highlighted including controlled practice of those features
Collaborative	Individual
Emphasis on creative process	Emphasis on end product

Writing per se is a process developed to create meaning. Mechanical aspects of writing are important but are not interfered with the composing process that requires much revision and drafting. Furthermore, the process approach emphasises the procedures students follow when writing through exploring ideas, organising them, drafting, writing and editing. Therefore, it is learner centered. The teacher guides students during the composing process in generating ideas but no emphasis is given on correctness until coming to the editing phase. This approach is characterized by a number of processes. First, students start writing ideas as drafts, then, they check to see their relevance and meaning. Therefore, it hinges on the clarity, organisation and efficiency of their ideas to achieve coherence.

Teachers should emphasise the organisation of writing then highlight the grammatical problems found in the final product. The teacher should consider the organisation of ideas before moving on to grammatical mistakes. Therefore, the more ideas are, the better writing is.

However, the question to be asked is which approach must be used? It is, therefore, needed to mix “*the careful control of language for learners (as in product), and the creative use of language by learners (as in process)*” (**Kim and Kim, 2005, pp.7-8**). Both approaches have their benefits and drawbacks. Thus, both approaches should be complementarily used to help learners develop their writing skill. The teacher should be biased towards using an eclectic approach where blending the process and product approach is evidently needed.

II.2.3. Genre-Based Approach

It is also called “English for Academic Purposes” (**Silva, 1990; pp.16-17**) or “English for Specific Purposes “ (**Dudley-Evans, 1998, pp.151-152**). It emphasises the value of different types of writing which are closely related to social communicative purposes. According to Badger and White (2000), this approach is the protraction of the product-based approach for it favors the study of a huge range of writing patterns such as business letters, reports, emails, scientific articles, etc. All of

which require teachers to give models to their learners so that they follow when it comes to producing their personal piece of writing. The negative aspect that we can mention from this approach is the learners' lack of technical words or appropriate expression that they need to accomplish their communicative needs.

Badger and White (2000) contended that genre theory is *“an extension of the product approaches, and it varies with the social context in which it is produced”* (p.155). It is, then, prevalently linguistic when the choice of the language is determined by the purpose and the context. Hence, the role of the teacher is to provide a model so that learners understand the aim and the context of the written text.

The genre based approach is also defined as *“abstract, socially recognized ways of using language”* (Hyland, 2003, p.21). It relates writing to social and cultural practice. It is purposeful communicative writing that depends on the context and speech community.

Nevertheless, all the aforementioned approaches complement each other. Thus, teachers should reinforce the use of a combination of product, process and genre approaches which is named *“a process-product hybrid”* (Dyer, 1996:, p316) so as to develop learners' writing competence. Teachers, then, should step-by-step integrate each approach during a writing activity so that learners will be able to transfer the knowledge they get from each approach smoothly and to flow naturally from one mode to another to produce an efficient piece of writing.

Algeria is a country that belongs to the expanding Circle as advocated by Kachru (1992), a country that recognises the importance of English as an international language. Therefore, our students have different purposes behind writing in English, such as getting good academic grades to pass the level or being successful in achieving particular jobs. That is why, searching for adequate methods and strategies of teaching this skill is highly demanding. This is what the following parts are going to explicate in depth.

II.3. Introduction to Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is the eagerness and the ability to work together in groups to master language skills. It is a learning strategy designed to engage students actively and keenly in the learning process through query and discussion with peers in small groups. Cooperative learning is a classroom technique followed by students through working together on learning activities. It helps students improve their academic performance especially for low achieving students; in the meanwhile, it fosters friendly positive intergroup relationships.

Cooperative learning is not one complete instruction; it is rather a combination of other instructional methods, such as large and small group discussion, peer feedback, etc. Interaction in groups plays a pivotal role in the learning process. The higher students talk and work together, the greater is the success in achieving their learning goals. Such strategy includes a number of treatments that can alter what is expected to proficiency and competence.

In writing, cooperative learning is a strategy that allows students to work together, explore and generate ideas about topics of their concern and organise their thoughts for learning. Cooperative thinking is a way through which students are provided with valuable ideas to improve their paragraph writing. They also assist each other during the editing process; wherein, they organize, elucidate their thinking and develop their final product and eventually provide success to all their peers.

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2000) stated that in cooperative learning classrooms,

The instructor assigns students to small groups, gives them a question to discuss and facilitates (and moderates) as students exchange ideas, explain and elaborate their views, question and respond to each other, and jointly derive an answer. The questions tend to be open-ended and require higher level cognitive reasoning to answer; the answers are open to interpretation. Knowledge is assumed to be dynamic and socially constructed. The instructor monitors the groups to facilitate discussion and obtain a window into students' minds by listening to their explanation.

(Gilliam, 2002, p.13)

Cooperative Learning (CL) is the most significant means through which learning takes place; besides, it emphasises the importance of social interaction in the

contribution of peers and learners- teachers learning. Dillenbourg (1999) defined CL globally as “*a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together*” (cited in Lin, 2016, p. 16). Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) defined CL as “*the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning*” (cited in Johns and Johns, 2008, p.65).

Gokhale (1995) saw CL as “*an instructional method in which students at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal*” (cited in Lin, 2016, p. 17). This implies that each group success hinges on other students, and therefore, this stresses the importance of a shared responsibility. Jacobs et. al., (2002) explained CL as “*principles and techniques for helping students work together more effectively*” (Ibid).

II.3.1. Theories of Cooperative Learning

Theoretically, cooperative learning is figured in the theory of social independence, founded on the work of Koffka, Lewin, and Deutsch (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998). It is also supported in the cognitive learning theory, developed by Piaget (1954) which stressed intrinsic motivation and students’ construction of knowledge as the pioneer elements in the learning process.

The social independence theory derived from the work of Lewin (1935) and Deutsch (1949,1962) that favours group learning instead of individuals’ competition and thus reinforcing the aptitude for learning. It offers educators a conceptual framework to construct effective learning through conforming it to different contexts and problem-solving activities. Moreover, Social Interdependence Theory stresses the viscosity of the group in the success of CL.

The cognitive developmental theory caters for the intrinsic motivation. Piaget (1954) claimed that cooperation needs an effortful attempt to attain specific goals and develop one’s own feelings in relation to the awareness of others’ feelings and points of view. In the Piagetian perspective, cooperative learning intends to promote intellectual development and agreement in the judgment or opinion reached by a

group as a whole. In short, cognitive theory in cooperative learning represents students' construction of knowledge based on their personal experiences and group interaction (Piaget, 1954). It favours the centeredness of the learner and the teachers' guidance and facilitation of knowledge transmission and learning. Cognitive-developmental theory regards cooperation as a core element for cognitive development and intellectual growth. Vygotsky (1962) stated that learning, understanding and solving problems cooperatively are fundamental in constructing knowledge. (Gillian, 2002)

The behavioural learning theory is another supporting theory in cooperative learning that puts forward structure to the classroom privileging extrinsic motivation and it is based on the stimulus response work of Bandura (1977) and Skinner (1971) who defined learning as an everlasting change in behavior as a result of particular stimuli (**Ibid**). Therefore, learning is teacher centered and the learner depends mostly on the instructor to ascertain the links between the stimulus and response and ensure a reward from the teacher and the whole member of the group. Thus, the behavioural learning theory admits students' engagement in particular tasks with the idea of receiving a reward while no success is attributed for tasks which do not afford any reward.

More importantly, it is assumed that constructivism is a stepping stone, a central part of collaborative and cooperative work. Cooperative learning has been differently labeled: collaborative learning, collective learning, learning communities, peer teaching or team learning. They all share group work, incorporation in the learning process; however, collaborative work is more inclusive than cooperative work in the sense that collaborative work implies the whole process of learning. As explained by Dooly (2008), collaboration "*may include students teaching one another, students teaching the teacher, and of course, the teacher teaching the students*" (Dooly, 2008, p.1).

Collaborative learning is also related to psycholinguistic- cognitive views (Johns, 1997, cited in Farrah, 2011, p.138). It is also rooted in the work of Halliday (1978) that considers learning as socially-related in its nature and that social communication is primordial in any learning process. Therefore, writing is essentially a social activity where teachers must create a motivational environment and

encourage students to work together and be responsible for their own learning, and thus to be autonomous through interacting, exploring, expanding and shaping their learning.

In a nutshell, cooperative learning is based on the theory of social interdependence and backed up by the cognitive and behavioural theories. However, these theories have different perspectives and cooperative learning employs them interchangeably to assure the potentiality of learning.

Interestingly, Vygotsky (1962) contended that knowledge is socially constructed from learning, understanding and solving problems cooperatively and jointly together. He also provided another viewpoint on cognitive learning theory from the Gestalt School of Psychology claiming that learning and thinking necessitate the engagement of an active learner who builds knowledge through interaction with others, the learning circumstances and experiences. The philosophers of the Gestalt School of Psychology resulted in key theories related to group activeness. The theory of social interdependence provides the framework for group dynamics and small group learning such as cooperative learning (Koffka, 1935). The concept of positive interdependence moves the students from a private, individualized classroom to a cooperative, public, social learning environment. **(Gillian, 2008)**

Vygotskian social constructivist perspective claimed that individual's cognitive development is related to social interaction and group learning and cannot be split up from the social environment (Vygotsky, 1978). In SLA, theorists admit a comprehensible input reception and comprehensible output production as the most significant viewpoint and that CL is vital for meaning negotiation. Therefore, cooperative learning is backed up by the social constructivist theory advocated by Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) who determined the importance of culture, society, language and interaction in the learning process. He asserted that what happens to a child in his social environment helps him learn, develop and grow. Children cannot solve difficult tasks alone unless they are surrounded by more skilled knowledgeable persons such as parents, teachers or peers who give guidance and thus his/her zone of proximal development is developed. Social interaction is vital in Vygotsky's social constructivism. Teachers and peers give feedback in an interactive manner. Therefore, they exchange and receive information and thereby develop knowledge. **(Ibid)**

More importantly, cooperative learning is viewed as a derivation of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. It determines the social context as part and parcel of the learning process, which is triggered off through the Zone of Proximal Development. **(Ibid)**. Vygotsky (1978) defined the Zone of Proximal development as "... *the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem- solving under adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers*" **(Lin, 2015, p.12)**.

This means that any learner has two levels of development. The first level is concerned with the already acquired cognitive activities where learners work independently without any assistance of the others. Whereas, the second level pertains to the learner's incapability to work alone which means that they need peers to perform well, and thus, calling for a cooperative-based atmosphere to accomplish their potential for mental development. According to ZPD, more proficient learners can help their peers generate ideas, expand their thoughts and thereby benefit mutually from the social learning context.

Vygotsky's perspective put forward social constructivist learning which is outstandingly associated with the context and peers. Later, Vygotsky (1986) asserted that working with a proficient learner is extremely crucial to the development of his peer. He claimed that

learning is first mediated on a social level between a child and other people in his or her environment, and then internalized by the child on an individual level. Secondly, learning on the social level often involves mentoring provided by more knowledgeable persons, either by adults or peers, who engage in activity with less experienced persons in a process of guidance or collaboration. In order for learning to process from the social to the individual level, language serves as a psychological tool to regulate objects, others and oneself in organizing functions that are crucial to mental activity.

(Ibid)

From this viewpoint, one can say that the social context is significant in the development of the individual learning process. Connectedly, "*learning embedded within the social events and occurring as a child interacts within people, objects and events in the environment*" **(Ibid)**.

In second language acquisition, cooperative learning is derived from Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis and Swain's (1985, 1995) Output Hypothesis through which linguistic competence is better attained (Lin, 2015). Thus, L2 development hinges on the total comprehensible input learners take in. Learners, then, acquire language all along their understanding of what is heard and read. In the meantime, Output Hypothesis stresses the fact that Input Hypothesis is of a paramount importance; however, it is also crucial to provide learners with chances to speak in the hope of favourable output to build up their interlanguage grammar.

In the same thread of thought, Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1981, 1983, 1985, 1996) sheds light on the importance of social interaction in enhancing comprehensible input, through which learners search for elucidation to clear up problem-solving activities (Lin, 2015). Outstandingly, cooperative learning is a way to compensate comprehension drawbacks.

To encapsulate the whole discussion, cooperative learning has its roots in three most fundamental theories, namely, social interdependence, cognitive developmental and behavioural learning theories. Social interdependence theory is the result of positive interdependence among individuals who try to interact to reach their goals. Johnson et. al., (1998) distinguished three different types of social interdependence. Positive interdependence is the result of cooperation through which learners constantly interact, discuss and encourage each other to learn and meet their objectives. Negative interdependence is basically competitive where no interaction is involved among individuals who hinder the learning process. And finally, individual interdependence lacks any interaction and interchange among individuals. In sum, in CL, the group member achieves personal goals when the constructive learning is done successfully.

II.3.2. Importance of Cooperative Learning

Most studies on cooperative learning occurred in the elementary and secondary school (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). However, few studies have been done at the higher educational level. Between 1924 and 1997, studies focused on the comparison of cooperative, competitive and individualistic learning. They confirmed

that cooperative learning was more successful in the acquisition of knowledge, solving problems, memorising and logical thinking than the competitive or individualistic learning (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1998). Moreover, Kagan (1994) posited that working cooperatively motivates students to achieve better results rather than competitive or individualistic learning.

Previous dissertation researchers have indicated different studies on cooperative learning at the college level including different fields, such as medical studies, business, mathematics, physics, computer science, history, biology, and English. Of the 37 studies, 24 found significant differences between courses taught cooperatively and those not taught cooperatively. Eight studies found no significant differences among those methods. Natasi and Clements (1991) noticed that cooperative learning resulted in the enhancement of academic achievement, cognitive development, motivation, social and interpersonal relationships and positive beliefs (Lin, 2015).

In the traditional way of teaching, the teacher does all the talking where students act as listeners. It is more like a teacher-centered interaction than a teacher-learner interaction; whereas, CL makes students active participants and the teacher plays a role of a facilitator rather than a controller. Dörnyei (2001) stated that *“in a CL directed class, learners work with their peers so that responsibility for the learning outcomes is shared”* (cited in Lin, 2015, p.14). Cooperative learning fuels student’s participation in class, caters for a potent motivational atmosphere and results in a better performance.

In cooperative learning, students promote interaction and create positive mutuality. Learners encourage one another to reach the desired objectives. Group work can contribute to the success of each member by providing help through explanation and elaboration; exchanging information; giving and receiving feedback; supervising each one’s efforts when facing challenges; increasing curiosity and motivation; urging efforts to achieve the groups’ goals; influencing positively each other and decreasing selfishness and competition in learning. Clearly, Gillies et. al., explained:

“When students work cooperatively together, they show increased participation in group discussions, demonstrate a more sophisticated level of

discourse, engage in fewer interruptions when others speak, and provide more intellectually valuable contributions.

(Gillies et al., 2010, p.933)

In the writing skill, for example, students work through an assignment, help one another until all the members of the group successfully complete it. It is, then, a reciprocal work where learners gain from each other's efforts. Therefore, research has shown that working cooperatively develops students' learning and academic achievement; besides, it helps students improve their oral communication skills and their social skills as well. Cooperative thinking during the drafting process helps students by providing valuable ideas to improve their writing. Students also help each other through the editing process when they organize, provide comprehensible thinking, develop the final product and guarantee success in the writing skill. The writer is the responsible for the creation of meaning through generating and structuring ideas, which then, become encoded into text. **(Ibid)**

Through cooperative learning, students' role is to accomplish a particular task collaboratively through interacting together and trying to solve a problem related to particular tasks. Communication during working cooperatively is so important to enhance their language skills. Each learner is responsible for his own and others learning task. Each student complements the other. The teacher's main role is to organise work, present guidance for small groups, promote groups independence, introduce new learning resources for the whole class, interact with groups, observe, ask and answer questions, give assignments and consequently evaluate students' performance. Astin (1993) stated that collaboration among learners caters for a social learning environment in which interaction among them is prominent and crucial that results in fruitful outcomes (**cited in Farrah, 2011, p.137**).

Zhang (2010) identified characteristics of CL compared with traditional language teaching. This latter is similar to a teacher-centered approach where different methods of learning are highly focused on, such as grammar translation method and audio-lingual method, where students' concentration is on the language form without providing opportunities to practice the language; besides, the emphasis is more on comprehensible input. The interaction is done between students and the teacher, thus, communicative competence is less developed and learners are

considered as being inactive participants. However, collaborative learning is hugely related to communicative language teaching which gives more importance to student-student interaction and the teacher acts as a controller and a facilitator. Thus, an active-like atmosphere is built among students, which leads to students' responsibility and autonomy. Therefore, students move from working individually and competitively towards interacting and working collaboratively to achieve a shared goal, creating a positive learning atmosphere, feeling comfortably engaged in activities, putting aside shyness, fear, and anxiety and therefore, being involved in a positive effective situation.

Working collegially promotes social interaction, as admitted by Brown (1994) "*the best way to learn to interact is through interaction itself*" (cited in Lin, 2015, p.22). Students in CL are engaged in different tasks, discussing and generating ideas, organising and questioning the process and therefore facilitating the improvement of their linguistic competence and communicative skills.

Thinking critically is determined by the learning environment and the teaching approach used which is mediated through CL through a problem-solving process (Johnson et.al., 2000). Discussing ideas, clarifying and evaluating peers' viewpoints boost students' critical thinking. Self-esteem, self-confidence, simultaneous interaction, responsibility, independence, motivation, equal participation and willingness to take chances in learning are all characteristics of CL.

II.3.3. Collaborative or Cooperative Learning

Collaborative and cooperative learning are sometimes used interchangeably. However, some researchers such as Roschelle and Teasley (1995), Dillenbourg et. al., (1996) and Oxford (1997) have classified the two concepts and recognized them as two distinguished concepts in L2 /EFL, hence, it is necessary to highlight them. (Lin, 2015)

Oxford (1997) claimed that cooperation is different from collaboration in the sense that the former is more structured, normative to teachers and the teaching strategies and more directive to learners who work together in groups. However, the

latter is bound up to the social constructivist theory of learning through integrating the target language and culture within the learning process. Importantly, collaborative learning is more learner-centered since the learners are responsible for their learning, the knowledge builders, the ones who change, improve and evaluate together their learning where autonomy is fostered (no interference of the teacher). The learner plays a role of a researcher.

Roschelle and Teasley (1995) put these differences as follows.

Cooperative work is accomplished by the division of labor among participants, as an activity where each person is responsible for a portion of the problem-solving; Whereas, collaborative learning involves the mutual engagement of the participants in a coordinated effort to solve the problem together.

(cited in Lin, 2015, p. 18).

Collaborative learning is used interchangeably with cooperative learning which is more structural. Smith and MacGregor (1992) set the following definition of collaborative learning:

an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. Collaborative learning activities vary widely, but most center on students' exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher's presentation or explication of it.

(cited in Farrah, 2011, p.139)

Therefore, it is worth saying that the two concepts differ only in the philosophical understanding and task division. In this study, both concepts are used interchangeably because structurally speaking, both involve the participation of more than a single student and both of them have the same characteristics, namely, language practice, creating a positive learning environment, promoting social interaction and developing critical thinking.

II. 4. Cooperative Learning Strategies

Cooperative learning is a type of strategy by which learners work together in small groups to attain particular common objectives, academic and social. It is a teaching strategy in which small groups of different levels of abilities interact together and work to enhance their learning process. Students at the university level lack reasoning and problem-solving skills which have an impact on the development of their critical thinking. Therefore, cooperative learning is one of the most effective methods that enhance students' critical thinking. Working cooperatively helps learners engage in critical thinking, reasoning and problem-solving activities. Moreover, through peer interaction, shy students become greatly, actively and emotionally involved.

According to Klimoviené et. al., (2006) critical thinking is *“necessary in students’ reading, note-making, assignment writing, tutorial presentations and professional practice”* (Klimoviené et.al., 2006, p.77). Therefore, the use of cooperative learning strategies help learners think critically, brainstorm ideas, monitor their own learning, give feedback and evaluate their own writing and that of their peers. Hence, they develop different skills and become better listeners, speakers, readers, and writers. Developing creative thinking through generating ideas leads to developing critical thinking through evaluating the appropriateness of their ideas.

Cooperative learning is a useful strategy and so effective in promoting students involvement and interest in the learning process. It is worth stressing that such strategy is *“a) less threatening for many students, b) it increases the amount of students’ participation in the classroom, c) it reduces the need for competitiveness and d) it reduces the teacher’s dominance in the classroom”* (cited in Mengduo, 2010, p.114). Therefore, such strategy is a way to develop students’ centeredness and autonomy and helps create a cooperative learner-focused atmosphere as it prevents students’ unwillingness to take part in classroom activities.

Many studies have been conducted on cooperative learning strategies and confirmed the effectiveness of their use in teaching and learning approaches. According to Research Corner: Education Data and Research Analysis from Edvantia (2005): *“Studies on cooperative learning indicate a strong impact on student achievement as well as increased motivation and improved social interactions with*

adults and peers” (**cited in Adams, 2013, p.31**). Educators should use cooperative learning strategies to improve students’ achievement in the writing skill.

In this dissertation, the researcher explains CL as a group of 3 students working together to generate ideas on a specific writing assignment through which they opine their own opinions without fear or hesitation where the teacher acts as a facilitator and a guide of the learning process. Collaboration in paragraph writing helps students generate ideas, paraphrase each other, summarise the most important parts and classify their viewpoints through agreement or disagreement. When learners are learning together in attaining their goals, each one feels responsible for his/her peers own learning and the success of the individual depends largely on the other classmate contribution in the learning process. Therefore, this creates positive interdependence among group members.

In an attempt to raise students’ achievements, educators have carried out cooperative learning strategies in the learning process. Over 50 years, cooperative learning strategies have been conducted in different learning activities and skills and they have been positively related to students’ performance. When integrating cooperative learning strategies into the classroom, students develop different characteristics, chiefly among them, positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction and social skills which will be developed in the following points.

It has been demonstrated that using cooperative learning strategies helps students enhance their achievement at all levels and subject fields. Cooperative learning is an effective teaching and learning strategy. It is explained in depth by the Office of Education Research Consumer Guide (1992) as follows:

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus, creating an atmosphere of achievement

(cited in Adams, 2013, p.11)

According to Graham (2012), “*Collaboration can increase the sense of community in a classroom, as well as encourage students to become engaged in the writing process with peers*” (p.34). Learners are hesitant to share and discuss ideas;

therefore, cooperative learning is one way to establish a supportive environment. Making students engage in collaborative work through the whole process of writing i.e., planning, drafting, revising and editing results in higher quality writing products. More importantly,

Cooperative learning is a student-centered, instructor-facilitated instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for its own learning and the learning of all group members. Students interact with each other in the same group to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter in order to solve a problem, complete a task or achieve a goal.

(Li & Lam, 2013, p.1)

Considering working cooperatively as a strategy, Storch (2005) researched the adequacy of collaborative composing in ESL settings. The study included 23 members who were offered the decision of working either together or alone. The results showed that writings written in groups were shorter yet better in terms of exactness of punctuation, grammar, and the language.

Using collaborative writing strategies, the participants are asked to brainstorm ideas for a paragraph in a cooperative group format. The purpose is to focus on pre-writing strategies, using cooperative format, which is based on the concept that all members of the group participate in order to complete the task. After brainstorming session, they will pretend that their homework assignment is to write the paragraph based on the idea generated in the groups.

Farrah (2011) carried out a research on using collaborative learning to enhance writing of the Palestinian English majors in 2010-2011 academic years. A questionnaire was used to find out the attitudes of 95 students towards collaboration with relevance to gender, proficiency and academic level and one element of the learning styles (introverts VS. extroverts). The results show that the learners favour collaborative learning; besides, female learners have positive attitudes towards collaborative learning. Moreover, it was also revealed that less proficient learners and extroverts promote collaborative tasks.

Many studies favoured collaborative learning strategy use in the writing skill which helps less proficient learners receive information and assistance from competent learners without feeling ashamed. Furthermore, it is an effective method

that develops learners' interpersonal skills. White and Caminero (1995) claimed that CL provides learners with "*valuable opportunities to learn from each other*" (**cited in Farrah, 2011, p.140**).

Despite its advantages, it is found that some students do not work in groups as they are egocentric and feel that they are competent enough to complete their tasks individually. This type of learning, thus, has its own limitations which are stated in the following points. Nor and Abd Samad (2003) claimed that "*most group writing fails because students do not know how to maintain effective social skills*" (**p.1**). This is may be due to the fact that learners should know how to work and interact in a friendly and enjoyable environment.

Interestingly enough, Smith and MacGregor (1992) contended that "*a collaborative classroom can be a wonderfully rewarding opportunity but it is also full of challenges and dilemmas*" (**p.8**). They further called for changes in the teacher's role and syllabus. They strongly emphasised the difficulty of some teachers to change their methods of teaching, i.e., moving from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness claiming that "*engaging students in a group activity is a hard work*" (**Ibid**).

More importantly, the problem lies in designing the appropriate syllabus for this type of learning. They stated that "*group work requires a demanding yet important rethinking of our syllabus in terms of course content and time allocation*" (**Ibid**). They eventually stated that "*designing and guiding group work takes time to learn and practice*" (**Ibid, p.9**).

Brown (2008) reported students' perspective of collaborative learning at the University of Botswana. Her students favoured collaborative learning and stated that it helps them gain "*academic benefits such as better comprehension and improved performance and acquired generic skills-enhanced communication and problem-solving skills*" (**p.1**).

Rodger et.al., (2007) carried out an investigation on 80 females and 80 males university students who were given an assignment to complete based on competitive and cooperative activities "*a mini- assignment either individually in the competitive condition or with a same-sex partner in the cooperative condition*" (**p.157**). They

found that female scores were significantly higher in the cooperative rather than in the competitive learning context; while, males' performance was identical in both learning environments. This can be demonstrated in the previous work of Ehrman and Oxford (1989) that highlighted females' tendency to use more social learning strategies and thus favouring cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning strategies can be of paramount importance to enhance and improve students' writing proficiency. Working cooperatively involves learners to carry out a learning process as a team which in its turn encompasses enquiry, discussion, sharing ideas so as to acquire the skill required. Concomitantly, students' interaction helps them think, write effectively, ask questions, give suggestions, be biased or against a particular point of view so that they produce argumentative paragraphs. Students should be encouraged to interact with one another, to elaborate ideas, expand and reshape them in a coherent and clear way.

II.4.1. The Advantages of Cooperative Learning

A huge number of studies confirm the strength of cooperative learning in enhancing students' achievement in higher education. Compared to the traditional way of teaching where teacher-centered approach, individual assignments, competition are focused on, cooperative learning involves many criteria that lead to better performance in the classroom and higher academic achievement. Critical thinking, time devotion on the assigned tasks, less turbulent behavior among students, lessening anxiety and stress, being motivated, friendly and positive relationships are all characteristics of cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning is an active method especially demonstrated when weak students, working individually, stop giving up and keep going and show positive attitudes towards learning; whereas, strong students exhibit self-esteem when explaining and making clear what is learnt to weak students. Weak students tend to leave particular assignments, incomplete or skip them entirely, but through working together, they know that each member of the group relies on the other; therefore, they become motivated to have the task finished.

The most commonly used definition of cooperative learning is that of David and Rodger Johnson (1998) of the University of Minnesota who stated that “*cooperative learning is an instruction that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that include the following elements:*

1. *Positive interdependence: team members are obliged to rely on one another to achieve the goal. If any team member fails to do their part, everyone suffers consequences.*
2. *Individual accountability: all students in a group are held accountable for doing their share of the work and for the mastery of all the materials to be learned.*
3. *Face-to-face promotive interaction: although some of the groups’ work may be parceled out and done individually, some must be done interactively, with group members providing one another with feedback, challenging reasoning and concluding, and perhaps, most importantly, teaching and encouraging one another.*
4. *Appropriate use of collaborative skills: students are encouraged and helped develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision making, communication and conflict management skills.*
5. *Group processing: team members set group goals, periodically assess what they are doing as a team and identify changes and functions more effective in the future.*
6. *Peer editing: pairs of groups of students do the critiquing for each other’s first drafts. Then, they revise their written paragraphs taking into consideration the teams’ points and finally submit to the teacher for the final assessment.*

It is believed that the use of cooperative learning in education enhances students’ performance, develops their critical thinking, ameliorates their interpersonal relations, motivates them and encourages peers’ support. Critical thinking is hastened as ideas are elucidated through debates and discussions. Using cooperative learning helps learners develop communication skills. They are more likely engaged in considering others feelings as they show a sense of admiration for their classmates and the teacher as well. Hence, more interaction is heightened among the members of the group.

Students should be actively involved in learning activities which are only facilitated through cooperative learning that provides an interactive classroom environment full of ambitions, assistance, excitement and creative group work. As indicated by Johns and Johns (2008), *“Highly structured cooperative learning allows students to develop their own understanding of key concepts all the while encouraging and assisting others”* (Johns and Johns, 2008, p.63).

Academic benefits and social-emotional benefits are two major elements that fall under the heading of cooperative learning advantages. It has been shown that students working cooperatively learn what to do, how to think critically about concepts and apply their understanding to different contexts. Students become better communicators and listeners.

II.4.2. Pillars of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is an activity where students work together to complete a particular task for achieving an intended goal. Students work in small groups where free communication is established. Working cooperatively maximizes output with peers, promotes authentic, natural communication and encourages positive interdependence. It is regarded to be more productive than competitive or individual learning. *“In contrast to competitive and individualistic learning, students can work together cooperatively to accomplish shared learning goals. Each student achieves his or her learning goal if and only if the other group members achieve theirs”* (Johnson & Johnson, 1998, p.28).

Johnson and Johnson (1991) model of cooperative learning has identified five crucial elements: positive interdependence, promotive interaction, individual accountability, group processing and social skills. Each of which is explained as follows.

II.4.2.1. Positive Interdependence

The effects of each member are indispensable for all the group success. Each group members' attempts are unavoidably necessary to achieve the group intended purposes. Each student's effort is jointly made for the contribution of the whole group success. The cohesiveness of the group resulted in promoting interaction while peers encourage the efforts of each other. It is defined as *"linking students together so one cannot succeed unless all group members succeed. Group members have to know that they sink or swim together"* (Ibid, p.2).

When students clearly understand positive interdependence, they understand that each group member's effort are required and indispensable for group success and each group member has a unique contribution to make to the joint effort because of his or her resources and/or role and task, responsibilities.

(Ibid)

The following quote completes the previous definitions in a precise and concise way: *"doing so creates a commitment to the success of group members as well as one's own and is the heart of cooperative learning. If there is no positive interdependence, there is no cooperation"* (Ibid). Students productively work together through which they are convinced that this collaborative learning environment allows everybody to succeed and reach their goals.

II.4.2.2. Promotive Interaction

Students are engaged in oral discussions to solve problems, share knowledge and relate what has been learnt with what is learnt now. Each group member interacts, thinks all together to generate ideas and achieve the assigned purpose. Group writing assignment depends on the contribution of each member and thus results in ongoing face-to-face interactions. Johnson (1998) explicated this pillar in depth as follows:

Students need to do real work together in which they promote each other's success by sharing resources and helping, supporting, encouraging and applauding each other's efforts to achieve. There are important cognitive activities and interpersonal dynamics that can only occur when students promote each other's learning. This includes orally explaining how to solve problems, teaching one's knowledge to others, checking for understanding,

discussing concepts being learnt and correcting present with past learning. Each of those activities can be structured into group task directions and procedures. Doing so helps ensure that cooperative learning groups are both an academic support system (every student has someone who is committed to helping him or her learn) and a personal support system (every student has someone who is committed to him or her as a person) it is through promoting each other's learning face-to-face that members become personally committed to each other as well as to their mutual goals.

(Ibid)

Hence, promotive interaction requires students working together, exchanging ideas, making dialogues and conversing and being beneficial for the achievement of the final product. Group writing assignment can be considered as an effective activity to promote interaction. The final writing product hinges on the product constructed by the whole group.

II.4.2.3. Individual and Group Accountability

Each member contribution reflects the success of the whole group. Each student is responsible for the whole group activity when the teacher gives students an assignment to write about. Each member of the group contributes in generating ideas and therefore their thoughts are shared and presented orally by only one student who is assigned the role to explain these ideas to the groups. Individual accountability ensures that “*students learn together, but perform alone*” (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1991) **(cited in Johns and Johns, 2008, p.69)**. Individual accountability is of paramount importance to group success. It may involve students critiquing each other's point of view, especially, if the final product is a written assignment to which each individual takes part in its accomplishment; where discussion and interaction between the group members while spurring on ideas on the assigned topic.

II.4.2.4. Interpersonal and Small Group skills

All the members of the group develop social skills that are required to better learning atmosphere. These include decision-making, trust-building, interaction, avoiding selfishness, etc. Social skills are the ability to connect to other people and

interact on an interpersonal level. In cooperative learning strategies, learners are taught how to lead the group members, how to build trust among each other, how to solve problems and how to make effective decisions.

II.4.2.5. Group- processing

Group members discuss their learning process and how they reach their objectives so that they may make decisions about what actions to change or continue. When ending up a particular activity, learners discuss whether what has been done is effective or not, the pros and cons of such strategy and thus making a decision upon continuing or changing such behaviours. It takes place when learners can evaluate their achievement of the whole group during which they recognize the positive and negative points of the group collaboration.

II.4.2.6. Face-to-face Interaction

Being active learners helps in the success of the group through interacting together and sharing knowledge. Johnson and Johnson (1989) admitted that through face-to-face interaction, *“accountability to peers, ability to influence each other’s reasoning and conclusions, social modeling, social support and interpersonal rewards all increase”* (cited in Adams, 2013, p. 28). Research has demonstrated that face-to-face interaction helps students achieve higher performance in the learning process. Kagan (1989) provided an umbrella definition for cooperative learning and contended: *“the structural approach to cooperative learning is based on the creation, analysis and systematic application of structures or content-free ways of organizing social interaction in the classroom”* (Kagan, 1989, p.696).

The success or the failure of the group is shared by all members of the group. When working cooperatively, elements should be taken into consideration. Students must perceive they are a member of the group and all have a common goal. All students must engage in discussion to complete a particular task. Each member’s individual work has an impact on the whole group success.

II.5. Writing Strategies

In the research of writing strategies, two eminent studies in Europe are to be highlighted. The first study is by Kieft, Rijlaarsdam and Van Den Bergh (2006), who considered the effectiveness of planning and revising writing strategies in teaching literature to 113 tenth-grade high school students in Netherlands. The second one is a study by Torrance, Thomas and Robinson (1994) who examined the writing strategies of graduate students in the field of social sciences in the UK. The participants were divided into three categories, namely, planners, revisers and mixed strategy writers. The results revealed that students who planned for their writing were more productive and successful than the two other strategy writers. It could be concluded that planning as a writing strategy for the production of effective writing can be fruitful for some students; however, planning alone cannot ensure writing success.

Developing writing in English as a second or foreign language is a sophisticated task to accomplish. Kellogg, 2008 and Baradaran, Sarfarazi, 2011 explicate writing as a means of producing cognitive processes that hinges on planning, organising and revising. Angelova (1999) demonstrated some variables that affect the writing process, namely, language proficiency, L1 writing competence, writing knowledge, cohesive devices and writing strategies. Among these variables, writing strategies are deemed important since their use differentiates successful from less successful writers.

One of the earliest studies on ESL writing strategies is Arndt's (1987) research who investigated the academic written text both in the first and foreign languages of six Chinese postgraduate EFL students. She used eight categories to identify the strategies students used in their writing. These strategies are planning, global planning, rehearsing, repeating, re-reading, questioning, revising and editing respectively.

Wenden (1991) carried out an investigation on eight ESL students who were required to write a composition on the computer. She mentioned students' use of metacognitive strategies (planning, evaluation, monitoring) and cognitive strategies (clarification, retrieval, resourcing). According to Wenden (1991), metacognitive strategies are the most direct and important strategies in the process of writing that

encompass three pivotal types of strategies, namely, planning, evaluating and monitoring.

Victori (1995) classified seven types of writing strategies through the use of interviews which are as follows. First, planning strategies by which the writer plans and discuss ideas, objectives, and organisation. Second, monitoring strategies are used to solve problems, check and revise their composition in the writing process. Third, evaluating strategies are used to revise again the written text, objectives, aforethought ideas and all changes set about to the text. Fourth, resourcing strategies are the references used about the target language such as looking up the dictionary for any grammatical or spelling doubts or to search for synonyms. Sixth, repeating strategies are chunk of ideas repeated during the composing phase. And finally, reduction strategies are used to avoid a problem, to solve or remove it from the text.

Therefore, Both Wenden (1991) and Victori (1995) admitted that planning, monitoring and evaluating are all under the heading of metacognitive strategies. According to Victori (1995) these strategies are “*three-fold general classification of metacognitive strategies*”

Flower and Hayes (1981) are the pioneers of the writing process. They created a model of writing through which any writer follows to complete a writing task. It involves four vital steps, namely, planning, generating ideas, translating, and editing. Though their model was so beneficial in the field of writing process, writing is still regarded as a toilsome phenomenon that requires much patience, lots of efforts and effective strategies to achieve better results.

Importantly, writers undertake different steps during the writing process. When focusing, writers make things clear for readers by stating and organizing the main ideas for their composition. When drafting, learners produce different drafts, hinging on teachers and peers by putting their thoughts into a piece of writing. When evaluating their writing, writers analyse their content and the texts forms so that they see if they need reformulation or rewording. The final stage is reviewing wherein learners assess and examine again the final work and see if any change is required.

Moreover, according to Hsiao and Oxford (2002), strategies can pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy and self-regulation. Being self-regulated

requires some processes and behaviours that students take up to accomplish more effectively and successfully their goals. Self-regulation is considered to be a requirement for effective revision. Self-regulation facilitates students' search for effective feedback and such feedback leads them to revise more their composition. To foster self-regulation strategies, students are exposed to giving and receiving feedback. Hence, it is pivotal to classify writing strategies explicitly from a theoretical perspective so that they facilitate learners' writing processes. First, I provide theories related to writing so as to indicate theoretical basis for the classification of writing strategies.

Going back to the history of ESL writing, Silva (1990) divided ESL writing into four stages based on four potent approaches, namely, the controlled approach, the current-traditional rhetoric approach, the process approach and the social approach. The controlled approach was influenced by structural linguistics and behaviourist psychology. It regarded writing as a habit formation. Students were given training to practice sentence structures and vocabulary through writing. The second approach was influenced by Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric. It considered writing as an internalization of patterns. The third approach was based on the use of suitable and effective writing strategies. The last approach focuses mainly on using writing as a way to become socially involved within discourse community.

Indeed, all these stages are supported by four important theories related to ESL writing which are contrastive rhetoric theory, cognitive development theory, communication theory, and social constructionist theory. These theories are related to the four approaches in ESL writing and provide a theoretical framework for the classification of ESL writing strategies.

Graham (2012) explained a writing strategy as "*a series of actions (mental, physical or both) that writers undertake to achieve their goals*" (Graham, 2012, p.15). He contended that "*Writing strategies should be taught explicitly and directly through a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student*" (Ibid, p.17). Many strategies can be used to help learners progress in their writing process. When students plan to write a persuasive paragraph, they have to provide clear goals right from the beginning such as mentioning three or more reasons to support their viewpoint. Teachers should check the background knowledge that students may have

about writing strategies. Then, they should explain and show them how they are used. Next, they should set goals about their use to enhance their writing. And most importantly, teachers should lead students to cooperative learning and encourage them to practice the strategy in small groups and write a paragraph collaboratively.

Teaching students to use strategies in writing help them reach their goals more effectively. According to Graham, Harris, Troia (1999), strategy instruction can “*increase knowledge about the characteristics of good writing and form positive attitudes about writing and students’ writing capabilities*” (Dean, 2010, p.4).

It was observed that many students do not use any strategies to complete a written task, they whether write whatever idea comes to mind or they may handle an incomplete paragraph to the teacher. They do not know what to write, how to start, how to organise their ideas and how to revise their final product. Writing instruction is, yet, an effective method for students to become strategic writers. Thus, they may not face any difficulties in completing a writing task in all contexts and genres.

Collins (1998) stated “*no amount of strategic writing instruction will help if students are not full participants in classroom communities*” (Ibid, p.10). It should be noted that students should regard the classroom as a social context where they write as a way of solving problems, not a place where they only have to do things. The different assignments teachers give to students have also a great impact on students’ enthusiasm and interest to complete a composition. For this reason, Paris and Paris stated:

To get engaged in particular strategic behavior, the assignments should meet the following criteria: 1) are intrinsically interesting; 2) allow personal ownership to some extent; 3) connect to students’ lives outside of school; 4) promote collaboration, 5) encourage quality writing through high expectations; 6) provide consistent support for students to meet those expectations.

(Ibid)

Outstandingly, the writing process is comprised of six components, namely, planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising and editing. Planning includes setting goals, generating ideas, collecting information from reading or from peers, already acquired knowledge, discussion with classmates and orchestrating ideas depending on the aim of the text and the audience to whom the composition is written to. Drafting is

when students transform their thoughts into pieces of writing. Students must construct sentences that appropriately meet the purpose of their writing where spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar are so important but not highly emphasised at this level.

Then, students should share their ideas with the teacher or their peers so that they receive more feedback during the writing process. Besides, students can evaluate their writing by themselves or they can give their text to their peers for a concrete feedback. Thus, students may change or keep their composition depending on the feedback provided. After discussing ideas and drafting, students read their text carefully or share the reading with their peers. They may change some words, sentence structure, reorganize ideas, delete any obscurity within the text, or remove ambiguous sentences writers undertake to achieve their goals. Editing is so important here to pay attention to every single word through reviewing again the clarity of the ideas, spelling, grammar, punctuation and any other corrections.

Furthermore, teaching genre is primordial. Teachers should stress how a particular genre is different from another in terms of writing properties and purposes. Taking the example of a cover letter, writers should state strong evidence to impress the employer, and this could be achieved not only through written communication and organisational skills but also through revealing much about one's personal style and work ethics. Therefore, the purpose of writing such kind of genre is to convince the employer that you are a potential candidate for this position. A letter, as a specific genre, can be written to convey different purposes: to persuade, to narrate, to inform, to show love, empathy, etc. According to Graham (2012), "*writing for different purposes often means writing for different audiences*" (p.21). Learners should be flexible in the use of strategies. Once acquiring a wide range of strategies, they need to select the adequate ones depending on the genre and purpose of their writing.

Interestingly, teachers should help students know how to write for different audiences. When writing an assignment, teachers and students should discuss the intended audiences for their writing. For example, a descriptive paragraph could be written to a friend to whom one describes his house, his intimate friend, his favourite movie; to a parent to whom one describes his journey when being abroad, etc. According to Graham (2012), "*Allowing students to write for a range of audiences*

enables them to think of writing as an authentic means of communication to accomplish a variety of goals” (Ibid).

When writing a persuasive paragraph, the teacher should provide students with a technique to develop their writing. This technique is called “TREE” (Topic sentence, Reason -three or more, Ending, Examiner) technique. (Graham, 2012) *“Techniques should be taught explicitly and directly through a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student until students are able to apply the techniques independently” (Ibid, p.25).*

O’Malley and Chamot (1990) regard learning to write as a mental process where learners are active receivers of that process. According to them, learners should explicitly be taught writing instruction so that they internally try to understand that process and thereby develop their own strategies. Hence, free writing strategy embraces this perspective where many other strategies are included such as planning, generating ideas, discussing meaning, cooperative work, giving importance to the audience, considering the purpose of writing, drafting, revising and editing.

Grenfell and Harris (1999) defined writing strategies as *“the conscious behaviours and techniques that can be taught and instructed in writing”* (**cited in Alnufaie and Grenfell, 2012, p.410**). This means that the focus is on the strategies that jointly relate process and product approaches to teach writing. A strategy that covers the “form” element of writing is considered as a product-type writing strategy; the strategy that embraces the “content” element of writing is included within a process-type writing strategy. Strategies such as, “I write sentences in Arabic and then literally translate them into English; when I finish writing my paper, I hand it in without rereading” are under the heading of product-type strategy. Strategies such as, “when revising I change my initial ideas and write new ideas; I write more than one draft before handing in the final draft of the paragraph” are concerned with process type writing strategy. Writing should join both process and product activities.

Writing collaboratively is also deemed as a pivotal strategy as Hirvela (2000) recommended:

Adopting writing groups, small groups of students working together on a writing task which normally occurs in the form of peer review where students working in groups, offer authentic feedback from which they learn to revise

their papers. Whilst working in groups, learners have the opportunity to improve their writing skills by means of exchanging ideas, sharing experiences as well as enriching knowledge.

(Cited in Al Alami, 2013, p.139)

“Writing strategies are defined as conscious decisions made by the writers to solve a writing problem” (Wenden, 1991 and Riazi, 1997 cited in Andjarwali, 2014, p.227). A number of studies emphasises the differences of strategies used by low and high level students. Honag (1998) demonstrated that high achievers used more writing strategies than low achievers. In line with Honag, Chien (2007) investigated cognitive and metacognitive writing strategies in EFL learners with regard their achievement in L2 writing. He found that low level students spent much time in planning than high level learners who moved directly to monitoring and evaluating (Andjarwali, 2014).

Revision is of paramount importance in the writing process. Berkaoui (2007) stated that *“good writers seem to revise at all stages of the writing process, as they generate, reevaluate, reformulate, and refine their writing goals” (cited in Fetham & Sharen, 2015, p.112).* However, Witte (2013) saw revision as *“a slow, arduous, laborious and complex task in which one must reflect over time on a piece of writing and the changes that might be needed”* and is therefore *“a difficult process to teach and model” (Ibid).*

Witte (2013) postulated the following definition of revision: *“a sequence of changes in a composition, in which ideas, words, and phrases are added, deleted, moved, or changed throughout the writing of the work” (Ibid).* Many students dislike the revising stage, thinking that what they wrote is clear, understood and straightforward.

For over 30 years, research into LLSs has been proliferating. Oxford (2011) postulated that these strategies *“help learners regulate or control their own learning thus, make it easier and more effective” (Oxford, 2011, p.12).* Among these prominent strategies, she emphasises the importance of metacognitive strategies that help learners control cognitive strategies; they encompass planning, organizing, monitoring and evaluating. These strategies help the learner control and manage their

use in each dimension: “*cognitive, affective and sociocultural-interactive*” (**Ibid, p.15**).

When writing students deploy cognitive strategies which help learners construct, transform and apply the target language knowledge. Affective strategies help learners “*create positive emotions and attitudes and stay motivated*” (**Ibid, p.14**). Working cooperatively and pushing each other to be motivated so as to produce a well-written composition is related to affective strategies. Moreover, sociocultural-interactive strategies “*help learners with communication, socio-cultural contexts and identity*” (**Ibid**).

II.6. Studies on Writing Strategies

Writing is a problematic skill yet very important for many EFL learners. Algerian students perceive writing as a traditional skill where they have to follow and abide by its rules. For many EFL learners, writing in English is a painstaking process that requires them to think deeply. However, following appropriate strategies and writing instructions, student writers can become good achievers in composition.

Learners are reliant on their teachers who cater for modeled writing texts. All that they can do is to imitate the structure leaving aside creativity and meaning in writing. In Algeria, English is taught as a second foreign language; besides, it is a facultative language to learn after graduation. However, learners consider English as a compulsory subject to learn as it becomes a globalised means of communication that they need in their workplace, when travelling or when communicating with others.

Khuwaileh (1995) postulated the effect of the mother tongue on students’ translation of ideas into English (**as cited in Shukri, 2014, p.192**). In line with Khuwaileh (1992), Hussein and Mohamed (2012) found that before composing in English, students write words and sentences in their L1. Byrne (1988) saw writing as a complex process especially when there is a lack of teacher’s feedback with regard coherence, cohesion and the form of the composition (**Ibid, p.193**).

Shukri (2014), in his pilot study, examined Saudi Arabian students’ problems in writing. He found that they encounter difficulties concerning adequate vocabulary,

spelling, grammar rules, cohesion and coherence. All these mistakes are due to the lack of explicit instruction and strategies and students' dependence on the teacher. More importantly, Ahmed (2010) looks into cohesion and coherence as the major problem of the Egyptians essay writing. Their writing difficulties lie in the thesis statements, topic sentence and the organisation of ideas. (Shukri, 2014)

Zuhairi (2016) examined 257 Indonesian students' use of LLSs in learning the writing skill relying on O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) questionnaire. He found that they use LLSs in a moderate level where cognitive strategies are the most reported ones. Besides, he recommended the incorporation of strategies-based instruction in the classroom.

Writing is the most frustrating skill for all EFL learners that needs much organisation and different stages that stress:

how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions to put them cohesively into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product.

(Brown, 2007 cited in Zuhairi, 2016, p.371)

As confirmed by Brown (2007), being successful in a second or foreign language learning “*will be due to a large extent to a learner's own personal investment of time, effort and attention to the second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language*” (Ibid).

An ample body of studies has been carried out in different EFL countries. The principle research to specify is from Chien (2007) who found that effective and most successful Taiwanese learners concentrate more on producing compositions, revising and editing; however, less achievers put great emphasis on the generation of ideas.

Lu (2010) revealed that strategy use plays a crucial role in students' writing performance. Therefore, LLSs are of paramount importance in achieving success and writing properly. Using Oxford's SILL (1990), Nguyen (2009) examined LLSs used by Vietnamese undergraduate students who employ more frequently metacognitive, memory, social and compensation strategies. Moreover, Alharthi (2011) investigated

Saudi male students of English who used more metacognitive, cognitive and affective strategies to learn writing.

Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) divided strategies into two types: process oriented and product oriented writing strategies and found that 95.9% of 121 second year undergraduate Saudi students used them interchangeably. Mistar, Zuhairi and Parlindungan (2014) demonstrated twelve strategy categories used by Indonesian senior high school students, namely, self-monitoring, language-focusing, authentic practicing, meaning focusing, vocabulary developing, metacognitive, mental, affective, compensation, evaluating and social process-focusing strategies respectively.

Nguyen (2009) and Mistar, Zuhairi and Parlindungan (2014) confirmed the use of writing strategies more frequently by successful learners than less successful ones. Zuhairi (2016) carried out a study on the intensity of strategies use by Indonesian Junior students in order to learn writing. He found that three kinds of strategies are used at a moderate level, chiefly among them, cognitive, metacognitive and social/ affective strategies.

Manchon et.al., (2007) observed three main trends during the last decades on L2 writing strategies. First, L2 writers make use of different kinds of strategies to learn to write. Next, *“given the socio-cognitive dimensions of composing, L2 writer’s strategic behavior is dependent on both learner-internal and learner-external variables”* (**Manchon et. al., 2007, p.229**). Then, the writer’s strategic behavior is intervened *“by the instruction received and can be modified through strategy instruction”* (**Ibid, p.250**).

It should be noted, then, that in both Oxford’s (2011) and Manchon et. al., (2007) work, two aspects are of paramount importance in clarifying the relationship of learning strategies and communication, namely, the socio-cultural and socio-cognitive dimensions. Oxford (2011) admitted that the socio-cultural settings encompass all the elements related to culture where communication takes place.

Moreover, in Africa, particularly in Algeria, Boudaoud (2013) carried out a research based on constructive planning strategy in writing used by students of English at the University of Constantine. He claimed that outlining strategy that

include cognitive and metacognitive strategies resulted in not only organising students thought for writing, but also producing good pieces of writing.

In Asia, Abdullah et.al., (2011) investigated writing strategies used by EFL Malay undergraduate engineering students of a private university. The research demonstrated that both competent and incompetent learners used jointly writing strategies, chiefly among them, cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies to bring forth ideas in essay writing.

Furthermore, Chen (2011) indicated that prewriting and revising strategies are extremely associated with students writing achievements. In the Middle East, Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) investigated EFL students' writing strategies in Saudi Arabian ESP writing context. The results showed that 95.9% of the participants used process-oriented and product- oriented writing strategies interchangeably. Pre-writing ideas are generated through small group discussions, brainstorming to put ideas down on papers, clarifying reasons and organizing thoughts in the beginning stage of paragraph writing. Students, then, revise and reconsider the presentation of ideas and word choice. Finally, they edit the work of their peers. Sharing ideas and experiences as working together will help students discover, expand and develop their writing skill to the level of proficiency.

Furthermore, self-regulated strategy was initially introduced for children and young learners with learning disabilities in order to teach the writing skill (Harris, Graham, 2006; Eissa, 2009). Lately, it was applied for all grade levels. Self-regulated strategies encompass three outstanding strategies, namely, cognitive, affective and social strategies. Cognitive strategies help learners build, transfer and apply writing knowledge. Affective strategies help the learners be positive and optimist. Social strategies help them communicate effectively (Oxford, 2011). self-regulated strategy assist learners to be courageous to undertake the writing process with a positive attitude. They also develop the writing skill and strategies that include planning, writing, editing and revising.

II.7. Collaborative Writing

Many learners face difficulties in writing assignments in English which is mostly due to the lack of motivation, audience and the lack of precise writing strategies. Many teachers and even learners stress accuracy, ignoring the fact that writing is a process that passes by a wide range of steps successively related to each other. However, such drawbacks can be solved if writing assignments are done in a cooperative learning environment. Therefore, writing collaboratively makes learners follow a precise map in their minds with regard to the purpose of writing, which is to produce cohesive and coherent texts, and the audience, which can be the teacher or their peers who are going to correct them. Furthermore, the process writing approach is reinforced as students plan, organize, write, edit and revise their composition.

Females favour collaborative writing activities. This is in line with the literature review that demonstrates females' preferences to social activities over males. As stated by Bhum (1999): "*female students place emphasis on relationships, are empathetic in nature, and prefer to learn in an environment where cooperation is stressed rather than competition*" (Farrah, 2011, p.147). It is also parallel with the findings of Shwalb et.al., (1995) who found that females scored better than males in collaborative activities. (Ibid, 143)

In her study, Farrah (20011) reported that females and low achieving students were in favour for using collaborative writing activities. Besides, her participants stated that through working collaboratively, they managed to develop not only communication skills but also motivation and critical thinking. More importantly, it helps them be autonomous learners through establishing a sense of responsibility towards their own learning.

Little (1994) summarised the notion of autonomy as follows: "*learner autonomy entails acceptance of responsibility for one's learning. This means:*

- *Establishing a personal agenda for learning*
- *Taking at least some of initiatives that shape the learning process*
- *Developing the capacity to evaluate the extent and success of one's learning*

(Cited in Grenfell and Harris, 1999, p.36)

Grenfell and Harris (1999) saw autonomy as

a necessary condition of developing linguistic competence; one which operates in interpenetrable forms between pedagogic and cognitive processes. We presume that this is what the successful language learner does, more or less on their own, in acquiring competence.

(Ibid).

Farrah (2011) found that low achievers have better attitudes towards collaborative writing activities. It goes in line with Radwan (2011) who found statistical differences between proficient and less proficient students in the use of certain learning strategies. It is noteworthy that high achieving learners could benefit from collaborative learning as they learn how to explain ideas to others as it is clearly known that some learners understand better when learning from their classmates other than their teachers. Students have better perception for collaborative writing.

Gokkale (1995) stated that students who followed collaborative learning were better performers on critical thinking than students who preferred individual learning (**Farrah, 2011**). The results are also in accordance with Brown (2008) who demonstrated that more than 75% of low respondents claimed that collaborative learning boosted their communication skills. In brief, Wong et.al., (2009) stated that collaborative activities enhanced their pupils' linguistic proficiency. (*Farrah, 2011*)

Moreover, Students had the chance to express ideas and spent much time on generating ideas. This is in line with Elola and Oskoz (2010) whose participants considered collaborative writing as extremely effective in exchanging ideas and structuring their essays, as clearly stated: “*they generated ideas and shared them with the intention of creating a more complete text*” (**Ibid**).

Brown (2008) contended that collaborative learning emphasised collective efforts and helped learners achieve responsibility for their own learning. It is also in agreement with Nor and Abd Samad (2003) who stated that their students “*assisted each other, regardless whether they were proficient or less proficient writers*” (**Ibid**).

Collaborative writing is a worthwhile experience. Brown (2008) found that 71.2% of their participants believed that CL was not a time wasting. He reported 77%

of her participants proposed that CL should be encouraged and continued. Nor and Abd Samad (2003) admitted that during collaborative tasks, participants “*disagreed with suggested ideas, gave feedback, planned about text structures and elaborated on these ideas*” (Ibid, p.153).

Elofa and Oskoz (2010) analysed the impact of collaborative writing on developing learner’s writing abilities. They most importantly examined “*learner’s collaborative synchronous interactions when discussing content, structure and other aspects related to the elaboration of the writing task*” (Ibid, p.140). Differences were found among learner’s interaction with the written text when working alone and with groups. Their participants considered collaborative writing as a beneficial method that develops their social skills especially in relation to having new friends.

As instructors, we need to integrate some changes in education, mainly to use a wide range of teaching methods that make learners motivated and active and therefore, enhance their life-skill learning. Thus, Collaborative activities have positive and negative outcomes. In order to achieve positive outcomes, instructors need to have well prepared students. Collaborative learning is purely learner-centered where in learners are actively engaged in completing a particular task. Collaborative learning, then, makes writing pleasurable, relaxing and meaningful as learners are engaged in problem-solving activities full of reflection and thinking which lead to better understanding and better achievement.

II.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to summarise the theoretical framework related to the writing skill. It also emphasised the role of cooperative learning in boosting students’ enthusiasm and developing the learning process. Writing strategies were also enlightened focusing on cooperative learning strategies as a stepping-stone to writing proficiency. The following chapter examines students’ use of language learning strategies in relation with their levels of proficiency. It also investigates students’ use of writing strategies in the development of paragraph writing.

Chapter

Three

III. Introduction

The use of learning strategies is, of no doubt, crucial in learning English in general and in the process of writing in particular. Thus, investigating the kind of learning strategies used by EFL learners of English at the Intensive Language Teaching Center of Mostaganem will be undertaken. Moreover, another examination of the writing strategies employed by the same category of learners is also carried out through which we may detect some of the motives behind their inadequate written paragraphs.

Thus, this chapter presents the research methodology and the methods of data collection and analysis. To answer the first two research questions, the methodology is fundamentally inspired by the work of Oxford (1990); therefore, the dependent variables are the six types of LLSs and the independent variable is students' language proficiency level. To investigate whether LLSs use is affected by this variable, a questionnaire is given to learners to complete at the centre. To answer the second research question, another questionnaire adopted from Pétric and Czàrl (2003) is given to students to determine whether they know about the writing strategies and if they apply them in their writing process. Analysing data will be done by performing percentage. It will be presented to find out whether there are significant differences between LLSs and writing strategies use and language proficiency.

III.1. Context of the Study

This research was conducted at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem where I am employed as an assistant teacher. Before I launched this research, I used to teach Written Expression in the Department of English at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University for second year LMD students. This made me pay special attention to the writing problems and motivated me to expand my research and search for other teaching methods and strategies to enhance students' writing skills.

The Intensive language Teaching Centre is a training centre that started in 2008 and it is devoted to learners from different fields of specialities and workplace.

It helps a wide range of learners acquire and boost their linguistic knowledge for a better international communication. Before each training session, students are required to take a placement test through which their level of proficiency is determined. During the training, learners are offered concrete contents that meet their needs and expectations that are measured through needs analysis, which reveals requirements, wants and needs of learners towards learning the target language.

The centre offers its trainees qualified language training aimed at enabling learners to acquire an adequate pronunciation in the target language, to master the basic fundamental rules of grammar, to read and write properly in the language studied, to understand and be understood in different situations through fostering the receptive and productive skills, namely, listening, reading, writing and speaking.

The centre receives learners from various specialities and workplace such as, Engineering, Computing, Finance, Law, French, Biology, Agriculture, Medicine, Economics, and Chemistry; lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers and so forth. Therefore, many students come to learn English for many purposes: travelling, business, communicating with native speakers, studies, understanding movies, medical purposes, leisure or simply because they are fond of the language.

Different languages are taught at the centre, for example, Arabic, French, English, Spanish, and German; however, the majority of learners are enrolled in English and French. All of which focus on the four skills by using adequate textbooks. The training lasts for approximately 5 months with an average of six hours per week.

The centre adopts the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which caters for a common basis for designing syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examination, textbooks, etc. It clearly describes what language learners have to learn to communicate effectively. Besides, an emphasis is put on the appropriate skills in order to improve and learn effectively. It also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' development to be gauged at each stage of learning. It is also used to standardise the levels of language exams internationally. It consists of six levels A1 (beginner), A2 (elementary), B1 (pre-intermediate), B2 (intermediate), C1 (advanced), C2 (proficient). These are comprehensively explained in appendix 1.

III. 2. EFL Students' Learning Strategy Differences Based on Language Proficiency

III.2.1. Participants

The participants of the study are learners enrolled in the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem University representing three levels of proficiency: elementary, intermediate and advanced. They are males and females whose ages ranged from 18 to 38 years old. These learners have studied English formally for 6 to 7 years at school. All the learners are to complete at least 80 to 120 hours as part of obtaining their certificate requirements in the English language.

Participants come to the centre for different driven goals. Most of them learn for the sake of obtaining a good level through which they can enrol in different universities abroad, or to have a chance to win Erasmus scholarships. Others seek for opportunities to find suitable jobs. Some other motives are related to touristic needs. Some students learn English for leisure and social reasons, such as listening to music, watching movies without subtitles or chatting to friends from different parts of the world.

III.2.2. Instrument

In this dissertation, the tool used for collecting data is Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (1990) to assess learner's strategy use. The rationale for using this instrument of research is that SILL is regarded to be one of the most prevalent summative rating scales most frequently used by researchers all around the world to shed light on students' choices and uses of LLSs. The SILL has two versions: one for native speakers of English which is composed of 80 items, and another for ESL/EFL learners (50 statements). Each statement describes what learners generally do when learning the target language and they are asked to indicate the extent to which each item reflects what they do and they respond on a 5 Likert-scale. Each statement says "I review English lessons very often" and learners respond on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never true of me) to 5 (always true of me).

However, in this study, a 3-point Likert scale is used to avoid any confusion and misunderstanding.

The SILL consists of direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are at once concerned with learning the target language and are classified into A) memory strategies (Part A: Qs 1-9) which are mainly used for putting new information into memory so that it sticks into the long-term memory, then calling it back when needed for use. B) cognitive strategies (Part B: Qs 10-23) which are used for linking new information with the already existing one, shaping and refreshing internal mental models and receiving and changing messages in the target language. C) compensation strategies (Part C: Qs 24-29) which involve those strategies that are used when facing obstacles in using and learning the target language, such as using gestures, synonyms and guessing to catch up with the missing knowledge.

However, indirect strategies are those strategies employed indirectly to use the target language. They involve A) metacognitive strategies (Part D: Qs 30-38) which are used to self regulate one's own learning, such as evaluating the learning process. B) affective strategies (Part E: Qs 39-44) are used to motivate oneself for learning and control one's emotions. C) social strategies (Part F: Qs 45-50) which are used to take chances in using the language through cooperating with others in order to enhance the learning process.

III.2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The process of data collection started in November 2015 and continued till 2017 which was due to the small sampling. Two sessions are enrolled per year and in each session the number of students is so limited and does not exceed 150 students divided into 4 levels. To carry out the investigation, the researcher needed at least 50 students for each level.

Students were given a short explanation about the aims of the study and what were supposed to complete as participants. 120 students were involved in the study. 50 elementary, 50 intermediate and 20 advanced learners who participated voluntarily

in this study. The rationale for choosing these three levels was the belief that they possess a satisfactory level of English which was proved through a placement test.

It should be noted that these levels can be compared to three other levels, namely, low, medium and high. It was expected that such a choice would help the researcher investigate the differences in the use of LLSs between skilled and less-skilled learners.

All the participants were aged between 18 and 38 years old. The researcher distributed the questionnaire during regular classes in two semesters (2015-2016/2016-2017). Students' participation was altogether voluntary and they were told that their responses would only be useful for research purposes. Besides, they were asked to fill in the questionnaire based on their honest answers regarding the use of LLSs.

The average for each group of the SILL indicated which strategy group learners tended to use most frequently. The results were used to identify the differences in LLSs based on participants' language proficiency. The data obtained from the self-reported questionnaire were analysed and responses to the research questions were made using percentage. Three groups of learners belonging to different levels of proficiency were involved in the study, namely, elementary, intermediate and advanced learners. To check whether the groups of participants used each of the six subgroups of LLSs differently, percentage was calculated and presented in the following points.

III.2.4. Findings

The rank order of LLSs was calculated using percentage. The results showed intermediate learners use more memory strategies (45.32%) than elementary students (31.32%) and advanced learners (30%) as the table below indicates.

Table 3.1. Memory Strategies Use According to Students' Language Proficiency Level

Memory strategies	Elementary (N=50)	Intermediate(N=50)	Advanced(N=20)
Never true of me	38%	26.44%	40%
Somehow true of me	24%	26.22%	27.75%
Always true of me	31.32%	45.32%	30%

Elementary and intermediate learners use almost the same proportion of cognitive strategies (46%/46.84%), while advanced learners make use of cognitive strategies slightly less than the other two groups (35.35%).

Table 3.2. Cognitive Strategies Use According to Students' Language Proficiency Level

Cognitive strategies	Elementary (N=50)	Intermediate(N=50)	Advanced(N=20)
Never true of me	35.56%	30%	31.4%
Somehow true of me	23.84%	22.84%	33.2%
Always true of me	46%	46.84%	35.35%

Compensation strategies are highly used by advanced learners (57.5%), followed by intermediate learners (48%), then elementary students (44%).

Table 3.3. Compensation Strategies Use According to Students' Language Proficiency Level

Compensation strategies	Elementary (N=50)	Intermediate(N=50)	Advanced(N=20)
Never true of me	36.32%	29%	15%
Somehow true of me	16%	23%	27.5%
Always true of me	44%	48%	57.5%

Metacognitive strategies are mostly employed by intermediate students (56.4%), followed by elementary (48.4%), then advanced learners (25.76%).

Table 3.4. Metacognitive Strategies Use According to Students' Language Proficiency Level

Metacognitive strategies	Elementary (N=50)	Intermediate(N=50)	Advanced(N=20)
Never true of me	25.54%	19.1%	16.1%
Somehow true of me	26%	31.1%	16.65%
Always true of me	48.4%	56.4%	25.76%

As for social strategies, it is found that intermediate learners are the most frequent users (53.66%), followed by advanced learners (41.65%), then elementary learners (22.44%).

Table 3.5. Social Strategies Use According to Students Language Proficiency Level

Social strategies	Elementary (N=50)	Intermediate(N=50)	Advanced(N=20)
Never true of me	46.32%	36%	40,8%
Somehow true of me	22%	21.66%	17.5%
Always true of me	22.44%	53.66%	41.65%

Finally, affective strategies are highly used by advanced learners (60%), followed by intermediate students (53.66%, then elementary learners (44.32%).

Table 3.6. Affective Strategies Use According to Students' Language Proficiency Level

Affective strategies	Elementary (N=50)	Intermediate(N=50)	Advanced(N=20)
Never true of me	37.66%	24.32%	22.5%
Somehow true of me	18%	22.32%	17.5%
Always true of me	44.32%	53.66%	60%

Interestingly, direct strategies are firstly used by intermediate students (49.52%); secondly, elementary groups (41.90%) and thirdly, advanced learners (20.33%). However, indirect strategies are mostly used by advanced learners (53.50%) followed by intermediate learners (51.70%), and finally elementary learners (36.92%).

Table 3.7. Direct and Indirect Strategies Use According to Students' Language Proficiency Level

	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Direct strategies	41.90%	49.52%	20.33%
Indirect strategies	36.92%	51.70%	53.50%

Furthermore, the table below shows elementary students' use of LLSs, ranking them from the most used to the least used ones. Elementary students use mostly metacognitive strategies (48.4%), followed by cognitive strategies (46%); affective strategies (44.32%); compensation strategies (44%); memory strategies (31.32%) and finally social strategies (22.44%). Direct strategies (41.90%) are most frequently used than indirect strategies (36.92%).

Table 3.8. Elementary Students' Rank of LLSs

Elementary LLSs use	Percentage	Rank
Metacognitive strategies	48.4%	1
Cognitive strategies	46%	2
Affective strategies	44.32%	3
Compensation strategies	44%	4
Memory strategies	31.32%	5
Social strategies	22.44%	6
Direct strategies	41.90%	
Indirect strategies	36.92%	

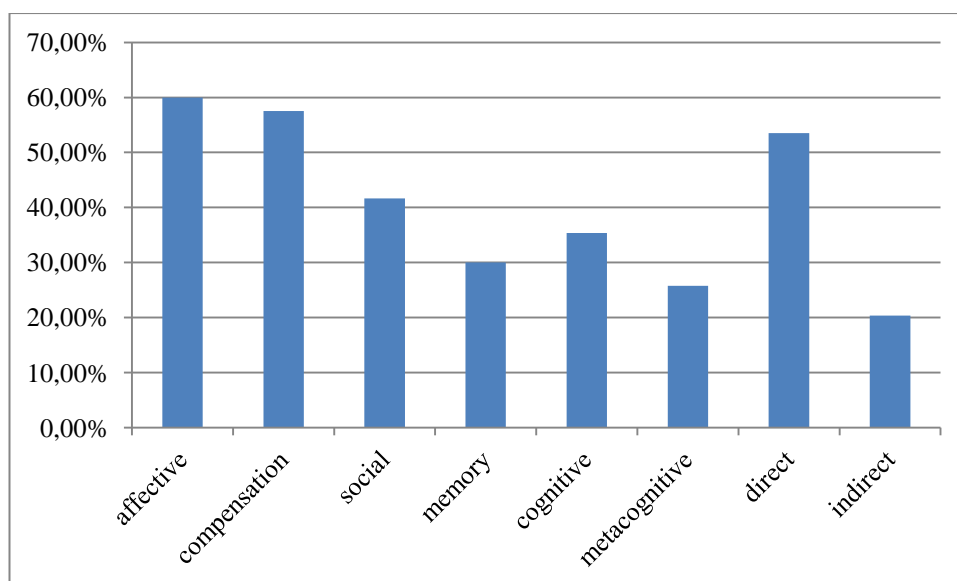


Figure 3.1. Elementary Students' Rank of LLSs

On the other hand, intermediate learners report mostly the use of metacognitive strategies (56.4%), followed by affective strategies and social strategies (53.66%), then, compensation strategies (48%); cognitive strategies (46.84%) and finally, memory strategies (45.32%). Besides, indirect strategies (51.70%) are mostly used than direct strategies (49.52%).

Table 3.9. Intermediate Students' Rank of LLSs

Intermediate LLSs use	Percentage	Rank
Metacognitive strategies	56.4%	1
Affective strategies	53.66%	2
Social strategies	53.66%	2
Compensation strategies	48%	3
Cognitive strategies	46.84%	4
Memory strategies	45.32%	5
Direct strategies	51.70%	
Indirect strategies	49.52%	

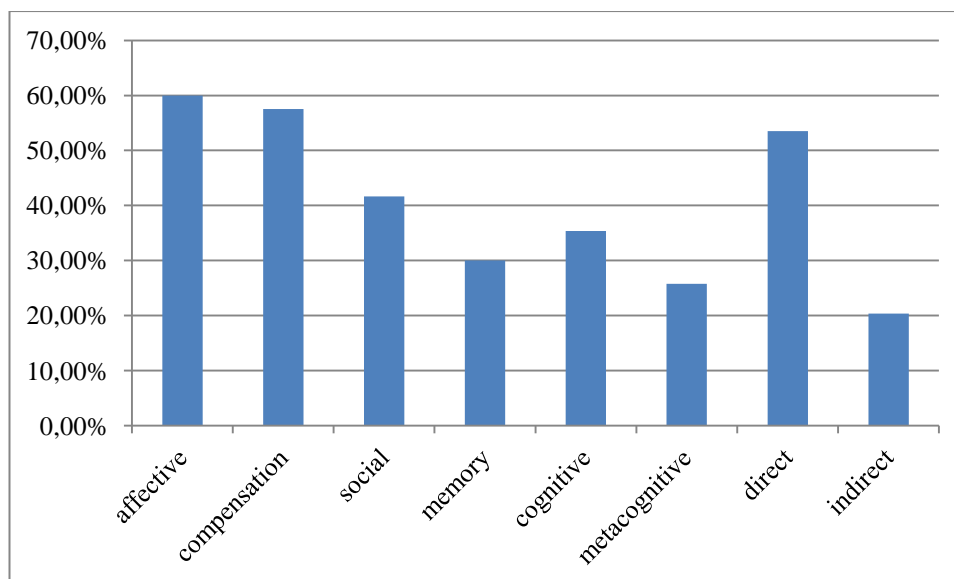


Figure 3.2. Intermediate Students' Rank of LLSs

As far as advanced learners are concerned, they report employing most frequently affective strategies (60%), followed by compensation strategies (57.5%), then, social strategies (41.65%); memory strategies (30%); cognitive strategies (35.35%) and finally metacognitive strategies (25.76%). Importantly, indirect strategies (53.50%) are used more than direct strategies (20.33%).

Table 3.10. Advanced Students' Rank of LLSs

Advanced LLSs use	Percentage	Rank
Affective strategies	60%	1
Compensation strategies	57.5%	2
Social strategies	41.65%	3
Memory strategies	30%	4
Cognitive strategies	35.35%	5
Metacognitive strategies	25.76%	6
Direct strategies	53.50%	
Indirect strategies	20.33%	

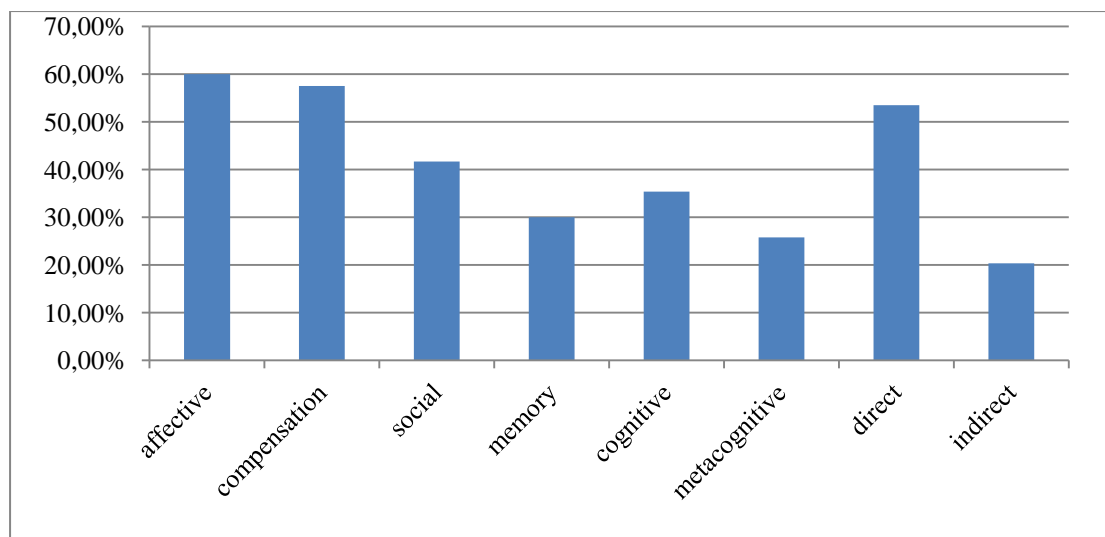


Figure 3.3. Advanced Students' Rank of LLSs

The table below lists in details the three groups' use of LLSs based on their level of proficiency.

Table 3.11. Students' Language Proficiency Level Comparison of the Use of LLSs

Strategies	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Memory	31,32%	45,32%	30%
Cognitive	46%	46,84%	35,35%
Compensation	44%	48%	57,50%
Metacognitive	48,40%	56,40%	25,76%
Social	22,44%	53,66%	41,65%
Affective	44,32%	53,66%	60%
Overall Strategy use	43,39%	50,41%	41,80%
Direct	41,90%	49,52%	20,33%
Indirect	36,92%	51,70%	53,50%

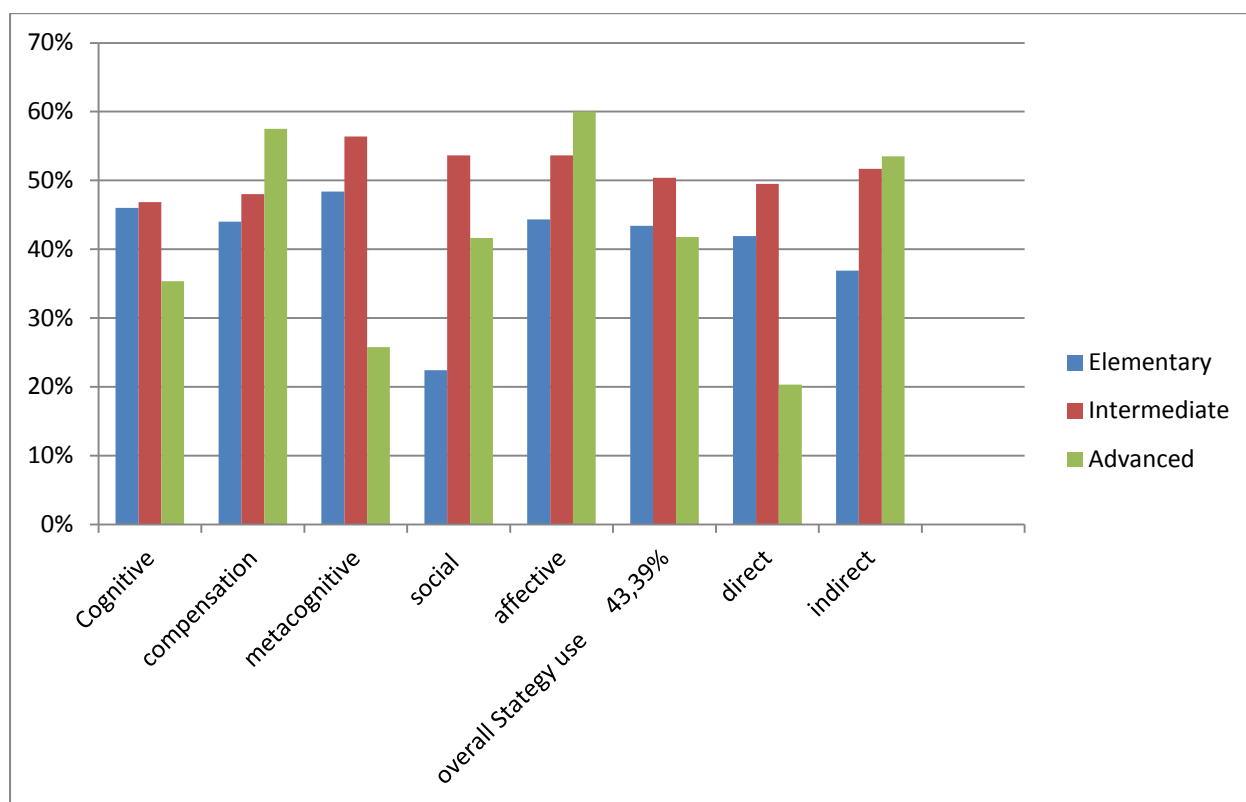


Figure 3.4. Students' Language Proficiency Level Comparison of the Use of LLSs

III.2.5. Discussion

Having analysed the data, findings and their interpretation will be discussed in the following points. The relationship between language proficiency and the use of LLSs will be analysed in depth. The results showed that both elementary and intermediate learners had the highest percentage of using metacognitive strategies. These latter helped them in directing, organising and planning their language learning. Learners at the centre have a strong instrumental motivation for learning the English language so that they boost their academic and professional lives.

Being afraid of failing the training course at the centre was a strong reason for taking control and assuming responsibilities of their learning. Completing the

courses and gaining good and adequate scores in English help them get the certificate that they may need at the workplace, to apply for different jobs or to join the Erasmus Scholarship Programme. Therefore, metacognitive strategies help learners follow the right path of learning which is vital in a foreign language input processes.

This is in accordance with Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) who reported that the most preferred strategy for students in intermediate level were metacognitive strategies. It also goes in line with O'Malley et.al., (1985) who investigated a research on 70 high school students in Eastern metropolitan area in the U.S. they found that intermediate level students tended to use more metacognitive strategies than any other level of proficiency.

Memory strategies are the least ranked by elementary and intermediate learners. This is may be because strategies such as acting out new vocabulary, using rhymes, reviewing English lessons and using words in sentences are not much used. Algerian learners have not strong preferences for using memory strategies, they rather prefer social strategies though the context does not allow them to speak with natives but they do use English with their peers.

Advanced learners reported using affective strategies most frequently as they are ranked in the first position, followed by compensation strategies. Despite their fear of making mistakes, advanced learners keep encouraging themselves of speaking English. They even show their feelings towards learning English to others. The most important for them is to use and speak English leaving aside all barriers and fears that hinder the process of learning. Proficient learners seem to be aware of their emotions and attitudes through lowering their anxiety levels and increasing their motivation. One might claim that learners develop self-confidence and perseverance when using affective strategies.

Furthermore, both elementary and intermediate learners showed a great preference for learning and cooperating with others. This was clearly shown in the use of social strategies. They highly favoured working with others, asking for help and collaborating with peers rather than simply memorising concepts and phrases.

This is due to the importance of the English language in the last few years in Algeria. Interactive learning is strongly encouraged for the sake of developing

fluency and communicative competence. The centre may be the initial contributor to the preferred use and selection of both social and metacognitive strategies. Elementary and intermediate learners are more confident in learning and using English, since they favoured interacting with others by practising the language to promote communicative purposes and increase certain features of that competence, namely, grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence.

As it is already mentioned, intermediate learners did not report much use of cognitive and memory strategies; they were the least used. It may indicate that these learners have achieved a level in their learning, where they acquired enough vocabulary and grammar points in the target language. Therefore, they reflect on how successfully their learning is processing, all that they have to do is to step forward. Such reflection on one's own learning is but an attribute of learners whose concentration is not at the level of memorising vocabulary and grammar forms. They develop awareness towards their learning; thus, they report more strategy use.

In this study, it was found that intermediate learners reported more use of the overall LLSs (50.41%) with regard to the other two groups i.e., elementary and advanced participants. This is congruent with Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) who investigated LLSs use of 55 ESL learners registered in an Intensive English Program college in North Texas University.

Advanced learners are the least strategy users in this study. It is worth noting that advanced learners' successful and regular use of LLSs may become internalised and automated to the extent of applying them unconsciously. That is why, their overall strategy use appeared to be lower than their counterparts.

The study showed that learners enrolled at the centre are conscious that LLSs are part and parcel of their learning process. At different levels of language proficiency, learners have various needs in learning the target language. For elementary learners, the teacher has to be explicit and clear in transmitting declarative and procedural knowledge since learners are not self-reliant and self-regulated and therefore, they feel passive and shy especially because of the lack of vocabulary and knowledge in general.

Nevertheless, for intermediate students, the teacher plays mostly a role of a facilitator since those learners have a great deal of strategic competence and a great amount of content knowledge, such as vocabulary and grammar. Their primary task is to select the best strategies that suit a given activity. As far as advanced learners are concerned, they are autonomous learners and the teacher's main role is to step back and leave them the floor to act upon their learning tasks.

Language proficiency and LLSs have been discussed in many Arab empirical studies. To name few, Ismail & Alkhatib (2013) in their investigation on the Foundation Program of UAE university, found no significant difference with regard proficiency level. The same is to be said for Abu Shmais (2003) for Palestinian students. Whereas, Redwan (2011) stated that language proficiency has a significant effect on the overall uses of strategies.

This study revealed that learners were medium users of LLSs. It is, then, consistent with previous research conducted in the Arab world (Abu Shmais, 2003; McMullen, 2009; Yang, 2010). Moreover, it is worth stressing that learners constantly interact with others as they also favour social strategies, and thanks to the spread of new technology, such as mobile phones, Internet, and social networks, students use them more frequently as assistance for developing their communication skills and interpersonal behaviours.

Findings also showed that differences existed in the use of indirect strategies for intermediate and advanced learners who favoured their use instead of the direct strategies. One possible suggestion may indicate these students think that they have acquired enough linguistic forms, get enough knowledge about the English language but what still lacks for them and what they want to reach is how to use the language to communicate with natives i.e., how to achieve communicative competence. While for elementary students, caring about how to learn the language and what to learn is of primary significance to be able to use the language appropriately. For them, using more direct strategies is of paramount importance than indirect strategies because such use may speed up their learning and increase their oral communication. Thus, knowing what to learn, how to memorise, how to summarise and take notes should be a pathway to knowing how to use the English language effectively

A myriad of studies have investigated this correlation between language proficiency and LLSs. They reported a positive relationship claiming that more proficient learners use more frequently and to a higher extent the overall strategies than less proficient learners (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Green and Oxford, 1995; Ya-Ling Wu, 2008; Kunasaraphan, 2015).

Green and Oxford (1995) stated that *“by far the commonest type of significant variation across culture levels was positive variation, indicating greater strategy use by more proficient, more successful learners”* (Chand, 2014, p.514). However, in this study, the results revealed the opposite, more proficient learners used less strategies than their unskilled peers. They also claimed that basic and intermediate categories of students used LLSs less frequently which is not the case for this study.

III.3. EFL Students’ Writing Strategies Based on Language Proficiency Level

III.3.1. Writing Strategy Questionnaire

In the second part of the methodological chapter, another questionnaire is used to help the researcher get information about how and whether students employ writing strategies in their paragraph writing. Generally in any questionnaire, questions may take two forms, either open or closed. In this study, the latter is applied. The respondents’ task is to choose the suitable answer from a list of a given choices. The questionnaire should be provided by adequate choice that envelops a variety of potential answers. Such questionnaires are reliable and satisfactory for eliciting information from a wide range of population where different variables, such as gender, the subject-content, age, motivation and language proficiency have to be taken into consideration. Briefly, a closed questionnaire helps the researcher compare the results.

As already mentioned, a closed format questionnaire is used to collect information about the use of writing strategies. The main objective is to elicit the kinds of writing strategies and to determine whether they use them in paragraph

writing in particular. In this questionnaire, the Likert- Scale format questionnaire is used as a method of data collection; however, a 5 Likert-Scale questionnaire was not that easy for students as they got confused to choose from several given statements. For the sake of avoiding such confusion, a 3 Likert-Scale was chosen instead.

Therefore, the second part of this chapter explores students' use of writing strategies at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem University by taking into account the correlation between language proficiency and writing strategy use. The instrument used is adapted from Petrić and Czál's (2003) writing strategy questionnaire. It consists of 30 items. It is also a 3-point Likert Scale question with 1 standing for "always true of me"; 2 "somewhat true of me"; 3 "never true of me". The scale is reduced in this study to make it comprehensible for learners. The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part involves "*before writing strategies*" and consists of 7 items. The second part deals with the strategies used "*when writing*" and it contains 11 items. The last part handles "*when revising*" and it is made up out of 12 items. This questionnaire is chosen as an instrument for this second part of the study for it is designed for non-native speakers of English; besides, it involves comprehensible items about writing strategies.

III.3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

This research aimed at investigating the writing strategies of EFL learners at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem. In the context of this present study, a typical number of students per class never exceeds 25; therefore, it was so important to set the sampling size to at least 50 to provide the adequate representativeness and generalisability of the results. The researcher distributed the questionnaire during a usual class. After sitting for the placement test, students were placed in different levels according to their results. Once attending regular classes, they were given the writing questionnaire and were asked to complete, taking into consideration the steps they follow when writing in English in general.

Data collection lasted for two academic years because of the students' number limitation in each session. The average for each group of the writing strategy questionnaire indicated which stage and strategy group learners employed mostly.

The results showed the differences in the writing strategies based on the respondents' language proficiency level. The data obtained were analysed using percentage.

A total of 120 students filled in the questionnaire during the academic years 2015-2016-2017. 50 were elementary learners, 50 intermediate and 20 advanced. As far as students' number of years of studying English is concerned, it was indicated that there were two groups: the first group around 6 to 7 years; and the second group around 8 to 10 years for those who continued studying English at the university level. However, all students would have had at least 6 years of learning English, 3 or 4 at the middle school, 3 at the secondary school and further three years at the university for some of them.

The contact hours for the writing skill at the centre are 2 hours per week. Typically, the writing task starts with the teacher providing some examples of different topics written within particular genres, such as writing letters, emails and paragraphs; therefore, students' task is to write their own letters or paragraphs following the example provided by the teacher. After that, they submit their papers to the teacher who, in his turn, correct them and provide learners with feedback which mainly consists of grammatical, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling mistakes. The students receive comments in the following class and they discuss about them with their instructor. Through this study, the researcher's aim, then, is to change completely this traditional method of teaching writing and adopt new techniques and strategies for learners to follow so that they write cohesively and coherently.

III.3.3. Findings

There were 120 participants, who fully completed the writing strategy questionnaire, 50 students were elementary, 50 were intermediate and 20 advanced. The Likert-Scale statements were divided into three sections which match the stages of the writing process, namely, pre-writing, when writing and when revising. The purpose was to determine the writing strategies and steps which students use mostly. The percentage was calculated to identify which strategies students were familiar with at these stages.

The table below shows learner's use of writing strategies according to their level of English proficiency. Each stage of writing strategies is completely calculated using percentage.

Table 3.12. Elementary Learners' Use of Before Writing Strategies

Before writing	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	34	2	64
2	20	26	54
3	36	8	56
4	60	8	56
5	42	14	44
6	60	6	34
7	28	24	34
8	42	6	26
9	68	6	26

In the pre-writing stage elementary learners favoured mostly the first strategy [I schedule for my writing process]; the second [I consider carefully the assignment]; the third [I analyse carefully the assignment]; the fourth [I start writing without planning or organisation], and the fifth strategy [I plan for writing in my mind, not on papers].

Intermediate learners preferred the use of the eighth strategy [I think about words and expressions in my mother tongue then I write them]; the sixth [I write down words and expressions related to the topic]; the seventh [I draw an outline of what I want to write about]; the second [I consider carefully the assignment];and the fourth [I start writing without planning or organisation]. The table below presents the results in details.

Table 3.13. Intermediate Learners' Use of Before Writing Strategies

Before writing	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	46	44	10
2	32	24	44
3	12	68	20
4	40	20	44
5	28	46	28
6	38	8	54
7	38	10	52
8	24	22	58
9	68	44	32

Advanced learners gave so much importance to the third strategy [I analyse carefully a model written by a proficient writer]; the fifth [I plan for writing in my mind, not on papers] and the ninth [I have a difficulty with writing because I am unable to structure the main idea I am making in the paragraph]. Here is below the illustration.

Table 3.14. Advanced Learners' Use of Before Writing Strategies

Before writing	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	70	45	25
2	30	45	25
3	30	25	45
4	30	35	35
5	30	25	45
6	50	30	20

7	40	50	10
8	10	75	15
9	15	40	45

In the second stage of the writing process (when writing), nine other strategies were analysed. Elementary learners seemed to favour the first strategy [I start with the introduction]; the third [I reread what I have written to check coherence] and the seventh [If I do not know how to express, I try to simplify it]; followed by the sixth [I check my grammar and spelling while writing] and the ninth [I ask somebody for help when I find difficulties in expressing an idea].

Table 3.15. Elementary Learners' Use of While Writing Strategies

While writing	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	10	4	86
2	38	16	46
3	16	4	80
4	34	50	16
5	44	44	12
6	32	8	60
7	12	8	80
8	46	6	48
9	30	10	60

However, intermediate learners' preferable writing strategies were the first, the seventh, the third, the sixth and the ninth as the following table shows.

Table 3.16. Intermediate Learners' Use of While Writing Strategies

While writing	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	6	4	90
2	50	40	50
3	18	20	62
4	46	20	14
5	44	2	54
6	44	14	46
7	8	6	86
8	10	0	90
9	86	4	50

Advanced learners also preferred the first strategy, the sixth, the ninth, the seventh and the eighth [when I do not find the suitable word in English, I search for it in a dictionary]. Table 17 clearly indicates advanced learners' when writing strategies preferences.

Table 3.17. Advanced Learners' Use of While Writing Strategies

While writing	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	0	10	90
2	35	30	35
3	25	30	45
4	55	15	30
5	10	40	50
6	0	25	75
7	15	30	55
8	15	30	55
9	25	15	60

The table below shows the last stage, when revising, which contains 10 statements. Elementary learners favoured the tenth strategy [after receiving feedback from my friends and the teacher, I check again my mistakes, learn from them, then write my text again]; then, the seventh [I rewrite my text after drafting it]; the second [I only read silently what I have written] and the fifth [I use a dictionary to check my spelling mistakes].

Table 3.18. Elementary Learners' Use of When Revising Writing Strategies

When revising	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	44	30	26
2	14	20	66
3	78	6	16
4	20	30	10
5	38	10	52
6	52	20	18
7	20	8	72
8	48	20	32
9	80	4	16
10	12	8	80

Intermediate learners were only biased towards the use of the second strategy [I only read silently what I have written]. The other strategies are less used or simply not used at all, which means that they do not give importance to the strategies of the third stage.

Table 3.19. Intermediate Learners' Use of When Revising Writing Strategies

When revising	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	48	52	0
2	8	42	50
3	80	8	12
4	60	36	4
5	62	32	6
6	46	34	0
7	30	56	10
8	86	0	14
9	76	24	0
10	20	66	14

Advanced learners; however, concentrated on the use of the fifth strategy [I use a dictionary to check my spelling mistakes], while the other strategies are negatively reported as the following table illustrates.

Table 3.20. Advanced Learners' Use of When Revising Writing Strategies

When revising	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	45	16	40
2	25	35	40
3	45	25	30
4	15	35	40
5	30	25	45
6	20	45	35
7	35	35	30
8	55	30	15
9	60	30	10
10	20	45	35

The following results show each level use of the three stages of the writing process. Elementary learners reported a negative use of before writing strategies. As it is demonstrated in the table below, 41.54% of the students indicated the use of before writing strategies, while 43.32% did not give an account to the use of these strategies. Moreover, 54.22% favoured the use of while writing strategies. However, when revising, 40.6% of the students did not mention the use of these strategies and 38.8% did.

Table 3.21. Elementary Learners' Comparison of the Writing Strategies

Elementary	Never	Sometimes	Always
Before writing	43.32%	11.1%	41.54%
When writing	29.1%	16.66%	54.22%
When revising	40.6%	16.6%	38.8%

The table below demonstrates intermediate learners' use of the writing strategies. 34.44% reported the use of before writing strategies; 55.76% used while writing strategies and 51.6% did not report the use of when revising strategies.

Table 3.22. Intermediate Learners' Comparison of the Writing Strategies

Intermediate	Never	Sometimes	Always
Before writing	28.22%	26.88%	34.44%
When writing	30.22%	12.22%	55.76%
When revising	51.6%	35%	11%

As far as advanced learners are concerned, when writing strategies are the most favoured ones (55%). However, they did not report the use of before writing strategies (33.85%). For revising strategies, 35% preferred their use and 35% did not.

Table 3.23. Advanced Learners' Comparison of the Writing Strategies

Advanced	Never	Sometimes	Always
Before writing	33.85%	36.65%	23.85%
When writing	22.75%	25%	55%
When revising	35%	27.5%	35%

To provide the rank order of these stages, it is noticed that elementary learners preferred the use of while writing strategies (54.22%), followed by before writing strategies (41.54%), then when revising strategies (38.8%).

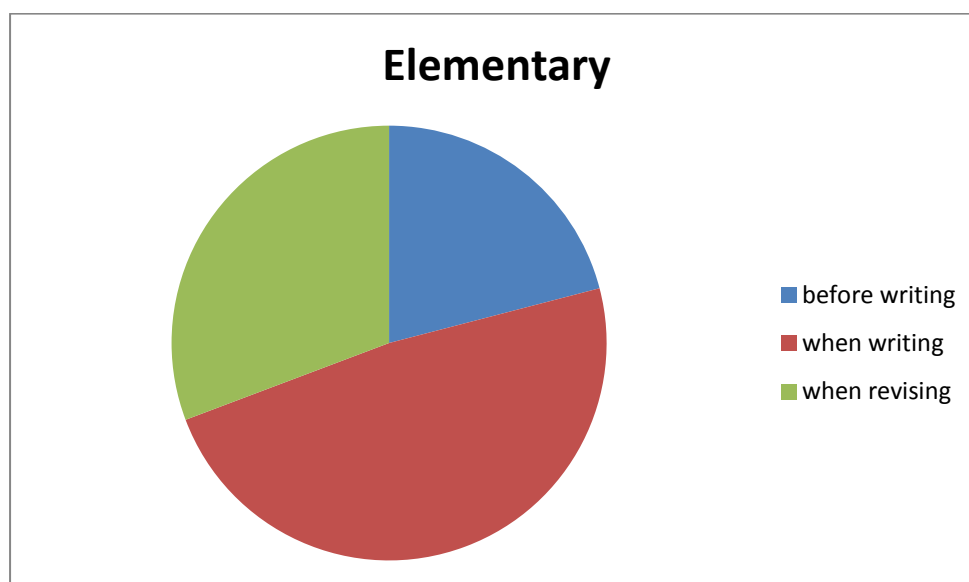


Figure 3.5. Elementary Learners' Comparison of the Writing Strategies

Likewise, intermediate learners liked the use of while writing strategies (55.76%); whereas, when revising strategies (11%) were far less frequent than before writing strategies (34.44%).

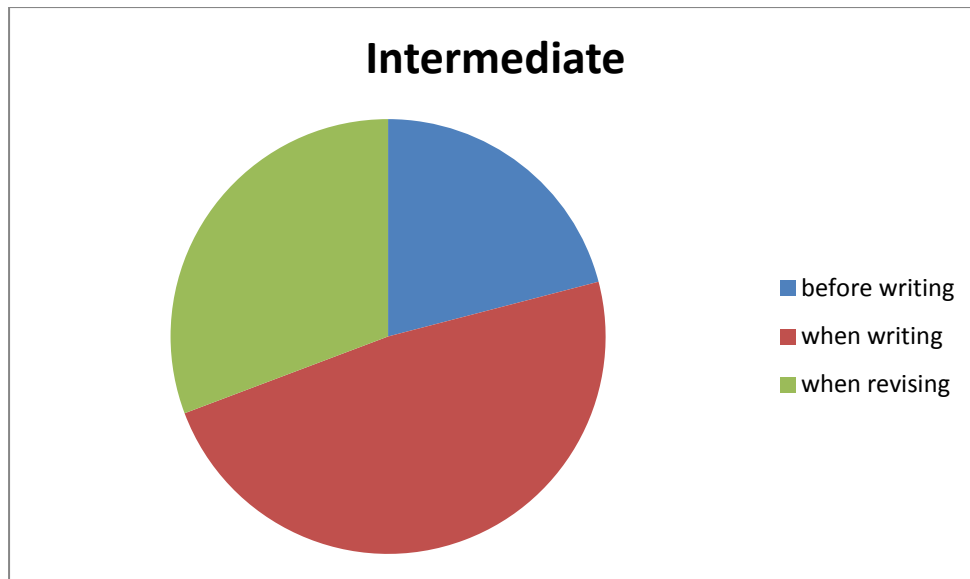


Figure 3.6. Intermediate Learners' Comparison of the Writing Strategies

Advanced learners reported mostly the use of while writing strategies (55%), followed by when revising strategies (35%), then before writing strategies (23.85%).

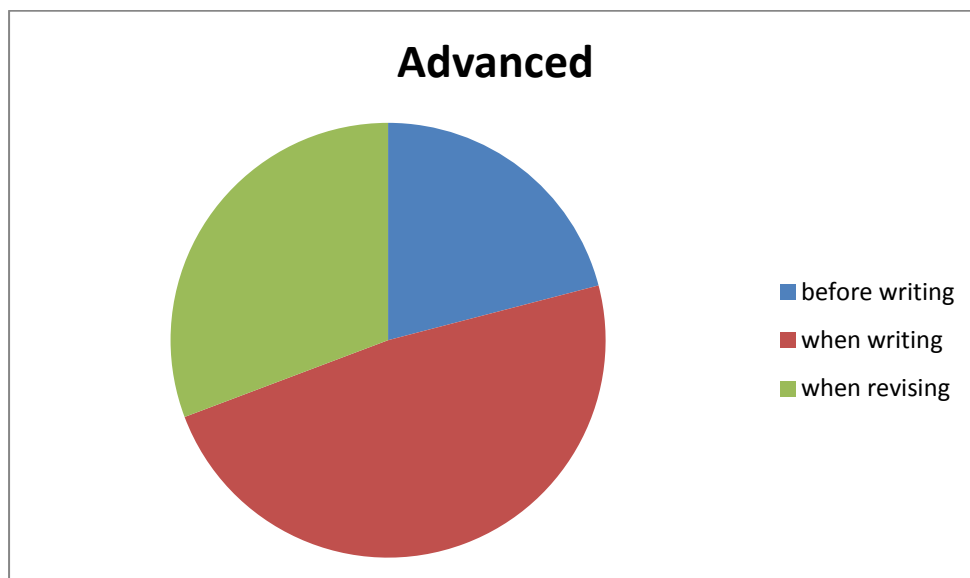


Figure 3.7. Advanced Learners' Comparison of the Writing Strategies

The following graph summarises all the stages according to students' level of proficiency. As it is shown, intermediate learners almost scored similar to advanced and elementary learners in terms of the use of when writing strategies. Moreover, before writing strategies were far less frequently used by all the groups of learners. When revising strategies were less used by intermediate learners. However, elementary and advanced learners used them in a medium way.

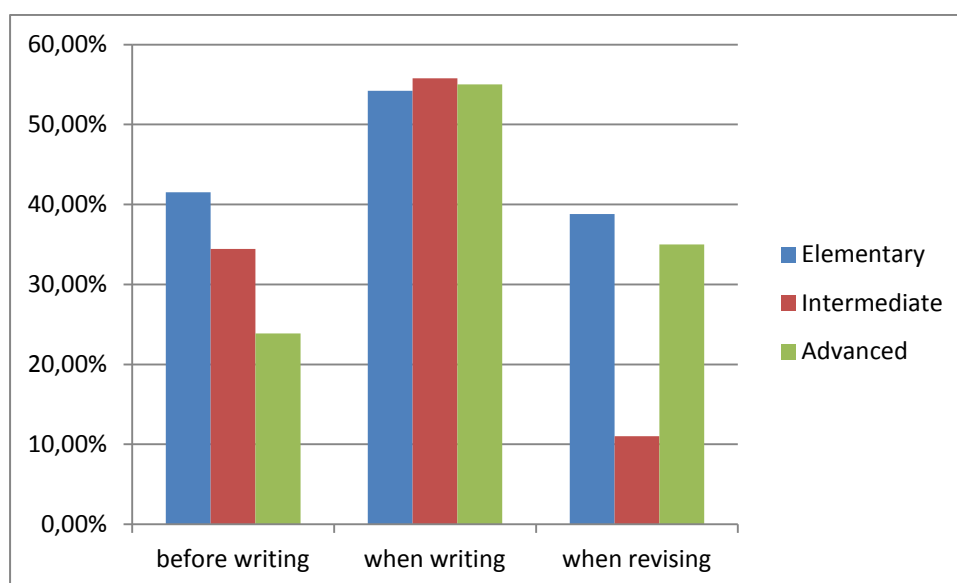


Figure 3.8. Learners' Comparison of the Writing Strategies According to their Level of Proficiency

III.3.4. Discussion

The second instrument in this study attempts to investigate learners' use of writing strategies with respect to their level of proficiency. Writing strategies can provide myriad of means so that language learners reach their goals. It is further assumed that writing strategies are the most effective factors in mastering the writing skill.

In this case study, it was found that elementary, intermediate and advanced learners used writing strategies in a very similar way and the difference is

insignificant. The results were in line with some previous studies, such as Baker and Boonkit (2004) who found no significant difference between high and low achievers in the employment of writing strategies. It is also consistent with the study of Nimehchisalem et al., (2017) whose results indicated that there was no significant difference between high proficiency and low proficiency Iraqi students' use of writing strategies. Likewise, these findings are in harmony with Shmais' study (2003) who reported no significant difference in the writing strategies used by high and low proficient Palestinian students.

The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with before writing strategies i.e., the planning stage of the writing process which was not favoured by all the three groups of learners. This shows that all students do not follow any before writing strategies, which can help them organise their thoughts and facilitate the writing task. Besides, they begin their writing immediately without planning or organisation on papers through focusing carefully on the assigned topic. Therefore, it should be stated that the students are not aware of the strategies used before starting writing. They rather prefer writing directly the introduction and sentences while checking grammar and spelling during writing. Students seem to be completely unprepared to use before writing strategies effectively, or not being given instruction about how to plan for their writing.

Moreover, they favoured the use of compensation strategies especially when they do not know how to express an idea; therefore, they try to simplify it. They also search for any missing words in a dictionary. More importantly, they employ social strategies when asking their peers about any difficulties in expressing ideas.

The data showed the highest usage of when writing strategies among students, followed by before writing strategies for both elementary and intermediate students; while advanced learners focused more on revising strategies rather than before writing strategies. Advanced learners seem to be self-regulated and self-aware. They appear to be self-confident writers when using revising strategies. Thus, they seem to be in control of their writing.

Hu and Chen (2007) stated that advanced learners spend much time planning for writing and generating ideas; however, it is not the case for the advanced learners of this study who do not care at all about the pre-writing strategies, which are

less frequent than the other kinds of strategies. It is, however, worth investigating to identify the reasons why students write immediately before planning and generating ideas for their writing assignments.

It is also noted that as learners engage in writing, they stop for a while to check coherence and grammar. Clearly, the grammatical correctness matters so much for them especially when handling the final written product to the teacher. Learners give much importance to the grammatical accuracy of their paragraphs. They seem to believe that grammatical correctness has a great impact on achieving good grades, since the teacher's first remark on a written text is also based on grammar.

Importantly, grammar is related to the product approach which was initiated in the 1960s by the structuralist linguists and later generalised by the behaviourist learning theories (Hyland, 2003:3). According to Hyland (2003), "*for many who adopt this view, writing is regarded as an extension to grammar- a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing learners' ability to produce well-formed sentences*" (Hyland, 2003, p.3). Therefore, students should practice more grammar-related activities before writing and to be well-prepared so that they become self-confident in their writing abilities.

Interestingly, all the categories of learners revealed their weaknesses when trying to express an idea; thus, they replace the missing words and expressions with the simplest ones. Consequently, the learners seem to be aware of the use of compensation strategies to overcome the gaps in their linguistic knowledge. Students should be given more help with their ideas when writing; thus, more training is required to show them how writing strategies should be applied independently while planning for their writing tasks.

Students will learn more about the construction of the paragraph, the role of the topic sentence and supporting sentences and hence learn more about the writing strategies to follow to achieve coherent and cohesive composition. The teacher's task, then, is to provide the learners with theoretical background and practical tasks to get them use the writing strategies appropriately and to become proficient writers.

As for the revision stage, advanced learners seem to give much focus. They check again their mistakes; however, they do not ask for feedback with peers.

They may think they are good writers and they only need feedback from the teacher as they consider him the most competent, the source of correct and valuable feedback in writing. As stated by Berkaoui (2007), “*good writers seem to revise at all stages of the writing process as they generate, re-evaluate, reformulate and refine their writing goals*” (cited in Fetham, 2015, p.112). Similarly, elementary learners favour drafting their writing compositions after receiving feedback from their friends and the teacher. Nevertheless, intermediate learners do not like the use of this social strategy, they do not seem to cooperate with peers in correcting their writings.

Hence, promoting social strategies especially working in pairs or groups in generating ideas and correcting the final writing product should be vital for the teacher to instruct carefully and appropriately, while they have to keep in mind that the success of the writing activity hinges on the cooperation and responsibility of the whole group.

Interestingly, it is argued that the use of writing strategies help students improve their writing; however, it is striking that the proper use of such strategies is more relevant than the frequency of their use. Therefore, students should develop self-awareness of the writing strategies that best work for them and how to apply them effectively. Once being more independent, they should reflect on their writing performance and adjust their strategies accordingly. Moreover, learners’ awareness of the writing strategies is not enough if they are not put into practice. It is, then, necessary to investigate in depth what happens when learners tackle a paragraph writing activity.

III.4. Conclusion

For decades, a host of consideration was given to individual differences in learning a language. Inextricably related to this, the purpose of this study was to show LLSs used by EFL learners at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem University in relation to language proficiency. Besides, it also elaborated whether there is a relationship between the employment of the writing strategies and students’ level of language proficiency. Therefore, this chapter provides a review of

the specific purpose of the study, the methodology, and the findings by answering the first two afore-mentioned research questions.

Significantly, writing is a complicated skill that requires great efforts from teachers and learners. In the Algerian context, teachers mostly focus on writing as a product rather than a process that may illustrate the inadequate use of writing strategies. Therefore, emphasis should be on writing as a process to help learners enhance their writing strategies to have a better performance. Writing as a process should be given more focus since it helps teachers find out their learners' needs of particular writing strategies. Besides, learners become aware of the strategies that suit their needs.

Notwithstanding, this research study involves some limitations. The participants were limited to EFL learners at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem. The number of subjects was also limited in completing the self reported questionnaire. However, using a great number of students and choosing other levels may lead to having different results.

In this current dissertation, the effects of variables on the use of LLSs and writing strategies were students' level of language proficiency; however, there are still other factors that may influence individuals' use of LLSs and writing strategies. Therefore, other variables, such as, age, gender, cultural background, attitudes, learners' beliefs, motivation, learning styles and personality should be examined in the future research. More importantly, the self-reported questionnaire was the only method used to investigate the LLSs and writing strategies in the present study, thus quantitative analyses were the only employed, but still are various methods needed to triangulate this study and prove the consistency of the findings such as interviews, classroom observation, and therefore conducting qualitative analyses is encouraged.

Chapter

Four

IV. Introduction

This chapter revolves around putting into practice SBI for EFL learners at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem University. The instructor overtly explained how LLSs can be taught and practised when writing a paragraph. First, SBI is explicated in depth through highlighting its four stages, namely, strategy preparation, strategy awareness, strategy training, strategy practice and personalization of strategies. Intermediate learners are tested before and after implementing SBI that encompasses Oxford's LLSs, cooperative learning strategies and De Silva (2010) Writing Strategy Instruction Circle. To analyse students' writing samples, quantitative and qualitative analyses are used based on CEFR writing rubrics and Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Sercombe (2002) frameworks. To triangulate this study, interviews were carried out to see students' attitudes towards SBI. To round up the whole discussion, the results are interpreted, and finally some suggestions and recommendations are provided for developing further research.

IV.1. Strategy Based Instruction Training Programme

During the 1990s, researchers started to shift from classifying and defining strategies to putting them in different kinds of classroom practices. Recently, learning has become more learner-focused and much more emphasis is put on assisting students to become responsible for their own learning so that they reach their own language learning objectives. Students are asked to be self-directed and self-dependent in their learning process.

Going back over 30 years of LLSs, a debatable research on whether implementing SBI in any skill leads to positive effects and high scores for the learners has been tremendously investigated. Macaro (2006) stated that "*effective learners deploy strategies in clusters appropriate to contexts and tasks.*" (Macaro, 2006, p.327) Hassan et.al., (2005) posited that strategy instruction can lead to improved outcomes on learning. (De Silva & Graham, 2015)

Therefore, learners should be aware of the strategies that might help them become self-confident, more independent, self-reliant and autonomous in approaching

the task. As stated by Oxford, “*LLSs are aimed at self-mangement in language learning and self-reliance in language use*” (Oxford, 2001, p.1). To reach this, it is fundamentally crucial to provide learners with the appropriate strategy instruction programme through introducing and fostering the strategies that help them enhance their proficiency in the target language in general and the writing skill in particular.

Admittedly, LLSs should be taught and integrated within the curriculum. Many researchers have focused on strategy instruction in all teaching processes. Therefore, strategy instruction has been referred to differently, such as strategy training or learning how to learn. Outstandingly, Chamot and O’Malley (1987) pointed out: “*strategies can be taught, students who are taught to use strategies and are provided with sufficient practice in using them will learn more effectively than students who have had an experience with learning strategies. Learning strategies transfer to new tasks*” (Yang, 2010, p.22).

Oxford et.al., (2001) called for styles and strategies based language instruction which is a learner-focused approach to language teaching that explicitly combines styles and strategy instructional activities with everyday classroom language instruction (Oxford, 2001, Cohen and Dornyei, 2001 cited in Cohen & Weaver, 2005, p.5).

Since the 1980s, many studies have been done on the effectiveness of strategy instruction models. Some have shown how strategy training affected the development of language proficiency (Brenner, 1999; Farhady, 1982, Goh& Kwah, 1997; Gu, 1996; Macaro, 2001; O’Malley& Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Philips, 1991; Shen, 2003) (Cited in Yang, 2010).

Other research has demonstrated the consequences of strategy instruction on particular language skills such as vocabulary strategy instruction (Gu, 2003; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Dornyei & Schmill, 2006; reading strategy instruction (Carrell, 1989, 1991; Keen, 1989; Pani, 2004; Song, 1998); communication and speaking strategy instruction (Chen, 1990; Dornyei, 1995; Nakatam, 2005; Rossietr, 2002); listening strategy instruction (Chen, 1990; Tompson & Rubin, 1996; Vandergrift, 1999) and writing instruction (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Graham & Harris, 2000, Sasaki, 2000). (Cited in Yang, 2010)

Strategy instruction may involve teaching more generic processes, such as brainstorming (Troia and Graham, 2002) or collaboration for peer revising (MacArthur, Schwartz, and Graham, 1991 cited in Graham et.al., 2007, p.15). Scaffolding is an essential element of strategy instruction to be effective which starts with the teacher's instruction and modeling of the strategies and then allowing students to use them for the task accomplishment.

Strategy instruction is learner centered where learners are actively involved and self-directed in the learning process. It helps them find adequate strategies that suit their tasks, apply them appropriately and reflect on their use. Its objective is to make learners become aware of learning strategies and responsible for their own.

Oxford (1990) postulated:

The general goals of such training are to help make language learning more meaningful, to encourage a collaborative spirit between learners and teachers, to learn about options for language learning, and to learn and practice strategies that facilitate self-reliance. Strategy training should not be abstract and theoretical but should be highly practical and useful for students

(Oxford, 1990, p.201)

Therefore, strategy instruction is a motivational, practical and useful training **(Ibid)**. Learners are directly taught how to use suitable strategies and how to transpose and shift them to new tasks. Oxford (1990) stated the positive sides of direct strategy instruction as: “*strategy training is best when woven into regular class activities in a normal basic*” **(Ibid, p.19)**.

Chamot (2004) admitted the value of strategy instruction integration both into real-life academic context and language activities. According to Chamot (2004) “*teachers should opt for explicit instruction and should probably integrate the instruction into their regular course work, rather than providing a separate learning strategies course*” **(Chamot, 2004, p.19)**.

Therefore, Little (1996) stated that strategy instruction should be a reflective model of language learning and reinforcement of its communicative goals that lead to learner's autonomy. Little (1997) went on explaining strategy instruction asserting that “*consciousness raising should invite learners to engage reflectively in task*

planning, execution and assessment, thereby extending the range of strategic competencies they bring to the classroom and offering them control of their learning” (cited in Grenfell and Harris, 1999, p.104).

More importantly, strategy- based instruction is a learner-centered approach to teaching that embraces two major components. First, students are explicitly taught how, when, and why strategies can be used to facilitate language learning and language use tasks. Second, strategies are incorporated into everyday class materials, and may be explicitly or implicitly embedded into the language tasks. Therefore, the first of these components deals with the role of the teacher to make students aware of the importance of using strategies in solving particular tasks by defining them, knowing why, how and when they can employ them. The second component is mainly about integrating strategies within classroom language tasks. Thus, SBI is a name given to a form of learner-focused language teaching that explicitly and implicitly includes strategy-training activities with everyday classroom language instruction.

In this connection, Cohen and Weaver (2005) defined SBI as: *“A learner-centered approach to teaching that focuses on explicit and implicit inclusion of language learning and language use strategies in second language classroom.” (MC Mullen, 2009: 420)* The underpinning of the strategies based method is that learners should be given the chance not only to learn the language but also to know how to learn that language proficiently and successfully. Therefore, to meet students’ needs, research seems to focus on a wide variety of LLSs. SBI, then, helps learners become more aware of the kinds of available strategies to them, understand how to gear and use them systematically and eventually learn how and when these strategies can be transferred to other new language contexts.

Furthermore, the terms *“strategy instruction”*, *“strategy training”* and *learning how to learn”* have been the bulk issue for many researchers. Most of them have provided a rationale for strategy instruction as O’Malley and Chamot who referred to it as: *“strategy can be taught, students who are taught to use strategies and are provided with sufficient practice in using them will learn more effectively than students who have had no experience with LLSs” (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990:240).* Moreover, Oxford conspicuously stated:

The general goals of such training are to help make language more meaningful, to encourage a collaboration spirit between learners and teachers, to learn and practise strategies that facilitate self-reliance. Strategy training should not be abstract and theoretical but should be highly practical and useful for students.

(Op.Cit:201)

Admittedly, Oxford contended:

Strategy training is best when woven into regular class activities in a normal basis. Teachers should opt for explicit instruction and should probably integrate the instruction into their regular course work rather than providing a separate learning strategies course.

(Ibid:19)

As also suggested by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), SBI may help learners in achieving some prominent features any good language learner has, namely, to be better learners, self-reliant, self-confident, but most importantly, to be motivated as they comprehend the intricate relationship between LLSs use and their success in learning the target language and developing the writing skill.

Any language learner, successful or less successful, has his own strategies and uses them when needed for language tasks. The difference between the two kinds of learners lies in the way they manage their own strategies, the level of awareness they have of their own strategy and the degree to which their strategies are efficiently applied to language learning tasks. Consequently, developing students' awareness of their strategies, teacher's modeling, identifying strategies by their names, providing opportunities for practice and self-evaluation are all under the umbrella of SBI. Besides, this model comprises four stages as the next points illustrate.

IV.1.1. Strategy Preparation

In this phase, the aim is to demonstrate how much knowledge students have about the strategies that they have already used. It may be found, here, that some students are even unaware of the strategies or they likely have used some of them but inappropriately and unsystematically. I tried to develop learners' metacognitive

awareness and their knowledge through conducting small group interviews or whole group discussions. This phase is nothing but an attempt to introduce some strategies and let students know that learning the target language can be fruitful and successful through being able to apply LLSs effectively. Moreover, students should be aware of the fact that everyone learns in different ways in such a way that they may find and choose what works best for them.

As an illustration, “taking notes” which is part of cognitive strategies can be introduced to learners within the writing skill, it can be explained as the most useful strategy that helps students organise their ideas, and jot them down as bullet points to be remembered. It can also be used to develop paragraphs by comparison, contrast, listing, examples and other types.

IV.1.2. Strategy Awareness

In this stage, awareness-raising is by definition explicit. Students raise their general awareness of strategy use and start paying attention to what the learning process involves, their learning style preferences, strategies they used before, newly learnt strategies and learning responsibility. Thus, SBI is overtly used to raise students’ awareness about the kinds of strategies they have used and those presented by the teacher or suggested by classmates. The focal point in this phase is to model the strategy by asking students to use “taking notes”, for example, each time when they are confronted to write any paragraph to orchestrate their thought and facilitate writing. Thinking and writing may confuse learners when coming to produce paragraphs, but thinking, scribbling down notes, then organising their paragraphs lead students to write successful paragraphs based on coherence and unity.

IV.1.3. Strategy Practice

Knowing about given strategies is not enough; it is, then, of paramount importance to provide ample opportunities for students to work out some tasks using LLSs. To complete these tasks, explicit reference to Oxford’s strategies, for example,

should be involved with the guidance of the teacher. Therefore, during this stage, students are given the chance to practise LLSs with an authentic learning task. Learners are shown how, when and why certain strategies are used. The teacher's task, then, is to give examples of potential useful strategies by leading small group or whole group discussions.

Students are allowed to reinforce strategies that they have already dealt with and practise the newly known strategies while learning how to write. I also emphasised how four processes, namely, planning, regulation, problem-solving and evaluation can be used whenever encountering a language task. I focused on how students may use these strategies unconsciously, but unless they choose appropriate strategies, they become consciously employed when facing painstaking tasks. Consequently, this phase deals mostly with explicit instruction on how to use these strategies within solving problem tasks.

IV.1.1.3. Personalization of strategies

In this phase, learners may evaluate their use of LLSs, personalize what they have learnt about these strategies, and finally, they look for ways to develop and assign these strategies to other language situations. My main concern in this phase is to allow students to have an opportunity to evaluate their own success in employing LLSs. Through conducting some experiments on the use of LLSs, students will be more aware about the valuable insights LLSs bring into their learning.

Students can compare their previously used strategies with the newly taught ones. Another way which can be best viewed by learners is that they can complete a given task without using strategies, then, they attempt to do the same task by employing strategies that lead them to be self-evaluated and become self-regulated eventually. Evaluation can include an open-ended questionnaire or an interview through which students are supposed to cater for their opinions about how useful particular strategies are.

Students are also encouraged to employ the strategies that they have found most effective in completing a given task, and apply the relevant strategies in new

learning context. Personalizing what they have learned about strategies, evaluating their use and looking for other ways to transfer them are all helpful in expanding the use of LLSs. Students are helped to experiment those strategies by using them in a wider range of activities. For instance, instead of using the strategy of taking notes in writing paragraphs, they can use it in other tasks such as reading a chapter of American history, then, trying to summarise the main ideas of that part.

Interestingly, SBI allows students to become more aware about the strategies, train them, give them the opportunity of practice and encourage them to personalize and evaluate their use. Thus, SBI is a one way method that assists students reach overall long-term goals in foreign language learning. Developing their learning by using strategies can help them become more effective and strategic learners who employ a variety of tools to aid their language learning and thus become autonomous.

Briefly, Mcdonough (1990) encapsulated strategy instruction as

Teaching strategies is not universally successful, but the target research is showing that, in certain circumstances, particularly when incorporated into the teacher's normal classroom behavior, and thus, involving teacher training as well as learners training, success is demonstrated.

(Cited in Yang, 2010, p.26)

IV.2. Studies on Writing Strategy Instruction

Learners need to know how to write appropriately because nowadays a wide range of jobs demand employees to produce a written text be it electronic messages, reminders, text presentations, reports, etc. Therefore, writing becomes vital in the workplace which has a pivotal impact on the hiring process.

It was observed that many students do not use any strategy to complete a written task. They whether write whatever idea comes to mind or they handle an incomplete paragraph to their teacher. They do not know what to write; how to start; how to organise their ideas and how to revise their final product. Writing instruction is, yet, an effective method for students to become strategic writers who would face no difficulties in completing a writing task in all contexts and genres.

Richards and Renandya (2002) contended that writing difficulties come up from handicaps in generating and organising ideas. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) and Milton (2006) explained that writing obstacles may be caused by grammatical inaccuracy (**Mutar & Nimehchisalem, 2017**). All these problems are but solved through SBI training.

Teaching students to use strategies in writing help them reach their goals more effectively. According to Graham, Harris and Troia (2002), strategy instruction can *“increase knowledge about the characteristics of good writing and form positive attitudes about writing and students’ writing capabilities”* (**Dean, 2010, p.4**). Collin (1998) stated *“no amount of strategic writing instruction will help if students are not full participants in classroom communities”* (**Ibid, 9**).

It is important to review the literature on strategy instruction in depth to understand how students approach the writing process, what problems they encounter along the way and how teachers support students in improving their writing skill. Most teachers tend to provide learners with modeling texts to copy or memorise them so that they get ready for the written expression exam. They attempt to use that easiest method because of time constraint. The practical implications of the study include the need to focus more on the process-based approach rather than product-based approach. However, strategy instruction and implementation can provide scaffolding for students that can lead to self- instruction, promote motivation and improve learning. Therefore, SBI is the specific strategy to be investigated in this study as it is related to writing achievement.

Strategy writing instruction is a complicated yet a fascinating process and requires to be taught adequately and appropriately to achieve ever-lasting results. Research on writing instruction has been thoroughly done with students who have learning disabilities. Hallenbeck (2002) investigated cognitive strategy instruction in writing of four seventh-grade students with learning disabilities. This strategy made learners use four most important stages in expository writing, namely, planning, organising, revising and editing through which teachers made use of “ think aloud models” that encourages students to speak and make conversations during the writing process (**Leavitt-Noble, 2008**). Thus, it facilitated the generalisation of ideas through

collaboration. The results showed that not only learners were motivated to write, but also they positively engaged in providing their peers with feedback and support.

During writing instruction, the teacher caters for scaffolds and gives direct instruction. While students get used to writing strategies and start using them independently, the teacher becomes a guide and facilitator rather than an instructor. This is called a shift or a gradual release of the teacher's responsibility. As advocated by Leavitt-Noble, (2008) "*techniques should be taught explicitly and directly through a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student until students are able to apply the techniques independently*" (Ibid, p.25).

Writing instruction helps learners be flexible and proficient, capable to write for different purposes, audiences and adjust to a wide range of genres. Teaching learners strategies for planning, revising and editing their writings has demonstrated a striking impact on the quality of students' writing. Strategy instruction involves explicitly and systematically teaching steps necessary for planning, revising and/or editing text. (Graham & Perin, 2007)

Teaching explicit writing strategies help both teachers and learners benefit from positive outcomes. According to Mayer (1998), "*students who receive writing strategy training show improvements in the quality of what they write*". (Mayer, 1998, p.55) Hence, the use of SBI is important for learners in both their academic and professional field. Its importance has been demonstrated in various recent studies. Tsiriotakis et.al., (2017) contended that SBI could help learners reduce their anxiety level and become self-dependent and autonomous in learning writing. (Mastan et.al., 2017)

Raofi et.al., (2014) carried out a qualitative research on 21 undergraduate Malaysian University students. When interviewed, students reported using a variety of writing strategies. The findings revealed that the highly proficient student writers reported using more metacognitive strategies, such as organising ideas and revising content than less-skilled ones.

In a study aimed at investigating the effect of writing strategy instruction on writing performance among 54 Vietnamese university students, Nguyen and Gu

(2013) found that writing strategy training significantly improved ESL writing performance. **(Raofi et.al., 2014)**

Writing proficiency is closely related to writing strategy use. For instance, Chien's (2012) study into writing strategies of 40 EFL university students revealed that students who had high writing proficiency significantly employed more planning, revising and reviewing strategies than those with low writing proficiency. **(Ibid)**

Moreover, Mastan et.al., (2017) carried out a research on 36 intermediate proficiency level students where they were assigned to two groups: the instruction group and the control group to measure the effect of strategy instruction on Malaysian students writing performance. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the instruction group who was exposed to self-regulated strategy instruction. Thus, SBI can be an effective programme in developing learner's writing and producing better writing composition.

Compared to other skills, such as listening and speaking, writing, though it is a crucial skill, is neglected by EFL learners. It could be more interesting if various strategies are applied appropriately. Nosratinia & Adibifar (2014) investigated the impact of metacognitive strategy instruction on the writing performance of L2 intermediate EFL Iranian Learners. They found that this training is fruitful and help learners improve their writing texts.

Graham et.al., (1991) argued that strategy instruction was beneficial to teaching writing for many reasons. They maintained that through strategy use, students developed behaviours that were more complex than the ones they already knew and ultimately they gained confidence in their skills as writers. Strategy instruction also added levels of support or scaffolding designed to help students to progress as competent writers. Through strategy instruction and modeling, teachers helped students acquire the self-regulation skills necessary to use strategy independently and apply it to other contexts. For those reasons, the strategy instruction is the focus in this study.

One research by Sasaki (2002) on low intermediate level learners has been carried out. The study did not illustrate whether there is such impact on the learners since no other level of proficiency was compared to. However, the results showed that

writing strategy instruction affected lower proficiency students' use of planning more before writing. (De Silva & Graham, 2015)

De Silva (2010) carried out a research on the influence of strategy instruction on learners of different proficiency levels. She found that indeed learners' pre and post writing tests were different and improved as a result of strategy instruction. Similarly, De Silva and Graham (2015) found that both low and high proficiency learners in Sri Lanka improved their writing in English for Academic Purposes thanks to strategy instruction. (Ibid)

De Silva and Graham (2015) defined writing strategy as,

A writer's conscious mental activity employed in pursuit of a goal (i.e., in order to solve a problem in writing) within a particular learning situation, and which is transferred to other situations and tasks. They are problem-solving devices.

(De Silva and Graham, 2015, p.49)

Tabrizi (2016) investigated the impact of metacognitive and cognitive strategies on 75 elementary Iranian learners' writing and found a significant positive effect. Likewise, Chien (2012) investigated writing strategies in relation to learners' English proficiency. He found that high level students emphasised more planning, composing and reviewing while low proficient writers gave no importance to these stages. It was found that the learners' scores have gone up after writing strategy instruction. More outstandingly, strategy instruction that included planning, revising and editing strategies when writing texts produced positive results in a research carried out by Graham & Perin (2007).

Since the early 1980s, many researchers have probed the L2 writing process. That complex task entails pondering about the topic to write about, many sequences of drafting, editing, feedback and revising. Moreover, these studies have examined different kinds of strategies used by L2 writers to the extent that different proficiency level writers are inclined to use writing strategies differently. Zamel (1983) admitted that the competent ESL writers spent more time in editing and revising their essays than the less experienced writers.

Another investigation of the writing process demonstrated the pivotal role revision and editing play in the production of well-structured, meaningful and successful piece of writing. (Polio, Fleck & Leder, 1998, cited in Mutar & Nimehchisalem, 2017)

The role of writing strategies in the enhancement of the writing skill has become markedly significant to the extent that research has found out discrepancies between more and less proficient learners in the number and the kind of strategies they used, their application to the task and rightness for the activities. (Chien, 2010; Hu and Chen, 2007; Mu & Carrington, 2007; Ridhuan & Abdullah, 2009 cited in Mutar & Nimehchisalem, 2017) This indicates that using writing strategies is of a great importance in the writing process, their effectiveness and appropriateness result in the production of successful pieces of writing and thus learners become proficient writers.

It has been found that most competent student writers use planning strategies; however, less experienced learners generally start writing without passing by the planning stage (Ridhuan and Abdullah, 2009), though they share the same writing strategies, chiefly among them, cognitive strategies that include a series of strategies, namely, repeating ideas, structure, rereading and translating. A Common European Framework of Reference stresses the importance of listing strategies as planning, execution, evaluation and repair; therefore, following the same procedures of strategy-based instruction.

Hu and Chen (2007) noticed that good writers spent much time thinking about what to write and how to write, showing that planning is an outstanding strategy that they follow to create an effective piece of writing. In contrast, despite their efforts and the time spent in generating ideas, weak writers still produce unsuccessful composition.

Moreover, another type of strategy that distinguishes a good student writer from a less competent writer is the revising strategy. Hu & Chen (2007) highlighted how competent writers express their ideas in a logical and meaningful way without only concentrating on mechanics through revising and editing. In addition, Mu and Carrington (2007) stated the importance of content revision, followed by structure and

vocabulary. On the contrary, Hu and Chen's (2007) investigation demonstrated the prominence of lexis and grammar rather than content per se.

Students encounter many deficiencies in generating ideas, thinking and structuring sentences in paragraph writing. They have also problems in grammatical usage, the use of L1 words, and the production of ambiguous sentences that leads to producing incoherent pieces of writing. All of which are considered as obstacles that hinder the development of their composition.

Therefore, strategy-based instruction becomes indispensable to help students understand the objective and process required in writing as a way of learning. Teaching learners strategies for planning, revising and editing their writings has demonstrated a striking impact on the quality of students' writing. Strategy instruction involves explicitly and systematically teaching steps necessary for planning, revising and/or editing text (Graham, 2006 cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p.15).

Writing is a means of communication and a vital skill in this world of globalisation. Thus, students should know how to use strategies appropriately to achieve writing competence. In the meantime, teachers should integrate writing strategy instruction into a regular writing class as contended by De Silva (2015) that SBI can positively increase the quality and quantity of EFL/ESL learners use of writing strategies and therefore reach writing competence. Following adequate writing strategies, learners can become more autonomous in perceiving, assessing and improving their learning. As admitted by Anderson (2003), "*being metacognitively aware of strategy use allows a writer to use strategies in an integrated way as opposed to thinking that they occur in isolation*" (Anderson, 2003, p.25).

The present study focuses on the use of cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, social and cooperative strategies during the three stages of the writing process, namely, pre-writing, writing and revising respectively. The following points will develop the procedures in more details.

IV. 3. Cooperative Writing Strategies

Traditional teaching was based on teacher-centered method in which a great deal was given to making students aware of certain aspects of the target language without providing them adequate practice. Students' task, then, was directed to memorising rules in order to grasp some foreign language rules and knowledge. Methods such as, Grammar Translation and Audiolingual Method were under this umbrella. However, within the emergence of communicative language teaching, cooperative learning finds its way, both have some similar characteristics. As an illustration, both approaches give importance to students- students and students-teacher interactions, where the teacher is seen as a guide, facilitator and negotiator. Moreover, they stress autonomy, personal growth, centricity and students' responsibility in the classroom.

Accordingly, cooperative learning can be referred to as *“a systematic instructional method in which students work together in small groups to accomplish shared leaning goals.”* (Zhang, 2010:81) Thus, findings in cooperative learning research showed that cooperation has positive effects on relations among students, self-esteem, long-term maintenance, and depth of understanding. It, then, provides *“much more opportunities for learners to comprehensible input and output and the processes of negotiation.”* (Ibid: 82)

Through cooperative language learning, interactive and natural contexts are created where students listen to each other, pose questions, clarify issues and communicate the target language. When interacting together, learners are engaged in negotiating comprehensible input and modifying their output as well. Students are involved in speaking differently about the same topic, ensuring favourable listening among them by comprehending the language from various sources and thus obtaining modeling and feedback whether positive or negative from their peers.

Through students' interaction, they are more driven to produce different ideas, more accurate and appropriate language. Thus, cooperative language learning is valuable in the oral practice which leads, in turn, to produce coherent writing. Here, students are supposed to rehearse their writings before being asked to read them in front of the whole class; therefore, their fears and anxieties may be reduced and faded away. In the study of Long and his colleagues with adult learners of English as a

foreign language in Mexico, they found that students performed well in teamwork rather than in teacher-centered activities. Students, thus, may develop different strategies as they are completing a problem-solving task, such as making suggestions, encouraging, negotiating meaning, classifying and exchanging information.

From this perspective, working collegially fosters students' responsibility and independence, promotes productivity and creativity in writing, and taking chances for communication. Hence, cooperative language learning clarifies the goals of foreign language teaching which is not only based on teaching grammatical rules and vocabularies but also on how to use the language in practice to express thoughts and ideas. Unsurprisingly, cooperative language learning is, then, effective in both teaching and learning a foreign language. Under the same token, it is worth stressing to introduce cooperative learning strategies in language learning classrooms, more particularly, the writing skill so as to help learners avoid producing poor writing.

Working together as a team may improve students' writing proficiency, cooperative learning strategies, then, involve inquiry and discussion with peer and small groups through sharing ideas and communicating as well. Concomitantly, interactive structures help students think and write effectively. Students work cooperatively in asking questions, clarifying, making choices or being for or against a particular concept or point of view in order to develop arguments for writing paragraphs. Students are expected to assist each other, discuss and assess one another current knowledge. As contended by Adeyemi, "*cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups in which students work together to maximize and gain from each other*" (Adeyemi, 2008, 696).

Therefore, students should be encouraged to interact with their peers before writing. Through such conversations, their ideas can be recognised, expanded and reshaped in coherent and clear sentences that address the topic under consideration. It has been proved that group work interaction is the source of learning; thus, the higher the percentage of students working and talking together, the greater the success in learning. Cooperative learning strategy is referred to as students' willingness to work together in a team group so as to master academic skills and foster positive intergroup relationships.

Cooperative learning strategy use clarifies thinking and lead to a better understanding of the writing process. Its use also decreases and eventually eliminates the writing problems. It enhances writing proficiency as well as serves students beyond the university levels. As working together in groups, students think, share ideas, write, revise and ultimately edit their paragraphs. All these lead to developing a social integrated pattern of learning. Besides, when students share their work cooperatively, they look for solutions, at the same time they refine their knowledge and skills.

It is noteworthy that students' poor writing stems from their poor thinking, that is why, a problem-solving strategy for writing is a recommended approach through which successful writers pass by different stages. Some of these are analysing the task, clarifying thinking as one draft, moving to revision and then editing for correctness. What is eminent is that students must be encouraged to draft and redraft their writing and have their peers edit their work. According to Mandal,

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning abilities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus, creating atmosphere of achievement.

(Mandal, 2009: 97)

Therefore, when a teacher gives his/her students a writing task, all the members of the group work together towards achieving certain shared learning goals. They assist each other during the process of drafting and writing, they plan, review, monitor and evaluate their writing. The teacher, then, should reward the best team to create competition among teams' members.

Zhang contended that *“People operating in a cooperative learning activity attain higher achievement level than those who function under competitive and individualistic learning structures.”* (Zhang, 2010:81) Thus, cooperative learning puts aside individualistic goals in which students disregard their classmates and look after their self-interests. Cooperative learning strategies, then, stress collaboration and shared understanding on any task; moreover, evaluation is interdependent, that is, the

success of the group benefits when worthwhile efforts are well-performed by all the members of the group.

Within cooperative learning strategies, planning, summarising, reviewing and editing can be used to complete a given writing task. For example, during the drafting stage, many useful discussions can take place among peers in order to encourage and develop students' thinking and interaction in the target language. Among the common cooperative learning strategies is think-pair-share strategy through which the instructor assigns a written topic for students, gives them few minutes to think about it in pairs or groups, jots down notes and then asks them to share their ideas with their partners. Such kind of strategy provides students with an opportunity to collect and organise their thoughts. After pairing and sharing ideas, students are supposed to compare and contrast their ideas within each other, and finally, they rehearse their paragraph response within the group before reading it in front of the whole class.

Round Robin strategy is another kind of cooperative learning strategies. It is primarily warming-up technique in which students generate ideas without explaining, evaluating or questioning these ideas. Group members take turns by elaborating their ideas and jotting them down by the leader of the group so as not to be forgotten. Within this technique, all members of the group, especially the reticent students are given the chance to speak and participate as long as many ideas are generated. Therefore, these ideas can be used to develop a piece of a good paragraph on a particular topic.

Another type of strategy is labeled Praise- Question- Polish. Throughout this strategy, the group members take turns to read aloud their papers as their peers follow along. It goes through three steps. First, students are asked to praise their peers work, that is, they are supposed to react to the piece of writing by identifying what they like about the work. Then, they may question their peers about what they have not understood in their piece of writing. Finally, to polish their writing, peers may offer suggestions for improving their writing. Thus, the only way to be able to improve their writing is to be critically evaluated about their writing.

Consequently, in cooperative writing, students are given the opportunity to write and revise, then, rewrite what they have written. Peer criticism helps students

sharpen their knowledge about paragraph structure, writing criteria and grammatical rules. It also gives students the chance to evaluate their own work. Thus, they build more confidence in writing and reduce apprehension towards paragraph writing. Teaching through using cooperative writing strategies will be equally interesting both for the teacher and students. Students, then, will show high level of enthusiasm, curiosity and involvement. They will be more motivated as argued by George: *“Students are motivated in cooperative learning to help one another master skills or learn the material.”* (George, 1994:21) Hence, integrating these strategies will be of great benefit to that community of poor writers so as to help them improve their writing skill.

To sum up, cooperative writing strategies help students have critical thinking, reasoning about course content and being active learners, as long as students are required to exchange ideas and have better understanding about all that concern the writing skill. Cooperative writing strategies increase social skills, respect for multiple opinions and perspectives, promote higher achievement and productivity.

IV.4. Research Methods

IV.4.1. Participants

To conduct this study, the sample consisted of 30 intermediate learners who already participated in the previous investigation. They were all enrolled in the centre during the academic years 2015-2016/2016-2017. The reason for this selection was to investigate the writing performance before and after SBI for the category of students whose level allows them to write complete sentences and who have adequate vocabulary repertoire. They all admitted that writing is but a challenging task. Their deficiencies lie in grammar, the generalisation of ideas and translation from Arabic to English. Writing for them is compulsory to be able to attain the level required.

Learners lack fundamental writing prerequisites. Therefore, meeting new roles as citizens within the community reinforces the significant importance of writing and strengthens their confidence in developing that skill. More importantly, students

report the difficulties they face with regard linguistic shortcoming, stating that the language they use in speaking is altogether distinct from that of writing.

IV.4.2. Instrument

The main instruments used in this study were pre and post test writing paragraphs. These instruments were designed by the researcher to compare the writing performance of the learners before and after the implementation of the strategy instruction. Learners were given time limit during the pre-test writing task (1 hour). They were assigned to write an argumentative paragraph. All their writing samples were analysed using a detailed marking criteria which will be thoroughly demonstrated in the following points.

IV.4.3. The Choice of the Writing Topics

The researcher decided which topics and what type of paragraph writing to be designed for the learners. They were chosen according to the researcher's familiarity with students' levels and abilities. Thus, argumentative type of paragraph writing was selected for intermediate learners. It is considered as a part of their assessed course. Besides, it is a suitable genre because it caters for a wide range of differences in terms of the quality of writing as well as a deeper understanding of cognitive skills.

Interestingly, argumentative genre is regarded as the most difficult type of writing (**Ka-kan-dee & Kaur, 2014, p.144**). Thus, it is the most challenging genre to test students writing abilities, since most EFL learners encounter different syntactic forms and adequate features in developing an argumentative piece of writing. This type of writing requires students to clearly convey their point of view about a particular topic so that they convince the reader. Nippold and Ward-Lonergan (2010) contended that "*argumentative writing is a challenging communication task that needs sophisticated cognitive and linguistic abilities*" (**Ibid, p.145**).

It is also noteworthy that such genre assists learners to engage deeply in society and take part in professional affairs through convincing members of the

community and being full and active participants. As admitted by Crowhurst (1991), “*it is important both for success and for general life purposes*” (Ibid). Knudson (1994) also stated that “*argumentation is one of the genres which is essential for full participation in society*” (Ibid). Therefore, the purpose of the researcher is to equip learners with communicative skills that are required at the workplace and in their future career.

IV.4.4. Data Collection

To carry out this investigation, two procedures are followed. The first deals with testing students’ paragraph writings before writing strategy instruction. The second examines students writing after strategy instruction. At the Intensive Language Teaching Centre, the teachers refer to CEFR that highlights the four skills, namely, speaking, listening, reading and writing. The time allotted for this latter is one hour each week where learners are encouraged to write sentences, dialogues, paragraphs and other different kinds of writing.

Therefore, during this one hour writing session, students were asked to write a ten lines paragraph on the following topics:

- People do many things to keep healthy. What do you do for good health?
- Your university has enough money to purchase either computers for students or books for the library. Which should your university choose to buy, books or computers?
- You have the opportunity to visit a foreign country for two weeks. Which country would you like to visit? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

Such topics were chosen because they were considered as suitable for intermediate learners and for the genre selected.

During this pre-test writing task, learners were asked to behave like having an exam; therefore, they were discouraged from discussing with one another since this is

deemed as an important ingredient of cooperative writing strategies. After the submission of their paragraphs to the teacher, she marked them and provided students with feedback that mainly focused on grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, organisation, ideas, unity and coherence. Each student received comments on his/her paragraph in the following writing session and discussed about them with the teacher in front of the whole class. Students were supposed to write cohesive and coherent paragraphs which was not the case since no strategies were used. The results were scored and analysed in order to be compared to the post-test writing results.

SBI training took five weeks to complete. Therefore, to achieve this successfully, I started by asking students about any strategies they use in their learning, then, I explicitly introduced certain strategies that they are not familiar to them. Dealing with a specific language skill such as, writing, I inserted strategies spontaneously in order to speed up the lessons and make learners produce meaningful stretches of paragraphs. Here, then, students were engaged in strategy based instruction by focusing on strategies for only part of time, the other whole time was devoted to completing language tasks by using strategies implicitly. At the end of the writing instruction, all participants were again asked to submit their final argumentative paragraph. Then, pre-test and post-test scores obtained after implementing SBI were compared. Therefore, any significant difference in scores is but an evidence of the effectiveness of SBI in improving students' writing paragraphs. Writing strategy procedures are explained in depth as the following point illustrate.

IV.5. Writing Instruction Program

The instruction was designed to learners during class time as a series of 5 hours workshops. The researcher provided explicit training in some selected Oxford's strategies, namely, cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies. These latter include cooperative learning strategies that are part and parcel of this investigation. Besides, De Silva (2010) Writing Instruction Cycle was adopted as the following figure demonstrates.

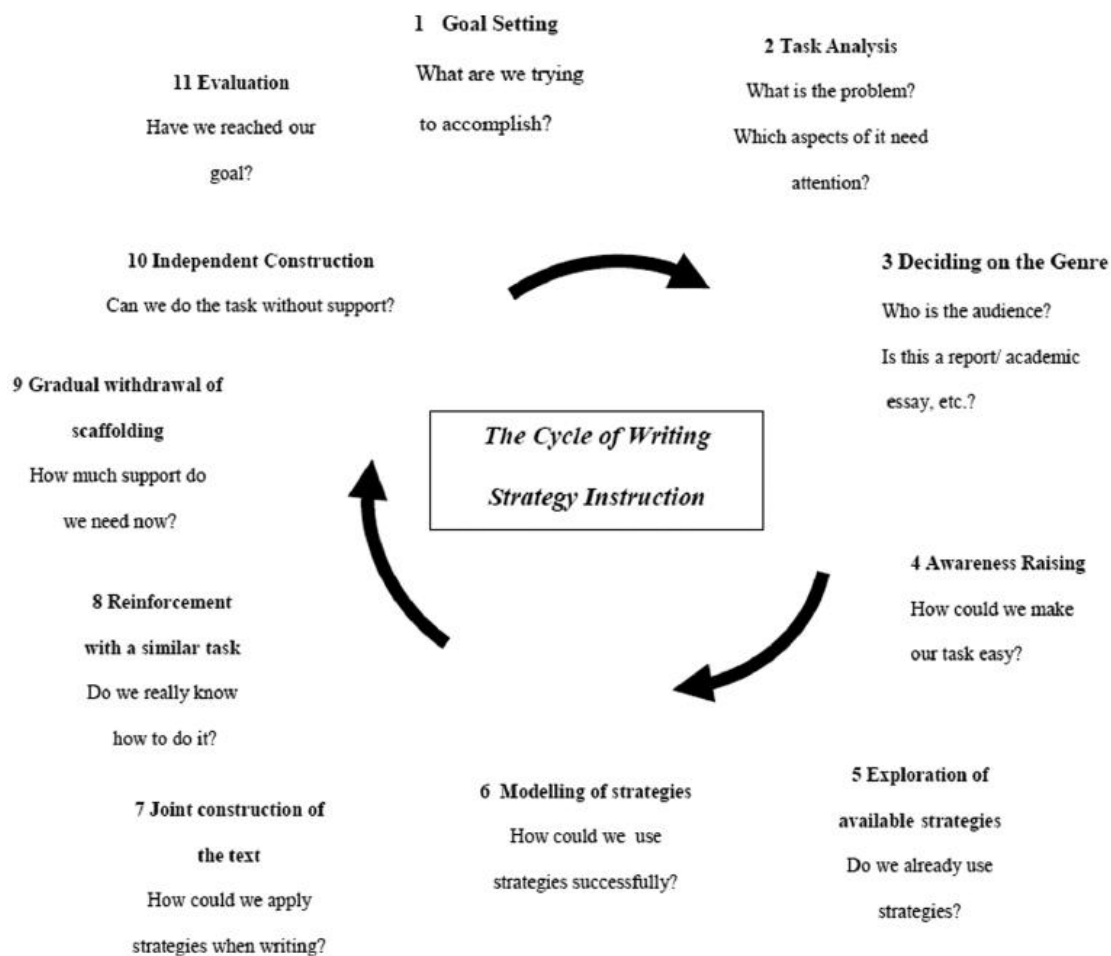


Figure 4.1. De Silva (2010) Cycle of Strategy Instruction

Writing instruction program started with Goal-setting. Both the researcher and students discussed the ultimate goal they wanted to reach at the end of the training program. The second stage was Task Analysis. When writing a paragraph on a given topic, students were shown how to highlight the key words on the writing assignment. At this step, the teacher also discussed the problems students face when writing immediately without planning. The teacher guided the learners to apply the strategies in different stages of the writing process with the possibility of combining and orchestrating different strategies, namely, Oxford's strategies. All students were motivated and involved in the use of the selected strategies. Among these strategies are metacognitive strategies that involve planning, monitoring and evaluating.

Planning is defined as “*the mental activity involved in retrieval and generalisation of ideas/lexis, overall organisation of content*” (De Silva and Graham, 2015, p.53). Content monitoring refers to “*instances where the writer revisits the tasks to check the relevance of his/her writing*” (Ibid, p.55). Production monitoring, however, is defined as “*the writer’s checking the accuracy, appropriateness of a word/phrase/sentence while writing*” (Ibid, p.56).

During the implementation of different strategies, metacognitive strategies will refer to planning as a prewriting stage, monitoring as a while writing stage and evaluating as a post-writing stage. Cognitive strategies will refer to the stage of generating ideas as a pre-writing stage, reviewing and editing as a post-writing stage. As defined by Zadeh (2010), cognitive strategies concern with “*the actual mental processes involved in developing a text while writing*” (cited in Tabrizi, 2016, p.218). Social strategies will refer to the actions taken by students during the generalisation of ideas, writing and revising where peer feedback and working cooperatively are of paramount importance. Compensation strategies will refer to the actions students take to compensate the missing words through the use of a dictionary or synonyms. Affective strategies will refer to what students do to regulate their emotions, to get motivated, to keep on being interested in completing the writing task.

The cycle of strategy instruction was developed using different writing strategies and writing models. In this study, a combination of process, product and genre approaches to writing was chosen. Therefore, an eclectic approach to teaching writing along with various writing strategies were used to implement writing strategy instruction for EFL intermediate learners.

IV.6. Students Training of Writing Strategy Instruction

EFL learners at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre lack interest in writing though it is vital for their success to get the level’s certificate. Writing is considered as the most challenging, painstaking task that needs much reflection, thinking, planning, revising and editing. Therefore, providing a paragraph that contains a clear set topic sentence, well organised supporting sentences and a well-

stated concluding sentence is often cited as an evidence of a good writing. However, many struggling EFL student writers make common errors mainly related to grammar. They also have many ideas to write about, but to put them in well-structured sentences is still deficient. Besides, divergence to other topics, sentences disorder, disorganisation of supporting sentences are commonly and constantly found in students samples.

Writing strategy instruction is vital in the enhancement of students' writing compositions. The researcher explicitly demonstrated a range of the aforementioned models and strategies. Before going through the different stages of WSI, the researcher explained the steps to write a paragraph that includes the topic sentence, supporting sentences and the concluding sentence. Each part was modeled and explained thoroughly. Moving to shedding light on the various types of paragraphs; however, the argumentative type of paragraph development was, then, chosen. The researcher provided a model text of such type to clarify the way students should write and give their opinions to convince the reader.

After dealing with all these steps, writing strategy instruction was implemented. The teacher assigned the aforementioned topics to write about. It is important to pinpoint the different stages of writing which are inextricably related to the process-based approach, namely, planning, drafting, writing, revising, peer feedback and editing. Each of which is illustrated in depth. She also clarified the goal to be reached at the end of writing which is to write a coherent argumentative paragraph.

To start with, the first step of writing strategy instruction cycle is Goal-setting. The researcher clarified the objectives behind the writing task which was to write a coherent argumentative paragraph. Students were told that they were not writing for themselves but for their audience who were their classmates and the teacher.

The second step is Task Analysis which involves planning. Students were assigned three topics as mentioned before. They highlighted key words so that they kept in mind the topic they should focus on. During this stage, they used different strategies such as listing different ideas. All these are part of metacognitive strategies. Besides, they used social strategies through working cooperatively in a group of three

students to gather all information they needed to enrich the content of the topic. They wrote ideas that were relevant to the topic given to them. They also thought aloud, generated ideas, interact in English as a way of practising the language. They were writing down as many ideas as possible as bullet point phrases in order to help them draft their paragraphs. Thus, taking notes is one strategy among the cognitive strategies. They also applied affective strategies through motivating each other to complete the writing task.

The third step is deciding on the genre. As already mentioned, the argumentative type of paragraph development was set clear. The fourth step is Awareness Raising. The teacher explained how learners could have avoided all the mistakes they made in their pre-test writing samples through finding ways to write better. Thus, moving to the fifth step was emphasized through exploring the different strategies. After that, the researcher made these writing strategies into practice.

The seventh step is Joint construction of the text. The teacher went further explaining how to transform the ideas they scribbled down into an organised outline where they mentioned the major headings, subheadings and details of their whole paragraph. It should be noted that planning and organisation are concerned with cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Students took notes and highlighted their ideas as they were monitoring their own writing process. More importantly, going through all these steps, working cooperatively was reinforced. When facing difficulties in writing, such as not being able to find the right word for the context of writing, students asked their peers to help them overcome that difficulty.

After planning and organising the writing process, drafting their paragraphs was focused on. In this phase, students were asked to sit alone and write an individual paragraph based on transforming their phrases as outlined in complete sentences without paying attention to mistakes but making sure, they included all the ideas they generated with their peers. While writing, many students tried to employ compensation strategies such as replacing a repeated word by another synonym to avoid redundancy.

After writing their first draft, the researcher asked learners to check the order of words, sentences patterns, grammar, any clichés, awkward sentences or misuse of

adjectives and adverbs, whether the supporting sentences are clearly organised, their mechanics that include spelling, punctuation, capitalisation. They checked, then, the form and content of their writing. This refers to the revising phase in the process-based approach.

The following step is peer feedback. At this level, learners revised again their composition collegially. Such collegiality has created an interpersonal atmosphere, a network of social learning support. Students shared and exchanged their writing paragraphs with their peers to receive positive or negative feedback through following a rubric given by the teacher. According to Race (2005),

feedback has four purposes: (1) it should help students to make sense of their work in some way, (2) it should clarify the need of learning by showing the students what they should be trying to achieve; what the outcome of their work should and finally yet importantly, (4) feedback should motivate the students to develop their skills.

(cited in Omar, 2014, p.327).

Moreover, Ellis (2009) differentiated between two types of feedback, direct and indirect. Direct feedback deals with identifying errors to students then supplying the correct forms; while, indirect feedback is done through highlighting the errors leaving the student himself to provide the correct forms.

More importantly, Ellis (2009) split up the indirect feedback into coded and encoded error feedback. According to him, the coded feedback is used when “*the exact location of an error and the type of error involved is indicated with a code*” (**Ibid**). This code is commonly shared and understood by all students so that they will not be misled, e.g., *sp* refers to spelling error. The uncoded feedback, however, is provided by highlighting or underlying the error without indicating the code. Nevertheless, this type of feedback is more suitable for learners with a more advanced level as they are able to distinguish and interrelate the feedback they have received with the already acquired knowledge.

Truscott and Yi-ping (2008) carried out a research on corrective feedback during the revision stage of writing. One group used feedback when revising their

writing, and the other group did not apply any feedback. Therefore, it was found that corrective feedback helped students improve their writing. **(cited in Omar, 2014).**

Written corrective feedback is considered as an effective method in raising students' accuracy level in a foreign language. It refers, then, to teachers or peer learners' evaluation concerning learners' writing linguistic errors. Corrective feedback is the most effective that many researchers focus on so that they raise learners' writing accuracy level.

Furthermore, Bitchener and Knock (2008) stated that *"indirect corrective feedback may increase deeper language understanding that allows the learner to be involved in guided learning and problem-solving activities, and therefore, this leads to long-term acquisition"* **(cited in Bakri, 2015, p.247).** On the other hand, Bitchener (2012) admitted that direct corrective feedback is rather more useful than the indirect one as *"it reduces confusion, resolve more complex errors, and it is more immediate"* **(Ibid).** Therefore, it is more suitable for learners with lower proficiency level because their linguistic knowledge is so limited that they need guidance.

Moreover, the researcher explained further other types of errors by referring to Ferris (2002) distinction. According to Ferris,

Errors in ESL writing refer to errors that interfere with the comprehensibility of a text these are errors concerning overall content, ideas and organization of the writer's argument, while local errors refer to slips or lapses in grammar, spelling or punctuation that do not impede understanding.

(cited in Chand, 2014, p.512)

Therefore, peer-feedback might help learners learn more from their friends' remarks and be competitive. They revised their peers' drafts using the checklist provided by the teacher where all the main elements of coded corrective feedback were mentioned. Thus, they learn from their mistakes and so they develop their intellect from thoughtful conversations. The following rubric was used between peers.

Correction codes: Rubric for an expository essay in a university writing class	
Symbol Meaning	
<i>S</i> :	Incorrect spelling
<i>W</i> :	Wrong word order
<i>T</i> :	Wrong tense
<i>C</i> :	Concord (subject and verb do not agree)
<i>Wf</i> :	Wrong form
<i>S/f</i> :	Singular or plural form wrong
<i>λ</i> :	Something has been left out
[] :	Something is not necessary
<i>PM</i> :	Meaning is not clear
	<i>NA</i> The usage is not appropriate
	<i>P</i> Punctuation is wrong

Figure 4.2. Byrne,D.(1998) *Teaching writing skills*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.

Finally, their drafts were edited through correcting the mistakes found by their peers, and then, they handed their paragraphs to the teacher for final evaluation and comments. After receiving corrective feedback from the teacher, students gained self-confidence in writing and were willing to read their paragraphs to the whole group.

After completing the writing instruction program, the teacher catered for more explanation through reinforcing the use of these strategies in other similar writing tasks and other types of paragraph writing. Therefore, a gradual withdrawal of scaffolding was needed. She also explained that such strategies would be also employed independently without the support of the teacher. Lastly, an evaluation of writing strategy instruction program was done by interviewing the learners about the effects of such training on the enhancement of their paragraphs. All students reacted positively towards these strategies. Hence, investigating whether students' paragraph writing has improved after SBI will be the discussion of the following points.

IV.7. Data Analysis

To approve the ground of the rational for this investigation and to find answers to the third research question, I collected 30 pre-test and post-test writing sample. To analyse the writing samples, quantitative and qualitative analyses were used. Following the frameworks of Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Sercombe (2002), I analysed the samples qualitatively to check their quality of writing. The analysis includes two main categories: sentential and intersentential aspects of the text. The

former covers writing mechanics such as punctuation and grammatical errors; while the latter involves language usage that contributes to coherence and cohesion. I considered these aspects because they are highly focused on in teaching writing at the centre.

However, the quantitative analyses followed CEFR (2003) writing rubrics, with a slight modification, which involve relevance of content, organisation, cohesion and coherence, language accuracy, presentation and mechanical accuracy. They are considered as inevitable, standardized scales when assessing any piece of writing. Their writing paragraphs were scored on a five-point scale as excellent(5); very good (4); good(3); satisfactory (2); poor(1); inadequate (0) as the following table indicates.

Table 4.1. Common European Framework of Reference for languages; levels B1-C2

CRITERION GRADE	RELEVANCE OF CONTENT	ORGANISATION	COHESION & COHERENCE	LANGUAGE ACCURACY	PRESENTATION & MECHANICAL ACCURACY
EXCELLENT (5)	Appears wellfocussed And relevant to topic and task; thorough coverage; well supported arguments; wide scope.	Outline of main ideas easily recognisable to readers; sections and paragraphs clearly marked, thorough introduction and conclusion; follows conventions of the field.	Cohesive and discourse markers appropriately used; forms a coherent whole; close, intelligible relationship between sentences; smooth flow of text.	Very few language errors; vocabulary, style and register appropriate to the topic and intended audience; closely follows the main discourse conventions of the field.	Clear presentation of both text and any tables and figures; proper format; correct spacing and indentation of paragraphs etc. Virtually no errors of punctuation, spelling or capitalisation.
VERY GOOD (4)	Appears focussed and relevant to topic and task; thorough coverage with only	Minor incompleteness or lack of clarity; sections and	Only minor inconsistencies in the use of cohesive and	No major difficulties in appropriate language use;	Relatively clear presentation and format, but some unsystematic errors

	minor aspects missing.	paragraphs generally divided well; introduction and conclusion well connected to body; good adherence to conventions of the field.	discourse markers, not affecting overall coherence; smooth flow of text, but possible overuse of certain discourse markers.	follows the main discourse conventions of the field.	in mechanical accuracy.
GOOD (3)	Appears relevant to topic and task; possibly little limited in scope, too detailed in places or too long; some problems with substantiating arguments.	Some incompleteness or lack of clarity in the whole; sections and paragraphs not divided perfectly; introduction and conclusion not well connected to the main body; minor problems in following the conventions of the field	Relationship between sentences may occasionally lack smoothness; some misuse of cohesive and discourse markers somewhat affecting flow of text	Some problems e.g. in the level of formality and register; consistent errors in certain areas of grammar, but rarely impeding comprehension	Quite clear presentation, but with occasional inconsistencies in format and other mechanics of writing, but rarely impeding comprehension.
SATISFACTORY (2)	Many aspects irrelevant in terms of topic and task; quite unfocussed and quite limited in scope, substantiation patchy.	Sections and paragraphs do not form a clear whole; introduction and conclusion separate from the main body; apparent difficulty in following the conventions of the field.	Lack of sentence transitions interferes at times with comprehension making relationship between sentences unclear; flow of text abrupt.	Several problems with using appropriate style and register; grammatical errors affect comprehension	Very inconsistent in presentation and format; frequent errors in punctuation and spelling; difficult to understand.
POOR (1)	Clear difficulty in focussing and dealing with the topic; narrow scope; needs elaboration, no clear evidence of substantiation.	Poor organisation and division between sections makes comprehension of the whole very difficult.	Unsatisfactory cohesion makes comprehension very difficult; appears incoherent and lacking in	Inappropriate style and register and frequent grammatical errors make comprehension	Errors in presentation, format, spelling, and punctuation make the text almost incomprehensible

			logical flow.	very difficult.	
INADEQ UATE (0)	Clearly unable to deal with topic competently; too short and unfocussed, completely lacking any form of clear argument.	No apparent organisation, making reading difficult; no apparent divisions between sections or paragraphs; lack of proper introduction and conclusion	Cohesive markers almost totally absent, making writing fragmentary and practically incomprehensible...	Number and type of errors make comprehension extremely difficult.	Partly or wholly illegible; errors in almost every sentence

Mainly based on Trzeciak, John & S.E. Mackay 1995: Study Skills for Academic Writing. Hemel Hempstead: Phoenix Study Series. NY: Prentice Hall and Council of Europe 2003: Common European Framework of Reference for languages; levels B1-C2.

IV.8. Results

IV.8.1. Students' Achievement Before and After SBI

Before SBI, students were given different assignments, they wrote a paragraph individually without the help of their classmates. The teacher's role was just to explain the topic and the type and the elements to be included within paragraph writing. Students, at this level, were unaware of LLSs; thus, they produced poor writing full of errors, disorder, misspelt words, no coherence and the like. However, when integrating SBI, students writing paragraphs changed positively. All participants improved their writing skill especially the language form, the development of the topic sentence and the mechanics of writing. Thus, the questions that one is prompted to ask are: was SBI effective to improve students' writing? Was there a significant difference in students' writing samples before and after SBI? The following points, then, will answer these questions.

Table 4.2. Intermediate Students Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Scores	5	4	3	2	1	0
Rubrics						
	Pre-test/ post-test	Pre-test/ post-test	Pre-test/ post-test	Pre-test/ post-test	Pre-test/ post-test	Pre-test/ post-test
Relevance of content	0/0	13/28	15/2	2/0	0/0	0/0

Organization	0/0	0/12	2/12	5/6	23/0	0/0
Cohesion & coherence	0/0	0/14	1/13	7/3	18/0	4/0
Language Accuracy	0/0	0/5	1/14	4/10	20/1	5/0
Presentation & mechanical accuracy	0/0	0/8	2/15	4/6	24/1	0/0

Table 26 shows intermediate students' pre-test and post-test scores from zero to five in each of the five rubrics. The results showed that all students' scores were not excellent in all five rubrics. It was found that students did not have weaknesses in the relevance of content before and after the test since they marked high. However, their shortcomings lay in organization, cohesion and coherence, language accuracy and presentation and mechanical accuracy. No one scored four and most of their grades were between two and one during the pre-test.

Moreover, within organisation, only two students marked 3; five others scored 2 and twenty-three got 1 before SBI. In contrast, during post-test, twelve students scored 4; twelve others got 3 and six students gained 2. No one's grades were between 1 and 0. As far as cohesion and coherence and language accuracy are concerned, during the pre-test, results revealed that in each rubric, only one student scored good; however, twenty five students scored between 2 and 1 i.e., their writings were satisfactory to poor. For the last rubric i.e., presentation and mechanical accuracy, six students scored well and twenty-four scored less. Nevertheless, during post-test, all students scored between very good to satisfactory.

Table 4.3. Pre-test and Post-test Percentage of Students' Writing Achievement

Rubrics	Pre-test %	Post-test %
Relevance of content	33.3%	35.4%
Organization	11.7%	28.8%
Cohesion and coherence	10.5%	30.3%
Language accuracy	9.6%	24.9%
Presentation and mechanical accuracy	11.4%	27%

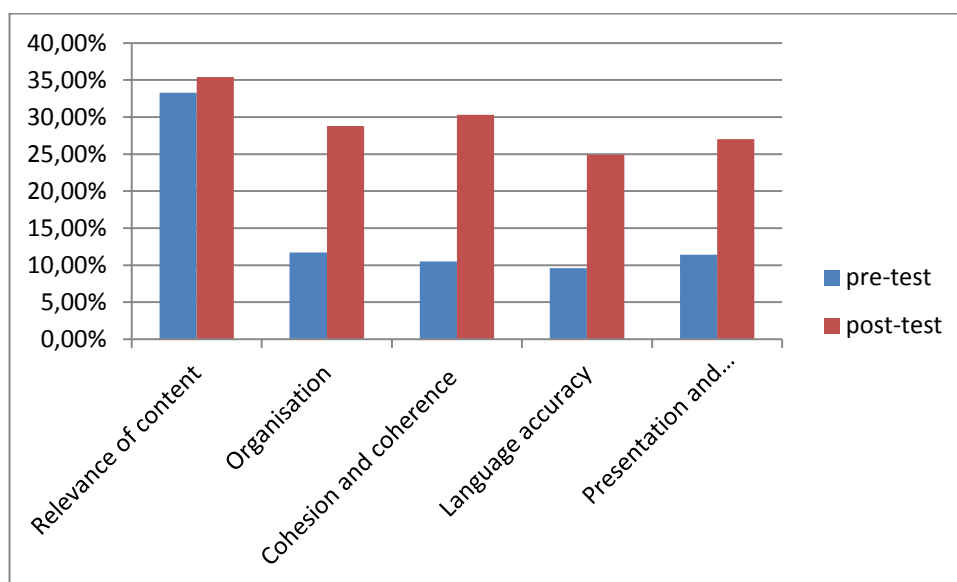


Figure 4.3. Pre-test and Post-test Percentage of Students' Writing Achievement

Table 26 indicates the percentage for each writing rubric. A significant increase was found when calculating all rubrics as the following items shows. The first rubric gauges students' ability to write clearly about one topic without digression. For many students, this domain is considered as somehow difficult to keep up. It also covers the supporting arguments and details students provide in their piece of writing, whether the topic and concluding sentences are adequately stated. As the results showed, during the pre-test students' percentage was 33.3%; while, in post-test results the percentage was 35.4%, there was not much difference.

The second rubric is organisation. It refers to students' ability to organise their writing in a logical and ordered manner. It also focuses on the shape of the paragraph, whether all the ingredients of paragraph writing development are included. During pre-test, students' percentage was weak (11.7%); however, after SBI, the percentage was high (28.8%).

The third rubric is cohesion and coherence. They refer to the smooth transition of ideas, and to cohesive devices and discourse markers that make up the text. The results showed that post-test writing percentage (30.3%) was higher than the pre-test (10.5%).

The fourth rubric is language accuracy. This involves spelling words correctly, using proper tenses, vocabulary use, style that refers to using a variety of polished words, well-structured sentences to catch the reader's eye and the use of appropriate register related to the topic and the target audience. It was showed that students' writing achievement in this domain increased after the implementation of SBI (24.9%) compared to pre-test results which were only (9.6%).

The last rubric is presentation and mechanical accuracy, which include indentation, punctuation and capitalization. Students' percentage score was 11.4% before SBI; however, after SBI it improved to 27%.

IV. 9. Discussion

The last chapter analyses address research question number three, that is, the strategies that can help learners improve their writing abilities. For the sake of answering this research question, participants were chosen from the Intensive Language Teaching centre. They are intermediate learners who have adequate linguistic knowledge. Therefore, the purpose of the last part of this dissertation is to implement SBI through employing cooperative learning strategies, De Silva (2010) Cycle of Strategy Instruction, cooperative learning strategies, and Oxford's learning strategies, namely, cognitive, metacognitive, social, compensation and affective strategies in order to scrutinize their effectiveness in teaching the writing skill and build up their writing proficiency.

Having collected the data, the researcher went through the process of their analysis and came up with the findings. The results indicated that the enhancement in the writing performance was due to the implementation of SBI. Not only did SBI have a positive effect on learners' writings, it also led students to be self-dependent, self-directed and autonomous. Therefore, this study catered for evidence of the usefulness and benefits of strategy instruction on learners' writings. The study shows that students' training in writing strategies can be effective. It is in accordance with previous studies (Sasaki, 2002; Nosralinia et.al., 2014; De Silva and Graham, 2015; De Silva, 2010; Baghbadorani et.al; Mastan et.al., 2017).

Admittedly, the inclusion of cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, social and cooperative strategies through applying different approaches may be the result of the success of SBI programme. Writing strategy instruction led to an improvement in self-motivation, determination and positive attitude. Intermediate post-test scores were higher than the pre-test. This is consistent with Mastan et.al., (2017) who found significant difference in ESL Malaysian writings. Baghbadorani et.al, (2014) results also revealed that SBI was significantly effective in enhancing the persuasive writing essays of the EFL Iranian learners.

It should be noted that before SBI, students at the centre lacked interest in writing and knowledge of the writing process. They spent less time on writing, had difficulty with organization, lacked self-monitoring skills and were more dependent on the teacher. Broadly speaking, their writings were less coherent, polished and communicative as it will be qualitatively analysed in details.

Besides, it was noticed that after SBI, students learnt how to jot down bullet points before producing well-structured sentences. Moreover, all students started to indent the first sentence in their paragraph as a sign of a well-shaped paragraph. Furthermore, they succeeded to plan their writing, organize their ideas and monitor their thoughts before drafting their paragraphs. They also collaborated with each other in elaborating ideas. More importantly, through peer-correction, students were able to detect their classmates' mistakes and their owns' too; thus, they learnt from each other. All participants learnt also to listen to each other, to avoid selfishness by working cooperatively and hence become active and autonomous learners, as they got involved in using the strategies already explicitly explained by the teacher.

It is worth mentioning that nearly all participants improved their writing skill in English, especially regarding language accuracy, cohesion and coherence and mechanical accuracy. Obviously, participants needed guidance with clearly and explicitly taught strategies on how to construct a paragraph. Therefore, using cooperative learning strategies by sharing and generating ideas provided opportunities to boost up writing as they continuously learn from each other. They were also able to share the content of their thoughts, structure their ideas and outstandingly gain knowledge from each other. Participants did much collaboration and interaction during planning, organizing and revising stages. Thus, they improved their English communication.

IV. 10. Results of the Qualitative Analysis before Implementing SBI

IV.10.1. Results of the Qualitative Analysis at the Sentential Level

It is noteworthy to differentiate between an error and a mistake before starting the analysis in depth. A mistake can be self-corrected, but errors cannot. When a student keeps repeating the same writing problem without recognizing that it is incorrect, this is considered as an error that requires the teacher to explain and correct. Thus, an error is a lack of knowledge; whereas, a mistake is a lapse of the tongue or the pen. Abiding by the frameworks of Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Sercombe (2002) (cited in Alharthi, 2012), students samples' analyses cover both the sentential and intersentential levels as the following examples illustrate.

IV.10.1.1. Sequence of Tenses and Wrong Forms

It refers to a set of grammatical rules that govern the agreement between the tenses of verbs within clauses or sentences. Many students lacked the ability to follow the right sequence of tenses in writing their paragraphs which impede the understanding of their compositions. They also made mistakes with regard verbs forms. The samples below illustrate the case in bold.

- 1- then, practicing sport **can help** us to feel active and **lets** the person satisfied about his body. (*sample 4*)
- 2- I **am eating** everyday in my house, I **didn't eat** in restaurant. (*sample 10*)
- 3- The health **is** expensive..... it **was protected** by all way possible. (*sample 10*)
- 4- In my opinion, people **must practice** sport if they **will be** in a good health. (*sample 2*)
- 5- And I **walk** when I'm **working**. (*sample 12*)
- 6- Books **has** many advantage than computers students have **to reads** and **reads** what they **found** in books **don't find** it in computer. (*sample 21*)
- 7- I always **dreaming** about that. (*sample 29*)
- 8- **it's inspire** me to learn. (*sample 28*)
- 9- **It's seem, it's represent**. (*sample 29*)

IV.10.1.2. Subject-verb Agreement

This means that the subject and verbs must agree with one another in number (plural or singular) i.e., a singular subject takes a singular verb; whereas, a plural subject takes a plural verb. Among the writing samples, it was noticed that many students had a deficiency about the most important basics of correct grammar as the following examples show.

- 1- There **is many habits** to adopt to get a good health. (*sample 5*)
- 2- All **doctors says** (*sample 11*)
- 3- Finally **should control** our foodFor example, in the **winter should wear** coat.....instead **play a gym** (*no subject/ sample 13*)
- 4- **everyone want** to be in good health.
There **is many peoples** (*sample 14*)
- 5- we consume every day **a large list of food wich contain**.....
there **is some chemical ingredients**. (*sample 15*)
- 6- the most important to me the sport (*no verb*) (*sample 17*)
- 7- There **is many things** to do to stay healthy. (*sample 18*)
- 8- **all people** in our word **dreams** to (*sample 20*)
- 9- The **computer give** us the opportunity to speak with any person in the world. (*sample 22*)

10- **it contain** (sample 24)

11- The books **affects** the ability to think. (sample 27)

12- the **books affects** our ability to think. (sample 27)

13- I'm a kind of **people** how **likes** traveling.

There **was muslims** there.

IV.10.1.3. Word Order

It refers to the way of building correctly ordered sentences. It is an essential part of writing as it helps the writer produce sentences that make sense. The most frequent error was that of writing an adjective after a noun which is due to the transference or interference of the mother language or the French language since in both languages adjectives follow nouns. Three cases were found such as,

- 1- The most **thing important**
- 2- They are adding a **product chemical**.
- 3- In many **people healthy**

IV.10.1.5. Prepositions

It is worth stressing that many students have problems with regard prepositions, even advanced learners find them difficult. Most of students translate their use from Arabic which is usually not possible. Learners would better learn them through looking them up in a dictionary or reading a lot in English. The following mistakes were detected:

- 1- We must take care **for** our health.
- 2- Talking **at** phone
- 3- We must give more importance **at** health.
- 4- depend **from**....
- 5- to do **for** staying healthy...

IV.10.1.5. Punctuation Marks

Most students misused punctuation marks, especially the comma. Mostly, they put it in the wrong place. Moreover, full stop was replaced by comma in

many cases. They also produced sentences without capitalizing letters at the beginning of each sentence, or capitalizing them in the middle of sentences. It was also noticed that students separated between ideas and sentences with a comma which is incorrect in English, they should instead use the full stop. They also omitted the punctuation marks and replaced them by conjunctions like “so” and “and” as the following items indicate.

- 1- to keep fit...to be fit, ...in this way. (*sample 2*)
- 2- we must take care for our health, firstly, I prefer walking 1 hour a day....food. (*sample 2*)
- 3- “ I alwaysmonths.” (*sample 14*)
- 4- Stay healthy, is very important things, that we should keep it. (*sample 15*)
- 5- ...ect. (*sample 15*)
- 6- for good health...(sample 15)
- 7- in my opinion....person (*sample 16*)
- 8- firstly, secondly, thirdly..... finally anyone can practice it. (*sample 19*)
- 9- all people..... (*sample 20*)
- 10- north of Europe, Sweden, netherland (*sample 25*)
- 11- for me without having second thought.... (*sample 26*)
- 12- my favourite city.... (*sample 28*)

IV.10.1.6. Spelling mistakes

The results showed that students writing’ samples highly suffered from spelling mistakes. Some of them are related to the influence of the French language. Though these left the reader to guess what the exact word is, it did not affect the meaning of the sentence. The following examples illustrate the case.

- 1- Tacke... secondary..... reel, coocked (*sample 2*)
- 2- don’t smook (*sample 7*)
- 3- thirds, finilly, sufficient (*sample 3*)
- 4- helth, beautiful, safety, sécurite (*sample 10*)
- 5- thing’s, polution, contry, with out (*sample 11*)
- 6- physicale, practice, agression, pratique, finaly, personns (*sample 12*)

- 7- not lik, exampl, finaly, climat, (*sample 13*)
- 8- Alyaws, think (to mean thing), finaly (*sample 14*)
- 9- wich, sourc, legums, ect (*sample 15*)
- 10- the thered, the forted (*sample 17*)
- 11- runing, swiming, sking (*sample 19*)
- 12- easlly (*sample 21*)
- 13- diferent, oportunity, centary, biggest (*sample 22*)
- 14- hobbie, oportunitie, visite, beaches, hystorical, peopol (*sample 23*)
- 15- soo, beautiful, butiful, contries, personnatly, naturel, relaxe, stading, beches (*sample 24*)
- 16- specialy (*sample 25*)
- 17- thaught, forg, they're (*sample 26*)
- 18- prefere, custums, fammily, wish (to mean which) (*sample 28*)
- 19- Hoses, musims, palaits, delisious (*sample 29*)
- 20- Realité (*sample 30*)

IV.10.1.7. Undeveloped Paragraph and Short Sentences

Many students provided short paragraphs that lacked the intended meaning. Most of their samples were ambiguous, confusing and incoherent. They even wrote paragraphs that did not meet the essential paragraph writing skills, as the following texts indicate.

- 1- Sample 2
- 2- Then to practice sport regularly. (incomplete sentence)
- 3- Also to drink a lot of water and to sleep earlier.
- 4- Moreover, to keep smiling and to be positive.
- 5- Sample 6; 7/9/12/14/16/19/20/21/22/24/25/26/27/28/29/30

Students failed to write complete coherent sentences. They also provided paragraphs without a topic sentence which is part and parcel of the clarity and unity of the paragraph. Moreover, some samples were not good enough to be recognised as a well-written piece of writing as they were full of bullet points or phrases instead of complete structured sentences. Their paragraphs were also

incomplete as they did not end up with the concluding sentence. They also produced insufficient supporting sentences to develop an argumentative paragraph. Briefly, they failed to discuss the focal point of the paragraph, link sentences, achieve smoothness and encapsulate in a satisfying logical manner.

IV.10.2. Results of the Qualitative Analysis at the Intersentential Level

IV.10.2.1. Undeveloped Ideas and Lack of Appropriate Supporting Details

It is noteworthy that any paragraph is composed of three crucial components, namely, the topic sentence, the supporting sentences and the concluding sentence. However, in most students' samples, there was a lack of supporting details and an absence of the concluding sentence. Moreover, some students started their paragraphs without a topic sentence moving towards listing supporting details in a form of phrases.

Any paragraph is unified when there is a smooth transition of ideas. Thus, most students' samples lacked coherence. Their paragraphs did not provide further arguments, nor do they develop coherent sentences. Repetition was also demonstrated in their writings as a way of showing that their paragraphs revolved around the same topic instead of elaborating supporting sentences. Such problems conceal the clarity of the text and the meaning as a whole; therefore, they prevent the reader from achieving the intended understandability of the topic.

- 1- « There are lazy » (*sample 1*)
- 2- Besides..... happier . (*sample 4*)
- 3- Sample 6/7/8/9/12/13/14/15/17/19/20/21/22
- 4- In my opinion, health is the first thing, that I do many things to be a healthy person. (*sample 16*)
- 5- The second is don't smoke he is a big perplame in our live I don't like it. (*sample 17*)

6-Live a simple life no sedentarity. (*sample 18*)

7-So if peopol (*sample 23*)

8-Sample 24/25/27/29/30

IV.10.2.2. Direct Translation

The common problem that students encountered was translating from Arabic to English as we can see in the following few examples.

- 1- The health is a crown that it can't be seen just by the sick persons (*sample 4*)
- 2- I go to the doctor for consultation (*sample 10*)
- 3- The health is expensive. (*sample 10*)

However, it should be noted that other range of difficulties and linguistic problems appeared in the students' samples. These included the incorrect use of articles which is always problematic for EFL learners, such as the use of the indefinite article "a" followed by a plural noun (a relatives; eating a natural foods). Moreover, in almost all students samples the contracted forms were apparent which should be avoided in any academic writing, for example, they shouldn't be nervous; they don't follow; don't smoke, won't be. They also tended to produce redundant sentences characterised by repetition, such as health it's the most thing that people need (along with the absence of the adjective)

IV.11. Results of the Qualitative Analysis after Implementing SBI

The results were positive after implementing SBI in writing an argumentative paragraph. Most students writings were coherent, precise and concise. They also avoided the mistakes they made in the pre-test samples thanks to peer feedback. Their writings were more organized, straight to the point and most importantly less mistakes were found. They also included all the components of a paragraph without missing out any part. They also tended to produce a text that has some strength in terms of being logically ordered through listing arguments in chronological order by using

transitional words, such as first, second, also, moreover and the like. However, it does not mean that their writings were free from any mistakes as the following examples illustrate.

Sample 1: so a person who **want** to be successful..... (*missing out "s"*)

patience let you.....

Sample 2: Health is the event of the moment (*direct translation*)

Sample 3: in the other hand (*the misuse of the preposition*)

Realy (*spelling mistake*)

Health is really a divine gift (*repetition of the topic sentence*)

Sample4: the shape of the paragraph was incorrect.

I will try to samrise it (*spelling mistake*)

I do swimming (*the misuse of collocation*)

Poll, twice, contains (*spelling mistake*)

The student did not respect the adequate rules of writing academically; besides, he did shape correctly his paragraph. Briefly, he produced a piece of text as if he was speaking.

Sample 5: I delete stress **of** my life (*incorrect preposition*)

In the end, health is a gift you should take care **about** it (*incorrect preposition*)

It's very important and expensive (*direct translation/ contracted form*)

Sample 6: we can't buy health (*contracted form*)

Having a good eating habits can also help us to have good healthy life. (*useless article and repetition*)

At last, I can say, (*redundant sentence*)

Sample 7 was free from mistakes

Sample 8: First, sport has a positif effect on health. (*misuse of adjective*)

we must practice it usually (*the misplacement of the adverb of frequency*)

it builds the body and make it more active (*missing "s"*)

sample 9: we can all practice sport minimly..... it helps loose weight (*spelling mistakes*)

we have to take after our health. (*misuse of the phrasal verb*)

The sample is not organized in term of the shape of the paragraph.

Sample 10: because we found any risk with the consumption (*incorrect use of tense*)

In the other hand (*incorrect preposition*)

sport is very important for protect our health (*incorrect part of speech*)

...for example, football, swimming...etc. (*punctuation mistake for etc*)

in conclusion (*no capitalization*)

sample 11: Finally, the worst thing that I hate it is smoking (*useless pronoun*)

That all that I do to keep my health always well because if we lost it we lost the life.
(*missing the verb; incorrect tense form*)

Sample 12: So I decided to go their and give some help. (*the pronoun is used instead of the adverb*)

The paragraph is not well-shaped.

Sample13: the student's paragraph is not well-structured, coherent and unified. Besides, it does not conform to the rules of paragraph writing.

Sample 17: though the paragraph is well written in terms of content, it is not shaped adequately.

To wrap up the whole discussion, it is worth mentioning that nearly all participants improved their writing skill in English, especially regarding the structure, content and mechanics of writing. Obviously, participants needed guidance with clearly and explicitly taught strategies on how to structure a paragraph for writing. Therefore, using cooperative learning strategies, sharing and constructing their ideas provided opportunities to boost up writing as they continuously learn from each other. Talking about the writing topics, students were able to share the content of their thoughts, structure their ideas and outstandingly gain knowledge from each other.

IV.12. Students' Interviews

Participants did much collaboration and interaction during planning, organizing and revising stages. Thus, they improved their English communication. Notably, to triangulate this study, interviews were conducted. It consists of open-ended verbal questions between students and the teacher who jotted down each comment and observation uttered by the learners. The students were interviewed individually. The interviews were carried out to see students' reaction on evaluation about SBI, that is, whether working cooperatively helps them write better, how interaction in groups helps develop paragraph writing, how useful were the learning strategies and whether their writing has improved after SBI.

The use of students' interviews in this study served several purposes. It is important in teaching writing that students demonstrate metacognitive awareness of their use of strategy instruction. Through the interviews, students' responses were helpful in assessing their knowledge and use of the strategies they had been taught. The interviews also provided each student with progressive feedback and served as a forum for their individual questions and concerns.

Students gave answers that indicated intrinsic reasons for their personal gains in writing. More specifically, they reported that their writing skills were improving because they were writing more appropriately. They went on to explain that they were elaborating on their topics adding more details and description and increasing the number of ideas they wrote. Students said they were able to stay on target and stick to

one topic when writing. Another said that using the writing processes and taking time to write helped him to improve his writing. One student said he liked writing more now than before especially that they made fewer mistakes than before. In a very clear explanation, one participant said that using strategies kept her organized. Others reported that these strategies helped them write more and motivated them to accomplish their goals.

Some students said *“learning cooperatively helped a lot, as well as, interacting in English with my classmates helped me think in English”*. Others saw that interaction with other students and working together helped them write better. Many students said: *“before we write as if we are speaking but when learning strategy instruction, we know now how to organize our thoughts.”* Moreover, others commented on the first step of the planning process where they have to take as much notes as possible about the topic as being effective. One student’s comment was: *“The more we talk about the topic, the more we generate ideas. We have learnt a lot from each other and we are still learning.”* Another student remark was about organizing step and said: *“I liked this where in we wrote an outline for our paragraph. It helped me a lot, through it, we respected the ideas to be included within the paragraph, without adding or skipping over other ideas. This is good”*.

All students favoured the usefulness of LLSs in improving their writing skill. Most of them said that they loved these instructions in writing. They learnt how to write coherent sentences, how to write correct grammar, how to discuss their ideas with their friends and get from them other ideas. For them, this method was great, what was given to them as strategy instruction was excellent. They also stated that thanks to SBI, they could write better. They especially learnt to use a dictionary each time for spelling words correctly, and that sharing paragraphs for editing was good. More importantly, they were able to correct their own paragraphs before giving them to the teacher.

According to other participants, their English has improved in writing and speaking too. They used to hate writing but after SBI, they found interesting. By allowing their friends to read their paragraphs aloud, they learnt to see their mistakes, especially punctuation. They used to write long sentences, all their supporting sentences were written in one sentence. However, their friends helped them separate

each new idea by a full stop to have another sentence. Their classmates' feedback encouraged them to write without forgetting anything related to paragraph writing, as they also reported that they made fewer mistakes than before.

It is, then, worth stressing that SBI is very helpful to enhance the learners' writing skill. Thus, educators should integrate SBI within students' learning course content programmes to help them refine their writing skill. To sum up, it was found interesting to end up with Griffith's quotation on LLSs: "The effective use of LLSs might contribute to successful language learning is exciting" (**Griffiths, 2003:381**). Therefore, educators should be biased towards teaching SBI to achieve an enormous impact on EFL writing classes, and other language learning skills. Thus, some implications will be suggested in the next point.

IV. 13. Implications and Recommendations

For the last two decades, Oxford called for more research in the field of LLSs in all over the world. For this reason, Algerian EFL research communities should take a step in doing further research and looking into deeper insights on the use of LLSs. Thus, Algerian EFL students should be differentiated from other EFL international students. The results of this study have been far reaching. Empirical studies were provided not only to detect EFL students' use of LLSs who belong to different levels of proficiency, but also to find ways to improve their writing skill by teaching them the effectiveness of using LLSs, more specifically, cooperative learning strategies. Thus, more studies need to be done. First, this study investigated LLSs used by EFL students of three levels of proficiency; however, a comparative study needs to be conducted to compare the findings of this research work.

Furthermore, in this dissertation, only 120 subjects participated in examining the use of LLSs and 30 others were involved in exploring whether their writings have improved after SBI. Notwithstanding, the results regarding language proficiency difference cannot be conclusive; therefore, a study that inspects LLSs using a greater number of participants may reveal different results. It would be difficult to generalize the findings of this investigation. Besides, language proficiency was the only variable

investigated in this study; nevertheless, it would be possible to devote some other researches investigating if age, culture, nationality for example, and other variables make a difference in terms of LLSs use.

Based on previously stated findings, several implications for teaching LLSs can be suggested to all EFL Mostaganem students to help them enrich their language learning skills. Thus, methodology courses need to call attention to the importance of LLSs training and accentuate its integration into a variety of classes so as to pave the way of facilitating the development of more confident, more strategic, and in particular, more successful language learners. Consequently, the results support the effectiveness of SBI in promoting positive growth in the writing rubrics

It should be noted that the goal of SBI is to assist students to become effective and autonomous learners. Accordingly, language learners should go far beyond the transmission of knowledge by helping students acquire the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to take responsibility for their own learning. Creating a writing community based on expressing thoughts coherently and unambiguously is all that any teacher should make his/her learners achieve by adhering to the practices of SBI. Therefore, more time and practice should be allotted to writing instructions. Students need a great reinforcement of strategies in writing with explicit training, scaffolding and modelling. They need the opportunity to think about writing in different contexts, instead of merely being asked to complete writing assignments.

Many learners face difficulties meeting the writing demands in the classroom; yet, many teachers consider writing as an important and primordial assessment tool. Moreover, writing is a demanding and challenging task that requires a number of skills and strategies simultaneously performed, self-regulated and monitored. More importantly, in this age of technology development, our society becomes more and more global. Therefore, learners are preparing for new and outstanding vocational experiences. They must be autonomous, learn to think critically and principally to be self-confident in dealing with problem-solving activities.

Many learners describe writing as a hard task; however, they usually spend less time writing, are less organized and scarcely employ strategies. It has been demonstrated that many learners suffer from deficiencies in written expression. Thus,

the need for this research specifically in the discipline of writing is evident. The teaching of writing which emphasizes mainly the process rather than only the product approaches is an example of a recent paradigm shift. One possible way to enhance students' writing performance would chiefly be to employ strategies. Strategy instruction and implementation can provide scaffolding for students which lead to self-instruction, promote motivation and improve learning.

The review of the literature support the rationale for strategy instruction that involves the implementation of various strategies, such as cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, affective, social and cooperative strategies respectively. The results of this study prompt several recommendations for future research. The findings also justify further investigation to be undertaken as an endeavour to find solutions to the writing drawbacks of EFL learners.

First, educators need to provide strategy instruction that will ameliorate their students' writing skills and promote intrinsic motivation. Moreover, they need to find techniques and strategies that will enhance not only their students' writing skills, but also increase perceptions of themselves as writers. Students' beliefs and self-regulation that they are capable writers could help them raise greater interest in writing and develop their confidence to keep up focus during writing.

Second, the most important result was students' development in writing achievement. Therefore, the role of educators is to teach students to use effective strategies that encourage self-regulation learning and autonomy. Students learn better and write better when they are motivated and interested in what they are doing and when working collegially to achieve a specific goal.

Third, writing is somehow effortless for some students; but too complex and demanding for others. Due to this fact, there is no exact set of strategies that can ensure writing enhancement for all students. In this study, the participants made significant progress after implementing strategy based instruction. Admittedly, it is vital that research continues in these areas of strategy instruction to help teachers gain a sufficient repertoire of writing strategy instruction accessible to their students.

Fourth, a major role of educators should be to provide students with intellectual tools and self-regulatory capacities to train and educate themselves

throughout their lives. This supports, then, strategy instruction which is beneficial to teaching writing for many reasons. Through strategy instruction, students develop behaviours that are more complex than the one already known, they also gain confidence and autonomy in their skills as writers. It also adds levels of support or scaffolding, designed to help students advance as competent writers. Through strategy instruction and modeling, teachers help students gain self-regulation skills necessary to use the strategy independently and even apply it to other situations.

The study was prompted by the scarcity of research on the use of writing strategies of Arab EFL learners in general and the Algerian context in particular. By integrating different methods of research, the study investigated the learning strategies and writing strategies and processes used by EFL intermediate learners to achieve a deeper comprehensibility of both the product and the process approaches. Consequently, this study is a contribution to the field of theory and pedagogy in many ways by exploring areas that require further investigation and eventually filling some of the gaps in that field.

The study tried to conduct in depth some of the writing difficulties in the Algerian context; thus, the findings of the analyses can be employed for teaching writing and thereby contribute to enhancing the writing performance of EFL Algerian learners. The present investigation sees composing strategies as an arrangement of procedures that attempt to not only empowering new thoughts, but also helping student writers intentionally control their learning and enhance their written work.

It is worth mentioning that these findings will be of indispensable significance of EFL learners and educators in general and the Algerian context precisely. Teaching English in Algeria is still product-oriented. Along these lines, the results of this examination endeavour to draw the consideration of instructors to focus on the procedures of writing in general and composing techniques in particular, enable their students to produce clear and coherent piece of writing and raise their perception about the advantages of utilizing writing strategies to make easy the process of writing their assignments.

The findings of this investigation cater for insights into the many-sided qualities of writing as a process, and feature the writing difficulties of EFL learners

and the Algerian most specifically. Thus, they may carry solid implications for the field of teaching methods and composing guidelines.

The distinction in writing samples and employing various writing strategies propose that EFL learners indeed give much importance to the form and accuracy as opposed to having a clear understanding of the application of these strategies to write meaningfully. Therefore, instructors should consider these issues and provide suitable composition tasks to advance and monitor the employment of writing strategies.

It was discovered that almost all students did not plan their writing paragraphs, which influenced their composition performance. In this way, it is vital to educate and monitor the use of metacognitive strategies in composing classes. Educators and teachers should expand students' devotion to pre-assignment tasks by empowering them to plan their written work since this would improve the quality of the language used during the activity and decrease students' mental processes and thinking problems during writing. Students ought to be encouraged to supply diverse drafts to gain time to compose plainly their final paragraphs. It serves as a feasible instructional strategy to enable students to enhance their composition.

Students gave less importance to revision strategies. Accordingly, educators should consider the effectiveness of revision and editing in the advancement of high-quality composition samples. This process should furnish abundant opportunities for students to work on compositions of various sorts.

Instructors should know the roles of affective and social strategies in directing their students' feelings. They may get stressed and anxious since they fear accepting terrible works or they will most likely be unable to express in composing what is in their thoughts. Teachers should explicate overtly to their students how affective and social strategies can enable them to adapt to their written work drawbacks and thus influence the composition process to be more worthwhile and satisfying.

Investigation of the composed examples of the study shows that students' written work is a linear procedure. Educators and teachers ought to know that the written work is no more considered as an inactive task of simply completing the paper with words, it is rather viewed as a critical thinking assignment with objectives to be accomplished. Along these lines, composing classes should encourage the

development of critical thinking and goal-oriented tasks to advance the recursive nature of writing.

Teachers and language educators should stress designing writing courses that hinge on the learners' needs and the results of this study. Such courses are aimed to find a link between students' level, the writing process and the genre of their piece of writing, for example, beginning with paragraph writing, moving towards essay writing, report writing, emails, articles and so forth. They should enable learners to build up the strategies expected to deal with their written work without any difficulties.

This dissertation could be proceeded in various directions that address different issues that still should be investigated in the field of English writing paragraphs in EFL context. Other investigations like this are deemed as a stepping stone for various examinations in the writing domain. Its outcomes should be strengthened and supplemented by additional and promotive studies so as to increase better comprehension of the nature of writing of the Algerian learners.

This study probed EFL learners English argumentative paragraph writing and strategies use at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem University. However, further studies might consider EFL learners majoring in English at the department of English. It was conceivable to direct another investigation in view of classroom perception and video recording to get further bits of knowledge into the students behaviour during the writing process.

The findings of the data analyses demonstrated the estimation of strategies in encouraging and making easy the written task. Other studies may dig into each writing strategy independently so as to make a more correct evaluation of what occurs during each writing stage. The results of such investigations would furnish the field of writing strategy instruction with important outcomes.

This examination explored the writing process without considering the function of motivation and attitude as imperative factors in promoting the writing process. Advanced work could tackle the effect of motivation, attitudes and writing strategies on the written product of EFL learners of different proficiency levels.

Examining students' writing samples revealed that their argumentative type of paragraph writing needs change and development. A wide range of successful written work guidelines into the educational programme alongside with training on how to build an argument may highly be beneficial for students. Building up these educational aptitudes may not only help them academically, but also it will extend to incorporate their lives beyond university since this skill is a necessity at the workplace.

Educators need to include reading in teaching the writing skill. Reading can acquaint learners with a specific composition mode. It can likewise improve students lexicon with a range of vocabulary and a set of features showed in the mode displayed. Such arguments go in line with the product approach that highlights the use of modeling texts to be imitated and composed accordingly. Adjusting this technique improves students' familiarity with what constitutes great writing in English.

The limitations of the current study have generated implications for further research in the field of LLSs and writing strategies particularly. The present examination is restricted to intermediate learners and their argumentative paragraph writing samples. It is, then, intriguing to direct a broad investigation of Algerian EFL learners in general and beginners and advanced learners in particular.

Instead of concentrating on one writing mode, investigations of other composition types, such as narrative, descriptive and expository modes are recommended to probe learners' capacity to write coherently and appropriately. To expand generalisability, more samples will be required. Besides, for the reliability of these results, they must be replicated with different studies from various universities, at diverse levels of proficiency and different academic disciplines.

The findings of this study cater for valuable proposals to curriculum planners and material writers and designers to incorporate components that emphasise the usefulness of writing strategies. Such instructors can employ suitable techniques to build up students' written work capacity in the EFL settings. Moreover, there is a need to make EFL students aware of the benefits of employing compelling teaching approaches and strategies to enhance students writing performance. In other terms, EFL teachers ought to know about university students' particular deficiencies in

writing and attempt to employ appropriate approaches and strategies to boost their writing competence.

It is suggested that further research could be embraced in the following areas. Further exploratory examinations in light of larger corpora from various domains are expected to yield other results and add to the making of more solid and valid research. Future research ought to focus on the enquiry of the impact of composing strategies on EFL beginners and advanced writing achievement in order to compare the effect of these strategies on learners of different levels of proficiency.

IV. 14. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the findings of the investigation, summarised the contribution of the study, displayed proposals for teaching the writing skill, featured the restrictions of the investigation and recommended areas for further research. The long trip towards understanding the nature and complexity of the writing skill is, in fact, deficient and features requirement for more research in this field. Regardless of their noteworthiness, the results of this research should be reproduced by different investigations mulling over encouraging research. The outcomes at that point may add more endeavours to the field of writing processes.

General Conclusion

The research study provides a broad overview of theoretical issues on LLSs use and their relevance to language learning theories and methods. Different definitions and types drawn from scholars in this field were demonstrated. Moreover it is assumed that learners employ LLSs differently which is due to many factors, such as gender, age, motivation, culture and proficiency level which is the main concern of this dissertation. Besides, the importance of using LLSs to improve students' paragraph writing has been investigated.

It is of paramount importance that students should understand the significance of using LLSs in learning language skills, especially, the writing skill which is considered as the most difficult skill for EFL learners. Therefore, the teacher's task is to raise students' awareness of LLSs, to help them use them in completing tasks, but most importantly, in enhancing their paragraph writing. Thereby, how to make students use different strategies in paragraph writing is also another focal point of this study.

The present research arises from the fact that the writing products of EFL learners at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre endure many deficiencies. As a teacher of English at the centre, I ceaselessly notice the poor writing paragraphs of the struggling learners. Besides, my colleagues stated the low performance of the students and their lackadaisical attitudes towards writing which is maybe caused by the lack of motivation, inappropriateness or difficulty of the topic assigned, the use of unsuitable strategies or remarkably the influence of their mother tongue on their written products.

The first objective of this study was to examine LLSs used by Algerian EFL learners in relation to their level of proficiency at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre of Mostaganem University. A total of 120 students were selected for the analysis. The assessment was done through using SILL Oxford's questionnaire. The study found that EFL learners enrolled at the centre were conscious about LLSs. It revealed that language learners were medium users of LLSs which is in line with previous research in the Arab world, such as Abu Shmais, 2003; McMullen, 2009. It was also shown that intermediate learners were the most frequently users of LLSs as opposed to elementary and advanced learners. They had a great deal of strategies that

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they selected depending on what sort of activities they tried to solve. However, elementary learners were not self-regulated, they needed much instruction and explicit training to understand LLSs. Advanced learners were autonomous, self-dependent as they applied LLSs unconsciously.

The second objective was to determine whether EFL learners used writing strategies when they wrote a piece of text. The aim was also to show whether there was a significance difference among learners of different proficiency level in the use of writing strategies through completing Pétric and Czarl questionnaire. The results revealed that elementary, intermediate and advanced learners used writing strategies in a similar way and the difference was insignificant. These results are consistent with Nimehchisalem et.al., (2017), Abu Shmais, 2003 research studies. The findings also indicated students' preferable use of while writing strategies without giving importance to before writing strategies which is deemed of vital significance in producing well-structured pieces of writing.

It is noteworthy that writing in the Algerian context still follows the product approach of learning and not much attention is given to how to write strategically and effectively. All that matters is the production of well-written texts in terms of the correctness of grammar and vocabulary used. Moreover, writing tasks are mainly assigned to students as homework and they are not done in the classroom while cooperation and working in groups is totally ignored. Therefore, learners are not given the opportunity to see how writing might be an interesting skill only if they apply some strategies appropriately.

The third objective of the study is to integrate some strategies, such as cooperative learning strategies, cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies in paragraph writing through implementing De Silva (2010) Writing Strategy Instruction Circle. The purpose is to help student writers to consciously regulate and improve their writing. For this reason, I analysed students' argumentative writing texts to see the effectiveness of this training programme.

To analyse the writing samples, qualitative and quantitative analyses were used. The quantitative analyses followed CEFR (2003) writing rubrics that involve relevance of content, organisation, cohesion and coherence, language accuracy, presentation and mechanical accuracy through performing percentage. Whereas,

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qualitative analyses adopted Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Sercombe (2002) frameworks that include the sentential and intersentential aspects of the text. The former includes mechanics, such as punctuation and grammatical errors; while, the latter focuses more on language usage i.e., coherence and cohesion.

Quantitative results revealed students improvement of paragraph writing after implementing SBI which is in accordance with previous research (Graham & Macaro, 2007; Sasaki, 2002). Through applying different approaches and strategies, SBI programme was successful and led to the improvement of not only students' paragraph writing, but also their attitudes towards writing. All the participants' writing samples scored higher after SBI especially language accuracy, cohesion and coherence, and mechanical accuracy. Admittedly, learners needed guidance and explicit strategies to well-construct their paragraphs.

Qualitative results showed that learners' writings suffer from many sentential and intersentential problems. Before SBI, students failed to write coherent sentences, incomplete paragraphs, insufficient supporting sentences, insufficient supporting sentences, unclear topic sentences, omission of the concluding sentence, errors in punctuation, redundancies, subject-verb agreement errors, poor choice of vocabulary, repetition, translation, etc. However, after implementing SBI, all participants enhanced their paragraph writings especially with regard to coherence and cohesion.

Interestingly, to triangulate this study, interviews were conducted to assess their knowledge and use of writing strategies. All students were positive towards SBI and favoured the usefulness of LLSs in improving the writing skill. It is worth stressing that SBI is helpful to enhance the learners' writing paragraphs. Therefore, based on these findings, I strongly recommend the following pedagogical implications to foreign language teachers and students.

First, students' awareness of the crucial role that LLSs play in the learning process should be reinforced. This can be reached by explicit teaching of these strategies to help students self-regulate and monitor their learning process and hence become efficient language learners. They also should be provided many other contexts, apart from writing, to practice these strategies.

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Second, teachers' awareness of LLSs and the variables that may affect their use should also be strengthened. Therefore, it is the role of the teacher to distinguish his/her learners' differences so as to adopt various teaching methods and strategies accordingly to help them. As the Chinese proverb says: *"give a man a fish and you feed him a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for a life time"*. Thus, applied to the language teaching and learning fields, this proverb may be interpreted as the fact of providing students with ready-made answers, their problem is immediately solved, but if they are taught the appropriate strategies to work out the answers for themselves, they are empowered to manage their own learning. Thus, the more students understand how they learn, the more likely they become responsible, independent and self-confident. Hence, it seems that LLSs instruction is one means of improving students' appropriate way of writing and the acquisition of foreign language.

It is worth stressing that teachers should take a step forward for teaching LLSs to their students to help them improve their language skills, chiefly among them, writing. Therefore, the findings demonstrated the teachability and practicability of SBI in enhancing students' writing paragraphs. Students should also be given the opportunity to transfer their strategies to other contexts, as they should be offered enough time to practise them aptly. Admittedly, SBI really works in boosting students' ability to write well-organised, correct, meaningful and coherent paragraphs.

It is worth noting to encapsulate the whole study with Oxford's (1990) argument that says: *"learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to learn how to facilitate the process. Although learning is certainly part of the human conditions, conscious skill in self-directed learning and in strategy use must be sharpened through training"* (Oxford, 1990, p.201).

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Appendices

Appendix 2:

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning ESL/EFL Learners

Oxford, 1990

Directions

This form of the STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL) is for students of English as a second or foreign language. You will find statements about learning English. Please read each statement. On the worksheet, write the response that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

1. Never or almost never true of me

2. Somewhat true of me

3. Always or almost always true of me

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read it quickly) then go back and read carefully.

19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.

Part E

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Appendix 3

Students' Writing Strategies Questionnaire

Please circle the appropriate number

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Somewhat true of me
3. Always or almost true of me

• Before Writing

1. I schedule for my writing process. 1 2 3
2. I consider carefully the assignment. 1 2 3
3. I analyse carefully a model written by a proficient writer. 1 2 3
4. I start writing without planning or organisation. 1 2 3
5. I plan for writing in my mind, not on papers 1 2 3
6. I write down words and experiences related to the topic 1 2 3
7. I draw an outline of what I want to write about. 1 2 3
8. I think about words and experiences in my mother tongue then I write them. 1 2 3
9. I have a difficulty with writing because I am unable to structure the main idea I am making in the paragraph. 1 2 3

• When writing

1. I start with the introduction. 1 2 3
2. I consider each sentence and read it aloud. 1 2 3
3. I reread what I have written to check coherence. 1 2 3
4. I change my outline while writing. 1 2 3
5. I write sentences in my native language when I translate them. 1 2 3
6. I check my grammar and spelling while writing. 1 2 3

7. If I do not find the suitable word in English, I search for it in a dictionary. 1 2 3
8. I ask somebody for help when I find difficulties in expressing an idea. 1 2 3
9. I ask somebody for help when I find difficulties in expressing an idea 1 2 3

- **When revising**

1. I read my text loudly. 1 2 3
2. I only read silently what I have written. 1 2 3
3. When I finish writing, I hand it in to my teacher without revising it. 1 2 3
4. I change some expressions. 1 2 3
5. I use a dictionary to check my spelling mistakes. 1 2 3
6. I make some changes in the whole piece of writing. 1 2 3
7. I rewrite my text after drafting it. 1 2 3
8. I ask my friend to read my text for feedback. 1 2 3
9. I compare my text with that of my classmates. 1 2 3
10. After receiving feedback from my friends and the teacher, I check again my mistakes, learn from them, then write my text again. 1 2 3

Appendix 1

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.



	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
WRITING	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. 2001. Council of Europe. Cambridge University Press.

Appendix 5:

Students' Interviews

1. Do you think working cooperatively help you write better?
2. How useful are the learning strategies?
3. Has your writing improved after SBI implementation?

Appendix 5:

Students' Writing Samples

Sample 1:

Life is a series of exams in personal or professional fields, so a person who wants to be successful must follow the next three characteristics. First, being optimist makes you never giving up and keeping dreaming. Second, the passion gives you power to work hard and love what you do. Finally, patience let you believe in what you do because success can come at anytime. To sum up, success is important in life, it makes you have what you want and why not having your name written in history.

Sample 2:

Health is the event of the moment and people do many things to stay healthy. Being healthy is easy but it is difficult to know how. Therefore, we must get up early, then walk at least half an hour daily. Also, we should avoid eating outside, especially during summer hot days. Next, we should clean our food and keep it in safe places like the fridge. Finally, visiting the doctor and many other ways are important to stay healthy.

Sample 3:

Health is the most important thing in life. So, we must preserve this divine gift since the child life. There are many ways to realize this aim,. Firstly, we must take good and interesting meals for the development of our body system. Secondly, it is preferable to practice sport regularly. Besides, we must take the natural medicines when we are ill and avoid the synthetic ones because of the side effects they have, in the other hand they have some antimicrobial resistance. Health is really a divine gift.

Sample 4:

The health is one of the most important things in life that we have to pay attention to. This is why people do anything to stay healthy and I am one of them.

Speaking about me and my health takes a long time but I will try to samrise it. The first thing I do is that I do not stop practicing sport. I go to the gym everyday and I do swimming in the poll twice per week. The other thing I do is eating ,we all know that eating is

important but not eating everything, for that reason I do not eat many sugar or fats and I read all contains of the food that I buy.

Staying healthy means the best life.

Sample 5:

There are three important things I do to stay in a good health. First, I drink a lot of water, a bottle and half about 4 cups every day. Then, I practice sport twice a week, such as running or going to the gym and walking 40 minutes. Third, I delete stress of my life by being positive, and sometimes I listen to music and have fun with my family and friends. In the end, health is a gift you should take care about it because it's very important and expensive.

Sample 6:

We always hear that we can't buy health, however, we can do many things to have a good one. First, practicing sport is the easy way to still have a good health. Having a good eating habits can also help us to have good healthy life. And the best natural way is sleeping. At last, I can say, to have a good healthy life is to have a good organization and give time for our health.

Sample 7:

The most important thing to do in my life is to stay healthy. I am trying to manage my life by keeping my health good. I believe that the food that I eat is the first reason to stay healthy. I am trying to eat Bio food and lot of vegetables and fruits. I also practice sport everyday for 30 minutes. I change my sleeping time, at night I sleep early and wake up early too. So, for these reasons I stay healthy.

Sample 8:

Health is a gift from God and if people want to stay healthy, they must do a lot of things. First, sport has a positif effect on health. So, we must practice it usually because it prevents heart attacks and decreases cholesterol in our body. Second, we must eat healthy food, we don't have to eat lots of sweets and junk food but many vegetables. Third, the work is a very important factor; it builds the body and make it more active. Finally, people must be calm and avoid being nervous. So, sport, healthy food and work are the principle reasons to have a good health.

Sample 9:

There are two most important things that people have to do to stay healthy: practicing sport and a good food alimentation. First, we can all practice sport minimly once a week like running, swimming, dancing why not, it helps loose weight to feel good too and have a good circulatory system.

Second, many people do not know how to equilibrate their meal, they eat and drink all the time and ignore an ingredient in it which is toxic for the body like burgur, juice, cakes and a lot of lipids.

So, life is short, we have to take after our health.

Sample 10:

In this life, health is one of the common preoccupations of the people worldwide because it is very important for doing daily activities. However, people do many things to stay healthy. For this purpose, we must choose the healthy food and especially natural food, because we found any risk with the consumption of these natural foods. In the other hand, sport is very important for protect our health for example, football, swimming...etc. in conclusion, food and sport are the most important factors to protect our health.

Sample 11:

The most important thing in my life is my health, so I have to keep it with many methods. First, I practice sport to stay always a strong person. Secondly, I eat just good food especially the bio one and I eat always in the right time. Then, I always sleep no more than eight hours. Finally, the worst thing that I hate it is smoking, to stay in good health you must not smoke. That all that I do to keep my health always well because if we lost it we lost the life.

Sample 12:

Next week, I am going to visit Syria, I am waiting for this moment more than 3 years. All the world know how Syrian people suffer each day, they need help from us.

So I decided to go their and give some help. I am a doctor so I can help. I was in touch with “medecin sans frontier” organization, they said that the last doctor for a child was killed last week and they needed new doctors. They accepted me to join them in Syria, so I took visa to

Turkey after that I will go to Turkey-Syria borders. I will do my best to help Syrian people to live.

Sample 13:

This year our university decided that there should be some big changes in the library, finally starting doing something good with all the money that they have.

If they asked me for my opinion, I would probably tell them to get new books not old novels but new writers, famous ones but very helpful for our generations. To let us be open-minded.

In science, I have to be hard a little on them because I am a biologist and I want all the new in science. I don't want Algeria to be the last like always.

I almost forgot computers please buy new ones HP or Dell or even Condor (I know they like saving money).

Sample 14:

If I have the opportunity to travel, I would visit Italy because it's such an ancient country with beautiful building, very old buildings from its structure you feel like you are in the 17th or the 18th century. Besides, it is called the floating city from this name it feels like flying without wings. To be honest, the first thing I want to try is pizza and I want to have a ride on its special boats, but what I really want is to have a chance to know its culture by visiting the museum. I also want to throw a coin in the fountain and make a wish. I like traveling and Italy is my first destination, it makes me feel like going back in ancient time.

Sample 15:

One of my dreams consists of visiting the United States of America because of many reasons. First, spending two weeks there will allow me to know how they become the most powerful in the world. Second, I would like to improve my English there since this language is useful when I want to talk to 70% of people around the world. Third and finally, tasting food is one of my passions, I precisely want to eat the hamburger from California. To sum up, USA will be the best travel destination in my life.

Sample 16:

My university would better buy books instead of computers for many reasons. First, almost everyone has at least one computer at home. Furthermore, all students are usually asked to make a research so books are the perfect means to find out what they look for. Although there are too many websites where you can get lost, the information on the internet might not be 100% correct especially the scientific ones. Besides, in one hand, books are sometimes very expensive; on the other hand, most of them are available in libraries. Finally, books “the written treasure” have a specific charm which will never disappear., we’ve to forget a little bit about technology and be over artificial world for a while. In the end, I strongly believe that nowadays people are in need to feed their brains more than feeding their stomachs.

Sample 17:

Using books or computers at the library is one of the most discussed topics in my university. Some students are for using books and others are not.

Some students say that by using a computer, we can do several things like reading, making research on the net. On top of that, they say that in one computer they can have more than 100 books at the same time, so we save some money.

However, computers work with electricity, so if it is off no one can run computers. Finally, books do not hurt our eyes like the computers do.

To sum up, I think that my university should purchase computers as they are the future.

Sample 18:

If I have the opportunity to visit a foreign country for two weeks, I would choose Turkey. First, I want to see the actors and take photos with them. I want to buy anything I love at the same time I’ll visit the most famous places like Ankara, Istanbul and I’ll take photos to show them to my friends. Next, I am a big fan of their culture and dishes. So, I will take a chance to buy any famous food, such as Baklava and I’ll eat ice-cream in front of the sea. It will be a wonderful trip spent in my life.

Sample 19:

If I have the opportunity to visit a foreign country for two weeks, I will choose Turkey for many reasons. First, it's so beautiful country that attracts a huge number of tourists from all over the world. It is a country where I can visit many different places like castles and high mountains. I can also eat whatever I want because they are muslims and their food is halal. Turkish people are not racist, they love the Arabs and respect them not like other foreign countries. I hope I will be able to visit Turkey one day.

Sample 20:

In order to succeed in life, there are some principles to follow. Religion plays an important role, it actually gives us a purpose in life, something to live and die for. Then, there comes education. The human mind is amazing; therefore, we should push it to its limit. In fact, with good education come great morals. One should be honest in every field that life has to offer. Following the above statements, we will not only achieve success, but also happiness.

Sample 21:

To succeed in life, each one of us has to make the best person of himself. To do that, we should rely on a few things in life. Any person has to be honest with himself by being honest with God. Furthermore, we have to focus on education. Indeed, a well-educated man is nothing if he is without morals. Moreover, the worker has to toil to manage his work successfully. To sum up, success in life has to be earned not given.

Sample 22:

If we want to get meaningful life, all we have to do is to pursue some steps that are very important. First, we have to be self-confident, which means to believe in your abilities that you can do something no matter what people think about you. Then, you should not hesitate to take decisions and to be afraid of failure. We should also focus on our purposes and fight for them. In addition to that, try hard to be optimist and avoid negative feelings. Lastly, every person can succeed in life if he does not bury his competencies.

Sample 23:

There are some important characteristics that a person should have to succeed in life. First, he must be motivated, because motivation is the secret of every success. Second, we must believe in ourselves and do not let the others tell us what we can do and what we cannot.

Third, we must have a purpose because if you want to reach your objective, then, you must fight for it. In the end, every person can succeed in his life with patience and persistence.

Sample 24:

Loneliness makes you feel lost, unhappy, depressed. But being with friends has so many benefits. First, you make the best memories with friends by going out and having fun, especially that they encourage you to try new things. When you get involved with problems, they get your back and be there beside you helping you to solve them. Above all, they help you to be a good person by telling you what is wrong and what is right. Having friends make you feel happy, protected and supported.

Sample 25:

There are many reasons why I do not like spending time alone but with friends. First, being with friends is funny, because we spend the best moments when we are together. Also, it is helpful especially when I face problems, they stand by my side. Furthermore, I just be myself when I am around them without pretending to be someone else. Friendship is a gift to feel delighted, loved and real.

Sample 26:

There are many reasons why I prefer to study alone. First, studying alone makes you feel more concentrated. If I study alone, I can create my plans and organize myself. Moreover, studying alone makes me independent, if I don't understand something, I will look for it and I am sure I will never lose it. Lastly, studying alone gives me the chance to learn by heart in a short time, there is nothing that can disturb me. To conclude, I like to study alone because I have all the characteristics to be successful.

Sample 27:

Stress is inescapable in our life, that's why we try to skip it by many ways. The best way for me to avoid being stressed is through practicing sport. Second, meeting friends and having fun is also another way to escape stress. Finally, reading Koran is the best remedy. To sum up, we must open our hearts and minds and be positive.

Sample 28:

I am motivated to study English at the center for three most important reasons. First, I need it to communicate with foreign companies in my future career. Then, if I travel abroad, I will have to use it because it is an international language. Finally, I really like reading English books through which I improve and enrich my vocabulary. My future career, reading and communication are three vital factors that pushed me to study English at the centre.

Sample 29:

I am always passionate about English but there are three most important reasons that motivate me to learn it. Firstly, I love American movies and songs, but the American subtitles are not always correct, that's why I want to understand movies and songs. Secondly, English permits me to travel in all over the world since it is an international language. Then, I have friends to whom I talk in English and I want to be able to understand them and be understood. Therefore, communicating with native speakers, tourism, understanding movies and songs are the crucial reasons that pushed me to learn English.

Sample 30:

Nowadays, most of people are interested in learning English at this centre for many reasons. In one hand, it is the worldwide language used by people. On the other hand, it helps us communicate with other speakers in the social media or when being abroad. Moreover, this centre can give us a level certificate that helps us to get a job or a scholarship. To conclude, its importance, communication and the certificate are the main objectives that I want to achieve through learning English at this centre.

Declaration

I, Sabria Ould Si Bouziane, declare that this thesis is my own work, and that, to the best of my knowledge, it has not previously been submitted for any degree in Algeria or any other educational institution in the world.

Signature:

Date: 25-02-2019

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