Second Language Learning and Teaching

Olga Trendak *Editor*

Exploring the Role of Strategic Intervention in Form-focused Instruction

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Preface

For many decades linguists and teachers were inclined to believe that providing foreign language students with numerous opportunities for output as well as with comprehensible input, correction and scaffolding would guarantee success in foreign language learning. What is usually expected of teachers is "to wait and hope that learners will notice the patterns and automatically activate their implicit learning mechanisms" (Gu 2010, p. 1). Although such actions may prove efficacious, there are other ways of helping students to take control over their language learning. One of them is the introduction of *language learning strategies* (LLS) into regular second/foreign language classes by means of *learning strategy instruction*. By showing students how to apply strategies when learning the target language, teachers can activate and encourage them to become more autonomous and responsible. Strategic intervention can make target language learners more active "in managing and controlling the learning process, thereby maximizing the outcomes of learning. Instruction in strategic learning can result in better learners" (Gu 2010, p. 1; as cited in Oxford 2011, p. 12).

The notion of *a language learning strategy* has attracted the attention of numerous scholars for many decades. Researchers have been trying to explore its value in the foreign language classroom with a view to facilitating the process of target language acquisition. Despite the considerable interest in LLS, it should be mentioned that there are numerous contentious issues such as, among others, providing a conclusive definition of a language learning strategy or deciding whether LLS should be perceived as behavioural or mental, general or specific.

Additionally, there are areas which still seem to be somewhat neglected, for instance grammar learning strategies (GLSs). Such a situation might result from the long-lasting controversy accompanying grammar and its introduction in the foreign language classroom over the years. For many decades grammar was dismissed as insignificant and irrelevant in the process of second language learning and stress was placed on communication. That is why it seems essential for researchers to extend the range of studies into LLS, particularly into grammar learning strategies.

There were a few factors that motivated the present author to focus on language learning strategies. One of them was her interest in the continuously expanding field

of LLS and their facilitative role in a foreign language classroom. Additionally, since the author has been working with advanced learners of English for the last 8 years, she wanted to investigate the strategies that learners presenting such a level of language advancement employ when they learn the grammar of the target language and, therefore, help them to become more proficient users of their L2. What is more, since grammar learning strategies have received considerably less interest from researchers than other language learning strategy types, the author wanted her research project to contribute to the existing body of research into LLS and provide guidelines for teachers wanting to help their learners become more autonomous.

The present volume comprises five chapters. The first four chapters are more theoretical in their form, while the last one overviews the results of the conducted study. The main concern of Chap. 1 is the concept of *grammar*, its different types and models and ways of implementing it in the foreign language classroom. The chapter is also devoted to the notion of *form-focused instruction* (FFI) which has received a great deal of attention in the last few decades. The author also evaluates the distinct types of FFI and discusses its relationship with second language acquisition.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical introduction to *language learning strategies* (LLS). The author assesses the differing definitions of LLS put forward by scholars. Moreover, the chapter addresses the conceptual problems associated with language learning strategies and their nature. Emphasis is also placed on selected factors influencing the choice of strategy application, such as cognitive and affective factors, learners' background and situational and social variables. The final part of the chapter explores the place of strategies in a cognitive framework.

Chapter 3 starts with presenting the different language learning taxonomies. Further parts of the chapter provide information on the studies investigating the notion of grammar learning strategies (GLSs) and their efficacy in the foreign language classroom.

Chapter 4 aims to provide in-depth information about the notion of *learning strategy instruction*. In the chapter the author discusses the different aims of strategy-based instruction (SBI) and the necessary steps practitioners need to take in order to introduce the training in their L2 classes. Mention is also made of the contentious issues associated with the implementation and intensity of strategy training as well as with the language and strategy choice. The chapter is also devoted to the different models of strategy training. The chapter also explores the ways of investigating strategy training. Stress is placed on different types of interviews but also on self-report questionnaires, diaries and journals, observations and think-aloud protocols. The final parts of the chapter are devoted to types of strategy studies and the criticism levelled at learner strategy research.

Finally, the objective of Chap. 5 is to report on the results of the study conducted into the LLS applied by advanced learners of English in a Polish educational setting. Additionally, emphasis is placed on the grammar learning strategies that the learners find most efficacious when learning the target language. The research project also addresses the effectiveness of strategy training and its impact on the

acquisition of a grammatical feature. Apart from a comprehensive analysis of the obtained results, the chapter comprises tentative suggestions for future empirical explorations of strategy training in the foreign language classroom. The aim of the research project and suggested guidelines is to help practitioners learn more about the language strategies advanced learners of English employ and, consequently, use that knowledge in their everyday practice in order to make their learners more self-reliant and responsible for their L2 learning.

Łódź, Poland Olga Trendak

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1.1 Introduction

Although the overwhelming part of the volume is devoted to the concept of language learning strategies, it seems fitting to present the notion of grammar in greater detail. The most important reason is that the empirical part of this work pertains to grammar learning strategies (GLS) which learners opt for when they learn the target language (TL). Therefore, this chapter will serve as a theoretical introduction outlining the most significant issues connected with grammar instruction.

In the following subsections an attempt will be made to present the different types of grammar and the attitudes towards its introduction in the foreign language classroom over the years. What is more, emphasis will also be placed on the very popular notion of form-focused instruction, with special attention being paid to the distinction between *form-focused* and *meaning-focused instruction* as well as the one between *focus on forms* and *focus on form*. Additionally, the author will present the most significant research findings appertaining to the concept of FFI.

1.2 Defining Grammar: Types, Models, Attitudes

The notion of grammar is indeed an intricate one entailing miscellaneous meanings that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Every viewpoint offers different assumptions about the relation between grammar and meaning, as well as language use and language learning (Batstone 1994). When investigating the complex process of language acquisition, linguists frequently refer to grammar as a *subconscious internal system* also called *Psycholinguistic Grammar* (Tonkyn 1994). However, grammar is usually associated with lengthy rules that have to be

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memorized in order to, among others, pass a test, a view very often held by language learners. They also perceive grammar as their duty when learning the target language. Moreover, it is tantamount to doing numerous, frequently mundane, exercises. Another dimension of grammar pertains to *Universal Grammar*, a theory according to which all languages possess certain common features.

When defining the concept of grammar, Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pawlak (2012) call it "a set of rules whose proper application ensures that the language they [students] produce meets the requirements of the standard variety" (p. 1). Harmer (2001) says that "the grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language" (p. 12). Knowing grammar is therefore necessary if one wants to communicate fluently in the target language. In addition, grammar is also treated as "a necessary communicative resource" (Widdowson 1990, p. 41). On the basis of this explanation one may conclude that learning the grammar of a foreign language is vital if one wants to achieve a high level of communicative proficiency.

When discussing the broad concept of grammar, it seems vital to elucidate an important division between *descriptive* and *prescriptive grammar*. As regards the former, to quote Pawlak (2006), "descriptive grammars are usually more detailed than prescriptive ones in that they cover a much broader range of structures at much greater length, and this coverage may sometimes extend beyond morphology and syntax to include phonetics, phonology, semantics and lexis" (p. 32). The purpose of a descriptive grammar is to present how native speakers actually employ their language rather than how they should do it. It is worth mentioning that descriptive grammarians shun describing certain instances of target language use as correct or incorrect. Instead, they prefer the distinction between *grammatical* and *ungrammatical* to refer to acceptable and unacceptable forms. Within descriptive grammar one may further distinguish between *formal grammar* and *functional grammar*. Formal grammars, in Larsen-Freeman's (2001) words, "take as their starting point the form and structure of language, with little or no attention given to meaning (semantics) or context and language use (pragmatics)" (p. 34; as cited in Pawlak 2006, p. 33). Functional grammar sees the language as a form of interaction and an attempt to explicate why a certain form is more congruent than the other in a given context (Larsen-Freeman 2001). Functional grammarians pay great attention to the production of grammatically correct sentences, which in their view facilitates communication.

The second type of grammar, the prescriptive one, clearly states which form is correct and which is not. Prescriptive grammar informs learners which rules determine the correct usage of the language. It therefore prescribes the necessary rules. Such a provision of information is important since it "allows the standardization of languages, as well as codifying standard varieties and regional dialects" (Mystkowska-Wiertelak 2010, p. 18). Additionally, it forces the learners to alter their language use and adjust it to a specific standard (Pawlak 2006). However, as many researchers argue, languages incessantly evolve and so do the rules of their usage. In everyday speech native speakers tend to employ structures which are forbidden according to prescriptive rules. The examples are numerous: double

negation, not using the -s ending in the third person singular, or employing *ain't* on a daily basis.

Grammar can also be looked at from a *static* or from a *dynamic* perspective (Batstone 1994). The researcher argues that no matter what we consider grammar to be, it will entail dividing the target language into smaller units, discrete parts, which will be described either formally (verb phrase, finite clause) or functionally (passive voice, future tense). Such an analytic way of describing grammar exerted profound influence on language teaching and is referred to as a *product perspective*. The researcher does admit that there are also other ways of elucidating grammar. He goes on to say that it can be looked at "as a resource which language users exploit as they navigate their way through discourse" (1994, p. 224). This perspective makes it possible to notice how grammar affects learners' language choice, how and in which conditions learners seek it, and how it enables learners to convey their messages in a comprehensible way. Since this viewpoint entails movement and change, and since grammar is seen as dynamic, Batstone (1994) described it as a *process perspective*.

Out of the two different viewpoints, it seems that the static one has gained greater popularity in language teaching. This state may be accounted for by the fact that linguists evaded the diachronic variation and resolved to focus on the synchronic state of the linguistic system assuming that it is impossible to elucidate all the variations within the language (Larsen-Freeman 2003; Pawlak 2006).

It goes without saying that grammar has received a great amount of attention from researchers and theoreticians in the field of language teaching. There were periods during which the value of grammar was frequently downgraded and dismissed by linguists, only to be elevated and highly praised at a different time in history. Its effectiveness differed depending on the methodological views prevailing during a particular period (Komorowska 2002). Looking back in time, one may observe that grammar played a pivotal role in the Grammar Translation Method. At that time grammar constituted an essential component of every lesson. The activities which focused on a specific grammar form entailed translation into learners' L1. Providing learners with the necessary rules was perceived as the key to success. It was assumed that if the learner cautiously attends to the formal aspects of the lesson, they will be able to present a fluent command of the target language.

In course of time, though, the Grammar Translation Method was disapproved of and the role of grammar in the process of language learning was disparaged. The assumption that the aim of language learning was to become familiar with its grammatical system was no longer valid. The method lost its proponents and came in for a great deal of criticism. In response to this approach, there emerged new ways of teaching the second/foreign language. Researchers started to espouse the belief that learners can master the target language by means of concentrating on communication activities. The Audiolingual Approach, which focused mainly on the formation of proper linguistic habits, rejected grammar and treated it as irrelevant in language learning. The Chomskyan revolution, on the other hand, placed grammar in the centre of linguistic interest (Tonkyn 1994). Although his beliefs had not directly affected language teaching, they formed a certain

atmosphere that made it easier for mentalist and cognitive approaches to revive and flourish. One of them was the Cognitive Code Method which was often referred to as an updated version of the GTM (Carroll 1966).

The early 1960s again saw a decrease in interest in teaching grammar, which was the result of disenchantment with linguistics and the traditional approach to teaching grammar. That period saw the emergence of the notion of *communicative competence* which encompassed not only the linguistic facet but also the sociolinguistic one (Hymes 1972). Communicative Language Teaching, which was also formulated as a response to formal instruction, dismissed grammar as irrelevant in the process of successful language learning. According to this approach, effective communication did not necessitate the employment of grammar. Prabhu (1987), who was an advocate of the deep-end Communicative Language Teaching, also believed that knowing grammar was useless as learners could learn the language naturally by means of meaningful communication. Similarly, Krashen (1981) downplayed the importance of grammar when learning the target language. In fact, he attributed the development of linguistic competence to the exposure to the TL, provided that the input is fully comprehensible. Such a stance on language learning triggered turmoil among researchers. It also led to the development of new methods and approaches to language learning. The Direct Method and the Natural Approach also disregarded grammar, as it was generally assumed that sufficient exposure to comprehensible input and the TL will lead its mastery (Komorowska 2002).

The Natural Approach, created by Tracy Terrell, appeared to exert a profound impact on second language learning worldwide. Based on an analytic syllabus which centred around communicative tasks, the Natural Approach placed emphasis on boosting learners' ability to communicate freely and spontaneously. Grammar, again, was marginalized, although Krashen and Terrell (1983) admit that "only certain rules need to be taught (. . .) only certain students will be able to profit from grammar instruction (. . .) [and] grammar use should be limited to situations where it will not interfere with communication" (p. 57).

While the early 1980s treated grammatical competence as only a small part of communicative competence, the second half of the 1980s experienced a revival of interest in grammar. However, instead of examining the advantages and disadvantages of focusing on formal aspects of the target language, researchers started to pay attention to situations in which formal instruction would benefit L2 learners. Language learning based mainly on exposure to the target language along with the *zero option*, which rejected grammar and error correction, came in for heavy criticism, which was also espoused by the results of different research studies (e.g. Schmidt 1983; Pavesi 1986). The beneficial role of grammar instruction was appreciated one more time, especially because meaning-centred teaching did not manage to live up to scholars' expectations. Researchers, along with practitioners, expressed their serious misgivings concerning the absence of grammar in the foreign language classroom, which is justified in the following words:

> I believe that it is a myth that grammar can be learned on its own, that it need not be taught. While some people can pick up grammar of a language on their own, few learners are capable of doing so efficiently (. . .). Furthermore, very few learners, even if they have the opportunity to live in a community where the target language is spoken, would learn the grammar as efficiently outside the classroom as they can within it. (Larsen-Freeman 2003, p. 78)

In course of time, many researchers came to the conclusion that knowing the language should not be limited to the ability to communicate. Although immersion programs helped learners become more fluent, they also suffered from several limitations, one of them being poor results on tests focusing on grammatical accuracy.

Undoubtedly, grammar has aroused a great deal of controversy among researchers and theoreticians. Opinions on its efficacy still vary, though, particularly in the Polish context. However, finding teachers who openly disapprove of grammar and its presence in the classroom would be a difficult task. Such a situation is inextricably linked with learners' expectations. Many of them admit that it is grammar that is of utmost importance to them and it is this area that they want the teacher to place emphasis on. Of course, moderation seems absolutely vital. It is the present author's firm belief that teachers should give prominence to grammar as well as to the development of communicative skills.

1.3 Form-Focused Instruction: Preliminaries

The role of form-focused instruction (FFI), defined as "any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form" (Ellis 2001, p. 1), in a foreign language classroom has been of great interest to researchers and theoreticians for the last few decades. The reason why this particular area attracted such a great deal of attention is the fact that by examining form-focused instruction researchers wanted to develop and test theories of SLA, as well as to establish the role of formal instruction in the foreign language classroom. The present author has resolved to focus on this field as it is of great importance to researchers and teachers alike, since investigating FFI may help to present the most effective ways of teaching grammar to foreign language students. One of the aims of conducting studies into form-focused instruction is the fact that they might ameliorate the quality of pedagogic practice, which in turn may help L2 learners struggling to master this subsystem.

Within the last few decades of research into form-focused instruction, one could observe certain changes in the manner FFI was perceived. At the very beginning, it was examined in connection with the teaching method adopted in the classroom. Later on, it was conceptualized as a certain form of exposure to the target feature, as opposed to natural exposure, or as a set of processes taking place in the classroom (Ellis 2001). Finally, FFI was conceptualized as different, pedagogically oriented options.

Pawlak (2006) states that thanks to cautious examination of FFI it will be possible "to bridge, or at least narrow, the gap between SLA theory and research on the one hand and language pedagogy on the other, as it brings the concerns of researchers and teachers" (p. 62). The relationship between teachers and researchers is by no means an easy one because, among others, they work in different social contexts and frequently have different aims and expectations referring to their professional life. Therefore, any attempt at trying to diminish the differences between these two worlds, is in the present author's opinion, fiendishly useful.

The following subchapters, which are a theoretical introduction, will concentrate on the early research conducted into the vast area of FFI. The author will also present the different types of form-focused instruction.

1.4 Form-Focused Instruction and Meaning-Focused Instruction

When addressing the notion of form-focused instruction, one may frequently come across the term *meaning-focused instruction*, also referred to as MFI. In FFI, the learner is provided with formal instruction whose aim is to make him/her notice the feature in question. Stern (1990) describes this phenomenon as an *analytic strategy*. In MFI, on the other hand, learners pay attention only to the content of the message they want to convey, which is described as an *experiential strategy* (Stern 1990). Here, the learner needs the target language to find a solution to a problem, to exchange information or to share their opinions about a certain topic. When comparing FFI and MFI, Pawlak (2006) provides the following definition

> while the former relies on the techniques of study and practice and invites the learner to pay attention to formal and functional features of languages which are to a greater or lesser extent abstracted from the context of actual use, the latter encourages the student to use the language to accomplish specific communicative goals, focus on communication and participate in social interactions and practical transactions. (p. 18).

Although the distinction is a common one, there have been voices of criticism levelled at it. Thus, Widdowson (1998) believes that separating FFI from MFI is artificial since in form-focused instruction learners pay attention to meaning and form as well. In meaning-focused instruction learners also have to concentrate on the form in order to analyze the message they want to convey or receive. What Widdowson considers the most significant issue differentiating the two notions is the sort of meaning learners pay attention to, namely semantic meaning, typical of language activities, and pragmatic meaning, characteristic of communicative exercises. Ellis (2000), on the other hand, argues that the key difference does not lie in the type of meaning but rather in the manner in which language and the learner are perceived. The researcher adds that language can be viewed as an object, rather than a tool, and the learner may function as a student, as opposed to a user. Therefore, to

quote Ellis (2001), "attention to lexical forms and the meanings they realize, where words are treated as objects to be learned, constitutes form-focused instruction" (p. 13).

Another way of conceptualizing FFI and MFI would be analyzing the data that are available to learners within SLA. In meaning-focused instruction, learners are provided with positive evidence about what is possible in the target language (Long and Robinson 1998). Positive evidence can be either authentic or modified. Proponents of MFI believe that the samples of the target language should be altered to be made more comprehensible. However, these changes should be, as Long and Robinson (1998) argue, as natural as possible and should result from negotiation for meaning in practitioners' "spontaneous attempts to communicate with less proficient speakers and not the product of artificial linguistic simplification, for example through a priori manipulation of the lexical frequency, sentence length, and syntactic complexity of texts" (1998, p. 19). In form-focused instruction, negative evidence plays a significant role. It is defined as information about what is not possible in a given language. It can take on two forms: the preemptive one in which learners are supplied with grammar rules before they utter incorrect forms, or the reactive one which entails providing learners with feedback. Reactive feedback can be explicit, or in other words provided directly/overtly in response to learners' mistakes, or implicit, in which case the teacher may break down communication or employ recasts or simply negotiate the form in question.

The advocates of FFI argue that providing learners with feedback in response to an incorrect utterance makes him/her notice the differences between input and output and, in turn, induces him/her to concentrate on the form. Long and Robinson (1998) add that sometimes comprehensible input it not satisfactory, for instance, some structures are impossible to learn from positive evidence. Long (1996) adds that "negative feedback obtained in negotiation or elsewhere may be facilitative of SL development, at least for vocabulary, morphology and language-specific syntax, and essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts" (p. 414).

There have been several studies exploring the effects of FFI and MFI. Beretta and Davies (1985) set out to compare the two types of instruction by assessing the Bangalore Project. At this point it seems fitting to briefly describe this notion created by Prabhu, a teacher of English in India. He wanted his students to be able to perform different tasks but without any formal instruction, which he deemed as superfluous. The aim of a lesson conducted in this manner was to successfully complete a task rather than perform a grammar activity. Beretta and Davies (1985) decided to compare experimental lessons with lessons carried out by means of the structural-oral-situational method. The results of their project demonstrated that the experimental group achieved better results on dictation and task-based tests. However, the other group was better in terms of structure-based and contextualized grammar tests. The findings obtained managed to fully support the superiority of MFI over FFI.

In another research project, Lightbown (1983, 1992) examined francophone subjects learning English within a comprehension-based program. During a 3-year project, the children read and listened to book recordings in English for

30 min on a daily basis. The learners did not receive any formal instruction throughout the study. Once the treatment was over, the children were compared with learners who engaged in an audiolingual program with emphasis on grammar. The findings demonstrated that both groups presented a similar level of comprehension in terms of written and spoken English. However, it was the experimental group that appeared to have developed a wider range of vocabulary and greater fluency and accuracy when speaking. It was the experimental group, though, that achieved much lower results on a grammatical competence test. The results are far from conclusive and fail to find a superior type of instruction. Pawlak (2006) believes that "even though such findings provide evidence that it is possible to acquire certain features of grammar in the absence of FFI, both the experimental and control subjects in the study were at basic levels of English development" (p. 180).

In a more recent study, Rodrigo et al. (2004) explored the efficacy of the comprehensible-input approach and a traditional teaching method with emphasis placed on formal instruction. The subjects participating in the research project were learners of Spanish at an American university. They represented an intermediate level of advancement. The first group was to read certain excerpts selected by the teacher and by the subjects themselves. The other one performed the same task; the only difference being that these subjects took part in a follow-up discussion closely related to the material they read. The last group received formal instruction in vocabulary and grammar. The findings of the study revealed that, on a vocabulary and grammar test, the two input groups did considerably better than the group which received formal instruction. The researchers concluded that their work demonstrated the superiority of the input-based approaches and that these methods could be successfully employed when teaching vocabulary and grammar. Such enthusiastic comments should be eschewed, though. Pawlak (2006) explains that little is known about the design of the study. Moreover, the researchers did not determine whether the subjects' level of language advancement was the same before the treatment. To make matters worse, the information pertaining to the testing instruments was rather scant. Therefore, the subjects could have been affected by the practice effect. The last argument advanced is the dearth of information about the sort of instruction the subjects received prior to the treatment.

1.5 Different Types of Knowledge

Despite frequent disagreements concerning the manner in which grammar should be introduced, researchers see eye to eye as for the typology of language knowledge. One may therefore differentiate between explicit and implicit knowledge. Krashen (1981) and Bialystok (1978) took interest in the relationship between formal instruction and L2 development, which created the foundations for the division into implicit and explicit knowledge. This distinction is pivotal in second language acquisition theory and it has attracted a great deal of interest among

researchers and methodologists. It bears a resemblance to Krashen's (1981) distinction between acquisition and learning. The following subsections will concentrate on a comprehensive analysis of the two types of knowledge. Mention will also be made of the interface position.

1.5.1 Explicit Knowledge

This type of knowledge is "available to the learner as a conscious representation", as propounded by Ellis (1994, p. 355). In a later paper, the same author (2004) adds that this is the knowledge of various norms and features of the target language, including lexical, pragmatic, phonological and sociocritical ones. The learner is equipped with the necessary metalanguage to talk about this sort of information. Explicit knowledge entails data about L2 stored in the form of examples, chunks, fixed phrases but also grammar rules. The learner may access it through controlled processing.

Furthermore, the learner may easily employ explicit knowledge when they encounter a task they have difficulty in completing. Another feature of explicit knowledge is that the learner is able to elucidate, not necessarily by means of complex metalanguage, why a certain utterance is appropriate or inappropriate, which makes the knowledge verbalizable. Pawlak (2006) provides an additional characteristic of explicit knowledge, namely that it can grow in breadth, so the learner gathers an increasing number of facts concerning the target language. Explicit knowledge can also increase in depth and become more precise and more consistently employed. What is more, it is frequently referred to as encyclopedic knowledge, associated with declarative knowledge (Anderson 1983), which does not occur in spontaneous utterances. Although some researchers disagree with the following stance, it is believed that learners may learn it at any age since it is not limited by learners' developmental stage but rather by the cognitive complexity of the target feature analyzed, its function and the use of complicated metalanguage (Ellis 2005; Pawlak 2006). When compared with implicit knowledge, the explicit type is less systematic and less coherent, which results in diminished correctness (Pawlak 2007).

In one of his articles, Ellis (2006) argues that the question whether teaching explicit knowledge grammar is one of the most contentious issues in the field of grammar teaching. Therefore, in his attempt to at least partially address this case, he poses the following three questions:

1. Is explicit knowledge of any value in and of itself?
2. Is explicit knowledge of value in facilitating the development of implicit knowledge?
3. Is explicit knowledge best taught deductively and inductively? (p. 96).

As for the first question, as Ellis says, researchers are frequently at odds when it comes to learners' ability to learn explicit knowledge. There are those who strongly believe that it is fairly possible and those who oppose such a stance (Krashen 1982).

Ellis's question leads to yet another issue, namely the degree to which learners actually put their explicit knowledge to practice. One explanation which has received some support is that this capability is restricted. According to Krashen (1982), learners make use of their explicit knowledge when they consciously apply it in the production of an utterance, or in other words when they *monitor* its employment. First of all, learners need to have a sufficient amount of time at their disposal to pay attention to the form. They also need to be familiar with the grammar rule if they are to produce it in speech (Steinberg and Sciarini 2006). What is more, studies demonstrate that teaching explicit knowledge without providing learners with a chance to practise the linguistic feature, in other words teaching explicit knowledge by itself, is futile. Therefore, the available body of research does not provide a conclusive answer to Ellis's first question. As far as the last two questions are concerned, they will be expatiated on in the subsections devoted to the contentious issue of the interface hypothesis as well as to the two approaches of teaching grammar, the deductive and inductive one.

1.5.2 Implicit Knowledge

As opposed to explicit knowledge, implicit knowledge is unconscious and largely based on learners' intuition. It can take on the form of formulaic knowledge, which comprises chunks, or rule-based knowledge, in which case it encompasses abstract as well as generalized structures (Piechurska-Kuciel 2005). It is often referred to as procedural knowledge (Anderson 1983) which is highly automatized and easily accessible to the learner and can, therefore, be applied in spontaneous utterances. For this reason, it is assumed to form the basis for linguistic competence. What is more, it possesses a coherent structure and is employed consistently and correctly, although it cannot be verbalized until the learner forms an explicit representation. An important issue related to implicit knowledge is the one of learners' age and its impact on the ability to learn it. On the basis of, among others, the Critical Period Hypothesis, it is assumed that learning implicit knowledge is indeed affected by learners' age. That is why its development within a foreign language classroom may constitute a pedagogical problem.

1.5.3 The Interface Position

The relation between explicit and implicit knowledge within the field of SLA is a vexed one. Although researchers concur that successful second language acquisition hinges on implicit knowledge and its development, they dissent in terms of the degree to which explicit knowledge can be transformed into implicit knowledge. That is why numerous attempts have been made to investigate and clarify the issue,

which resulted in the creation of three different positions: *the non-interface*, *the strong interface* and *the weak interface position*.

According to Krashen (1982), learners' *acquired system* facilitates the initiation of an utterance. It is also believed to be responsible for learners' fluency and the ability to correctly judge a given sentence or utterance. The *learned system*, on the other hand, functions as a monitor whose use relies on the time necessary to access the learned system, the knowledge of rules and focus on form instead of on meaning (Lightbown and Spada 1990). Krashen (1982) identifies the acquired system with implicitness and the learned one with explicit processes. The researcher argues that these two systems are disconnected and should be treated as separate. That is why, converting explicit knowledge into the implicit one is not possible, which formed the basis for *the non-interface position* also supported by Seliger (1983), Schwartz (1993) and Hulstijn (2005). According to this position, "acquired knowledge can only be developed when the learner's attention is focused on message conveyance, and (. . .) neither practice not error correction enables learned knowledge to become acquired" (Ellis 1994, p. 356). On the basis of these assumptions, providing learners with formal instruction is futile. Fluency can only be developed thanks to comprehensible input.

A different view was presented by Sharwood Smith (1981), and later corroborated by Johnson (1996) and DeKeyser (2001), who propounded *the strong interface position*. According to this stance, explicit knowledge can be transformed into implicit knowledge thanks to an extensive amount of practice directed at a given feature, which is justified by the following words: "it is quite clear and uncontroversial to say that most spontaneous performance is attained by dint of practice" (Sharwood Smith 1981, p. 166). This transition from explicit to implicit knowledge does not necessarily mean that learners dispose of their awareness of rules (Pawlak 2007).

The last model to be elaborated on is *the weak interface position* which states that there are certain limitations to the transition of explicit to implicit knowledge. To start with, as Pawlak (2007) says, in order to incorporate the target feature into their interlanguage (IL), learners need to represent the necessary developmental stage (Ellis 1997). What is more, explicit knowledge can indirectly lead to the development of implicit knowledge because it makes it possible for the learner to notice the target form. It also makes the learner cognizant of the gap in their target language (Ellis 2002). Additionally, learners employ their explicit knowledge in language production which, in turn, activates the mechanisms responsible for implicit knowledge development (Schmidt and Frota 1986).

1.6 Types of FFI

Form-focused instruction encompasses a great many terms, which frequently engenders some deal of bafflement. The aim of this subsection is to analyze the pivotal ones and present the different pedagogic options associated with them in order to provide a theoretical background for the whole volume.

Many believe that the upsurge of interest in FFI may be attributed to Long's (1991) seminal work in which he differentiated between *focus on forms* and *focus on form*. Although these terms have gained great popularity and have been widely employed, Ellis (2001) believes that conceptualization of FFI should be referred to as three rather than only two types: focus on forms, planned focus on form and incidental focus on form, all of which will be elaborated on in further subsections of the volume.

1.6.1 Focus on Forms

Based on a synthetic syllabus (Wilkins 1976), the focus on forms approach assumes that gathering distinct entities is the main goal of language learning. Thus, learners treat the TL as an object rather than a tool and work as students rather than real users of the language, a distinction made in an earlier part of this chapter. In focus on forms the teacher and the students are cognizant of the purpose of the task, namely learning a specific structure or form which was earlier preselected by the teacher. What is more, focus on forms "always entails isolation or extraction of linguistic features from context or from communicative activity" (Doughty and Williams 1998a, p. 3).

Focus on forms appertains to a traditional way of teaching grammar in which the elements to be taught are preselected by the teacher and ordered in accordance with the following: the degree of difficulty, the frequency of occurrence or utility (Johnson 2001; Pawlak 2006). In focus on forms it is the form, as opposed to meaning, that is of utmost importance. Frequently associated with focus on forms is the PPP procedure, which comprises presentation, practice and production. The target feature is first presented, either in a deductive or inductive manner, then the learners are provided with numerous exercises that check their understanding of the feature taught and, finally, learners are given a chance to produce the item.

There are different options associated with focus on forms. They include explicit and implicit focus on forms as well as structured input and production practice. They will be addressed on in the following subsections.

1.6.1.1 Explicit Focus on Forms

The purpose of explicit focus on forms is, to quote Ellis (1997), to "teach about grammar so that learners construct some kind of conscious, cognitive representation which, if asked, they can articulate. This is likely to entail the learners learning some subtechnical vocabulary (e.g. 'refer to' and 'agree') and technical terms (e.g. 'article' and 'pronoun')" (p. 84; as cited in Pawlak 2006, p. 266). As was mentioned earlier, the teacher may focus on a preselected item by means of deduction or induction (Fig. 1.1). Both approaches are believed to facilitate the development of explicit knowledge.

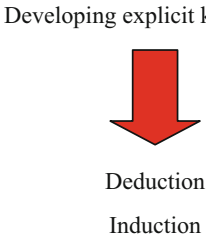

Fig. 1.1 Ways of developing explicit knowledge

In the deductive approach, also referred to as rule-driven learning (Thornbury 2001), learners are first provided with a rule, orally or in a written form, and then asked to complete an activity that requires the application of this particular rule. The tasks may include transformation activities, translation tasks, or fill-in-the-blanks exercises. On the whole, the order of this type of instruction is rather fixed, although there are certain components which can be altered and which are subject to modification. These include features like *explicitness*; that is, the teacher may supply the learners with a complete rule explanation or only part of it (Sharwood Smith 1981). The next issue is *elaboration*, which pertains to the amount of time the teacher spends on elucidating a certain item. *The source of presentation* is another component likely to be altered (Eisenstein 1980). The rule may be provided by the teacher, by another student or by the coursebook. Finally, *the manner in which the rule is provided* may also differ—the rule may be introduced in a written or oral way or as a combination of both.

When discussing the deductive approach, Pawlak (2006) explains that the teacher should take into consideration several other significant issues. To start with, the teacher ought to decide whether a verbal statement of a rule is necessary, as sometimes different devices may be good enough when introducing grammar. For instance, the teacher may explicate a rule by means of *demonstration*, *charts*, *iconic devices* or simply *pictures*. It is worth mentioning, though, that in the end many teachers still resort to an oral explanation to help students comprehend the concept being taught. Another issue is the use of learners' L1. Although many teachers and researchers advocate the use of L2 during the lesson, there are cases when L1 can be applied. These include lessons conducted among beginners who simply have not yet developed their TL vocabulary or cases when the target rule is believed to be complex and therefore difficult. Researchers believe, though, that regardless of the rule's level of complexity, the teacher should try and provide an explanation in the target language, and only if this approach fails can they provide learners with additional explanations in their L1. Similarly, another issue that should be considered is the use of metalanguage. Its employment ought to be adjusted to learners' level of language advancement, their cognitive development but also their learning styles (Borg 1999). In addition, c*rosslingual comparisons* also merit some degree of attention. Comparing the target structure with learners' L1 might arouse interest and, hopefully, make it more memorable.

However, the manner in which a rule is introduced may not be enough for it to be successful. The rule itself should also present certain qualities. Swan (1994) provides the necessary requirements a rule should meet to be efficacious. To start with, the rule should be true and reflect linguistic facts. Secondly, the teacher ought to present the limitations of the structure introduced. Swan (1994) also asserts that the rule should be as clear and straightforward as possible. Additionally, it should be presented in an easy to comprehend manner. Lastly, when introducing the rule the teacher should bear in mind the possible difficulties that the learners might encounter.

Further analysis of the conditions put forward by Swan leads to the conclusion that it is not always feasible to create a rule that would be true, simple and clear. There are researchers, like for instance Larsen-Freeman (2003), who argue that even the best rules cannot mirror all the grammatical intricacies. Therefore, Pawlak (2006) suggests elucidating why rules exist and informing learners *how* a certain form is employed and also *why* it is used in a given way and context. These steps taken by the practitioner could add meaningfulness to the process of SLA.

The deductive approach has many proponents who strongly believe that this manner of introducing forms can benefit L2 learners. To start with, such an approach helps to save precious lesson time. Many rules can be explicated in a simple and quick way providing more time for further practice. What is more, since in most cases deductive instruction follows the PPP procedure, it guarantees an orderly organization of the lessons, which is frequently praised by students (Johnson 2001). Deductive instruction appreciates the intelligence and maturity of students, particularly adults. It also recognizes the place of cognitive processes in the process of language acquisition (Thornbury 2001).

Furthermore, many students, who want to make the most of their language lessons, openly admit that they prefer this type of instruction as it facilitates quick language learning. The deductive approach is frequently employed in courses preparing students for certain types of exams (e.g. FCE, CAE, DFB or other language certificates). Introducing a rule directly, rather than asking learners to come up with their own ideas about the way in which the rule is formed, can help to economize on time. It should be borne in mind that courses aimed at exam preparation are usually very intensive. That is why, in order to use the time as efficiently as possible, teachers eagerly rely on deductive instruction.

Another advantage of deductive explicit instruction is that it provides learners with a feeling of safety, as they are cognizant of what they can expect during the lesson. They know they will focus on a certain linguistic item and then perform exercises that will check their comprehension of the form. Such a sequence of actions introduces a sense of security and stability, which many learners favour. In addition, the deductive approach makes it easier for the teacher to systematically cover the target grammatical issues, which also contributes to the feeling of regularity and order.

However, deductive instruction is not free from faults. To start with, Thornbury (2001) argues that many learners, particularly those younger and less advanced ones, may find it extremely discouraging to start a lesson from learning grammar.

They may also feel inhibited is some way, as this type of instruction deprives them of the chance to explore the target language and discover the rules on their own. Inquisitive language learners may find lessons conducted in this manner dull and lacking the element of challenge, which may lead to a significant drop in motivation.

Furthermore, deductive instruction may prevent learners from looking at the TL holistically. Instead of perceiving the different and abundant language components, they may attach too much importance to particular items like phrases, structures or chunks. Other critical remarks relate to the domineering role of the teacher. Many researchers argue that this instruction is teacher-centred in that it places too much emphasis on the teacher, rather than on the student, and that it promotes a transmission-style classroom (Thornbury 2001; Pawlak 2006). After all, it is the teacher who talks most of the time and the learners are expected to listen, at least during the initial part of the lesson when the rule is introduced. Such a situation limits the amount of time which learners could devote to interacting with each other and practising the target feature orally when engaged in communicative tasks. In this respect the deductive approach bears a resemblance to the Grammar Translation Method, as instead of engaging in communicative exercises, learners are supposed to become familiar with the rule, memorize it and successfully employ it in an activity.

To make matters worse, the sequence of the lesson and the manner in which it is conducted is completely imposed by the teacher. Therefore, learners become limited to the function of passive listeners who do not exert any impact on the way the lesson develops. Some of them might even leave the classroom with a feeling that it is the teacher who is the pivotal individual in the classroom and whom the learners have to obey. There is also a risk that learners who did not contribute to the development of the classes will not remember the rules imposed on them by the teacher. Additionally, deductive instruction in some cases may promote excessive reliance on the teacher and limit learners' autonomy, which may constitute a serious obstacle in the future, for the teacher and the student alike. Eventually, it may trigger discouragement and a loss of motivation to learn.

Finally, deductive explicit instruction requires presenting the target forms in isolation, which prevents learners from seeing how the structure/phrase operates in authentic language. Usually, learners only have a chance to observe the form in question in a formal classroom setting.

The second option in explicit focus on forms is inductive instruction, also known as discovery learning (Thornbury 2001). Here, to quote Pawlak (2006), "learners are first exposed to instances of language use, they are expected to attend to a specific grammatical structure in the data, pinpoint recurrent patterns, and arrive at their own generalizations which account for the regularities perceived" (p. 270). Thus, they are not provided with a fixed grammatical rule; on the contrary, they formulate it on their own on the basis of the materials they are supplied with. As for the order of inductive instruction, it is not subject to alterations, though certain variations are possible in other areas. The first one is the input which can take on the form of dialogues, photos, magazine articles, newspapers, poems, but also websites, music pieces, reports, etc. Pawlak (2006) goes on to mention the manner of data

provision which may be oral or written or a combination of these two. Different may also be the way in which the importance of a specific feature is stressed. The teacher may resolve to highlight the target feature by increasing its frequency in a text, bolding it, introducing italics, underlining it, etc. Additionally, language learners may do exercises requiring different operations like gap filling, completing a rule or discussing the use of a certain form. Finally, the last issue mentioned is the grammatical terminology introduced which may vary in different groups according to their level of proficiency as well as age.

Inductive, or indirect, instruction has frequently been praised and even regarded as much more efficacious than the direct type of instruction. One of the reasons is that learning about grammar in such a manner that is by making discoveries, is much more thrilling and challenging. Learners work out the way a rule is formed on their own, which makes learning more memorable. This approach is also ideal for inquisitive and imaginative learners who want to examine the language carefully and find the things that interest them. Students are more likely to memorize a rule this way than by being given it by the teacher. Thornbury (2001) explains that "the mental effort involved ensures a greater degree of cognitive depth which, again, ensures greater memorability" (p. 54).

As opposed to direct instruction, the inductive approach encourages active participation in the classes. Learners feel that they are co-creating the lesson and that not everything is imposed on them by the teacher. Here, they are no longer passive listeners; they can engage in a communicative exchange of information and interact with other students, which makes learning more stimulating and boosts learner autonomy. One should also remember about teachers who benefit from the inductive approach. It is very rewarding and motivating to see one's students actively participating in the lesson and wanting to make their own discoveries.

The approach has also come in for some degree of criticism from researchers and teachers alike. First of all, preparing a lesson along with this type of instruction is very time-consuming. The teacher needs to spend some time creating the lesson and selecting the materials to be discussed, which takes up a lot of energy. Secondly, the materials should be cautiously selected and adjusted to the learners' level and to their interests. Besides, the practitioner should also monitor the learners' use of L1. There is a risk that some of them, particularly the less advanced ones, may resort to their first language when negotiating the rule, which, in the author's opinion, should be avoided. What is more, working out the rules is not always quick and easy. In fact, in some cases, learners may need a great deal of time to carefully formulate their own rules, which the teacher should take into consideration when planning the lesson. Worse still, they may arrive at an incomplete or incorrect rule, which may result in a waste of precious lesson time which could have been devoted to practising the target feature. As a consequence, the learners' motivation may drastically decrease and they may leave the classroom with the impression that they failed to complete the task. The teacher might also experience a feeling of failure and a loss of time and shun indirect instruction in the future.

Lastly, there are students who disapprove of the inductive approach perceiving it as too time-consuming and who would prefer to be given the rule by the teacher. Frequently, learners attending courses preparing them for specific exams want to

economize on time and even expect the teacher to supply them with as much theoretical information about the TL as possible. They do not wish to participate in discussions concerning the target feature; they want to practise it instead. In such cases, inductive instruction is possible, though rather rarely.

In his discussion of inductive instruction, Thornbury (2001) explains that it is affected by a few factors, for instance the manner in which the data are organized, or the quality and the quantity of the data provided. As a result of the emerging technologies, teachers have more options to choose from. One of them would be corpora which are incessantly gaining great popularity. There are many advantages of incorporating these computerized databases into a foreign language classroom. To start with, they clearly display the extensive use of a certain word or phrase and provide the learner with a context. Learners can gain access to a great many examples of the target feature in a relatively short amount of time, which would be very difficult by means of, for instance, books, dictionaries or newspaper articles. Corpora enable students to learn more about the frequency and the co-occurrence of a given word (Thornbury 2001). This can be achieved thanks to concordancing programs which provide the co-text for the target word.

Despite their advantages, corpora have also been criticized for a number of reasons. First of all, learners may feel overwhelmed by the comprehensive and abundant data. Secondly, using corpora may also be time-consuming and take up too much lesson time. Furthermore, not every teacher is aware of the value, or even the existence, of corpora, and even if they do possess this knowledge, they frequently do not have the necessary software. For these reasons, corpora should not be employed on a regular basis but should rather be treated as "an appealing once-in-a-while departure from the ordinary" (Pawlak 2006, p. 273).

There have been several studies carried out with a view to examining the beneficial role of the deductive and inductive approach. Thus, Herron and Tomasello (1992) found the indirect approach to be the more efficacious one, while Rosa and O'Neill (1999) failed to find a significant difference between the two approaches. The studies which demonstrated the superiority of deductive instruction were conducted by Seliger (1987), Robinson (1996), Ellis (1993), DeKeyser (1995) and, more recently, by Erlam (2003). When investigating the two types of grammar instruction, one should also bear in mind that not every target feature can be introduced inductively. Ellis (2006) argues that "simple rules may best be taught deductively, while more complex rules may best be taught inductively" (p. 98). Of course, in the end, it is the teacher who decides about the form of the instruction. It would seem reasonable, though, to strike a balance when employing these approaches, as both of them can yield satisfying results.

1.6.1.2 Implicit Focus on Forms

The difference between explicit and implicit learning is that, in the case of the latter, learners attend to linguistic features without being cognizant of it. When comparing the two approaches, Ellis (2001) argues that "in both cases, learners may construct

rules to represent the form they are studying, but whereas explicit instruction is directed at helping learners make the rules explicit, implicit instruction is geared to helped learners acquire implicit rules" (p. 18). In implicit learning learners pay attention to form, though unconsciously. Implicit learning may take on the form of *structured input* and *production practice*. This distinction is based on the computational model of SLA. When examining the model, one can distinguish three different processes. The first one is intake, which refers to the part of the input which is housed in the learner's short-term memory. The second process is acquisition which involves internalizing the target features in long-term memory, also known as picking up the TL. The last process is production, which means the deployment of the linguistic items in a written or spoken way. As Ellis (2001) argues, the second process is not affected by environmental control; therefore, it is possible to direct formal instruction at this particular area. Focus on forms is to help learners master the production of the target feature; that is why it is aimed at production. An alternative to this approach would appear in the form of, the already mentioned, *structured input*.

Structured input is carefully planned to include numerous examples of the target feature. Learners perform a task which is meant to help them notice the item and process the meaning it conveys. There is no emphasis placed on production. Learners may be asked to perform different types of activities like drawing, choosing the best translation of an L2 sentence, matching sentences with pictures, etc. They are "pushed to attend to particular feature of language while listening or reading" (VanPatten 1996, p. 6). Ellis (2001) argues that structured input should be regarded as a component of focus on forms as it is created to help learners attach importance to form and not meaning. It also requires learners to attend to form on numerous occasions. It is often treated as another form of implementing a structural syllabus.

In *production practice* learners perform activities which focus on the target feature. As opposed to structure input, learners are given the chance to produce the item in question. These exercises are also called situational/contextual language exercises (Ellis 2001). Some may argue that production practice should not be included within the notion of focus on forms instruction. However, Ellis (1997, 2001) argues that it is form rather than meaning that is of utmost importance. What is more, learners are cognizant of the fact that the aim of the lesson is to excel at employing a certain linguistic feature by means of its frequent production.

1.6.2 Focus on Form

When defining the concept of focus on form, Long (1991) states that it "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (pp. 45–46). The teacher pays attention to a certain item, should a communicative need arise. Similarly to meaning-focused instruction, focus on form is based on an analytic syllabus,

created and organized in connection with the reasons for which the target language is learnt and "the uses of language necessary to meet them rather than a list of linguistic items" (Pawlak 2006, p. 23).

Long and Robinson (1998) state that focus on form may be attained in three ways. The first example the researchers provide is the one of a problem solving-task. The completion of a given activity requires the use of, in this specific case, verbs like *deteriorated*, *exceeded*, *doubled*, *plummeted*, *increased*, *decreased*, etc. "Seeding" a text with these verbs, or in other words increasing their frequency of occurrence, makes them more noticeable for the learners, which might accelerate the internalization of the target feature(s). The second possibility refers to drawing learners' attention to a certain problem. If the teacher notices that learners tend to make the same mistake very often, for instance during pair- or group-work, they may take time out from the task in order to lay stress on that particular issue. The last option is providing the learner with implicit negative feedback. As Long and Robinson (1998) argue, studies into first language acquisition demonstrate that the grammatical data in reformulations of children's utterances, also known as recasts, are very likely to be noticed. In fact, it is assumed that "recasts are more likely to facilitate acquisition than models containing the same grammatical information as evidenced, for example, by the rate of development of structures contained in recasts compared with models" (Long and Robinson 1998, p. 25). What is more, such claims have also found support in the field of SLA (Oliver 1995; Ortega and Long 1995).

Although taking time out and using recasts match the demands made by Long (1991), namely that focus on form should be incidental, seeding the text does not since it entails conscious selection of the target feature. On the basis of the arguments put forward by Doughty and Williams (1998a), one may distinguish three main features. The first refers to the learner's engagement with meaning before attending to form. The second stresses the importance of examining learners' needs in order to isolate the features that are problematic. Finally, the treatment should not extend in time (Ellis 2001).

There has been some disagreement regarding the effectiveness of focus on forms and focus on form in terms of implicit knowledge development. Long (1991) and Doughty (2001) believe that it is the latter instruction that is more likely to engender the development of learners' interlanguage since "the acquisition of implicit knowledge occurs as a result of learners attending to linguistic form at the same time they are engaged with understanding and producing meaningful messages" (Ellis 2006, p. 101). There are also advocates of focus on forms and its efficacy. One of them is DeKeyser (1998), who is of the opinion that linguistic features are learned through the automatization of explicit knowledge, which can only be attained by means of focus on forms. This approach ensures proceduralization of explicit knowledge by means of various activities like drills that focus on bahaviours rather than structures.

The following subsection will elaborate on the two types of focus on form: the planned and incidental one. In further parts of the chapter the author will present the main differences between these types of instructions and the pedagogical options associated with them.

1.6.2.1 Planned Focus on Form

In planned focus on form the instruction provided is intensive, which means that it is maintained over a certain period of time, a lesson or a few lessons conducted even for several weeks, and is directed at a particular language feature. As opposed to the focus on forms approach, the target feature is not selected on the basis of the syllabus, but in relation to learners' difficulty in employing it. The approach is therefore learner-oriented and is adopted by the teacher in response to the observed difficulties (Dakowska 2003). Moreover, learners are oblivious of the linguistic item that they are practising, which makes them function as real language users rather than only learners (Ellis et al. 2002).

Within planned focus on form one may distinguish different pedagogical options. One of them is *enriched input*. It comprises linguistic data that have been wantonly altered to provide learners with numerous examples of the linguistic item. Still, it is not this feature that is of utmost importance, for it is meaning that receives more attention, which makes the activities to be performed more communication-oriented. The purpose of enriched input is, to quote Ellis (2001), "to induce noticing of the target form in the context of meaning-focused activity" (p. 20).

Input may be enriched in miscellaneous ways, one of them being *input flooding*. It is believed that the more often a certain item appears within a text, the more likely the learner is to notice it. Apart from the increased frequency of occurrence, there is no other device that attracts learners' attention to the linguistic item. It is worth bearing in mind that although learners are exposed to a frequently occurring form, the teacher does not supply them with an explicit rule. The efficacy of input flooding hinges on two factors: its duration as well as its intensity (Pawlak 2006). However, even fulfilling these requirements, that is providing learners with intensive instruction throughout an extended period of time, cannot guarantee that learners will indeed notice the target feature. White (1998) adds that relying solely on input flooding when introducing a linguistic feature may not be enough. Therefore, in some cases the teacher will have to resort to more or less explicit explanations.

A second option within planned focus on form is *input enhancement* which can be exemplified as visual highlighting by means of bolding, italics, colour-coding or modifying intonation, all of which for the sake of attracting learners' attention and concentrating on the feature in question. Pawlak (2006) provides another example of enhancing input, i.e. *methodological enhancement*. The teacher may ask learners to do specially created follow-up exercises. Unfortunately, as was the case with input flooding, there is an incessant risk that despite all the exposure learners will still fail to notice the target feature and internalize it. Sharwood Smith (1991) argues that perceptual salience is not tantamount to linguistic perception. The researcher cautions that externally modified input does not trigger the incorporation of the target feature into the learners' interlanguage, which is justified in the following words: "although learners may notice the signals, the input may nevertheless be nonsalient to their learning mechanisms" (Sharwood Smith 1991, p. 121).

Input enhancement has received a fair amount of interest from researchers. Thus, Trahey and White (1993) set out to examine the value of input flooding among learners of English focusing on the issue of adverb placement. Although they did manage to master the SAVO (Subject-Adverbial-Verb-Object) sequence, they did not succeed in disposing of the SVAO (Subject-Verb-Adverbial-Object) order. The results of the study led the researchers to think that input enhancement may appear useful when learners focus on completely new items. It is not equally effective when learners try to discard the deviant rules existing in their interlanguage.

In a different research project, Jourdenais et al. (1995) also investigated the efficacy of input enrichment. The target feature they enhanced by means of a larger font was Spanish preterite and imperfect endings. The study revealed that learners paid more attention to the enhanced linguistic features rather than to those which were not externally modified. Another study was carried out by White (1998) who wanted to make the English third person singular possessive determiners more noticeable for francophone ESL learners. The researcher resorted to increased frequency of occurrence, highlighting by means of bolding, underlining, or altering the size of the font and italics. In the light of the results obtained, the researcher concluded that there were certain advantages resulting from the treatment. All the subjects improved their performance on the immediate post-test. However, the results obtained on further tests were less satisfying. White (1998) comments that it is possible that the subjects should have received more guidance when employing the input to create the determiner system (Doughty and Williams 1998b). Williams (1995), on the other hand, examined the effectiveness of input enrichment as opposed to explicit instruction. Emphasis was placed on participial adjectives and passive voice among students learning English as their second language. The findings obtained demonstrated that alterations, such as highlighting, may appear futile when implementing more sophisticated forms.

Focused communicative tasks also merit mention. These activities are designed in such a manner that learners pay attention to the target feature while performing a communicative task. In this type of activities meaning is a salient issue. Furthermore, learners feel that there is a certain goal they need to achieve. The task is outcome-evaluated and there is a strong real-world relationship (Ellis 2001). The difference between a communicative task and a focused one lies in the fact that the latter is meant to elicit the production of a preselected target feature. However, learners are not asked to employ the item. They are also unaware of the intended linguistic focus (Pawlak 2006). Some researchers believe that focused communicative tasks should result in a natural and useful production of the target feature (Loschky and Bley-Vroman 1993). Though difficult to achieve, it is feasible. As for the first requirement, *task-naturalness*, learners may produce the item naturally. Some situations may simply require the use of a given feature, for instance, when talking about predictions based on clues, learners are expected to employ the structure *to be going to*. The second feature is *task-utility*. Even though a certain task can be done without the deployment of the target feature, its use would facilitate and add variety to task performance. *Task-essentialness* is the last and at the same time the most difficult characteristic to attain that is discussed. Here task

performance depends on the employment of a certain item. There is a risk, though, which should be borne in mind. Pawlak (2006) explains that such a form of language practice "cannot guarantee that learners will in fact choose to focus on meaning rather than form since, particularly the more proficient ones, may identify the hidden instructional agenda and rely on their explicit knowledge, thus thwarting the teacher's intention to cater for incidental and implicit learning" (p. 258).

1.6.2.2 Incidental Focus on Form

As far as the second type of focus on form instruction is concerned, it should be mentioned that it is provided in an extensive manner. Therefore, numerous structures are covered within a relatively short period of time, for instance during one lesson. That is why the teacher is not able to comprehensively attend to the forms in question and, consequently, they receive scant attention. When comparing the two types of focus on form instruction, Ellis (2006) argues that "it is the difference between shooting a pistol repeatedly at the same target and firing a shotgun to spray pellets at a variety of targets" (p. 93). In incidental focus on form, the teacher intervenes when they notice that learners encounter grammatical obstacles which they cannot surmount or have difficulty in dealing with. The intervention is not a premeditated one and it takes place only during activities which are meaning-oriented. Two options have been distinguished within incidental focus on form, namely *preemptive* and *reactive focus on form*.

In preemptive focus on form, the teacher, though this could also be the learner, takes time out from a purely communicative activity with a view to drawing the learners' attention to a certain form. The form is stressed, even though no production errors associated with it have been produced. The target language ceases to be a tool and starts functioning as an object. Similarly, the learner becomes a student rather than a real user of the language. Ellis (2001, p. 23) provides the following example of taking time out from an activity focusing on creating an alibi for a crime:

T: *What's an alibi*?
T: *S has an alibi*.
T: *Another name for a girlfriend*? (*laughter*)
T: *An alibi is a reason you have for not being at the bank robbery* (. . .).

By means of such a short provision of the definition of the word, the teacher wants to make certain that every learner is familiar with the term in question.

Reactive focus on form bears a resemblance to the preemptive one in that attention to form may be attracted by the teacher or by the learner. Moreover, similarly to preemptive focus on form, it can arise due to communication problems, when the students fail to comprehend their classmates' message, or when there is a problem connected with the form, for instance when the learners want the teacher to provide them with additional information about a certain form because they want to learn more about it. In both cases the teacher may use a short recast or may resolve

to engage in a longer discussion. Reactive focus on form has attracted greater interest than the preemptive type. It comprises *implicit* or *explicit negative feedback* which is a reaction to learners' errors, whether actual or only perceived ones (Ellis 2001). As far as the former is concerned, it is generally preferred by teachers (Seedhouse 1997). Some studies have shown that in specific contexts, like for example immersion programs, teachers show a preference for recasts (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Mackey and Philp 1998). Apart from recasts, teachers have other possibilities at their disposal, such as requests for clarification and repetitions. There have been several studies examining the superiority of requests for clarification over recasts (Pica et al. 1989; Nobuyoshi and Ellis 1993; Ellis and Takashima 2000). The findings demonstrate that uptake is more likely when learners are asked to clarify their utterance rather than when they are provided with recasts.

The second component of reactive focus on form is explicit negative feedback. The teacher informs the learner directly that they made a mistake and corrects the deviant utterance. This type of correction is frequently shunned by many teachers. One of the most significant reasons is that it is considered to be highly obtrusive. What is more, learners receiving this type of feedback on a regular basis might feel discouraged and, in certain cases, they may even experience a dramatic decrease in motivation. Ellis (2001) explains this trend in the following words: "most likely it reflects a sociolinguistic need on the part of teachers to protect the face of their students" (p. 25).

The efficacy of incidental focus of form has been the subject of several research inquiries. Although the results pointed to the feasibility of combining attention to form with attention to meaning (Loewen 2003; Basturkmen et al. 2004), the studies concerning learners' uptake failed to provide conclusive results. As for the Polish educational context, Pawlak (2005) found that placing emphasis on form and meaning within communicative activities is by all means possible. Moreover, the researcher adds that it can be applied to different aspects of the target language and that it can exert a positive impact on uptake. Although the researcher states that "a dual focus on form and meaning is a powerful tool" (2005, p. 292), he argues that teaching grammatical features relying solely on such an approach is to be avoided. Teachers should not forget about the values of explicit instruction.

1.7 Research into FFI

In the 1960s and the 1970s researchers concurred that language teaching should include a focus on form. The most important issue examined was *how* to teach the target form rather than *whether* to teach it. Initial studies into FFI which were conducted at that time were method-oriented (Ellis 2001) and their aim was to globally compare the different methods of teaching the TL. Researchers wanted to check which type of instruction—the explicit, as observed in the Grammar Translation Method, or the implicit, present in the Audiolingual Approach—was more

beneficial in terms of grammar teaching. However, research results failed to clearly point the more advantageous method.

During that time, SLA researchers based their work on L1 acquisition studies and set out to explore the different ways in which learners acquired their L2 in a natural, rather than classroom, context. It is worth mentioning that part of that research was pedagogically-oriented. Researchers, such as for instance Hatch (1978), wanted to investigate how learners acquired the TL naturally and then to incorporate the findings into the classroom setting. The studies revealed that learners have their own order of language acquisition which is not affected by variables such as their age or L1. Therefore, as Ellis (2001) reports, there appeared a question whether, in the light of these results, formal instruction was needed. Such a situation triggered a great many other research projects whose aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of FFI among instructed and uninstructed learners. Additionally, researchers wanted to see whether students who received form-focused instruction demonstrated the same order of acquisition as those students who were deprived of FFI. The results were by no means conclusive. On the one hand, instructed subjects learned at a faster pace and presented a higher proficiency level than the uninstructed ones, which implied the effectiveness of FFI introduction (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991; Ellis 1994). On the other hand, though, some studies failed to find a relationship between FFI and the order of acquisition, as learners who received the treatment followed the same order of acquisition as learners who did not receive it. These opposing findings led many researchers to believe that "FFI only works by promoting the processes involved in natural language acquisition, not by changing them" (Ellis 2001, p. 4).

The third strand of early studies into the area of form-focused instruction is classroom process research. Its development resulted from the decreasing interest in comparative method studies. The purpose of those studies was to examine "how instruction was accomplished through the observation and description of teaching-learning events" (Ellis 2001, p. 4). In the beginning, researchers paid attention to issues like error correction or the classification of miscellaneous treatment options (e.g. Allwright 1975; Long 1977; Chaudron 1977). In course of time, however, they started to place emphasis on classroom interaction and its miscellaneous forms.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s researchers carried out numerous experimental studies with a view to examining whether learners learned the target forms introduced by the teacher. By "learned" Ellis (2001) means "operationalized as statistically significant gains in the accurate production of the targeted structures" (p. 5). These studies were theoretically and pedagogically driven. In the case of the former, researchers set out to test the hypotheses put forward by Krashen (1981) and Schwartz (1993), namely that it is only possible for a learner to acquire grammar by means of comprehensible input and that grammar instruction and corrective feedback do not have any influence on learners' acquired system. As for pedagogic motivation, the studies focused on the facilitative role of FFI in grammar learning. Researchers investigated whether form-focused instruction

helped in the acquisition of the target features that learners, despite many years of exposure to comprehensible input, did not manage to learn (Ellis 2001). Although some of the studies yielded rather inconclusive results, in general they showed that FFI exerted a positive impact on the target feature and led to gains in the production of the structure in question.

The early 1990s saw an increase in SLA theory developments influenced by information processing and skill learning theories. *The Noticing Hypothesis* was only one of several terms that appeared at that time. It was at that time that Schmidt (1990, 1994, 2001) formulated the Noticing Hypothesis, according to which "SLA is largely driven by what learners pay attention to and notice in target language input and what they understand the significance of noticed input to be" (Schmidt 2001, pp. 4–5; as cited in Pawlak 2006, p. 213). In other words, if the target form is to be acquired, it must be, more or less, consciously perceived or noticed by the learner in the input material. This assumption runs counter to Krashen's (1981) claims that learners acquire forms in an unconscious manner.

In his *Input Processing Theory*, VanPatten (1996) implies that attending to form and meaning simultaneously may constitute a problem, particularly for learners at an elementary level, who may be incapable of attending to both of them at the same time. Van Patten's theory is preoccupied "with how learners derive intake from input regardless of the language being learned and regardless of the context (i.e. instructed, noninstructed)" (VanPatten 2002, p. 757). The researcher states that if the learner is to fully attend to form, the input they are provided with has to be completely comprehensible. What is more, he also argues that when learners pay attention to meaning, they will resort to *default strategies* that "prevent them from attending to forms in the target language that do not conform to these strategies" (Ellis 2001, p. 8).

There are also researchers, like Johnson (1996) and DeKeyser (1998), who drew on the *Skill Building Theory* (Anderson 1993). They believed that formal instruction can facilitate the proceduralization of declarative knowledge by means of practice, particularly if learners receive negative feedback when they employ the feature in question in communication. Such theorizing, especially in terms of negative feedback, attention or consciousness, led to a slight change in scientific interests. Therefore, researchers focused on studies that addressed questions like:

- Do some types of form-focused instruction work better than the others?
- In what ways can input (positive evidence) be enhanced to promote noticing?
- What kinds of feedback (negative evidence) promote acquisition? (Ellis 2001, pp. 8–9)

Consequently, researchers have slightly changed their area of interest. Instead of focusing on whether grammar instruction really works and makes a difference, they have taken greater interest in the different types of FFI and in establishing which FFI type is the most efficacious one in developing the target language in a formal setting. Norris and Ortega (2001, pp. 158–159) mention the following questions in connection with the areas researchers wanted to explore:

1. Is an implicit or an explicit approach more effective for short-term L2 instruction? (Alanen 1995; de Graaff 1997; DeKeyser 1995; Doughty 1991; Ellis 1993; Robinson 1996; Scott 1989, 1990);
2. Can raising learners' metalinguistic awareness of specific L2 forms facilitate acquisition by fostering psycholinguistic processes of form-to-function mapping? (Fotos 1993, 1994; Fotos and Ellis 1991; Kubota 1995; Swain 1998);
3. Is instruction that draws learners' attention to relevant forms in the context of meaning-focused lessons more effective than an exclusive focus on meaning and content? (Lightbown and Spada 1990; Day and Shapson 1991; Lyster 1994; Leeman et al. 1995; Williams and Evans 1998);
4. Is negative feedback beneficial for L2 development, and if so, what types of feedback may be most effective? (e.g. descriptive research by Chaudron 1977; Lyster 1998; and experimental studies by Carroll et al. 1992; Carroll and Swain 1993; Doughty and Varela 1998; Kubota 1994, 1996; Long et al. 1998; Mackey and Philp 1998; Nagata 1993; Nobuyoshi and Ellis 1993);
5. Is acquisition promoted more effectively when learners process the input in psycholinguistically relevant ways than when they experience traditional grammar explanation and practice? (VanPatten and Cadierno 1993; Cadierno 1995; VanPatten and Sanz 1995; VanPatten and Oikkenon 1996);
6. Is comprehension practice as effective as production practice for learning L2 structures? (DeKeyser and Sokalski 1996; DeKeyser 1997; Nagata 1998; Salaberry 1998).

The studies conducted to explore the above mentioned issues are mostly experimental. However, one may also observe an increase in descriptive research projects, like attempts at presenting how teachers combine form and meaning in a classroom setting (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Panova and Lyster 2002; Loewen 2003; Pawlak 2005). As Pawlak (2006) reports, other issues investigated in these studies include the decisions teachers make when they choose the target feature, the type of the instruction and how they manage the time they have at their disposal (Borg 1999). Instruction types have also been analyzed in relation to, among others, learners' age, aptitude or their learning styles (Robinson 2002), the complexity of the target form (DeKeyser 2005), the degree of noticing (Schmidt 2001) or the duration of the study (Doughty 2001).

The last few decades devoted to FFI exploration have brought interesting and encouraging findings. One of the most significant ones is the fact that, as Ellis (2001) observes, the number of languages investigated in FFI studies considerably increased. Initially, it was English that received greatest attention. In course of time, however, researchers examined FFI in connection with other languages such as Chinese, German, Italian, French, Japanese and Spanish. However, there are certain obstacles which need to be surmounted, for instance the differing research methods and considerable lack of research replications (Norris and Ortega 2001). The things researchers are sure of are the beneficial role of FFI in promoting language learning and the fact that the natural order of acquisition is impervious to formal instruction.

Conclusion

The aim of the introductory chapter was to familiarize the reader with the broad notion of FFI and the essential issues connected with it. The chapter was to delineate the notion of grammar and form-focused instruction in greater detail. Therefore, mention was made of the different types of grammar as well as views on introducing grammatical instruction in the foreign language classroom over the years. The terms discussed are aimed to provide a brief theoretical background to further parts of the work but are not of the utmost importance as far as the whole volume is concerned. The information presented in the introductory chapter is to facilitate the analysis of the chapter devoted to the relationship between strategy instruction and the acquisition of the target form. Since the volume is mainly devoted to the area of language learning strategies (LLS), the author resolved to give priority to this particular field and present only the most significant data appertaining to FFI. The following chapter will focus on, among others, defining the concept of LLS and presenting the different factors that exert an impact on strategy selection and application.

Chapter 2
Language Learning Strategies: A Theoretical Backdrop

2.1 Introduction

The 1970s saw a certain change in the attitude toward language teaching and toward the learner. Stress was laid on the communicative aspect of teaching a language but also on the learner and their contribution to learning the target language. This approach was clearly visible in a study conducted by Rubin (1975) who wanted to investigate the strategies deployed by the Good Language Learner (GLL). The results of her project engendered great interest in strategies applied by learners. Researchers started to perceive the learner as a very valuable source of information that could reveal a great deal about the processes involved in learning a language. Thus, within the last few decades one could observe an upsurge of interest in learner autonomy and in the good language learner and language learning strategies. The first tendency is believed to have originated in Europe, whereas the second one in the USA. The strong interest in the area of LLS and their role in second language acquisition, as some researchers believe, stems from the need to identify the features of an effective learner (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). Researchers wanted to know what better learners did and what learning behaviours they engaged in that helped them surpass weaker learners (Rubin 1975, 1981; Naiman et al. 1978; Reiss 1983, 1985; Gillette 1987; Lennon 1989). Initially, though, it was believed that analyzing the teaching methods would be enough to find out why some learners are better than others. However, research into the teaching methods failed to point at the best method and the one that would ensure success when learning another language (Droździał-Szelest 1997).

The aim of this chapter is to provide comprehensive information about LLS and their conceptual development over the years. The chapter will focus on presenting certain problems associated with learning strategies such as, among others, whether they should be perceived as mental or behavioural, general or rather specific. Stress

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will also be placed on a selected number of factors influencing the choice and application of language learning strategies.

2.2 Defining Language Learning Strategies

The term *language learning strategies* has been present in the literature for a few decades and its appearance has led to many heated debates. Still, providing even a brief definition of this notion seems to cause certain difficulty. Researchers seem to differ in the way they define strategies, which Ellis (1994) puts down to looking at strategies form completely different perspectives. Oxford (1990) claims that in order to fully comprehend LLS, one has to analyze the basic meaning of the word *strategy*. The history of this word dates back to the ancient Greek times. Initially, the term *strategia* appertained to the art of war and all the military actions associated with it. It was described as "the art of using battles to win wars" (James 1984, p. 15). In course of time, though, the word *strategy* has been deprived of its military connotations and became widely applied in other fields of life such as politics, games or business. Strategy has taken on a new meaning; it can also have a *cooperative* (as opposed to competitive) and *nonadversarial* (versus adversarial) aspect (Oxford 1990). The term has also become very popular in the field of education where it has been converted into *language learning strategies* which Oxford describes as "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information" (1990, p. 8). Though useful, the definition, as the author suggests, needs further expansion. Therefore, Oxford propounded another, more developed one: "(. . .) learning strategies are 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).

Ellis believes that a learning strategy comprises "mental or behavioural activity related to some specific stage in the overall process of language acquisition or language use" (1994, p. 529). In comparison, Brown sees strategies as "specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information" (2007, p. 119). The definitions provided are too numerous to mention all of them. The table presented below (Table 2.1) presents an overview of selected definitions in chronological order.

When discussing the field of strategies it is impossible to omit a distinction between *learning strategies*, *communication strategies* and *production strategies*. Tarone (1981) proposes the following definition of communication strategies: "(. . .) a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (1981, p. 294). She adds that meaning structures comprise linguistic and sociolinguistic structures. What is more, she provides the necessary criteria for the definition to work. First of all, the speaker feels a need to convey a message to the listener. Secondly, the speaker is convinced that the structure, linguistic or sociolinguistic, they want to use

Table 2.1 Definitions of learning strategies (source original)

Source	Definition
Cohen (1984, p. 110)	LLS are "mental operations that learners utilize in accomplishing learning tasks"
Bialystok (1985, p. 258)	"Learning strategies are construed as activities undertaken by learners, whether consciously or not, that have the effect of promoting the learner's ability either to analyze the linguistic knowledge relevant to the language under study, or to improve the control of procedures for selecting and applying that knowledge under specific contextual conditions"
O'Malley et al. (1985a, p. 23)	"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"
Wenden (1986, p. 10)	"*Learning strategies* are defined as steps or mental operations used in learning or problem-solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning material in order to store, retrieve, and use knowledge"
Rubin (1987, p. 19)	"Learner strategies include any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information, that is what learners *do* to learn and *do to regulate* their learning"
Oxford (1989, p. 235)	"Language learning strategies are behaviours or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and enjoyable"
Oxford and Crookall (1989, p. 404)	LLS are "the behaviours used by learners to move toward proficiency or competence in a second or foreign language"
O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1)	LLS are "the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information"
O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 43)	"Learning strategies, (. . .) have learning facilitation as a goal and are intentional on the part of the learner. The goal of strategy use is to affect the learner's motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge"
MacIntyre (1994, p. 190)	LLS are "actions chosen by language students that are intended to facilitate language acquisition and communication"
Cohen (1998, p. 4)	LLS are "those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language"

to convey the message is not available. Therefore, and here we move on to the third criterion, the speaker resolves to abandon the message or use some alternative ways of communicating the message. Tarone (1981, p. 286) provides a number of examples of communication strategies, for instance paraphrase, borrowing, appeal for assistance, mime or avoidance, though she stresses that the list is by no means to be treated as final or exhaustive.

Another notion that Tarone discusses is production strategy, which, just like communication strategy, is a strategy of language use. A production strategy (PS) is

perceived as "an attempt to use one's linguistic system efficiently and clearly, with a minimum effort" (1981, p. 289). She adds that production strategies bear a resemblance to communication strategies as they rely on one's linguistic system; however, the former are deprived of negotiation of meaning. Examples of production strategies include the following: using prefabricated patterns, discourse planning and rehearsal All of them facilitate speaking in a given situation. Tarone (1981) also deals with the term *learning strategy* which she defines as "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language" (1981, p. 295). Mnemonics, memorization or repetition are examples of learning strategies. The main difference between learning strategies and communication ones is the fact that the former are used to learn, whereas the latter, as the name suggests, to communicate. However, it is not an easy task to examine whether the learner's intention when choosing a strategy was to learn or to communicate.

Tarone (1981) believes that, in theory, it seems possible to separate learning strategies from communication strategies by means of the first criterion she mentioned when defining communication strategies—a desire to convey a message to the speaker. However, there are certain issues which are not that clear. Firstly, it is difficult, or even impossible, to check what motivates the learner to deploy a given strategy—their desire to learn or to communicate. Secondly, the learners may in fact be eager to, both, learn and communicate. Furthermore, even if the learner decides to use a strategy with a view to communicating, they may obliviously acquire the target language.

As for LLS, Tarone (1980) suggested a distinction between language learning strategies and skill learning strategies. The former pertain to an attempt by the learner to deal successfully with new linguistic or sociolinguistic information concerning the language. Becoming a skilled writer, listener, reader or speaker is connected with skill learning strategies. Yet again, separating these two types may prove to be a challenge. The last notion Tarone mentions is that of perception strategy, namely "an attempt to interpret incoming utterances efficiently, with the least effort" (1981, p. 291). She also provides a few examples such as focusing on the ends of words or on stressed syllables. She elucidates that at times, thanks to the redundancy of speech, one does not have to pay attention to the whole utterance.

2.2.1 Conceptual Problems

Unfortunately, the plethora of definitions provided has not resulted in the creation of one fixed definition that would satisfy, both, researchers and practitioners. Such a situation may stem from the fact that learning strategies were looked at from different perspectives and many problems have not been resolved yet. Many still consider it to be unclear whether language learning strategies ought to be regarded as conscious or unconscious, mental or behavioural, specific or general. For these reasons Dörnyei refers to strategies as "immensely ambiguous phenomena" and adds that "nothing is clear about them" (2005, p. 162).

2.2.1.1 Behavioural or Mental Aspects of Language Learning Strategies

For some time it was not clear whether learning strategies should be perceived as *behavioural* or as *mental*. Oxford (1989, p. 235) treated them as purely behavioural ("behaviours or actions") and so did MacIntyre (1994, p. 190) by calling them "actions". In addition to this, there are also researchers who believe in the mental nature of strategies, and those who think that strategies can combine the mental and behavioural aspects. Weinstein and Mayer (1986) regard strategies as the actions or thoughts individuals take in order to comprehend, store and remember new pieces of information and new skills. What is more, Cohen (1998), and many other researchers, believe that certain learning strategies can be behavioural and therefore observable, whereas others are mental processes and cannot be directly observed.

2.2.1.2 General or Specific Nature of Language Learning Strategies

The next issue which seems to trigger a certain deal of interest and discord among researchers is the one of strategy *specificity* or *generality*. At this point, it is worth mentioning a distinction made by Stern (1983). He sees a difference between *strategies* and *techniques*. The former term was defined as "general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner" (1983, p. 405), whereas the latter as "particular forms of observable learning behaviour, more or less consciously employed by the learner" (1983, p. 405). An example of a *strategy* that Ellis (1994) provides is an active task approach. Making use of a dictionary or inferring grammar rules from texts, on the other hand, is seen as an example of a *technique*. The division made by Stern is not always appreciated by researchers who tend to employ the term *strategy* to talk about learning behaviours that Stern treats as *techniques* (Ellis 1994).

Another distinction was drawn by Seliger (1984). He distinguished between *strategies* and *tactics*. Strategies are regarded as "the basic abstract categories of processing by which information from the outside world is organized or categorized into cognitive structures as a part of conceptual framework" (1984, p. 41). Tactics, in contrast, are seen as "an infinitely variable set of behaviours or learning activities dependent on a wide variety of factors such as environment, age, personality, affective constraints, and first language" (1984, p. 38). It is believed that the former refer to the "subconscious mechanisms which govern how input becomes intake" (Droździał-Szelest 1997, p. 26). Tactics, which are said to be conscious, are used by learners to assess their progress, organize the learning situation or to deal with the demands of the task they are faced with.

Cohen (1998) believes that the proliferation of terms can become perplexing and, therefore, it would be better to "refer to all these simply as strategies, while still acknowledging that there is a continuum from the broadest categories to the most specific or low-level" (1998, p. 10; as cited in Bielska 2006, p. 97).

2.2.1.3 Self-Regulation

It seems clearly visible that the existing definitions of language learning strategies are frequently insufficient and lead to some confusion. As was mentioned earlier, there are several issues still waiting to be resolved despite great efforts made by researchers. To make matters worse, as Dörnyei (2005) argues, "virtually nobody examined the theoretical soundness of the concept of learning strategy critically, particularly given that the definitions offered in the L2 literature were rather inconsistent and elusive" (p. 167). While the value of learning strategies and their role in teaching methodology cannot be denied, the existing conceptual problems hinder further empirical investigations. In the light of such obstacles, the researcher goes ones step further and questions the need to still focus on learning strategies.

The evident dissatisfaction with conceptual confusion regarding LLS led many researchers to abandon the concept of a learning strategy and instead opt for a broader and more general one, namely self-regulation. The notion of self-regulation emerged in the 1990s in the field of educational psychology and has gained great popularity. Dörnyei defines self-regulation, also known as self-management, volition, action control or self-control, as "the degree to which individuals are active participants in their own learning" and adds that "it is a more dynamic concept than learning strategy" (2005, p. 191). Boekaerts and Corno also provide their definition and state that self-regulation is in fact a set of different processes which are situated "at the junction of several fields of psychological research, including research on cognition, problem solving, decision making, metacognition, conceptual change, motivation, and volition" (2005, p. 200). Self-regulation differs from language learning strategies in that it focuses on the process rather than the product. In fact, in comprises metacognitive, cognitive, behavioural and environmental processes that learners may freely apply to enhance their language performance.

Gu (2010) defined the notion of self-regulated learning as different methods the learners use to deal with "the learning task at hand and managing to self in overseeing the learning process under the constraints of the learning situation and learning context for the purpose of learning success" (p. 2). Self-regulated learning, as Zimmerman (1990) believes, affects the role of the teacher and the school as an institution as it "has profound implications for the way teachers should interact with students and the manner in which schools should be organized" (p. 4). The researcher also (1990, p. 6) states that self-regulated learning comprises three significant elements: students' application of self-regulated learning strategies, students' responsiveness to self-oriented feedback about the effectiveness of learning and, finally, students' interdependent motivational processes. What this means is that self-regulated learners take various steps to enhance their learning: they plan, set goals and self-evaluate their performance. They will deploy self-regulated strategies with a view to achieving their goals based on the feedback concerning their learning effectiveness and skills. In addition to this, self-regulated learners take greater responsibility for their results and consider the process of language acquisition to be a systematic one that can easily be controlled (Zimmerman 1990).

Despite the advantages of introducing self-regulated learning and self-regulated L2 learning strategies, the notion of self-regulation, as many agree, has also led to certain conceptual problems. Since it encompasses a great many terms and notions, it is far from easy when it comes to defining it. What is more, researchers may experience difficulty in operationalizing self-regulation empirically (Boekaerts et al. 2000). However, as Dörnyei (2005) argues, despite

> many fuzzy boundaries and distinctions, as well as numerous unresolved issues ranging from the conceptual to the methodological, scholars are keen to invest time and energy in researching the topic because the stakes have been raised considerably since the time whet the target research was learning strategies only: Self-regulation has become one of the important themes of scientific psychology in the 21st century. (p.192)

While changing the scope from strategies to self-regulation has not helped to produce a unanimously acceptable definition of language learning strategies, it has proved helpful as it allowed for "the broadening of perspective, with self-regulation proposed to be made up of a whole series of integrated and interrelated micro-processes, of which learning strategy use is only one" (Tseng et al. 2006, p. 81).

Although self-regulation emerged due to the growing disenchantment with the fuzziness surrounding learning strategies, it fails to preclude the need for the existence of the notion of LLS as, to quote Pawlak, "in order to empirically investigate the activities learners engage in with an eye to self-regulating their learning, it is still indispensible to define and describe these activities as well as to operationalize them in some way (2011d, p. 21). What is more, as many researchers believe, the new concept is far from perfect in terms of its definition and may certainly cause some difficulty in comprehending it. However, even this conspicuously "insufficient understanding does not prevent researchers from making headway in understanding other aspects of self-regulation" (Tseng et al. 2006, p. 81).

2.2.2 Characteristics of Language Learning Strategies

As can be seen in previous subsections, there are many issues which still have not been resolved and which sometimes lead to disagreement, for instance providing a comprehensive definition of the term *strategy*, the proliferation of terms, the nature of strategies—whether they are behavioural or mental, general or specific, conscious or unconscious. Other contentious areas encompass the effect that strategies exert on the students' interlanguage or the factors that encourage learners to employ language learning strategies. There are, however, certain aspects of strategies which researchers see eye to eye on. The list below, based on the work of Oxford (1990, pp. 8–13) and of Ellis (1994, pp. 532–533), is a brief overview of the characteristics of strategies.

Ellis (1994) believes that strategies appertain to general as well as more specific actions or techniques which are employed to learn the TL. Strategies are also problem-orientated, which means that a learner uses them when they have to surmount a learning obstacle. What is more, learners are cognizant of the strategies they apply and, if asked to talk about the exact steps, they can describe what strategies consist of. Ellis adds that strategies comprise two types of behaviour, namely linguistic (for example requesting the name of an object) and non-linguistic (for instance pointing at an object so as to be told its name). Furthermore, linguistic strategies can be performed in the L1 and in the L2. In addition to this, some strategies are behavioural and, thus, can be directly observed, whereas others are mental and cannot be observed. The researcher goes on to say that strategies can affect learning indirectly providing learners with data about the L2 which they can then process. On the other hand, certain strategies can exert a direct impact on learning, for example memorization strategies aimed at specific lexical items or grammatical rules. Finally, the use of strategies depends on the type of task the learner is to perform and individual learner preferences.

When analyzing the features of LLS, Oxford (1990) starts her discussion by saying that the aim of each strategy is to help the learner achieve communicative competence which has to include the use of meaningful and contextualized language in realistic interaction. Language learning strategies are the devices that facilitate active participation in such interaction. Moreover, they can boost communicative competence in general and more specific ways as well. As far as the former ones are concerned, Oxford mentions metacognitive strategies which can, for instance, help learners plan and assess the progress they make on their way to achieving communicative competence. Affective strategies help to boost learners' self-confidence, which is very helpful if interaction is to occur. The use of social strategies can lead to increased interaction and emphatic understanding, which is essential for communicative competence. Compensation strategies help to deal with situations in which the learner is at a loss to convey their message and, therefore, "help communicative competence to blossom" (1990, p. 9). Certain cognitive strategies aid understanding and recalling new material, which plays a significant role in the development of communicative competence.

Strategies can also function in more specific ways. Grammar accuracy can be improved by means of imagery, deductive reasoning or contrastive analysis. Sociolinguistic competence can be boosted thanks to social strategies such as cooperating with peers and/or native speakers, asking questions or becoming culturally aware. Discourse competence, on the other hand, can be enhanced by using, for instance, social strategies (cooperating), compensation strategies (using clues from the context to guess) and cognitive ones (recombination). Using gestures or synonyms when the target word is missing can aid strategic competence.

Another point Oxford (1990) makes is that LLS can give learners a sense of self-direction. It is particularly significant among students whose culture or environmental setting imposed a certain manner of learning on them. Encouraging such

learners to employ strategies could help them take the initiative. However, teaching learners may not be enough at times. Teachers may be faced with a much more serious issue, namely encouraging learners to actually "want greater responsibility for their own learning" (Oxford 1990, p. 10).

Language learning strategies can also expand the role of the teacher in the classroom. Thanks to promoting strategies, practitioners become more than instructors or managers. They help learners notice and deploy strategies. This way, the bond between the students and the teacher may become stronger, as learners will cooperate with a person who is also their adviser and guide. Pavičić Takač also believes that "LLS change and expand the role of teachers: they help, facilitate, advise, coordinate, diagnose, cooperate, offer ideas and directions, and participate in communication" (2008, p. 57).

Furthermore, LLS are used when there appears a language problem that needs to be overcome. Compensation strategies, for instance, are employed when there is a communication gap and affective strategies when the learner needs to boost their confidence. Strategies are also characterized by their action basis, which means that they are specific actions or behaviours that learners engage in to master the TL. There are a great many factors that influence these actions, for example motivation, aptitude or learning styles. Oxford also believes that LLS are not limited to cognitive functions only. Metacognitive, emotional and social mechanisms are also part of strategies and cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, LLS can have a direct influence on the process of learning (direct strategies) and an indirect one (indirect strategies). Both types play an equally important role.

Another subject Oxford (1990) raises is the one of observability. There are strategies which can be easily noticed and recognized by the teacher, such as pair- or group-work. However, there also strategies which can never by visible to the naked eye, for example making mental associations. That is why, many teachers are oblivious of the strategies their learners employ. Oxford (1990) also discusses the role of consciousness. Many researchers strongly believe that learning strategies are intentional and fully conscious. However, Oxford comments that in course of time learners begin to use strategies automatically. On the other hand, many learners employ strategies instinctively and are unaware that the learning behaviour they engaged in is actually a learning strategy.

Language learning strategies are also characterized by the fact that they can easily be taught to learners, as opposed to students' learning style or personality features which seem rather fixed. The teacher can conduct strategy training that could make learners more cognizant of the strategies, encourage them to apply strategies and to experiment with them. Strategies are flexible, which means they do not always appear in the same place and at the same time. Learners decide when a strategy will be used. However, some degree of predictability is also possible; for instance, before writing an essay learners will usually make a plan of what they want to include in their piece of writing. Finally, LLS are affected by many factors. The most important ones will be discussed in the following subchapters.

2.3 Selected Factors Affecting the Choice and Use of Learning Strategies

The previous subchapters dealt with defining language learning strategies. In this part of the volume the author will try to address another significant issue, namely the factors that motivate learners to choose certain strategies. It is believed by many researchers that learners vary greatly in their selection and application of strategies. It is also said that one factor cannot lead to language learning success and that there are a great many of them which, when combined, may result in achievement (Bielska 2006). Ellis (1994) believes that a mixture of individual learner differences and situational and social factors affects the learner's choice of strategies which, consecutively, determines the learner's rate and level of achievement. However, the level of success can also influence the strategies that students choose. Since there is a great number of factors that could interact with learning strategies, the author has resolved to discuss only a selected group of variables.

2.3.1 Cognitive Factors

Since it would be difficult to cover all the cognitive variables, the author will deal with only a selected number of areas, such as cognitive and learning styles, aptitude, the distinction between field dependence and field-independence and, finally, ambiguity tolerance. As the chapter is dedicated to the concept of LLS, emphasis will be placed on empirical studies exploring the impact that these variables exert on the selection and application of language learning strategies.

2.3.1.1 Cognitive and Learning Styles

The two variables that are of interest to SLA researchers and theoreticians are cognitive and learning styles. What should be borne in mind is that these two constructs should not be regarded as one, which is frequently the case. Cognitive style refers to the way we process information and to the manner in which we perceive the surrounding world, comprehend and analyze it in our minds. Brown (1991, p. 104) says that "the way we learn things in general and the particular attack we make on a problem seem to hinge on a rather amorphous link between personality and cognition; this link is referred to as cognitive style." Learning styles, on the other hand, can be described as "cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Keefe 1979, p. 4). In other words, it is the way in which we prefer to learn but it can also refer to the learner strategies we are willing to employ. When dealing with the distinction between a cognitive and learning style, Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) say that "the former can be defined as a predisposition to process information in a characteristic manner while the latter

can be defined as a typical preference for approaching learning in general. The former, in other words, is more restricted to information-processing preferences, while the latter embraces all aspects of learning" (p. 602). The student's learning style can predispose them to deploy certain strategies. For instance, students who are characterized by a visual learning style may opt for the use of imagery, whereas an analytic or field-independent learner may choose deduction or grouping (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). It is commonly believed that one's learning style is rather fixed and not amenable to change. However, there is evidence to prove that it is possible to aid adult learners in forming their learning style and looking closer at their learning preferences by conducting *learner training* (Ellis 1994).

Learning styles, due to their multiple distinctions and aspects, may be in fact much more complex than they seem. Dörnyei (2005, p. 120; as cited in Pawlak 2009a, p. 14) says that "the area is a real quagmire: There is a confusing plethora of labels and style dimensions; there is a shortage of valid and reliable measurement instruments; there is a confusion in the underlying theory; and the practical implications put forward in the literature are scarce and rather mixed, and rarely helpful." Indeed more than many distinctions have been proposed in terms of learning styles. Thus, Pask and Scott (1972) distinguish *serialists* who work with simple hypotheses and *holists* who prefer more complex one. In comparison, Nelson's (1973) differentiation includes *referential* and *expressive learners*. The former use language in order to refer to things, whereas the latter to communicate emotions, desires, etc. Finally, Hatch (1974) points at *rule-formers*, who focus on linguistic forms and rules, and *data-gatherers* who place more emphasis on communication.

On the basis his surveys, Reid (1987) described four disparate perceptual learning modalities: visual learning, auditory learning, kinaesthetic learning and tactile learning. Also Willing (1987) used a survey in which he examined adults learning English as their second language in Australia and the learning styles they preferred. The findings pointed at two major dimensions of learning styles, cognitive and affective. The former was closely connected with the notions of field independence/dependence, whereas the latter with "how active learners were in the way they reported approaching L2 learning tasks" (Ellis 1994, p. 507). There are, however, some claims that his study is not valid since the number of subjects participating in it (517) was not sufficient enough to make it statistically convincing. Another issue raised by some researchers was the dubious reliability of the administered questionnaire.

The findings obtained in the areas of cognitive and learning styles these areas are inconclusive. Therefore, the relationship between one's learning style and language acquisition is still a vague one. Ellis (1994) implies that it may be the learners who are characterized by an eclectic learning style who are most likely to achieve success, though there is no valid evidence that could prove it. He believes that the reason for such a great deal of uncertainty concerning learning preferences is the fact that the notion of a learning style "is ill-defined, apparently overlapping with other individual differences of both affective and cognitive nature" (1994, p. 508). There is one thing that seems rather stable, though. Among all the distinctions that have been proposed, only a few have been of great interest to researchers. One of them is the construct of field independence and field dependence.

2.3.1.2 Field Dependence/Independence

The dichotomy of field dependence and field dependence stems from the work of Witkin (1962) and his associates (Witkin et al. 1971). The two terms have been described in the following way: "in a field-dependent mode of perceiving, perception is strongly dominated by the overall organization of the surrounding field, and parts of the field are experienced as 'fused'. In a field-independent mode of perceiving, parts of the field are experienced as discrete from organized ground" (Witkin et al. 1971, p. 4).

Various tests have been constructed to measure the learner's capacity to distinguish figures from ground. One of them is called the *Group Embedded Figures Test* (Witkin et al. 1971). The aim is to find a target figure which is hidden in a certain pattern. As Skehan (1989) points out, the test is meant to show the manner in which people see and organize the surrounding world. He goes on mention that those who score high on the test (field-independent) are believed to be analytic and able to distinguish figures from ground and to separate the significant from the insignificant. On the other hand, those who score low (field-dependent) tend to perceive the surroundings in a rather holistic manner, paying attention to the whole rather than to separate components.

The traits mentioned have led to a certain amount of disagreement and are not accepted by all researchers. Field-dependent individuals are said to be more gregarious and, thus, to take up people-oriented jobs. They can easily start a conversation with other people. Such learners are also good at negotiating and are characterized by greater sensitivity than field-independent individuals. The latter type individuals are considered to be introverted, as opposed to field-dependent individuals, less convivial and more independent. FI learners like to work out solutions on their own, while FD students work more effectively in groups (Dörnyei and Skehan 2003). In terms of language learning, they are said to possess greater cognitive skills. Another feature worth mentioning is FI learners' "resistance to fossilization, and (. . .) the capacity to restructure and develop interlanguage systems more readily" (Skehan 1989, p. 112). Therefore, FI learners will more often opt for strategies such as analyzing, hypothesis-testing, inferencing and restructuring (Droździał-Szelest 1997).

Since the impact of the FI construct on language learning seemed quite promising, research into this issue has received considerable attention. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the relation between field independence (FI)/field dependence (FD) and L2 learning and to test the hypotheses that have been propounded. One hypothesis is that FI learners fare better in formal learning, for example learning grammatical rules, paying attention to grammatical correctness, whereas FD ones in informal learning (Ellis 1994). This issue has not been settled yet, though, since there is research which proves that FI learners can manage equally well in integrative tests and in those on communicative competence (Chapelle and Roberts 1986; Carter 1988). There are also studies which show a rather weak relation between FI and L2 learning (d'Anglejan and Renaud 1985),

while those which do show a connection prove "that it loses significance once the effects of the learners' general scholastic ability have been statistically removed" (Ellis 1994, p. 502).

Research has also been conducted to test the hypothesis that FD learners are more willing to communicate with L2 users. In fact, as Seliger's (1977) studies reveal, it was field-independent learners who opted for interaction in the classroom setting. Such an occurrence may be accounted for by the fact that FI learners did not seek the group's approval, which was conducive to taking more risk. Another researcher whose study refutes the hypothesis is Day (1984), who failed to find any relationship between the constructs of FI/FD and interaction.

There have also been studies which proved a positive correlation between FI/FD and performance. For instance, Naiman et al. (1978) observed a group of 72 children who were learning French as a foreign language. Two skills were of particular interest here: oral production and listening comprehension. The findings pointed to a correlation between FI and the two skills. However, contrary to expectations, it was FI that corresponded to oral production. In comparison, Genessee and Hamayan's (1980) study included a group of 6- and 7-year-olds who were taking part in a French immersion programme. The results indicated a strong correlation between the Group Embedded Figures Test on a general achievement and listening comprehension test in French, however not on an oral production one (Skehan 1989).

No correlation was found between FI and listening/reading comprehension tests and oral production in a study conducted by Tucker et al. (1976). Furthermore, Bialystok and Fröhlich's (1977, 1978) results also downplayed the role of FI in foreign language learning. Judging by the provided data, one may infer that FI has not proved to play a significant role in language learning. In fact, field independence exerts a weak, or even no, impact on learners' language performance and their level of achievement.

2.3.1.3 Aptitude

Language aptitude has been a very common term in psycholinguistic literature for many years. It has been considered to be a pivotal factor that facilitates learning a language. The notion of language aptitude is commonly referred to as "a specific talent for learning foreign languages" (Dörnyei and Skehan 2003, p. 590). Thus, Pawlak (2009a) treats aptitude as "an attribute which does not determine the ultimate level of proficiency which an individual can accomplish but, rather, affects the *rate* at which she or he will progress in mastering an L2" (p. 13). In comparison, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) believe that learners who have an aptitude for learning foreign languages may be in fact learners who managed to find their own LLS thanks to which they can be successful.

Carroll (1981) mentions four components of language aptitude that are inextricably linked with developing specific language skills or subskills. The first one is called *phonemic coding ability*. Emphasis is placed here on the ability to detect the

unfamiliar sounds and, most importantly, to store them (Skehan 1989). Therefore, learners have to be able to process the sounds they hear into sounds that could be stored and used later on. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) claim that good foreign language learners are able to use learning strategies like selective attention or directed attention to help them in their perceptual processing.

Another component mentioned by Carroll (1981) is *grammatical sensitivity*. This notion describes the ability to identify grammatical rules and recognize the grammatical roles that are assigned to words in sentences. The findings of O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) work showed that students used deductive strategies in order to identify grammatical rules and strategies such as self-monitoring, comprehension, linguistic transfer, elaboration of prior knowledge and inferencing to interpret language functions.

The third component is *inductive language learning ability*. This term pertains to the process in which a learner deals with limited linguistic material, analyzes it and, thanks to their own generalizations, is able to infer certain rules governing a specific structure. As Skehan (1989) points out, this ability bears a resemblance to the one of grammatical sensitivity, though the latter "seems more connected with analyzing a given language structure, while inductive language learning ability emphasizes reasoning and extrapolating" (p. 27).

The last component is *rote learning activity for foreign language materials*. This ability comprises learning associations between sounds and meanings in an effective manner and then retaining these associations (Carroll 1981). There are various strategies that could accelerate this process. One of them is the keyword method (Atkinson and Raugh 1975). In order to learn a new word, learners associate it with a different one (keyword) that sounds similar. That is when learners create a mental image which establishes a connection between the new word and the keyword. This method has been successfully used when introducing new vocabulary.

Opinions on the issue of language aptitude and learner strategies vary. Ellis (1994) claims that language aptitude is not a pivotal factor in strategy use and that the link between these two ideas is rather tenuous. The role of aptitude has also been downplayed in Bialystok's (1981) study, which showed that learners' beliefs proved to be more significant than aptitude. Rubin (1975), on the other hand, regards aptitude as one of three variables that should characterize a good language learner. She believes that, unlike opportunity and motivation, aptitude cannot be easily manipulated, though this issue has been hotly debated.

These views stand in contrast to O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) opinions. The scholars assume that the relationship between aptitude and strategy use could be in fact much stronger and in such case aptitude should be perceived as a strategic ability that can be learned rather than as an innate and fixed feature. More studies should be conducted on the connection between aptitude and strategy use, since the findings are frequently inconclusive. One of the most common obstacles is the uncertainty about the constituents of language aptitude (Droździał-Szelest 1997). The difficulty may stem from the fact that many abilities ascribed solely to aptitude may in fact be also connected with intelligence or personality. Rubin (1975) believes that aptitude is strongly related to motivation and opportunity. She

explains that even a gifted and motivated learner will not make any progress if they are not provided with the opportunity to practise the TL. Similarly, if the learner is poor or not motivated, they will acquire the language at a slower pace even if there is an opportunity to practise it. Lastly, if the learner is talented and has a chance to use the language but they are not motivated, they are liable to fail.

2.3.1.4 Ambiguity Tolerance

Ambiguity tolerance (AT) is another variable that has an influence on language learning. It can be defined as the ability to "function rationally and calmly in a situation in which interpretation of all stimuli is not clear" (Chapelle and Roberts 1986, p. 30). Ellis's definition of ambiguity tolerance states that "it entails an ability to deal with ambiguous new stimuli with frustration and without appeals to authority. It allows for indeterminate rather than rigid categorization" (1994, p. 518). Ambiguous situations or ideas, for people with low ambiguity tolerance, are seen as causing mental discomfort. They feel threatened when the presented idea is not clear enough for them to comprehend. Therefore, they quickly give up if there is an obstacle that they cannot surmount. Little ambiguity tolerance can hinder language learning. What is more, such learners may be unwilling to carefully analyze the ambiguous situation they are faced with. One type of learning strategies that could be used by such learners is compensation strategies like getting help or switching to the mother tongue.

On the other hand, learners who easily tolerate ambiguity find such situations enjoyable and challenging. They do not feel discouraged if they cannot comprehend a given idea immediately, as they know understanding will come later on. They are more flexible when it comes to ideas that seem blurred at first sight. Learners with high levels of ambiguity tolerance are said to do very well on ambiguity tasks. One can be led to believe that individuals with high AT may opt for compensation strategies, such as for instance circumlocution or synonyms when they wish to describe an idea that they do not fully comprehend. Ambiguity tolerance is a trait that can prove extremely useful when learning a foreign language. To quote Droździał-Szelest (1997, p. 55), "successful language learning necessitates tolerance of ambiguity: especially at the beginning of instruction a great deal of apparently contradictory information is encountered."

The issue of ambiguity tolerance as a factor affecting successful SLA has received a certain amount of interest from researchers. The findings vary, though. Naiman et al. (1978) found a positive relationship between AT and scores on listening comprehension. However, they did not manage to find a positive one on an imitation test. There are also studies which failed to find any connection between AT and L2 acquisition (e.g. Chapelle 1983). What is more, Chapelle and Roberts (1986) reported a negative connection between AT and L2 proficiency. Besides, Ely (1989) investigated the role of ambiguity tolerance and LLS use. The first hypothesis of his study was that learners with relatively low AT would use L1 more often and would pay greater attention to details, while those with higher AT would

focus on the whole message rather than minutiae. In his study 48 students of Spanish representing a university level filled in self-report Likert-scaled instruments of AT and learning strategies. The results showed that AT was a negative predictor of strategies that included L1 reliance, for instance looking up words in English right away when reading, and ones that focused on individual elements, such as thinking about grammar when writing. According to the second hypothesis, learners with greater AT would be more likely to deploy LLS connected with overall meaning. Here, AT was a variable that affected variance in strategies such as looking for overall meaning in reading. The study proved a connection between AT and strategy choice. However, "the construct would explain, on average, around ten per cent of variance in the dependent variables, which indicates that there are many other factors that, together with tolerance of ambiguity, influence the use of language learning strategies by second language learners." (Ely 1989, p. 442; as cited in Bielska 2006, p. 114).

2.3.2 Affective Factors

Theories related to SLA have stressed the significant role that affective factors such as, among others, motivation, personality or self-confidence play in the development of students' second language (Siegel 2003). Additionally, strategy-oriented research has demonstrated that there exists a relationship between affective variables and students' selection of LLS. The following subsection will be devoted to discussing the influence of motivation, personal and learner beliefs on the selection of language learning strategies.

2.3.2.1 Motivation

It is frequently stated that motivation is a salient factor that helps learners to make progress and attain higher levels of proficiency. Motivation can be described as a strong drive that leads learners to their goal, either a long-term one like achieving fluency in a foreign language, or a short-term one, like scoring high on a test or getting a good mark from an essay. Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) state that motivation "is responsible for *why* people decide to do something, *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity, and *how hard* they are going to pursue it" (p. 614). Learners who are motivated are ambitious, determined and enjoy being challenged. They are not disheartened if they do not obtain the best grades immediately or if there is a temporary lack of progress. They are patient and consistent in their work. What is more, motivated learners do not lose heart if they fail to understand certain structures or rules right away. They believe that comprehension of such, at first sight, difficult notions is just a matter of time.

On the other hand, students who lack motivation are not eager to be active and participate in the lesson and, therefore, often miss a chance to enhance their

performance. In addition, they are reluctant to invest effort or take up new learning behaviours for fear of failing or achieving a lower grade. Faced with no progress, they easily give up and lose their confidence. This significant issue has also been raised by Rubin (1975). Good language learners are ready to go to great lengths in order to communicate and present their views. They are ready to employ various devices such as circumlocution, paraphrase or gestures with the sole view of getting their ideas across. Motivated learners are, thus, more likely to test out new strategies. Motivation can also exert an impact on the LLS learners make use of. Numerous studies have been carried out to examine this variable and its effect on the choice of learning strategies. One of them was conducted by Oxford and Nyikos (1989). The project included 1,200 students studying foreign languages in a Midwestern American university. The subjects were surveyed with a view to establishing the strategies they used. The results clearly showed that motivation was the most powerful factor affecting strategy choice. Not only did highly motivated learners use certain types of LLS, but they also did so more often than less motivated ones. Learners with a high degree of motivation chose more strategies that were connected with functional practice, formal practice, general study, and conversation/elicitation. Mochizuki (1999) and Wharton (2000) examined motivated Asian university students. The results revealed a more frequent use of all the six categories put forward by Oxford (1990) strategies among the more motivated learners.

Interestingly, the type of motivation can also be a pivotal issue in the choice of strategies. Accordingly, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) observed that general study strategies and formal practice were opted for far more often than functional practice strategies, which could be elucidated by learners' instrumental motivation, namely a strong will to complete the course and achieve very good grades. On the other hand, though, Ehrman's (1990) study revealed that learners with instrumental motivation selected strategies aimed at communication. Objectives that language learners wish to accomplish affect their use of strategies, which was also depicted in Politzer and McGroarty's (1985, p. 118) study: " (. . .) the goal of English language study must be taken into account; the learning strategies required for and contributing to the acquisition of communicative competence may indeed be different from those involved in developing linguistic competence."

However, there is one issue that has not been resolved yet. It remains to be seen whether high levels of motivation lead to an extensive use of strategies or whether frequently used strategies trigger high degrees of motivation. So far, research investigating this relationship has been scarce (Takeuchi et al. 2007).

2.3.2.2 Personality

It is believed that learners' personality is also a significant factor that leads to successful language learning. It is worth mentioning, though, that personality comprises several dimensions. Eysenck (1970), for instance, believes that there are three main ones: extroversion/introversion, neurotic/stable and psychotic/

normal. The first distinction has received a great deal of interest from researchers. Eysenck (1965) elucidates what the two terms mean:

> The typical extrovert is sociable, likes parties, has many friends, needs to have people to talk to, and does not like studying by himself. He craves excitement, takes chances, often sticks his neck out, acts on the spur of the moment, and is generally an impulsive individual. He (. . .) always has a ready answer, and generally likes change (. . .) The typical introvert, on the other hand, is a quiet, retiring sort of person, introspective, fond of books rather than people; he is reserved and distant, except with intimate friends. He tends to plan ahead (. . .) and distrusts the impulse of the moment. (pp. 59–60)

The researcher goes on to say that there are two main components of extroversion: sociability, that is the need to be in the company of other people and the fear of being alone, and impulsivity, for instance risk-taking or the need for thrill and incessant change. These two features frequently go together as gregarious people have a propensity to be impulsive. Moreover, extroverts are believed to experience difficulty concentrating for longer periods of time. Introverts are believed to code information into their long-term memory in a more efficient manner than extroverts, which could imply that introverts will have higher academic achievement as compared to extroverts (Skehan 1989).

There have been studies exploring the relationship between personality and LLS use. One of such research projects was conducted by Ehrman and Oxford (1989). The findings showed that extroverts opted, more frequently than introverts, for two categories of strategies, namely affective ones and visualization. By contrast, strategies of searching for/communicating meaning were used more often by introverts. Ehrman and Oxford also reported that intuitive individuals, as opposed to sensing ones, made greater use of four strategy categories: affective, formal model building, authentic language use and searching for/communicating meaning. Moreover, feeling-type individuals chose general study strategies more often than thinkers.

In another study, Ehrman and Oxford (1990) examined 20 adults learning Turkish in the USA. The results revealed that extroverts had a preference for social and functional practice strategies, whereas introverts preferred to learn on their own and shunned contact with others. It could be put down to, as some researchers believe, extroverts' need for interaction with other people and the fact that they are more likely to join groups and be active during the lesson.

Another study investigating the relationship between personality features and strategy use was the one conducted by Wakamoto (2000). In order to garner the necessary data, he implemented two instruments, Oxford's (1990) SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) and the MBTI (the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) for personalities. His study included 254 Japanese college students. He reported that extroversion was strongly connected with functional practice and social-affective strategies. However, unlike in Ehrman and Oxford's results, introversion was not connected with any use of the SILL strategies (Takeuchi et al. 2007).

To conclude, Takeuchi et al. (2007) argue that, on the basis of the studies that have been conducted so far, extroversion may indeed be a factor contributing to the use of certain LLS. There is no general consensus regarding this issue, though. In

fact, there are a great many other variables such as, for instance, the learning context which could also exert some influence. Also Ellis (1994) remains sceptical and says that "if there are important links between personality and strategy choice, they remain to be demonstrated" (p. 543).

2.3.2.3 Learner Beliefs

In her study exploring the role of learner beliefs, Bialystok (1981) examined grade 10 and 12 students learning French in Canada. The findings pointed to differences regarding learners' beliefs about what language learning should involve. The subjects differed in their views on whether learning a language should comprise formal or functional practice and it was these varying opinions that exerted an impact on the learning strategies that they employed.

In a different study, Wenden (1987) examined learner beliefs on how to successfully approach learning a second language. On the basis of the obtained results she divided her subjects into three groups, according to their beliefs. One group placed emphasis on using the target language. They also commented that it is vital to practise the TL and not to lose heart when mistakes occur. The next group stressed the importance of learning about the language that is focusing particularly on the vocabulary and the grammar of a given language. The last group referred to the important role of personal variables in the process of language learning. They believed that certain factors can either accelerate or hinder learning and that variables, such as aptitude, are vital when learning a language.

The study also showed that the differing beliefs could actually have an impact on the selection of LLS. Learners who emphasized the role of learning about the language made more frequent use of cognitive strategies, whereas those who stressed using the language opted more often for communication strategies. The last group did not reveal any specific pattern of strategy use.

What learners think about learning a language can have a serious effect on their success and, thus, should be taken by the teacher into consideration. To quote Horwitz (1988):

> preconceived notions about language learning would likely influence a learner's effectiveness in the classroom. A student who believes (...) that learning a second language primarily involves learning new vocabulary will expend most of his/her energy on vocabulary acquisition, while adults who believe in superiority of younger learners probably begin language learning with fairly negative expectations of their own ultimate success. (p. 283)

It is worth mentioning, though, that these opinions frequently stem from insufficient knowledge. Therefore, it is the teacher's role to make learners rid themselves of wrong attitudes towards language learning. Droździał-Szelest (1997) argues that many learners hope that the teacher will actually do all the work for them and that is why they prefer to stay passive in the classroom, which is often referred to as learned helplessness (Wenden 1987).

2.3.3 Learners' Background

Another group of factors affecting the selection and application of language learning strategies refers to learner's background. It is believed that individual learner differences such as students' previous learning experience and their level of language proficiency can also affect the strategies they choose. These two variables will be the elaborated on in the following subsections.

2.3.3.1 Prior Learning Experience

The application of different strategies may result from learners' prior experience regarding learning another foreign language or simply the school context they found themselves in. O'Malley et al. (1985b) commented on the results of a study investigating the use of LLS involving a group of Asians and Hispanics. The former made extensive use of memorizing and shunned imagery and grouping when learning word definitions. Researchers argue that the differing strategies could in fact be caused by, apart from learners' cultural background, differences in prior schooling. Some learners may have been exposed at school to a great deal of rote memorization, which could have led to the development of memory strategies and, at the same time, to learners' difficulty in developing problem-solving or comprehension strategies.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) agree that the amount of language learning expertise could be a significant factor in strategy use. They found that novice language learners at times fled in panic having noticed that they did not possess the procedural skills required to solve language problems. On the other hand, learners who had already engaged in studying another foreign language managed to maintain their composure when faced with completely new language tasks. They also used their procedural skills which they had developed earlier. A study conducted by Ehrman (1990) revealed that professional linguists made more frequent use of strategies than students and instructors lacking professional training. Also Nation and McLaughlin's (1986) study proves that learners who had already had a certain degree of linguistic experience were better at deploying learning strategies. The researchers created an artificial language which they taught to groups of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual students. The results obtained showed that multilingual learners fared better in an implicit learning activity, which led the researchers to believe that these learners, due to their language experience, managed to use learning strategies in a more automatized manner.

2.3.3.2 Learners' Level of Proficiency

It is believed by many researchers that the more proficient the learner, the more frequent and more sophisticated strategies they will use. More proficient learners

are expected to apply more efficacious LLS than learners who represent an elementary level of language advancement. Droździał-Szelest (1997) argues that "as the learners' level of proficiency increases, the strategies they use seem to become more efficient" (p. 67). Park's study (1997) including 332 Korean university students revealed a relationship between the SILL strategies and TOEFL which measured proficiency in English. Rossi-Le (1989) reported that learners representing a higher proficiency level made more frequent use of strategies such as planning, evaluating and formal practice. Green and Oxford (1995) examined 374 Puerto Rican ESL learners attending three courses: prebasic, basic and intermediate. The study revealed that the higher the level of proficiency, the more frequent the use of strategies. The strategies that were affected by proficiency level were cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies along with social strategies. They also reported that more advanced learners used 17 individual strategies more frequently. Mullins (1992), Bedell (1993), Park (1994), Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) also reported a positive relationship between proficiency level and the use of strategies.

In a different study O'Malley et al. (1985b) examined 70 students participating in ESL classes. They were divided, according to their level of proficiency, into beginners and intermediate learners. The interviews revealed 638 instances of learning strategy use, out of which 53 % constituted cognitive strategies, 30 % metacognitive ones and 17 % socioaffective ones. Beginners employed more frequently strategies such as translation and imagery, whereas intermediate learners used more resourcing and contextualization. The most popular metacognitive strategies among the two groups were self-management and advance preparation. As for socioaffective strategies, beginners and intermediate learners used cooperation and questions for clarification almost equally often. There were also strategies which were not used or used very rarely, namely advance organizers, keyword, deduction and recombination. The study did not provide great differences in strategy use among beginners and intermediate-level learners. This may be because the proficiency distance between the groups was not big enough (Bielska 2006). Another finding was that more strategies were used for vocabulary learning and pronunciation. The smallest number of strategies was used for oral presentation and operational communication. The reason why so many strategies were deployed for vocabulary and pronunciation tasks may stem from the fact that they are "less conceptually complex than integrative language tasks such as listening and making an oral presentation. Part of this may be due to the fact that students are provided fewer opportunities in classrooms for performing integrative than discrete-point language activities" (O'Malley et al. 1985b, pp. 567–568).

A study conducted by Marrie and Nettan (1991) demonstrates that the strategies employed by more and less effective learners were similar in their number. The difference lies in the types of the strategies chosen. The more proficient learners were reported to have used more effective strategies. Rost and Ross (1991) noticed that successful and less successful students employed different LLS and processed the new material at a different cognitive level. Analyzing these results, MacIntyre (1994) believes that one should not overlook the relation between learning

strategies and their effect on language proficiency as well as proficiency and its impact on the use of strategies. He goes one step further and poses a question: "does the use of certain strategies lead to (cause) improved ability level or does an elevated level of ability lead to the use of different strategies?" (1994, p. 188). According to MacIntyre, when dealing with this vexed issue, one should bear in mind the fact that learning strategies are supposed to help learners at a certain time. Thus, when starting to learn a foreign language, students communicate at a basic level and the strategies they are likely to use are also basic and simple, for instance using gestures or coining words. Once they have learnt new grammatical rules, structures or more sophisticated words, learners will use strategies that could help them deal with certain weaknesses connected with communication. In other words, the higher the proficiency, the greater the learners' needs. When possessing a good command of the target language, the learner is likely to apply strategies that would make their communication more informative, efficacious or persuasive. Therefore, at this stage, the learner will use different strategies than at an elementary stage. MacIntyre (1994) provides an example of two students taking up a foreign language. The type who achieved greater proficiency faster would be called the more successful one. If this learner used more strategies then they would prove that LLS can speed up the process of learning and can actually result in higher proficiency during the same amount of time. On the other hand, a situation in which two students present a different level of advancement is a more complex one. The cause may lie in the fact that it is not an easy task to estimate whether the discrepancy between the students is triggered by their proficiency or by the rate of learning.

In addition, more successful learners may seem to be employing more advanced LLS as they may have already gone beyond the stage when they need to use basic strategies to convey the intended message. Students' communicative needs, and therefore strategies, vary according to their level of advancement. However, to quote MacIntyre (1994), "strategy use may also assist in the progression to higher level" (p. 189). Therefore, learning strategies are regarded here as a factor that can contribute to the attainment of proficiency but also as one that can result from proficiency.

Ehrman and Oxford (1995) examined 262 English government employees learning various foreign languages at the U.S. Foreign Service Institute. Only one type of learning strategies, compensation strategies, was connected, and rather tenuously, with learners' proficiency. In comparison, Peacock's (2001) study, in which he used SILL, included 140 students at a Hong Kong university. The findings show that learners made frequent or very frequent use of 18 out of the 50 strategies, mainly compensation and cognitive ones. Peacock explains that the use of nine strategies was connected with proficiency. In a study conducted by Nisbet et al. (2005) only metacognitive strategies showed a correlation with TOEFL scores.

The conflicting findings can be accounted for by the fact that other individual differences showed their dominance, for instance tolerance of ambiguity, field dependence/independence, motivation, risk taking or self-esteem (Scarcella and

Oxford 1992). What is more, Takeuchi et al. (2007) claim that the instrument employed to measure language proficiency could also play a significant role. For instance, no direct measures of interactive and communicative skills are included in the TOEFL, even in its most recent version. Therefore, Nisbet et al. (2005) imply that a stronger correlation between learner strategies and more communicative proficiency measures is possible. Researchers' attention should also be drawn to investigating whether frequent use of LLS results from or triggers proficiency (Bielska 2006), an issue which does cause a certain amount of disagreement. Green and Oxford (1995) claim that the relationship between these two is causal and can be "best visualized not as a one-way arrow leading from cause to effect, but rather as an ascending spiral in which active use strategies help students attain higher proficiency, which in turn makes it more likely that students will select these active use strategies" (p. 288).

2.3.4 Situational, Individual and Social Variables

The last group of factors affecting strategy use appertains to situational, individual and social variables. The present section will address the following issues: nationality and ethnicity, the learning context which students find themselves in, the language tasks that they are to perform, students' gender, age, and, finally, the language that they wish to learn.

2.3.4.1 Nationality or Ethnicity

Nationality and ethnicity are factors that should be taken into consideration as they, among others, affect learners' beliefs and values, which could in turn play a role in the process of language learning. Politzer and McGroarty (1985) were among the first researchers to investigate nationality and its role in learning a foreign language. In their study, they examined 37 students learning English in the USA (19 Hispanics and 18 Asians). The results demonstrated that it was the Hispanics who made more frequent use of different strategies (e.g. asking others to repeat, asking for confirmation, engaging in social interaction). Politzer and McGroarty believe that one of the reasons for such results is the fact that these strategies are more characteristic of the Western, and not Asian, learning environment. They go on to say that "in many Asian educational institutions, where the emphasis in language instruction is placed on rote memorization, translation of texts, or recognition of correct grammatical forms in reading, these interactive second language learning behaviours are not always likely to occur in classroom settings" (1985, p. 114). Memorization seems to be typical also of Arabic cultures (Farquharson 1989). As far as linguistic competence is concerned, the Asians scored higher than their Hispanic colleagues. Politzer and McGroarty comment the findings of their study by stating that learners' nationality can exert an impact on the language behaviour they engage in.

In contrast, O'Malley et al. (1985b) report that Asian students in their control group outperformed the experimental groups in terms of applying the strategy of rote memorization to vocabulary task. The authors of the study also add that Hispanics were fond of learning new strategies and scored much higher on posttest than their Hispanic friends from the control group. Another study that examined the role of nationality was the one conducted by Bedell and Oxford (1996). They report that a popular strategy used among Chinese learners, mainland and Taiwanese, is guessing meaning. Surprisingly, memory strategies scored rather low. What is more, Japanese subjects in Watanabe's (1990) and in Mullins's (1992) studies also made more frequent use of compensation strategies. On the other hand, they were not so frequently used by Puerto Ricans and Egyptians. Thus, these specific strategies may in fact be culture-dependent (Bedell and Oxford 1996). Griffiths' (2003) findings reveal that the SILL strategies are used more often by European students that those of different origin.

Judging by the existing data on the influence of nationality or ethnicity, one can infer that it is a factor that has great impact on the manner in which students learn and, thus, its role in the use of strategies cannot be downplayed. Pawlak (2011b) states that "language learning is bound to be shaped by the particular social milieu in which it is situated" (p. 152).

2.3.4.2 The Learning Context

The choice of learning strategies can also be affected by the setting in which students learn a foreign language. It is worth mentioning that the learning context does not only embrace the classroom as a place where students learn. Gu (2005) says that "the learning context can include the teachers, the peers, the classroom climate or ethos, the family support, the social, cultural tradition of learning, the curriculum, and the availability of input and output opportunities" (p. 15). In comparison, Rubin (1975) argues that the strategies learners make use of will be more limited in a classroom setting, where the opportunity to practise the language is scarce, than in a natural setting where the learner is compelled to use the TL if they want to communicate. Apparently, especially adult learners who found themselves in a classroom setting rarely employed social and affective strategies, with the exception of questioning for clarification. Ellis (1994) claims that it may be the type of classroom interaction which accounts for such scarce use of social strategies.

Furthermore, the strategies used may also differ depending on whether the learning takes place in a second or foreign language setting. Chamot et al. (1987) investigated the strategies used by foreign language (FL) students and it appeared that they used strategies that were not applied by students learning English as their second language (ESL) taking part in a previous study conducted by the two researchers, for instance self-talk, substitution, rehearsal, self-reinforcement and contextualization. What is more, FL students, compared with the ESL ones, used fewer cognitive strategies. For instance, Riley and Harsch (1999) conducted a study

in which they compared 28 Japanese ESL students learning in Hawaii with 28 Japanese EFL students learning at a university in Japan. They found that the strategies used by the two groups differed, which led the researchers to believe that the setting could be a significant factor in the process of language learning. The Japanese students in a study by Takeuchi (2003), due to the FL setting, had limited opportunity for output and input. It was observed that they placed emphasis on specific metacognitive and cognitive strategies, for instance reading aloud.

Some researchers, especially those affected by Vygotsky's work, are of the opinion that it is also the social context that exerts an impact on language learning strategies and their development (Norton and Toohey 2001; Gao 2010). And so, Lave and Wenger (1991) believe that tasks, functions and activities are part of more sophisticated systems of relationships which have been formed within social settings. What is more, Takeuchi et al. (2007) add that "the individual learner is defined by, as well as defines, these relationships" (p. 76). Therefore, when analyzing LLS, one has to take into consideration the setting in which the learners found themselves and the interactions present. Gu (2005) also acknowledges the importance of interactions and says that

> person, task, context, and strategy use are interrelated and work together to form the chemistry of learning. An analysis of learning strategies will never be complete without knowing the person-task-context configuration of the particular learning situation. Some strategies are more person-dependent, some are more task-dependent, and others are more context-dependent. (p. 15)

2.3.4.3 Language Tasks

Gu (2005) argues that the notion of a learning task is indeed a very broad one. It pertains to the material that is being learned but also to the aim the learner wants to attain by means of the material. He goes on to say that different tasks demand the employment of different learning strategies. For instance, remembering the meaning of a word is not the same as learning how to use it in everyday situations. Certain tasks call for memorization, whereas others for oral drill (Rubin 1975).

Students observed by Bialystok (1981) employed different strategies for different types of tasks they were required to perform. It appeared that not every strategy could be suitable for the same task. In the study, writing rather than speaking or reading tasks benefited from strategies like monitoring one's errors. In comparison, O'Malley and Chamot (1988) conducted a study which revealed that strategy choice was affected, among others, by the type of the task learners were asked to perform. When engaging in tasks such as a cloze test, the learners used the following strategies: self-monitoring, self-evaluation, translation, deduction, inferencing and elaboration. Self-evaluation and self-monitoring along with resourcing and elaboration were frequently used in tasks focusing on vocabulary. When doing a listening task, the learners most frequently used selective attention and note-taking. They also applied inferencing, summarizing, self-monitoring and elaboration. Writing tasks required the greatest number of cognitive strategies,

namely: resourcing, translation, deduction, substitution, elaboration and summarizing. As for metacognitive strategies, the learners employed organizational planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

O'Malley and Chamot (1988) claim that more strategies are used when learners deal with tasks which are not conceptually challenging, whereas fewer strategies accompany more complex or integrative activities. The two researchers also state that the findings are interesting from a pedagogical point of view. Firstly, assigning a specific type of strategy to a task "provides a rationale for teachers to show students how to use that strategy for the same type of task. Secondly, strategies that are used for many different language tasks appear to be of primary importance and should become the instructional focus of strategy training" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 142). Learners ought to know how to apply strategies to different types of tasks. Moreover, strategies such as, self-monitoring and elaboration, should be emphasized in strategy training as they seem to be more important than other strategies.

Another study, conducted by O'Malley et al. (1985b), revealed that certain types of learning strategies were used more often for specific learning tasks. The subjects employed more strategies for vocabulary learning and pronunciation. The smallest number of strategies was used for listening for inference, oral presentation, listening comprehension and operational communication. The reason why so many LLS were applied for vocabulary and pronunciation tasks may stem from the fact that they are "less conceptually complex than integrative language tasks such as listening and making an oral presentation. Part of this may be due to the fact that students are provided fewer opportunities in classrooms for performing integrative than discrete-point language activities" (O'Malley et al. 1985b, pp. 567–568).

The aforementioned studies prove that different strategies may be employed for different kinds of tasks. Ellis (1994), on the other hand, makes a point that predicting the type of strategy learners will use for a certain task is not always possible. He goes on to say that there are tasks which might in fact "predispose learners to use particular strategies, but they cannot predetermine the actual strategies that will be used" (p. 545).

2.3.4.4 Age

The amount of research investigating the impact of age on the choice of strategies used has been scarce, although age has been regarded as a factor playing a significant role in the selection of LLS. Griffiths (2003), who conducted such studies, analyzed the influence of factors such as age, gender, course level and nationality. Only the last of these were believed to play a role in strategy use. Ellis (1994), on the other hand, claims that "age emerges as a clear factor affecting the way strategies are used" (p. 541). He goes on to say that the strategies chosen by young learners are fairly simple, in comparison to the more advanced ones preferred by older learners. The procedures employed by older students in Ehrman and Oxford (1989) were also more sophisticated and elaborate. What is more,

112 learners, aged 23–39, in Peacock and Ho's (2003) study opted, more frequently than their younger colleagues, for four out of the six categories put forward by Oxford (1990), namely memory, metacognitive, affective and social ones. The younger 894 participants, aged 18–22, chose these strategies less often. Peacock and Ho also observed a higher use of 13 individual strategies among older learners. The two researchers concluded that "more mature L2 students perhaps need less help from the teacher in affective and social areas, and more work in other areas, e.g. compensation and cognitive strategies" (2003, p. 57). Of course, this is not always the case, however, it is a research-inspiring issue. In a different study, Victori and Tragant (2003) observed 766 participants from three age groups. The first one comprised 10-year-olds, the second 14-year-olds and the last one 17-year-olds. The results showed that the two older groups of learners used cognitively advanced strategies more often than the first group. The younger learners, on the other hand, were reported to use social strategies more willingly.

Takeuchi et al. (2007) suggest that the results, at times conflicting, may stem from the disparate contexts in which the research projects were carried out. Therefore, students who participated in Griffiths' (2003) study came from various ethnic backgrounds and were characterized by different learning goals. In contrast, the study by Peacock and Ho (2003) took place in Hong Kong, where the population was homogeneous and the learning objectives fixed. To be sure, Victori and Tragant's (2003) subjects also belonged to a homogeneous group; however, their learning goals varied. Therefore, the situation and the context of the studies could have affected the connection between learners' age and the LLS they resolved to make use of (Takeuchi et al. 2007). Another reason standing behind the difference in strategy choice between younger and older learners is the fact that "older children and adults learn faster than young children, especially in the area of grammar and vocabulary, for which there are many learning strategies, while children are superior in pronunciation, for which there are rather few strategies available" (Droździał-Szelest 1997, p. 63).

2.3.4.5 Gender

Gender, as a factor in strategy use, has received more attention than age. Early research on the role of this factor was reviewed by Oxford (1993a, b, 1994), as well as by Oxford and Green (1995). In their review they go back to Politzer's first empirical study (1983) which involved 90 American college students learning foreign languages. The findings demonstrated that females made use of social/interactional strategies more often than males. Green and Oxford (1995) conducted a large-scale study among 374 Puerto Rican learners of English. The aim of their research was to determine the relationship between gender and LLS, as well as proficiency and learning strategies measured by the SILL (Oxford 1990). The findings obtained showed that females employed strategies such as memory, metacognitive, affective and social ones, more often than males. Green and Oxford add that many of the strategies opted for by women were rather global (e.g. seeking

L1 words similar to L2 words, making summaries of information, using gestures when stuck for words) and women, as opposed to men, are believed to be global learners. What is more, females also chose strategies regarded as introspective and, to a certain degree, affective (e.g. trying to find out about language learning, giving self-reward for doing well, noticing when I'm tense or nervous), which could be accounted for by the fact that women are said to focus more on these elements of learning. Women's propensity for engaging in conversation was reflected in the choice of strategies such as asking another person to slow down or repeat, asking to be corrected when talking, asking for help from English speakers.

The results of Ehrman and Oxford's (1989) study also show a higher use of four SILL strategy categories, general learning, functional, searching for/communicating meaning and self-management among women. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) observed 1,200 US students and noticed an inclination towards three strategy categories: formal practice, general study and input elicitation among females. Also Sy (1994) used the SILL to investigate gender differences when using learning strategies. The results demonstrate that female subjects, students of English in the Republic of China, made more frequent use of cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social strategies.

Researchers provide numerous reasons for these findings. One of them is that women are more eager to abide by the prevailing norms. They also want to obtain good marks and receive approval from their group. Another factor is women's greater verbal ability and the act of using unconscious L1 discourse strategies (Bielska 2006). One can also infer that women are more ready to engage in social interaction than their male counterparts who are more action- and competition-oriented (Maccoby and Jacklin 1974).

Similarly, Green and Oxford (1995) say that these findings are a significant contribution since they point to the differences in the manner females and males learn another language. They argue that "if gender differences appear in many studies across different cultures, this suggests that biological and/or socialization-related causes for these differences might exist and that these causes might have a real, if subtle, effect in the language classroom" (1995, p. 266). At the same time, they point out that the gender differences when selecting LLS do not mean that one group excels at language learning and the other does not. Green and Oxford say that the results of their study showed that the strategies employed more often by women did not overlap those which were employed by more proficient learners. In a similar study, Dreyer and Oxford (1996) examined 179 females and 126 males within a South African community. The research showed that not only did women choose strategies more frequently than men, but they also opted more eagerly for social and metacognitive ones.

In comparison, in her study Ku (1997) observed 335 college students in Taiwan. The findings of her research reveal that women were characterized by a higher use of strategies. However, as Peacock and Ho (2003) stress, she does not provide a statistical justification of the results. Similarly, in Goh and Foong's (1997) study, women made use of compensation and affective strategies more often than their male colleagues.

It is worth mentioning the fact that not all studies are uniform in their results. In Hashim and Sahil's (1994) work no differences, apart from more frequent use of affective strategies among women, were observed as far as the SILL categories were concerned. Rong (1999), Griffiths (2003), Shmais (2003) and Nisbet et al. (2005) also failed to find any significant gender-related differences, while Wharton's (2000) large scale study involving 678 university students engaged in learning French and Japanese in Singapore revealed that women used fewer strategies when compared with men.

Nyikos's study (1990) showed that certain strategies increased the performance among men, whereas others among women. No difference was observed between males and females who used rote memorization. On the basis of these findings, MacIntyre (1994) implies that language proficiency is affected by the individual features of the learners, situational characteristics and the interaction between the strategies employed. Factors such as gender and ethnicity, commonly perceived as the ones that determine the use of LLS (Oxford 1989), "may be more clearly understood through the attitudinal, motivational, and learning style differences generally associated with gender and ethnicity" (MacIntyre 1994, p. 187). In other words, gender can only show a certain tendency to possess a certain feature, like willingness to engage in social interaction and it should not be treated as a prerequisite for the use of a particular strategy. Additionally, MacIntyre (1994) suggests examining other differences closely connected with gender, like motivation, economic status, learning style or aptitude as they may also affect the relationship between gender and strategy use. Furthermore, Tran (1988) gives an example of Vietnamese immigrants who came to the USA. In his study on the learning strategies they used, he found that men used more strategies since they were the ones who had greater chances of finding a job outside their home.

2.3.4.6 Language Being Learned

A factor that cannot be overlooked is the language being learned. Researchers conducted studies which stress the role of the TL. Chamot and her associates (1987) observed a group of 34 college students of Russian and 67 Spanish students. The results showed that both groups used numerous strategies; however, the former one employed a greater number of strategies. In comparison, Politzer (1983) examined a group of 90 undergraduate students who enrolled in foreign language courses in French, Spanish and German. Using a questionnaire, he discovered that Spanish students made use of fewer strategies than the two remaining groups.

Oxford (1989) believes, however, that the target language may in fact interact with a great many other factors. More gifted, or as Oxford (1989, p. 236) puts it, "more strategy-wide students", may resolve to take up more difficult languages. Moreover, teachers of these languages may employ various teaching methods, which also exerts an impact on the choice and use of LLS. Also different goals learners wish to accomplish determine strategy selection. Although the existing body of research into the factors influencing the application of LLS seems

impressive, it is not free from certain limitations. The effect is that, to quote Pawlak (2011b), "the reported findings can hardly serve as reliable signposts for foreign language pedagogy" (p. 153). The researcher goes on to mention the limitations. The first one is the fact that the available findings are fragmentary and inconclusive. Additionally, the number of follow-up studies is relatively small. What is more, to quote Pawlak (2011b), "the relationships between variables are bound to be influenced and confounded by a host of other factors. This is visible (...) in the study conducted by Griffiths (2003) in which the impact of age, gender and proficiency interacted in complex ways with the participants' ethnicity and goals" (p. 153). Finally, there are factors which have received scant attention, such as anxiety.

2.4 MacIntyre's Social Psychological Model

There has been a whole array of studies concerning LLS and their influence on the process of language learning. However, according to MacIntyre (1994), strategies were analyzed in a manner that was too general. He goes on to say that there are a great many more facts that should be taken into consideration and, therefore, offers his own stance on strategies. He believes that the use of language learning strategies should entail intentionality and a deliberate choice on the part of the learner. Lastly, he presents a model according to which several conditions have to be fulfilled for effective strategy use to take place. The model, as its author suggests, can be useful when predicting the relations between learners' features, situational variables, learning strategies employed and proficiency in the target language.

2.4.1 An Attempt at Defining Language Learning Strategies

An issue that MacIntyre examines is the assumption made by Oxford and Crookall (1989) that learners and their teachers may be in fact oblivious of the strategies being employed. Such a statement may seem controversial as it implies that learners are not sensible of the fact that they are actually using LLS. MacIntyre, therefore, goes back to the basic meaning of the term strategy, which indicates active planning in order to achieve a certain goal, hence we hear about political, military or business strategies. Furthermore, he claims that strategies entail intentionality and the learners' decision to use a given strategy. He justifies his claim in the following words: "inadvertent, haphazard, or automatic actions do not fit the general definition of a strategy as a plan for success. If an action is planned, then it must be intentional. Actions that arise automatically for a person are most likely to have their origins in the learner's personality, the situation, or a combination of the two" (1994, p. 190). In other words, an introvert would find it very difficult to meet new

people at a party, whereas an extrovert would find it completely natural and even automatic, which stems from their personality.

MacIntyre goes on to analyze the second feature of learning strategies, namely choice. If a student is left with no choice in a given situation, than the actions undertaken by them cannot be referred to as strategic. The researcher gives an example of a situation in which using English is a necessity at one's workplace. Here, speaking English should not be perceived as a strategy but rather as a must if the employee wants to keep their job. Therefore, MacIntyre propounds his own definition of the term *strategy* which goes as follows: "the actions chosen by language students that are intended to facilitate acquisition and communication" (1994, p. 190). Emphasis is placed here on planned actions taken by the learners. What is more, even if the action does not lead to the expected result, it is still deemed as a strategy, provided it was planned. This way, MacIntyre's definition rejects the issue of situational and learner variables as well as strategy unawareness on the part of the learner.

2.4.2 MacIntyre's Strategy Use Model

Language learning strategies, along with factors like anxiety, cognitive style, self-esteem, attitude and motivation are to be seen as only part of a sophisticated scheme. MacIntyre believes that before the learner makes use of LLS, certain conditions need to be fulfilled. First of all, it is vital for the learners to be sensible of the strategies they have got at their disposal. Only then can they intentionally select those which they find most effective. Moreover, students should feel an incentive to employ strategies. It could be their motivation, a positive attitude or simply an opportunity to select and use a given strategy. In other words, students ought to become cognizant of an appropriate strategy and feel that there is a reason to apply it. Furthermore, MacIntyre believes that students should not feel that there is a reason *not to* use a given strategy. If there are any doubts concerning the strategy and its effectiveness, than it will simply not be used. The last condition mentioned stresses the importance of positive reinforcement. If a student sees no positive results after using a certain strategy, then they will be less likely to use the strategy one more time.

MacIntyre (1994) introduces a model which presents social psychological influences on the use of strategies. The assumption standing behind the model is that before the learner uses a strategy, there needs to be some sort of demand or an objective, for instance communicating, learning new words, writing a composition. Learners should also be aware of the strategies that they have at their disposal to complete a certain task. Their awareness can be raised thanks to teachers, learners' existing knowledge, as well as other learners, but also proficiency, cognitive style, intelligence and aptitude (Gardner and MacIntyre 1992, 1993). Furthermore, the learner must feel motivated to make use of the strategy. The level of apprehension should also be very low. MacIntyre (1994) believes that these two factors may

hinge on a number of other variables, for instance self-confidence, attitude toward learning the TL but also toward the other language group (Gardner 1985; Horwitz and Young 1991). With a lack of or with a low level of motivation and a strong feeling of apprehension, the learner will probably not employ the strategy. As MacIntyre (1994) points out, the continuation in the model is only possible if the learner is aware of a different appropriate strategy. If the student achieves their goal, they are likely to become more proficient. In addition, their level of motivation to make use of a certain strategy is likely to increase. On the other hand, apprehension which accompanied the use of the strategy will decline. To quote MacIntyre (1994): "successful use of strategies may improve proficiency and generate new communicative demands and higher goals for the language student" (p. 191). There is, however, a possibility that if the learner fails to accomplish their intended goal, they will be less eager and less motivated to make use of the strategy one more time.

To illustrate the model, MacIntyre gives an example of a learner of French whose aim is to comprehend native speakers. The student in question considers the following strategies to be of great importance: participation in immersion classes, possessing tapes with instructions, listening to the French media. The first strategy seems reasonable and the learner is willing to enrol in the course. However, she changes her mind because she suddenly feels afraid of all the other students attending this class. Using tapes does not make the learner feel ill at ease. Still, she refuses to make use of them because they seem dull. Listening to the news, on the other hand, is perceived by the learner as enthralling as she has a chance to practise her pronunciation, see how words and grammatical rules are applied in reality. Should this strategy bring results that are not fully satisfying, the level of motivation may drop and the whole attitude toward learning French may become negative. On the other hand, should the strategy prove to be successful, the level of anxiety and apprehension may diminish and the attitude toward communicating in French may become more positive. It may also lead to greater developments in proficiency that could, in turn, trigger the use of more strategies.

2.4.3 Implications

The model put forward by MacIntyre may prove to be useful when attempting to predict how characteristics interrelate. According to the model, the choice of strategies may hinge on two factors: on the communicative demand or on the goal which is to be achieved. The demand leads to strategy awareness. There are, however, a few aspects that need to be borne in mind before employing these strategies. The application of LLS depends on the context, since in one situation strategy awareness may arise, whereas in another one, not. That is why, there is no guarantee that strategies will be transferred from one context to another. MacIntyre (1994) admits, though, that the chances of transfer taking place increase when the context is similar. What is more, anxiety may hinder the use of a strategy even if the

learner is motivated and eager to employ it. Another conclusion resulting from the model is the fact that the learner will use a certain strategy in the future if they feel the results of the already used strategy are satisfying. A continued use of a strategy that seems ineffective is also possible if the learner is unaware of any other strategies or if, for instance, that particular strategy lowers the level of anxiety and apprehension.

2.5 The Place of Strategies in a Cognitive Framework

When analyzing strategies it would be advisable to investigate Anderson's (1981) model discussed in detail by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). The reason why they resolved to focus on this topic is their suggestion that "language acquisition cannot be understood without addressing the interaction between language and cognition" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 16). The researchers believe that the role that LLS play in the process of acquiring information can be accounted for with reference to the information processing framework for learning. The objective of this framework is to explicate the manner in which information is stored in the memory and how it is acquired. The framework implies that information can be stored in either short-term or long-term memory. The former holds a certain amount of information, however, only for a limited time. The latter is referred to as "the sustained storage of information, which may be represented as isolated elements or more likely as interconnected networks" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 17). It is believed that new information is acquired in four stages: selection, acquisition, construction and integration (Weinstein and Mayer 1986). In the first stage learners concentrate on certain information that is of interest to them and transfer it to the short-term memory. In the second stage, information from short-term memory is transferred to long-term memory for permanent storage. In the third stage, learners create internal links between ideas existing in short-term memory. Finally, in the last stage of information acquisition, the learner looks for prior knowledge in long-term memory and transfers it to working memory (long-term memory). The first two stages account for how much is learned, whereas the two remaining ones for what is learned and how it is organized.

The framework has most frequently been used in connection with vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, and problem solving of the acquisition of factual knowledge. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) express the need for a theory that would look at language acquisition from its earliest stages to proficient use and that would address numerous aspects of language for integrative language use in the following areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, they resolved to make use of Anderson's production system. First of all, it combines a large number of notions connected with cognitive processing, which makes the theory more general and current. The theory also differentiates between factual knowledge and procedural skills in memory representation and learning.

In their work, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) perceive SLA as a complex cognitive skill, or "the ability to perform various mental procedures" (1990, p. 24). Anderson (1983, 1985) claimed that cognitive skill acquisition comprised three stages. He also differentiated between two types of knowledge, declarative and procedural one. The former refers to what we know *about* and that includes facts, definitions, explanations. It is maintained in long-term memory and can be acquired in a relatively short time. It can be activated consciously. The latter term, on the other hand, pertains to what we *know how to do* (Anderson 1983, 1985). Examples of procedural knowledge could include the following: the ability to comprehend and produce language or use the already possessed knowledge to deal with a problem. It is acquired not as quickly as declarative knowledge and the learner must be provided with ample opportunities for practice. Moreover, it is initiated unconsciously. The aim of procedural knowledge is, to quote Droździał-Szelest (1997): "to activate declarative knowledge and to increase it through learning; it takes an active role in transforming facts and data stored as declarative information" (p. 32). Anderson (1983) adds that using the same knowledge repeatedly in a procedure can trigger losing access to rules that facilitated the procedure. Therefore, the ability to state these rules may be lost. A very important issue in cognitive theory that is frequently raised by researchers is the representation of procedural knowledge in memory. Anderson (1983, 1985) believes that it is contained in production systems. There are two main components of a production system, namely a "condition" and an "action." The former consists of an *if* clause, whereas the latter of a clause preceded by *then*, for instance: IF the goal is to generate a plural of a noun, and the noun ends in a hard consonant, THEN generate the noun + /s/ (Anderson 1981; as cited in O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 25). It also needs to be pointed out that that these productions can at first be represented in declarative form. In course of time, thanks to practice, they can be combined into production sets and, therefore, become automatic.

Ellis (1985) states that procedural knowledge can be divided into two components: social and cognitive. The former consists of behavioural strategies the learner employs to engage in interaction, for instance using L2 in a face-to-face situation. The latter, on the other hand, includes miscellaneous mental processes that take part in "internalizing and automatizing new L2 knowledge and in using L2 knowledge in conjunction with other knowledge sources to communicate in the L2. These processes, therefore, include both learning and using the L2" (Ellis 1985, p. 165). Learning processes explicate the way in which the learner collects new rules of the target language and also the way in which rules already possessed are automatized by means of attending to input. Production, reception and communication strategies are examples of processes participating in using L2 knowledge.

The main question posed by Anderson (1983, 1985) refers to the way in which one proceeds from declarative to procedural knowledge. He proposed three stages of skill acquisition: cognitive, associative and autonomous. It is in the cognitive stage the learner is provided with the information how to perform a task and has a chance to see how the teacher performs it. The learner acts consciously and the knowledge acquired is usually declarative and can be verbalized. The learner may

know how to generate a sentence in the present perfect tense, however they may fail to use such a sentence correctly in spontaneous speech or even in controlled activities (Pawlak 2006). In the associative stage declarative knowledge becomes procedural knowledge. However, the learner is still able to verbalize the declarative knowledge, for instance the grammatical rules that were necessary to generate a particular sentence or a set of sentences. Thus, the declarative representation is not always lost. The last step is the autonomous stage. Here, the performance becomes automatic and the skill can be performed without any effort made on the part of the learner. What is more, the errors that previously hampered successful performance disappear. According to this three-stage skill acquisition theory, learners "will learn rules underlying performance of a complex skill as a precursor to competent and automatic skill execution" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 26).

O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) focused on LLS and their place in Anderson's (1983) cognitive theory according to which learning strategies are represented in the same manner as any other cognitive skill. O'Malley and Chamot made use of a cognitive information processing view of human thought and action which assumes that learners' behaviour can be explicated by the manner in which they perceive and interpret their experiences. The second assumption of this theory is that learners process information in a way that bears a resemblance to computer processing. Cognitive theory assumes that learners process information and the thoughts that accompany this process are called mental processes. Therefore, to quote O'Malley and Chamot (1990), LLS "are special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information" (p. 1).

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide comprehensive information associated with the concept of language learning strategies. The author placed emphasis on presenting the numerous definitions put forward by researchers over the years. Even though the notion of LLS is not a new one and has been present for a few decades, there are still many aspects which lead to disagreement among researchers. That is why one of the aims of this chapter was to address the conceptual problems connected with strategies which have not been resolved yet. In addition, the author focused on the characteristics of language learning strategies. Stress has also been placed on elaborating on the cognitive, situational and social variables and the role that they play in the process of selecting and applying LLS.

The following chapter will place emphasis on the classification systems propounded by researchers. It will also present the different types of language learning strategies and studies investigating their effectiveness.

Chapter 3
Investigating Grammar Learning Strategies

3.1 Introduction

Early research into language learning strategies, for instance by Rubin (1975, 1981) and Stern (1975), focused predominantly on identifying LLS that learners employed. As Ellis (1994) adds, the strategies that were identified focused on the setting, particular interests of the researchers or the type of learners under study. There was little interest in classifying those strategies into more general groups or categories.

The early taxonomies of language learning strategies share a few similarities. For example, Skehan (1989) identified three general areas which were present in different classification systems. The first one was learners' ability to impose themselves on the learning situation. Naiman et al. (1978) point to *an active task approach* which manifests itself in actions such as looking for learning opportunities and becoming involved in practice activities. Other strategies that fall into this domain are Rubin's (1981) *clarification* and *verification* and Wong-Fillmore's (1976) *getting some expressions* and *making the most of what you have got*. Learners' technical predispositions constitute the second general area. At this point, Skehan (1989) provides an example of Naiman et al.'s (1978) *realization of language as a system*. This strategy involves using crosslingual comparisons, making inferences about the TL and analyzing it. Another example is Rubin's (1981) *guessing* and *inductive inferencing* and Wong-Fillmore's (1976) *looking for recurring parts in formulae*. The last similarity is learners' ability to assess, which is represented by Rubin's and Naiman et al.'s *monitoring*. This strategy includes correcting errors, noting their source and testing out guesses (Ellis 1994).

The aim of the following chapter is to present different taxonomies put forward by leading researchers. However, since the empirical part of the book addresses the grammar learning strategies applied by advanced learners of English, the chapter

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will mainly focus on presenting grammar learning strategies and the existing body of research in that area.

3.2 Classifying Language Learning Strategies

The present chapter will focus on the most influential taxonomies of LLS. Since the author wants to show how the classification systems evolved in course of time and what changes and modifications have emerged in this area, she adopted a historical perspective. Therefore, the first taxonomy dates back to the beginnings of research into language learning strategies, that is the 1970s. The chapter will also include a review of grammar learning strategies (GLS); readers' attention will be drawn to the most important, though still rather scarce, research into these strategies.

3.2.1 Bialystok's (1978) Taxonomy

In order to delineate the differences present in individual attainment and attainment in different aspects of second language learning, Bialystok (1978) suggested a model of second language learning. Learning strategies are defined here as "optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language" (p. 71). The researcher distinguished four categories of LLS which she incorporated into her model. The first two are *formal* and *functional practising*. Bialystok (1978) describes the former as a "general concept of practice which refers to a language learner's attempts to increase his exposure to the language" (p. 76). The distinction between the formal and functional types was based on a classification made by Stern (1974). Bialystok explains that formal language pertains to the language code and the learner's knowledge about it. Functional language, on the other hand, is connected with language employed in communicative situations. Therefore, *formal practice* can be used in two ways. To start with, the learner may broaden their explicit knowledge on the code by using information about it, for instance by studying a grammar book, asking native speakers for clarification or more information about pronunciation, grammar, new words, etc. The other way entails using the information that already exists in explicit knowledge in order to automatize it. Language drills may be of some help here.

Functional practice is described as "increased exposure to the language for communication" (Bialystok 1978, p. 77). Going to the cinema, listening to songs, reading magazines in the TL, engaging in a conversation with a native speaker—these are just a few examples involved in the strategy of *functional practice*. In Bialystok's model this strategy is an indicator of the degree to which the learner will try to become exposed to the target language so as to enable acquisition.

The last two strategies discussed by Bialystok are *monitoring* and *inferencing*. She describes them as complementary because the former is a production strategy, whereas the latter is its comprehension counterpart. In addition to this, since monitoring helps to enhance formal aspects of productive answers, it can be classified as a formal strategy and inferencing as a functional one. Monitoring works by "bringing information from explicit linguistic knowledge to the language task for the purpose of examining or correcting the response" (Bialystok 1978, p. 78). Inferencing pertains to the learner's actions to find out the meaning of a certain word or expression which is not known to them. It is seen as way to boost the understanding of linguistic material (Carton 1971). When trying to unveil the meaning of an unknown word, the learner may use cues from the environment, gestures or their knowledge of the subject in question. The context in which a given phrase appears may also be of some help to the learner. Bialystok comments that inferencing is regarded predominantly as a comprehension strategy and it can be used together with monitoring in production tasks.

3.2.2 Rubin's (1981) Taxonomy

In her classification system, Rubin focused on the strategies employed by successful learners. The researcher (1981, pp. 124–126) distinguishes between processes which may *directly* and *indirectly* contribute to learning. The former include the following:

(a) Clarification/verification—the learner asks for examples how to use a particular word/expression, asks to be corrected, asks questions about culture, asks for repetition, etc.
(b) Monitoring—the learner corrects his/her own pronunciation, spelling, grammar mistakes; the learner observes the language used by others, etc.
(c) Memorization—the learner takes notes of new words, structures; the learner pronounces out loud and looks for associations, for instance semantic, visual, auditory or kinesic ones, etc.
(d) Guessing/inductive inferencing—the learner uses various clues to guess the meaning, for instance from key words in a sentence, from pictures, gestures, syntactic structures, intonation, narrative/conversational sequence; the learner also ignores difficult words and focuses rather on the overall message, etc.
(e) Deductive reasoning—the learner compares his/her mother tongue with the target language in order to find similarities, the learner also infers grammatical rules and vocabulary by analogy, finds the meaning of an item by means of breaking it down into parts, etc.
(f) Practice—the learner experiments with new sounds in isolation and in context; repeats sentences until he/she has no difficulty producing them; consciously applies grammatical rules when speaking; makes use of new words when speaking, etc.

On the other hand, processes which may contribute *indirectly* to learning entail:

(a) Creating opportunities for practice—the learner tries to create opportunities for further practice: he/she creates situations in which they could talk to native speakers and verify their linguistic abilities; the learner initiates conversation, listens to TV, the radio, watches movies in the target language, etc.
(b) Production tricks—the learner uses circumlocution and paraphrase to convey the meaning, the learner makes use of synonyms, cognates, gestures to communicate the meaning; uses simple sentences, speaks more slowly or more rapidly, etc.

Although the classification put forward by Rubin was a pioneering one, it attracted some deal of criticism. It was believed that the strategies present in the model overlapped. Moreover, the strategies listed did not exclude each other and frequently turned up in more than a single grouping (O'Malley et al. 1985b).

3.2.3 Carver's (1984) Taxonomy

Carver (1984, pp. 125–126) also proposed a way of classifying language learning strategies. His system comprises four main categories which are later on broken down into further examples.

(a) Strategies for coping with TL rules
Carver (1984) adds that this category could be further divided into: generalisation, transfer from L1, simplification, reinterpretation, hypercorrection, elimination of register differences.
(b) Strategies for receiving performance
This category, quite distinct from the former one, could include such subcategories as:

- inferring (from probability and knowledge of the world),
- predicting (from contextual clues),
- checking (by rereading, asking for repetition; by asking for confirmation of one's interpretation; by asking for simplification),
- indentifying key terms (from frequency, from knowledge of context, from chance).

(c) Strategies for producing performance
Within this set one could distinguish the following:

- repeating (sentences, key elements, phatic elements),
- labelling (by enumeration: *The first point is*.., by function: *I want to explain to you*. . .),
- lifting (of sentences, of expressions, of ideas),
- monitoring reception of message (by question tags, and other feedback devices; by requesting comment or reply),
- using routines (holophrases appropriate to the context).

(d) Strategies for organising learning
Here Carver provides the following subcategories:

- repetition,
- cognition,
- whole or part learning,
- concentrates on spaced learning,
- peer group contact,
- contact with the teacher,
- revision,
- using reference material, trying out and practising.

3.2.4 Chesterfields' (1985) Taxonomy

When discussing the notion of a learning strategy, Chesterfield and Chesterfield (1985) incorporated learners' efforts to enhance linguistic and socio-linguistic competence, as well as their attempts to practise the target language. They created a set containing twelve strategies developed by younger learners in a chronological order. The strategies listed include, among others, repetition, memorization, formulaic expressions, elaboration, monitoring, request for clarification or appeal for assistance.

The above-mentioned researchers believe that young children in bilingual classrooms have a tendency to develop second language strategies in a natural order. Those learners who represent a more advanced level deploy a greater number of strategies than less advanced learners. Chesterfield and Chesterfield (1985) reported that, initially, the observed children employed *repetition* and *memorisation*. In course of time, they made use of strategies that could enable interaction. It was also observed that strategies which indicated learners' language cognizance and monitoring were used at a later stage and not by all students.

3.2.5 O'Malley et al.'s (1985b) Taxonomy

The study conducted by O'Malley et al. (1985b) was divided into two parts. The first one was descriptive and focused on the LLS employed by 70 ESL high school students representing beginning and intermediate proficiency levels, whereas the other involved strategy training. The data in the descriptive part were collated by means of observations and interviews. There were two treatment groups and one control group.

Not all the strategies present in the literature appeared in the study under consideration. Examples include advance organizers, keyword, deduction or recombining. As O'Malley et al. (1985b) report, there were also strategies which

did not match those described in the literature. They appeared to be "quite specific activities of the study-skill type, such as note taking or grouping, both of which are examples of a more general cognitive strategy identified in the literature as *transformation*" (O'Malley et al. 1985b, p. 565). The findings showed 638 reported instances of language learning strategy use, 30 % of which were metacognitive strategies like self-management or advance preparation. The majority of the strategies reported were of the cognitive type (53 %), for example repetition, note taking or imagery. Socioaffective strategies, such as contextualization or resourcing, were in minority as they accounted for only 17 % of the overall strategy use. O'Malley et al. (1985b) add that strategies were predominantly used to perform vocabulary or pronunciation tasks, "which may be less conceptually complex than integrative language tasks such as listening and making oral presentation" (p. 568).

The purpose of the second stage of the study, strategy training, was to see whether combining LLS chosen for language tasks would facilitate target language learning. The strategic intervention was performed in a natural learning environment. There were three groups: the metacognitive one, the cognitive one and the control group. The findings showed that the two treatment groups outperformed the control group.

On the basis of the obtained results, the strategies reported by the subjects were classified into three groups: metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective ones. Metacognitive strategies included, among others, advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention or self-management. Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, comprised repetition, translation, grouping, imagery or transfer. The last group, socioaffective strategies consisted of co-operation and questioning for clarification. As for the training, the study showed that combining strategic intervention with integrative language skills can in fact exert a positive impact on target language learning. What is more, the list of strategies provided can serve as a basis for further research and also for teachers wanting to combine strategy training with regular classes (Chamot 1987).

3.2.6 Oxford's (1990) Taxonomy

In her classification system, Oxford (1990) distinguishes between two most significant types of LLS, namely between direct and indirect ones. The former necessitate mental processing of the language. Within direct strategies one can distinguish three subcategories: memory, cognitive and compensation strategies which process the language in a different manner. The main aim of memory strategies is to aid learners in storing and retrieving new pieces of information. Cognitive strategies, in contrast, aim to help learners comprehend and employ language by different means. Compensation strategies, on the other hand, enable learners to use the TL, even if they have certain gaps in their knowledge. The two major types of strategies "and these six strategy groupings function as a mutual support network within which

various types of strategies support and enhance each other's effects in order to improve L2 learning" (Hsiao and Oxford 2002, p. 370).

Indirect strategies, the second category mentioned by Oxford, comprise metacognitive (e.g. paying attention, delaying speech production), affective (e.g. lowering your anxiety, writing a learning diary) and social strategies (e.g. asking questions, cooperating with peers). The first subcategory helps learners to be in charge of their own cognition and to control learning by means of planning, evaluating, arranging or centering. Controlling emotions, motivation and attitudes is the aim of affective strategies, whereas social strategies enable students to learn by means of interaction with others. Oxford (1990) refers to these strategies as indirect as "they support and manage language learning without (in many cases) directly involving the target language" (p. 135). What is more, they enhance language learning by means of focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy, etc.

This classification is deemed to be one of the most thorough ones. It is based on a classification dating back to 1985 and it was later revised and enhanced. In the 1985 taxonomy Oxford distinguished between primary strategies and support strategies. The former comprised nine subcategories (e.g. summarizing, practice, inferencing, mnemonics), whereas the latter included eight types (e.g. attention enhancers, affective strategies, planning, cooperation, self-management). Each of the subcategories was provided with further examples, which resulted in a list of 64 strategies. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) leveled some criticism at such a lengthy and extensive list that encompassed virtually every strategy that appeared in literature. The underlying problem of such a classification lies in the fact that it "is removed from any underlying cognitive theory, fails to prioritize which strategies are most important to learning, and generates subcategories that appear to overlap" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 103).

It is also worth adding that the 1985 taxonomy served as a basis for a questionnaire that was to evaluate learning strategies in SLA, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The inventory relies on primary and support strategies and includes items tapping the 64 strategies present in literature. The revised taxonomy is praised for its comprehensiveness and the inclusion of nearly every strategy that has been mentioned in literature. Ellis (1994) admits that "the organization of specific strategies into a hierarchy of levels and the breadth of the taxonomy is impressive" (p. 539). Furthermore, Oxford's taxonomy recognized the social and affective dimensions of language learning, since she perceived this process as a multidimensional one that includes not only cognitive but also social land affective aspects.

However, the taxonomy also has its shortcomings. Ellis (1994) says that Oxford did not differentiate clearly between strategies focusing on L2 learning and those focusing on L2 use. He adds that compensation strategies have been lumped under learning strategies, which for some researchers has constituted a contentious issue. Oxford (1990) argues that the notion of communication strategies has frequently been used in a limited way, with reference to strategies that compensate for gaps in knowledge only during conversational speech production. The researcher goes on

to mention Tarone's (1980, 1983) examples of communication strategies (paraphrasing, borrowing, avoidance) which refer only to the speaking situation, which might lead one to thinking that "communication does not occur when the learner is engaged in the other three skills, listening, reading and writing" (Oxford 1990, p. 243). Another problem with communication strategies she mentions is that many linguists believe these strategies cannot be treated as learning strategies as their objective is communication and not learning. Oxford argues that at times it is very hard to state whether the learner's strategy choice is motivated by the desire to communicate or to learn. What is more, learning very often results from using communication strategies, even if communication was of utmost importance. Therefore, in order to shun the artificial distinction between communication and learning strategies, Oxford (1990) resolved to replace the term communication strategy with compensation strategy.

3.2.7 Stern's (1992) Taxonomy

In his classification model, Stern (1992) distinguishes five main strategies. The first one refers to management and planning. This type expresses the learners' desire to be in charge of or, in other words, to manage their process of learning. The learner has to set a goal which will be within their reach and assess their attainment in the light of that goal. Cognitive strategies are the second type mentioned in Stern's classification model. These are the strategies that learners deploy when they engage in the study and practice of the TL. The third type is the communicative-experiential one. The main aim of these strategies is to prevent message breakdown and to impart the message effectively. The learner may therefore use circumlocution, gesturing, paraphrasing or may ask the teacher for repetition or explanation. There are also interpersonal strategies which help the learner to surmount the social obstacles they encounter when learning the language. This type entails engaging in a conversation with native speakers of the target language and getting to know that culture. Finally, there are affective strategies which are "to create favourable conditions and to overcome the inevitable problems of negative affect" (1992, p. 266). Learners quite frequently face stress and anxiety that accompany task performance. Mounting tension can be, in extreme cases, paralyzing, making the learner incapable of producing a fluent and correct utterance but, what seems even worse, it can lead to the learner having unpleasant feelings towards learning the L2. Employing affective strategies should diminish that tension and help the learner reduce the feeling of anxiety that hinders further progress. Stern (1992) adds that since learning the target language combines formal study and practice, cognitive and communicative-experiential strategies should be perceived as complementary. Therefore, the learner would benefit most if they employed the two types of strategies.

One can notice that there has been considerable progress in classifying language learning strategies. Researchers moved on from mere classifying and list making to

creating more thorough taxonomies which are theoretically-motivated and multi-levelled (Ellis 1994). There are, however, many issues which have not been resolved yet. To start with, the plethora of definitions and classification systems on offer may be perplexing. Too many terms and names make this field seem, as many researchers admit, fuzzy. The categories provided differ in terms of dimensions such as specificity. For instance, the strategy of repetition is more specific than the one of self-management. Another difference lies in the degree of observability, for example questioning for clarification is an overt activity, whereas elaboration is not (Ellis 1994). What is more, there is little agreement on the number of strategies as it is not exactly known how many of them have been observed and how many are actually available to students to help them learn the target language (Hsiao and Oxford 2002). Droździał-Szelest comments that "the reliable identification of strategies is quite difficult, which is indicated by the continuous modification of strategies as a result of various studies" (1997, p. 44). In addition, every classification model contains an implicit theory about learning strategies and sometimes even about the process of learning a foreign language, for instance, to quote Hsiao and Oxford (2002), "if a system contains separate, substantial categories for affective (emotion- and motivation-management) strategies and social learning strategies, the implicit theory suggests that these types of strategies are important and that student affects and social interaction play key roles in L2 learning" (p. 368).

Due to such a proliferation of terms and typologies, researchers frequently do not know which classification is the right one to employ in their studies. It is not clear whether all the models put forward are reliable or which model is more effective. For instance, many researchers stress the fact that the taxonomy provided by O'Malley et al. (1985b) and Oxford (1990) overlap and, hence, should be "combined so as to increase their explanatory power and ensure greater compatibility with the available research findings" (Pawlak 2011a, b, c; Pawlak 2011d, p. 23). Finally, it needs to be stated whether all the models fully reflect the process of L2 learning. The problems mentioned constitute considerable stumbling blocks to conducting reliable research. It cannot be denied, though, that the existing taxonomies are a useful and valuable source of information and a reference for teachers and researchers alike.

3.3 Grammar Learning Strategies

The first studies on grammar learning strategies (GLS), defined by Oxford et al. (2007) as "actions or thoughts that learners consciously employ to make language learning and/or language use easier, more effective, more efficient, and more enjoyable" (p. 117), date back to the 1970s. Rubin's (1975) article on the strategies employed by good language learners showed that learners take interest in learning grammatical aspects of the target language. The paper illustrated that effective learners feel a need to attend to form, look for patterns, analyze, categorize

and synthesize their L2. Though the beginnings seemed extremely promising, interest in further research into GLS was scarce. These strategies failed to attract sufficient attention from theoreticians and researchers who were preoccupied with the communicative approach. Since grammar and grammar strategies were neglected for a long period of time, research in this area was rather limited, which is reflected in Anderson's (2005) words: "what is greatly lacking in the research are studies that specifically target the identification of learning strategies that L2 learners use to learn grammar and to understand the elements of grammar" (p. 766). Oxford (2011) adds that GLS "have garnered the least interest and concern of any area of L2 strategies" (p. 256). In addition, Cohen et al. (2011) state that "there is a tendency to play down the issue of grammar and even relegate grammar learning to homework assignments" (p. 146). Such a situation may seem astounding, particularly because many learners and teachers still attach a great deal of importance to grammar when learning the target language. Furthermore, to quote Cohen et al. (2011), "learners encounter grammar forms that are problematic and that cause them repeated difficulties, regardless of how well these forms are presented in textbooks, drilled in class, or exercised in homework assignments" (p. 146). Therefore, more information on grammar strategies and more studies into that area is certainly necessary as it could facilitate and even accelerate the process of mastering a new language.

Due to the fact that grammar learning strategies still remain largely unexplored, Oxford et al. (2007) refer to them as a *Second Cinderella*. The term *Cinderella of strategies* was first coined by Vandergrift (1997) in connection with listening strategies which at some point were very neglected by researchers. When discussing the notion of grammar learning strategies, Oxford (2011) says that "what little has been done in grammar strategies has largely been separated from learning strategy research and is not all that well known within grammar instruction research, either" (p. 256). The aim of the present subchapter is to depict the slowly growing body of research into grammar learning strategies.

3.3.1 Research into Grammar Learning Strategies

Because of the relatively limited interest in the field of grammar learning strategies, the number of studies conducted so far is certainly not impressive. GLS failed to attract a great deal of academic interest. What is more, the available research projects are based on various classification systems and frequently yield contradictory results (Pawlak 2011c). The earliest attempts focusing strictly on grammar learning strategies include research performed by Karmiloff-Smith (1979), Stevens (1984) and Oliphant (1997). However, as Pawlak (2010a) adds, the results of these studies were frequently ignored by many scholars. In addition, there are few state-of-the art research projects that would address the issue of grammar learning strategies. The present section will concentrate on a selected number of important studies into GLS.

3.3.1.1 Karmiloff-Smith's (1979) Study

In her study, Karmiloff-Smith (1979) examined the use of determiners among French speaking children, aged 3–12. The researcher wanted to test the hypothesis that "children come to awareness of intralinguistic cues to gender, i.e., phonological/morphological and syntactic cues, later in their development, while their initial point of reference is extralinguistic, i.e., natural gender differences" (Oliphant 1997, p. 2).

As part of the investigation, the children were presented with pictures showing different objects which later on received French names. Karmiloff-Smith wanted to examine the children's sensitivity to different combinations of three types of gender cues. The findings revealed that phonological and syntactic cues had a greater impact on the children's assignment of gender to the presented objects than semantic cues. The researcher also found that the subjects aged 3–9 employed mainly phonological strategies. In course of time, the subjects' awareness of the importance of syntactic cues increased along with their sensitivity to semantic cues. Finally, older participants showed a tendency to assign nouns more frequently to the masculine.

3.3.1.2 Stevens' (1984) Study

Stevens (1984) examined English-speaking children in a French immersion classroom. He concentrated on the manner in which they coped with phonological, syntactic and semantic cues to gender. In order to conduct his study, he made use of the three gender tasks employed by Karmiloff-Smith (1979). The subjects were children aged 6–13 who had been learning English for at least 1 year (1–6). They were asked to give statements showing whether they were able to assign gender correctly. The researcher found that his subjects showed some similarity to those in the aforementioned study by Karmiloff-Smith (1979) because when assigning gender, they used phonological cues in noun endings. The older subjects also focused on semantic and syntactic cues. When there was no disagreement observed with the phonological cues, the younger children used syntactic ones. The older subjects used the cues correctly even if there was discord, but tended to show greater accuracy in the case of agreement.

Further findings demonstrate that the subjects did very well on masculine items. However, the children attending the immersion classroom were not as good at assigning gender as their native counterparts and also encountered some difficulty with the article system. Stevens (1984) reports that he observed improvement in the learners' understanding of masculine articles, though there was still some confusion in terms of the feminine article system. Article omission was typical of younger children, whereas children of all ages shunned marking adjectives for gender and used the masculine form (Oliphant 1997).

3.3.1.3 Oliphant's (1997) Study

The main aim of the study was to examine the ability to assign gender to nouns in the target language among L2 learners' of Italian. There were 64 first and second year university students participating in the project. They were all American community college students. The reason why this particular grammatical feature was addressed was the fact that, as the author of the study reveals, it caused some deal of difficulty among learners with an English background.

In the course of the treatment, the subjects were provided with three tests examining their sensitivity to the cues that help to determine the gender in Italian. The overall results of the test administered show that the masculine gender was selected at a lower rate. The subjects achieved better results with feminine nouns, which might imply that the masculine gender is not the unmarked form. In addition, the results reveal that learners do not encounter difficulty in assigning gender when they are provided with complementary cues. However, the presence of conflicting cues leads to a certain degree of confusion among students. Oliphant (1997) adds that "this fact suggests that students were simultaneously processing a number of cues, though their ability to cope with them successfully varied according to the type of strategy they were following" (p. 27).

3.3.1.4 Gimeno's (2002) Study

In the study Gimeno (2002) wanted to investigate the effects of combining explicit strategy training and explicit grammar instruction on secondary school students. By introducing strategy training the researcher also wanted to help the participants of the project become more autonomous students. It was the researcher's firm belief that if students are capable of learning independently, without receiving incessant assistance from the teacher, their motivation will be higher and they will enhance their performance, which will in turn make the teacher's job much easier. The researcher set out with two hypotheses (Gimeno 2002, p. 125):

- Students (. . .) following the grammar strategy instruction will acquire the second conditional structure better than the students who do not follow this instruction: that is to say, their results in the first post-test, second post-test, and final post-test will be better.
- The experimental group students (. . .) will transfer their way of acquiring second conditionals to another grammatical structure, in this case the third conditionals, better than the students who do not follow this instruction.

The project included 90 students, aged between 16 to 22, who attended three English lessons a week. Due to frequent absences, the final number of subjects dropped to 60. The subjects formed an experimental group and a control one. The former was subjected to strategy training, which included emphasis on cognitive and metacognitive strategies, while the latter followed the regular coursebook. The

strategy training started with a questionnaire to learn more about the subjects and also about their application of grammar learning strategies. The instructional model in the experimental group included the following stages: strategy preparation, strategy presentation, strategy practice (presenting the structure, isolating it, producing the structure and providing feedback), strategy use evaluation, strategy transfer (Gimeno 2002, p. 136).

The data collated during the study confirmed the two hypotheses; the results revealed that the students in the experimental group managed to obtain better results in their post-tests than the students in the control group. In addition to this, thanks to the strategic intervention the subjects transferred "the knowledge acquired in learning how to get second C. declarative knowledge into getting third C. declarative knowledge" (Gimeno 2002, p. 298).

The findings should be treated with some degree of caution, though. To start with, the number of participants was too limited to allow conclusive results. What is more, the training was introduced throughout a short period of time. Even the author admits that "more strategy training should be provided to help students automatize the use of the practised strategies" (Gimeno 2002, p. 296). The author also states that while the subjects broadened their declarative knowledge on the target structure, they failed to fully automatize it, which is why the author admits that the subjects could have been provided with more practice opportunities. Finally, introducing at least one more experimental group could help to look at the investigated area from a broader perspective.

3.3.1.5 Tilfarlioğlu's (2005) Study

Tilfarlioğlu (2005) set out to examine how learners manage to learn English grammar more effectively, what strategies they deploy and whether they favour any specific types of strategies. If so, the study was meant to show a connection between strategy employment and grammar learning. The subjects of the study were students of the Preparatory School at the University of Gaziantep. In order to collect the data, the researcher made of the students' achievement grades and the Grammar Learning Strategies Questionnaire. The subjects were asked to answer 43 questions which were based on Oxford's (1990) taxonomy.

The results failed to show a statistically significant difference between successful and unsuccessful learners in terms of grammar learning strategy use. Both groups employed grammar learning strategies equally often. Moreover, most of the students participating in the study opted for cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective strategies. As far as gender differences are concerned, it appeared that female students employed cognitive, social-affective and metacognitive grammar learning strategies more often than male students.

Lastly, the study also focused on the relationship between strategies and learners' educational background. The results point out that students who graduated from vocational schools employed cognitive, social-affective and metacognitive GLS more frequently than those who graduated from Anatolian high schools.

3.3.1.6 Mystkowska-Wiertelak's (2008) Study

The aim of the empirical study was to investigate the grammar learning strategies employed by 160 secondary school students. To gather the necessary data the researcher made use of a questionnaire based on Oxford's SILL. The instrument was divided into six parts, each of which represented a strategy type (e.g. memory strategies, cognitive strategies, etc) referring to learning grammar. As the researcher admits, all the respondents were provided with comprehensive instructions prior to completing the survey. The questionnaire was administered in Polish to shun any potential misunderstanding and was completely anonymous.

The findings of the study reveal that it was metacognitive strategies that proved to be most frequently applied by the respondents (nearly 71 %). Among this group there were two strategies that were clearly the most frequently applied ones: trying to find relationships between what you already know and new things you learn in English (89 %) and trying to understand every grammar rule (89 %). Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2008) comments the popularity of these strategies among the respondents saying that thanks to many years of extensive practice high school students have developed autonomous learning behaviour and know how to take responsibility of their learning.

Compensation strategies were also popular among the subjects with as many as 69 % declaring their frequent application. The strategies that garnered the most interest within this group were guessing what the new structures mean (84 %) and using gestures when you are lost for words (76 %). As many as 107 subjects admitted using social strategies, for instance asking the interlocutor to slow down or repeat if you do not understand what they are saying (73 %) or asking people who speak English better for help (79 %). Memory strategies certainly proved to be less popular with slightly more than half of the students questioned (51.12 %) declaring their use. This score might seem somewhat low because, as the researcher explains, the educational system in Poland is heavily reliant on committing to memory abundant information, which means that numerous students managed to build a wide repertoire of strategies facilitating memorization. Even less popular were cognitive and affective strategies which were deployed by 49.23 % and 40.6 % students respectively.

Another issue that Mystowska-Wiertelak investigated in her project was the relationship between the subjects' age and reported use of grammar learning strategies. She divided the respondents into three age groups: 16-year-olds, 17-year-olds and 18-year-olds. The results showed that it was the group of 17-year-old students who deployed strategies most frequently. Nearly 60 % of the subjects in this group reported frequent strategy use. Only slightly more than half of the students in the youngest group used strategies, which might be attributed to their limited language experience. More surprising is the fact that only 55 % of the subjects in the oldest group admitted employing strategies, which Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2008) accredits to, among others, "the coursebooks the students used throughout their education or classroom practices which did not promote strategy use" (p. 145).

The last issue to be addressed in the study was the relation between strategy application and students' attainment operationalized as the subjects' grades. Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2008) says that students who deployed strategies more often achieved better results than those who were less keen to apply strategies. It is not clear, though, what grades were analyzed—whether these were final grades or grades received in tests. Lastly, claiming that "the employment of learning strategies enabled the learners to achieve better results" (Mystkowska-Wiertelak 2008, p. 146) might be somewhat risky, since there might have been a great many other factors that also contributed to learners' improved performance.

3.3.1.7 Pawlak's (2009b) Study

Pawlak (2009b) explored the relationship between GLSs and attainment in learning English, operationalized as success in classes devoted to grammar and an end-of-the-year practical English exam that included all the features of target language proficiency. Altogether, there were 142 subjects studying at an English department who participated in the study—67 of whom were first-years, 38 second-years and 37 third-years. The data were collated by means of a questionnaire, the students' final grades at the end of their practical grammar course and the grades achieved in their practical grammar exam at the end of the year. The questionnaire comprised two parts: one with open-ended and closed questions and the other based on a classification model introduced by Oxford et al. (2007). The results of the study showed that GLSs were most frequently used by the second-year students; however, as the author of the study admits, the differences between the three groups failed to achieve statistical significance.

As for GLSs connected with the instructional mode, it appeared that implicit learning with focus on form prevailed in all three groups, followed by explicit deductive learning and explicit inductive learning. The study revealed that the subjects frequently deployed GLSs and that they were cognizant of the importance of grammatical features when trying to get the message across. Pawlak, however, remains cautious and adds that

> excessive optimism should be tempered in view of the fact that in response to the question concerning their favourite ways of learning grammar, the subjects listed only a very limited range of quite traditional strategies such as formal practice and only 15 % made references to using the structures taught in spontaneous communication. (2009b, p. 51)

Such answers may be far from the real GLSs learners employ. There are two reasons for that: either the instrument did not fully reflect the reality and the students' choices or the subjects wanted to be perceived as good and conscientious and, therefore, reported a frequent use of grammar learning strategies. Surprisingly, the results failed to show a strong correlation between grammar strategies and attainment. There were even cases of negative correlation, which is astounding as it might imply that employing grammar strategies exerts a negative impact on exam grades. Equally surprising is the fact that the second-year students who reported a

frequent use of grammar strategies showed a propensity for lower grades in the final exam.

The strongest relation was observed between strategies connected with explicit deductive learning and grades in the grammar course. This result could signify that this particular type of grammar instruction is still popular among teachers and learners. The last issue in the research pertained to the GLSs used by upper- and lower-level students. The study did not reveal major differences in the frequency of the overall use of grammar strategies or the use of specific behaviours. When analyzing the results, Pawlak (2009b) comments that there were many factors that could have exerted an impact on the results, for instance the data collection instrument that proved inefficient. Not enough stress placed on strategic devices used when practising grammar could also have affected the results. The insufficient number of metacognitive and memory strategies present in the study might also be to blame for the results obtained,

> as well as the fact that the taxonomy comprised many cognitive devices that might have been unfamiliar to many respondents (input-enhancement, garden-path technique, dictogloss, etc). The latter problem could have accounted for the astonishingly high use of GLS related to implicit learning with focus on form which failed to be reflected in descriptive responses, as the participants could have decided to play it safe and indicated frequent use of behaviours regarded as beneficial (Pawlak 2009b, p. 55).

Although the study did not show a relation between the use of GLSs and attainment, it must be borne in mind that it is among the first ones conducted in that field in the Polish environment and it is too early to draw far-reaching conclusions. The results call for more research into students' GLSs, which will hopefully help researchers to gain greater insight into the strategies employed by students and the factors influencing that use.

3.3.1.8 Stephen and Singh's (2010) Study

Stephen and Singh (2010) stress the significance of metacognition in effective language learning. They add that "successful learners are those who are metacognitively aware to use appropriate learning strategies" (2010, p. 148). In their paper the two researchers wanted to investigate the impact of training in metacognitive strategies on learning the subject-verb concord. The study was divided into five sessions and included 50 subjects who were first year students at the American College, Madurai, South India. The participants formed two groups—an experimental and a control one. During the first session all the subjects were asked to write a pre-test on the subject and verb concord. During the second one the students in the experimental one were subjected to training in metacognitive strategies. The researchers explained the notion of metacognition and then showed the subjects how to deploy strategies such as planning, monitoring or self-evaluating. The subjects in the control group did not receive any training. The third session was devoted to presenting materials on subject and verb concord. The experimental group was to learn this target feature using the metacognitive

strategies they had been acquainted with during the previous session. By contrast, the students in the control group were provided with information about the subject and verb concord by the teacher. They did not learn any metacognitive strategies that could help them learn the target feature. The fourth and fifth session focused on two post-tests on the target feature. The students were instructed not to complete a given task if they did not know the answer. This way the researchers wanted to shun blind guessing.

The findings of the study reveal that the subjects in the experimental group achieved higher mean scores on both post-tests: 12.52 on a 20-point scale on the first post-test and14.84 on the second post-test. The control group scored 9.04 points and 10.92 respectively. The findings led the researchers to conclude that "students can learn grammar autonomously if they are trained well in the use of metacognitive strategies" (Stephen and Singh 2010, p. 148).

Despite the optimistic results, some criticism can be levelled at the study. First of all, the number of the subjects in the study is too small and any generalizations should be avoided. Secondly, little is known about the level of the participants, their previous experience with learning English, their background, which could have had profound effect on the final results. Additionally, providing students with only one session of strategy training is most certainly not enough. There is insufficient guarantee that the obtained results were the effect of the training and not of external variables. There was also no delayed post-test which could help the researchers verify whether the effects of the treatment were durable. Finally, little is known about the pre- and post-tests implemented in course of the study apart from the fact that they included 20 multiple-choice questions. In spite of the numerous limitations the study is another attempt at enriching the existing body of research into grammar learning strategies and might constitute a source of inspiration for undertaking similar empirical endeavours.

3.3.1.9 Cohen et al.'s (2011) Study

Cohen et al. (2011) decided to conduct a study into grammar learning strategies in response to the very limited number of empirical investigations in that area. In his article (Cohen et al. 2011) Cohen explained that the cause of the scarce interest in GLSs was in fact poor understanding of the notion of grammar learning strategies and what they encompass. It was partly for this reason that the researcher embarked on designing a website devoted to GLSs which, he hoped, would encourage further research on grammar learning strategies. Another aim of the undertaking was to ameliorate students' control of Spanish grammar. The website was to include different strategies that learners of Spanish found effective when encountering grammatical problems, i.e. structures they failed to understand. The authors of the project stressed the fact that the website does not serve as a set of grammatical rules but has a very practical aspect to it, namely to help learners enhance their control of Spanish grammar.

The authors of the website started their project by designing online surveys which would help to collate information concerning the grammatical features that students regarded as difficult when learning Spanish. Apart from this instrument, the researchers also made use of interviews which were recorded and, in some cases, later digitized and placed on the website. Another aim of the study was to raise learners' awareness of the strategies that they are already using and remind them of the numerous factors that exert profound impact on strategy choice and application. Furthermore, the website provides learners with the opportunity to complete a learning style survey. The results of the survey may prove extremely helpful as the website helps students find strategies that would correspond to their learning style preferences and that could be used to learn different grammatical structures and forms. In fact, students are given a list of strategies that can be deployed by students opting for the auditory learning style (e.g. rhymes, songs), for the visual one (e.g. note cards, colour coding, using mental images) or the kinesthetic one (e.g. physical behaviours, writing it over). The students may click on each of these strategies and read more about them, listen to a short passage on a given strategy or even watch a short video. This way of presenting grammar learning strategies is extremely beneficial as students can actually see how to apply a strategy, but more importantly, how to do it effectively. The authors (2011, p. 155) of the project admit that they wanted to show what potential such a website has in terms of applying strategies "in a number of skill areas". They also hope that their undertaking will spur other researchers into action, especially when it comes to designing and using websites. Additionally, they wanted to assist those students who, when faced with a grammatical problem, did not know what do.

All together the website comprises 72 strategies that learners believed were helpful when learning Spanish grammar. However, it needs to be stressed that "the intention is not to teach Spanish grammar but rather to support learners in learning and performing the grammar forms that they select" (Cohen et al. 2011, p. 155). Those students who want to practise grammar can still do so as the website includes numerous links to Spanish grammar websites. The strategies mentioned were obtained thanks to a meticuluous analysis of the online surveys, audio and video materials. The researchers selected only those strategies that matched the definition of GLSs which the researchers understand to be "deliberate thoughts and actions students consciously employed for learning and getting better control over the use of grammar structures" (2011, p. 147).

Two years after the introduction of the website, the researchers conducted a study to examine its effectiveness and to investigate the ways in which it was used by students. The project addressed four research questions (Cohen et al. 2011, p. 156):

- To what extent did learners perceive the strategies that they had selected to be helpful in improving the Spanish?
- What were the learners' reasons for choosing the strategies that they choose?
- How are specific strategies received by learners?
- What were the learners' overall impressions of the website?

The data were collected from 15 students attending Spanish lessons, their level of linguistic proficiency ranging between intermediate and advanced. The researchers made use of interviews and the Strategy Tracking Form which "directed subjects to indicate the strategies that they accessed, the elements in the strategy information that they used (e.g., audio, video, or written content), rate its utility to them, and indicate whether they had added it to their repertoire" (Cohen et al. 2005, p. 158). The results of the investigation showed that the subjects found the majority (73 %) of strategies they chose from the website were very helpful when learning Spanish grammar. As for the second question, it appeared that 61 % of the strategies available on the website were chosen for the purpose of helping students with specific structures, while only 39 % were chosen as general strategies. Additionally, it should be stressed that some students admitted that the website made them analyze their learning process and the learning styles they use, which was one of the many goals of the project. In the third question students were to comment on the usefulness of the strategies the website offered. Opinions varied greatly, which Cohen et al. (2011) put down to the fact that the effectiveness of a strategy hinges on a great many factors, such as the students' learning characteristics, their learning background, expectations, etc. There is no universal strategy that would appeal to everyone and that would yield satisfactory results in every learning task. Finally, most of the participants expressed very positive opinions about the website and its usefulness. However, there were a few who perceived the website as too simplistic, suggesting it would be more suitable for students at a lower level of advancement. Despite these mixed opinions, as the researchers report, the website helped students gain greater control of their grammar learning process.

Innovative as it was, the project was not free some limitations. To start with, there was a very limited number of participants (15). Furthermore, the researchers admit that they did not test whether using the website actually contributed to learners' greater mastery of Spanish grammar. All the results were based on students' personal opinions. Another limitation that the authors of the project mention is the form of motivation. In order to encourage students to participate in the study, the researchers offered them a $75 credit at the university bookstore, which leads to the question whether students' motivation to use the website would have been equally high, had it not been for the financial incentive. Additionally, the subjects used the website over a period of 2 months only, which could have been insufficient to fully observe the effects of the strategies applied. There was also no control group against which the obtained results could have been compared. Despite these limitations, the authors conclude that the website does have "potential for supporting learners in their efforts to perform language skills more effectively" (2011, p. 168).

3.3.1.10 Briewin et al.'s (2013) Study

Briewin et al. (2013) believe that successful language learning can only be possible if students' needs are taken into account. By listening attentively to what learners

have to say about the process of learning, educators stand a greater chance of designing stimulating learning materials, especially those addressing the grammar of the target language.

The aim of the study was to gain greater insights into EFL students' preferences for grammar learning strategies. The findings were to help the authors create a grammar module that students could benefit from when learning the target language grammar. Briewin et al. (2013) stress the importance of needs analysis and add that it is indispensible when helping students enhance their performance. In fact, they even compare it to a puzzle, saying that "once the right pieces have been discovered, the entire picture can be formed" (Briewin et al. 2013, p. 250).

There were 20 EFL students participating in the study. All of them represented an intermediate level of advancement and attended an English Language Centre. The subjects, aged between 17 and 19, came from Cambodia, Yemen, China and Mongolia. So as to collate the necessary data the researchers made use of a questionnaire based on the one introduced by Cohen et al. (2003). The questionnaire contained 11 examples of strategies, 8 of which were placed under the category *Strategies to improve my grammar ability*, and 3 under the category *When I encounter rules and sentence structures that I do not understand*. The participants of the project were to choose one of the following answers: *This strategy doesn't fit me*, *I have tried this strategy and would use it again*, *I use this strategy and like it*, *I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it*. The researchers focused only on the strategies that reached a percentage of 60 and above.

The first strategy to garner a great deal of interest was using five senses to differentiate abstract and concrete nouns. Learning prepositions through pictures was the second strategy that attracted the respondents. As many as 65 % of the students questioned found this strategy effective and would willingly employ it one more time. The third strategy was learning to write/speak out adjectives in the correct order through the use of adjective chart. There were 15 respondents who perceived this strategy as useful. When faced with grammatical obstacles, 13 students underlined or crossed out adverbs according to their usage in a passage or text. The last strategy mentioned referred to using formulas to memorize conjunctions, with 12 respondents declaring its frequent use.

The authors of the study concluded that their project helped to identify the main strategies that learners deploy when they want to enhance their grammar abilities or when they encounter certain setbacks when learning the grammar of the target language. Due to the limitations in the form of, for instance, a very small number of respondents, it would be fair to say that the study depicts only certain tendencies among a certain group of students. The obtained results can by no means be treated as conclusive. What is more, there is only scant information pertaining to the participants with no mention being made of their previous learning experience. The questionnaire used in course of the study could have been complimented with additional instruments such as diaries or interviews. Then, we could learn more about, for instance, the circumstances in which the grammar learning strategies were employed or the frequency with which they were used. Additionally, the

questionnaire could have included open-ended questions so that students could justify their choices.

Despite these limitations, the study touches upon a significant issue, the one of needs analysis. Briewin et al. (2013) emphasize that learners' expectations should merit a great deal of attention as they can help "course designers and developers to keep abreast of the current needs of learners, which would eventually help educators to create suitable language learning materials" (p. 253).

3.3.2 Oxford et al.'s (2007) Grammar Strategy Classification

One of the first researchers who decided to devise a system classifying grammar learning strategies was Oxford together with her associates. Oxford et al. (2007) based their GLSs classification on the distinction between two main instructional modes, namely the implicit and explicit one, which can be further subdivided into smaller units. The aim of the following subsection is to provide greater insight into these two modes and the subcategories connected with them.

3.3.2.1 Implicit Instructional Mode

Implicit learning has been referred to as a "process of apprehending structure by attending to frequency cues" (Reber 1976, p. 93) or as "the unselective and passive aggregation of information about the co-occurrence of environmental events and features" (Hayes and Broadbent 1988, p. 251). In implicit learning, students focus on the grammar of the target language, though they are not aware of it. Neither are they provided with rule elucidation. Since learners are not forewarned of the feature to be taught, they learn incidentally.

This mode includes a *focus on meaning* (FonM), with little interest in grammar, and *focus on form* (FonF) in which attention to grammar is paid occasionally. The first notion raises some degree of controversy since there are researchers who do not perceive it as an instructional mode but rather as "classroom L2 exposure" (Doughty 2003; as cited in Oxford et al. 2007, p. 121). The most significant aim is to draw learners' attention to meaning. In FonM "teachers do not push learners to attend to any forms and certainly not to induce any underlying grammar rules" (Oxford et al. 2007, p. 121). The main idea is that students learn most effectively, whether within or beyond their classroom setting, when they experience the TL as a medium of communication, rather than an object of the study (Long and Robinson 1998). The more comprehensible input they are exposed to, the more chances of achieving learning success they have. Focus on meaning concurs with Krashen's (1996) Natural Approach by rejecting grammar explanation and translation. The presence of awareness or attention is not necessary for the learner to acquire a certain structure. It was argued that "grammar instruction played no role in acquisition, a view based on the conviction that learners (including classroom learners)

would automatically proceed along their built-in syllabus as long as they had access to comprehensible input and were sufficiently motivated" (Ellis 2006, p. 85).

In focus on form, emphasis is placed on form, which may be an individual word, an expression, an idiom, a grammatical pattern, incidentally and only when it constitutes an obstacle to achieving the communicative objective or, in other words, when there is a communication breakdown. It is still meaning that is of overriding importance, which is evinced in Doughty and Williams' (1998a) words: "focus on form entails a prerequisite engagement in meaning before attention to linguistic features can be expected to be effective" (p. 3). Learners' attention is drawn to the form by means of *enriched input* which consists of *input enhancement* and *input flooding*. As far as the former is concerned, the target form is visually manipulated thanks to underlining, bolding, italics, colour-coding but also orally by, for instance, intonation. Learners have a chance to notice gaps in their L2 and to deal with them. Unfortunately, there is a risk that learners will notice the form visually and not linguistically. In the case of input flooding, Doughty and Williams state that "the principle is simply that the more opportunities there are in the input for the learners to notice a linguistic feature, the more likely they are to do so" (1998b, p. 236). As Pawlak adds, the efficacy of this technique hinges on two variables: its intensity and duration, though "there is always a danger that some students may fail to attend to and notice form-meaning-function mappings" (2006, p. 294). The strategies that are associated with meaning-oriented L2 learning are, for instance, reading books, newspapers, magazines in the L2, watching TV in the new language, engaging in a conversation with a native speaker. The aim of these strategies is to increase the level of exposure to L2. Since emphasis is placed on meaning, there is little, if any, space left for grammar strategies.

There is another type of implicit learning which includes drawing learners' attention to form in the case of difficulties with conveying or comprehending the message. Then, the teacher may briefly focus on the form to dispose of the hindrance. Here, learners may and do opt for GLSs. Examples of strategies linked with this type of implicit learning include noticing structures that cause problems with meaning or communication, paying attention to how proficient users of the TL say things and then imitating them.

3.3.2.2 Explicit Instructional Mode

Hulstijn (2005) defines explicit learning as "input processing with the conscious intention to find out whether the input information contains regularities and, if so, work out the concepts and rules with which these regularities can be captured" (p. 131). The two instructional modes in explicit learning are *focus on forms* (FonFs)—explicit-inductive mode, and *focus on forms* (FonFs)—explicit-deductive mode (Oxford et al. 2007). Before more information is provided on the distinction between the two explicit instructional modes, it would be advisable to elaborate on the notion of *focus on forms*. Basically, in focus on forms "the teacher and the students are aware that the primary purpose of the activity is to learn a preselected

form and that the learners are required to focus their attention on some specific form intensively in order to learn it" (Ellis 2001, p. 17). Students learn a new word, collocation, grammar rule or a pattern that were chosen by the teacher on the basis of a structural syllabus. Learners are also provided with numerous opportunities to practise the target feature. Focus on forms frequently employs the PPP sequence, presentation-practice-production. Here, the target feature is presented orally or by means of a picture, drawing, or dialogue. Then it is practised in a number of different ways like transformations, gap-filling, or sentence translation. Finally, learners are encouraged to use it in a more spontaneous utterance, for instance, when talking about their own experience and interests (Pawlak 2006). The new information is introduced by means of deduction or induction.

In the *explicit-inductive mode* "learners are first exposed to instances of language use, they are expected to attend to a specific grammatical structure in the data, pinpoint recurrent patterns, and arrive at their own generalizations which account for the regularities perceived" (Pawlak 2006, p. 270). Rule presentation is avoided, though there is place for discussion about L2 grammar. Oxford et al. (2007) provide examples of techniques stimulating learners' attention to form: input practice involving forms, metalinguistic feedback, the garden path technique and output practice.

The teacher begins the lesson by introducing a certain linguistic feature present in a longer text and asks the learners to create a general rule that governs this grammar item—its formation and use. Learners are not expected to learn the rule by heart; they are expected to verbalize it and to be able to use it, even spontaneously. They operate consciously and are fully cognizant of their learning actions and behaviours. This type of learning, or as Thornbury (2001) calls it, *discovery learning*, is believed to be very stimulating and engaging for the learners since they have a chance to actively participate in the lesson and also to contribute to its development. Inductive learning is sometimes very challenging but at the same time very rewarding, also for the teacher. The strategies deployed by students in explicit-inductive L2 learning include, among others, participating in rule-discovery discussions in class, trying to discover the underlying rule, keeping a notebook with examples of structures, creating hypotheses.

In *explicit-deductive learning*, students are presented with a new rule, usually at the beginning of the lesson. The aim is to introduce a new grammatical concept or structure overtly, that is by stating directly what it is and when and how it should be applied in the TL. Oxford et al. (2007) consider it to be "the most overt illustration of the rule-oriented approach to language learning" (p. 129). Once the learners have become acquainted with the new linguistic feature, they are provided with numerous examples of tasks so that they can put their theory into practice.

Deductive learning, also known as *rule driven learning* (Thornbury 2001), has been praised by many since it satisfies the needs of those learners who are pressed for time and wish to get straight to the point. This approach is time-saving and enables the teacher to allocate more time for further practice of the target feature. It also meets the demand of learners who have an analytic learning style. Instances of strategies that are connected with this type of language learning include, for

instance, making grammar charts, paying attention to the rule, creating new sentences with the rule, etc. When describing grammar strategies, Oxford et al. (2007) make a point that it frequently does not matter what steps teachers take in the classroom in order to introduce new grammatical forms because certain students will still decline to learn new structures. Worse yet, learners may opt for completely different grammar strategies than those put forward and promoted by the teacher. Such a situation may result from learners' cognitive and linguistic developmental stages, their learning styles and preferences, their aims, beliefs, cultural background and many other individual differences. There are, of course, also such learners who value and willingly follow their teacher's advice, thanks to which they consistently form and develop their own grammar strategies.

Researchers like, for instance, DeKeyser (2003) believe that there are learners who particularly favour explicit learning, namely adults. Therefore, they are more likely to focus their attention on the new linguistic features they encounter during the lesson. Another factor is the opposing *small cultures* of classrooms (Oxford et al. 2007). Some learners share their grammar strategies with their classmates and value their help and advice. At times, learners oppose the instructional mode supported by the teacher since it is not consistent with their beliefs and goals and create their own ways of learning grammar. It must also be borne in mind that the activities that are going on in the classroom may not necessarily reflect learners' cognitive development. Some learners, especially those with learning problems, may find it difficult to engage in inductive or deductive learning. Such a situation might engender a feeling of frustration and might even adversely affect learners' motivation. What is more, as far as learners' cultural background is concerned, Oxford et al. (2007) make a point that in some learning environments, grammar learning occurs only when the teacher provides learners with a grammar rule. Thus, other types of grammar instruction are dismissed and deemed as immaterial. On the other hand, many cultures downplay instruction in which the rule is provided directly, referring to it as old-fashioned.

Differing views on grammar as such may also exert an impact on students' GLSs. There are teachers and students who believe that learning a language is only possible when stress is placed on the grammar of the target language. Repeated drills or transformations are part and parcel of learning grammar for such students. There are also learners and teachers who stress the importance of meaning and communication in language learning, neglecting this way the role of grammar instruction. Finally, there are those who opt for a balance between form and meaning.

The classification proposed by Oxford et al. (2007) is one of the first models that addresses the ways of teaching grammar to foreign language learners. The authors believe their model will stimulate and challenge others to revive interest in grammar strategies since "the second Cinderella should not toil namelessly in a patched dress in a dank, dark basement" (Oxford et al. 2007, p. 137). Pawlak (2010a) argues that one of the strengths of this model is that it stresses the strong connection between the two processes, i.e. learning and teaching, in that the instructional mode employed by the teacher may affect the grammar strategies used by the learners.

This link shows that it may seem futile to generate a reliable classification of grammar strategies without taking into consideration the methods of introducing grammar. Teachers' choices with reference to grammar introduction are also important since, as Pawlak (2010a) adds, the classification systems and instruments based on them will render possible a clear and detailed identification of the strategic actions undertaken by the learners.

Though very promising, the model has also its downsides. To start with, it does not allude to any already existing strategy classification systems, which, as Pawlak (2010a) observes, makes the actions placed in the same category seem completely different. Furthermore, when analyzing the LLS and matching them with the six categories proposed by Oxford (1990), one may notice that the majority of them constitute cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The list of the strategic behaviours described by learners gives the impression of being incomplete. Memory strategies are infrequent, social strategies occur very rarely, there is only one compensation strategy and not even one affective strategy. There have also been claims that the model is too simplified since it overlooks learners' point of view and what they find most appealing. Therefore, all the things going on in the classroom may be falsified (Pawlak 2010a). After all, as has already been stated, learners do not have to follow the instructional mode introduced or sometimes even imposed by the teacher since it may not concur with their expectations and needs. Finally, analyzing the behaviours mentioned in the model, one may notice that they predominantly appertain to perception, acquisition and memorization of grammar items. Not much room has been left for grammar practice which is equally important and should by no means be neglected (Pawlak 2008a, 2009c).

All of the above mentioned remarks evince that there is a need for a more comprehensive and detailed classification system that would also entail learners' thoughts accompanying the process of learning grammar. The model should also be based on the findings of empirical studies aimed at identifying strategies employed by various groups of learners (Pawlak 2010a). Using numerous instruments that would provide both qualitative and quantitative data which could help to gain greater insight into the LLS employed by students, seems necessary. Another condition that needs to be fulfilled is the creation of standardized methodology of empirical studies. Then, it will be possible for researchers to draw more general conclusions.

3.3.3 Pawlak's (2010a) Classification Model

With reference to what has been said about future grammar strategy typologies and classification systems, it is important to shun typologies which focus too much on one technique, neglecting other available ones, or even dismissing them as completely unimportant. This may refer to, for instance, giving too much priority to meaning and communication and omitting form, or placing emphasis on the formal aspects of the target language. Therefore, the reference point of Pawlak's

(2010a) grammar classification system is the typology of techniques and procedures proposed by Ellis (1997). The system is also based on the taxonomies provided by Cohen and Dörnyei (2002), O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990).

Pawlak's (2010a) attempt at classifying grammar strategies is based on the idea that the categorization should include more general types of strategies but also refer to more specific procedures available when teaching GLSs. The strategic behaviours included in the classification systems follow those mentioned by Cohen and Dörnyei (2002), namely *cognitive strategies* connected with the performance of specific actions. They include comprehension, memorization and elaboration of the input material. The second category is *metacognitive strategies* whose aim is to organize, supervise and evaluate the effectiveness of learning. *Social strategies*, being the third category, focus on interaction and aim at increasing the chances of communicating in the TL or at practising the language with other people like the teacher, classmates or native speakers. The last category includes *affective strategies* which refer to reducing the anxiety that frequently accompanies task performance but also to controlling one's motivation and attitude or encouraging oneself not to give up.

Using the categories mentioned above, Pawlak (2010a, p. 109) distinguishes the following categories of strategic behaviours[1]:

1. *Strategies used while performing communicative tasks that require the production or reception of a certain grammatical structure*, for instance using the target feature for a communicative purpose, identifying and correcting one's own errors, comparing one's utterance with the one produced by a classmate, paying attention to problems disrupting communication, noticing structures which were visually enhanced in the text, etc.
2. *Strategies used while performing tasks aimed at developing explicit knowledge* which can be further divided into those typical of *induction* and *deduction*. The former may entail the analysis of expressions in order to discover new regularities, hypotheses creation and testing, paying attention to structures frequently appearing in spoken and written texts. The latter may comprise paying attention to the target feature in question, using charts and drawings or paraphrasing to make the available generalizations understandable.
3. *Strategies used while performing tasks aimed at developing implicit knowledge* which will differ according to whether the main goal will be *the production* or *the reception of the target structure*. Tasks aimed at more or less spontaneous production of a given form may entail numerous traditional activities, creating sentences with the use of the structure or undertaking conscious attempts to use the structure in spontaneous utterances. If the main aim is to notice the relation between the form, its meaning and use, learners may listen to texts including many examples of the form, guess the meaning of the feature thanks to different clues, try to modify the way of transforming linguistic data, etc.

[1] Own translation.

4. *Strategies used while correcting errors connected with the use of a given structure* which may appear in activities such as paying attention to the feedback while performing a communicative activity, trying to modify one's utterance, noting down reappearing errors, self-correction while performing activities requiring the use of a given structure, etc.

The model brings us one step closer to finding out more about GLSs applied by learners. Since studies in that field have been scarce, future models will have to be based on the already existing classification models (Pawlak 2010a). Therefore, there is a need for more research into GLSs which would make it easier to generate reliable and more specific classification systems.

Although the model is helpful and definitely pioneering on the Polish scene, it could be further developed by identifying metacognitive, social and affective behaviours. Neither does it comprise compensation strategies, though this is accounted for by the fact that Pawlak (2010a) based his model on a specific strategy classification and that such strategies are usually described separately as communication strategies. However, since compensation strategies can also be employed by learners focusing on grammar, adding another category to the classification model could appear necessary. When commenting on his model, Pawlak (2010a) admits that the cognitive strategies present in the model are not perfect and should be verified in further studies. He also makes a point that the model provides us only with examples of strategic behaviours and not with a complete list. What is more, those behaviours may prove to be useful for different tasks; therefore, their unequivocal assignment may cause some difficulty.

One must bear in mind that the model does not constitute an instrument which could be used to examine the strategies learners employ when focusing on grammar. Creating such a tool means conducting numerous studies based on different strategy typologies. Pawlak (2010a) implies that a good instrument should be based on a Likert scale and should include open-ended and closed questions. This way it will be possible to collect qualitative and quantitative data, which would make the study more reliable. The instrument should also be complemented with other tools that will affect the study's reliability and reflect the repertoire of grammar strategies learners make use of. All of these conditions could lead to the standardization of grammar strategy research methodology.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to take a closer look at the most common taxonomies of learning strategies that have emerged within the last decades. The author tried to show how LLS classification systems developed over the years and what modifications were introduced. Emphasis was also placed on reviewing grammar language learning strategies and the variables affecting their selection, use and efficacy. The reason was to provide the reader with comprehensive theoretical bases of the broad field of language learning strategies before moving on to the more empirical parts of the work.

(continued)

The following chapter will focus on the notion of learning strategy instruction. Apart from discussing the aims and the different ways of designing strategic intervention, the author will also address the more contentious issues associated with SBI such as, among others, whether the intervention should be separate or integrated, direct or embedded. The chapter will also include information concerning the types of studies into LLS, which will be an introduction to the final part of the volume.

Chapter 4
Strategy Training and Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter will be devoted to the notion of *strategy training*, often referred to as strategy-based instruction (SBI; Rubin et al. 2007). The author will address contentious issues such as, among others, the intensity of the training, language choice or the selection of strategies to be taught. Emphasis will be placed on the studies into the effectiveness of strategic intervention. Finally, the chapter will present different types of studies into LLS.

The results of strategy-oriented research indicate that it is not enough to teach only the TL to the learners. Their attention should also be drawn to strategies which could be of use when promoting successful learning, which can be seen in Rubin's (1990) words: "often poor learners don't have a clue as to how good learners arrive at their answers and feel they can never perform as good learners do. By revealing the process, the myth can be exposed" (p. 282). The role of LLS, which Oxford (1990) defines as "tools for active, self-directed involvement essential for developing communicative competence" (p. 1), cannot be neglected in the process of learning the target language. Learning strategies are significant because they lead to greater proficiency and also boost learners' self-confidence. The researcher also says that "L2 learners, no matter how autonomous they wish to be, are not born knowing all the strategies and tactics they need. They must learn about these strategies (. . .)" (2008, p. 54).

One of the reasons why LLS should be incorporated into regular classes is the fact that they are believed to play a significant role in developing learner autonomy. Learners should be made cognizant of the existing strategies, which may lead to more effective learning. Dansereau (1978) thinks that "by not stressing learning strategies, educators in essence discourage students from developing and exploring new strategies, and, in so doing, limit students' awareness of their cognitive capacities. This lack of awareness obviously limits an individuals' ability in a

O. Trendak (ed.), *Exploring the Role of Strategic Intervention in Form-focused Instruction*, Second Language Learning and Teaching,
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situation requiring new learning strategies" (p. 14; as cited in Droździał-Szelest 1997, p. 82). There are many other researchers who stress the significance of strategy training and claim that this process enhances learners' understanding of the LLS that they are employing. Rubin et al. (2007) argue that promoting strategies enables learners to manage their cognitive and affective strategies, increases their motivation and performance and supplies them with the necessary knowledge to carry on with autonomous learning. Paris (1988) says that students who think and work in a strategic way have more motivation to learn. It is also believed that strategy employment increases self-efficacy and learners' confidence in their learning abilities (Zimmerman and Pons 1986; Zimmerman 1990).

There are also many opponents of strategy training and its implementation. One of them is Kellerman, who considers strategy instruction in L2 to be irrelevant and unnecessary. He encourages teachers to "teach the learners more language and let the strategies look after themselves" (1991, p. 158). Kellerman assumes that language learners already developed their strategic competence in their mother tongue. Therefore, they can quickly and easily transfer this knowledge to their TL without any additional help in the form of strategic intervention. A more critical approach to strategy training will be presented in further parts of the volume.

4.2 Strategy Instruction in the Foreign Language Classroom

Strategy training is meant to make it easier for the learner to notice and choose strategies appropriate for a learning task (Rubin 1987). Training is supposed to "help students become more effective learners" (Oxford 2011, p. 175). Moreover, the intervention is expected to show students that LLS can be used in different settings, at different times and that they can help them develop all their language skills. Rubin goes on to say that thanks to the training learners should know how to make effective and reasonable use of the materials they have at their disposal. Additionally, Cook (2008) says that SBI "leads on to autonomous, self-directed learning, in which the students take on responsibility for their own learning" (p. 118).

Droździał-Szelest (2004) is of the opinion that bridging the gap between the knowledge about the TL and the ability to use that knowledge in practice is another aim of strategy instruction. Thanks to the intervention the learner should be able to use the knowledge acquired during the lesson in practical activities. The training is also meant to provide students with a wide range of problem-solving skills. It frequently occurs that learners deploy strategies which later on turn out to be ineffective. Therefore, the training is believed to make it easier for them to choose strategies appropriate to the performed task.

Another issue which should be borne in mind is that thanks to strategy training students are encouraged to monitor and evaluate their performance and progress. Strategic intervention also promotes cooperation between the teacher and the

students. By showing students the right strategies, the teacher helps their learners to take on more responsibility for their learning. Finally, the training should place emphasis on making learners less dependent on the teacher and more autonomous. Students should feel encouraged to make their own decisions when learning L2.

There are several steps which should be taken into consideration when conducting strategy training. Oxford (1990, pp. 204–208) puts forward eight important stages. To start with, the teacher should *determine the learners' needs and the time available*. They should consider issues such as the learners' age, level of proficiency, social and cultural background as well as their strengths and weaknesses. It is vital to observe which strategies the learners employ and which they may most benefit from. Oxford (1990, p. 204) suggests considering the following questions:

- *Is there a wide gap between the strategies they have been using and those you think they need to learn?*
- *How do these students view their roles as language learners?*
- *Do they take responsibility, or will you need to help them change their attitudes about learning?*
- *Have you given the learners a chance to express their desires about strategies they might like to learn?*

Oxford (2011) stresses the role that learners' attitudes and beliefs play in strategy instruction and believes that they should by no means be ignored. The second step is to *select strategies well*. The strategies chosen should be well adjusted to learners' needs. Learners should see that the LLS taught are useful and can be transferred to different tasks. Thirdly, the teacher should *consider integration of strategy training*. This issue will be elaborated on in a different section. Another thing to remember is *motivational issues*. The teacher should know how to motivate their students to take active part in the lesson. To do so, they may give them a good grade for their contribution to the lesson. Oxford (1990) adds that encouraging students to choose the strategies they want to be taught is also a good idea. This way learners will feel that they actually contributed to the development of the classes and that not everything was imposed on them by the teacher. *Preparing materials and activities* is another issues to remember. Apart from creating stimulating and appealing handouts, the teacher might encourage their students to design their own handbook which would include the strategies already discussed during the lesson. Such a step could also motivate students and spur them to further work.

Oxford (1990) emphasizes the significance of *conducting completely informed training*. She strongly believes that students should know why they are engaging in this particular form of practice and what benefits it will bring. One of the last things the teacher ought to do is *evaluate strategy training*. After the training, the practitioner should assess its effectiveness. An effective training, as Droździał-Szelest (2004) believes, is one thanks to which learners know which strategies they should employ to develop their language skills. It is important to check whether learners' strategy repertoire, their language skills as well as their attitude towards LLS have changed. The last issue mentioned by Oxford is to *revise the*

strategy training. At this stage the researcher suggests reconsidering all the previous steps and introducing possible changes.

4.3 Contentious Issues

Several research projects devoted to investigating the relationship between strategic intervention and learners' performance provided very promising results. Yet, despite the fact that many researchers recognize the beneficial role of strategy training, there are still numerous issues which lead to some disagreement and which need to be carefully analyzed before introducing strategy training. Some of them include, for example, the implementation and intensity of the training or the form of the training. Opinions vary as to whether SBI should be separate or integrated, direct or embedded. These contentious issues will be delineated in the following sections of this subchapter.

4.3.1 Implementation and Intensity of the Training

Some researchers believe that strategy training is most effective when it is introduced among learners in the middle range of their verbal ability (Dansereau 1985). However, more or less advanced students can also benefit from the instruction. There are opinions that strategy training should be introduced the moment students begin to learn the target language. This conviction may be somewhat controversial as at the beginning learners do not possess the necessary terminology that could be helpful when analyzing strategy-oriented notions.

Drożdział-Szelest (1997) claims that regular instruction in the effective use of strategies is more advantageous to learners representing a more advanced language level. What is more, such instruction benefits learners with little or no experience in dealing with difficulties when learning the TL. An issue that needs to be borne in mind, though, is the fact that more advanced students have already created their own strategies that they stick to. Therefore, altering their preferences may appear to be a great challenge. Additionally, due to their language proficiency, they are likely to develop learning awareness to a greater degree and, thus, require less learner training than their less advanced peers. In such cases some researchers suggest focusing on more demanding tasks like writing an academic paper or a business report (Prokop 1989; O'Malley and Chamot 1990).

The intensity of the training is also worth discussing. Oxford (1990) mentions two types of training, namely *one-time strategy training* and *long-term strategy training*. Within the former, students learn and practise one or more strategies with their regular language tasks. They are informed about the value of a given strategy, its use and function and also about the manner in which they can assess the effectiveness of the strategy. There is a drawback of such training, though. It is

not a long-term one and, thus, it is best for those students who want to learn about strategies during just a few classes. Oxford adds that this type of training is not as valuable as the long-term strategy one.

The second type, long-term strategy training, bears a resemblance to the first one in that it includes learning and practising strategies with regular classroom language tasks. Students also find out about the importance of those strategies and their use. They learn how to monitor and assess their own performance. The difference is, as the name suggests, that this type of training continues over a longer period of time and covers a greater number of strategies; that is why it is believed to be more efficacious than one-time training.

4.3.2 Separate Versus Integrated Instruction

Little consensus has been reached as to whether strategy training should be integrated with the regular materials performed in the classroom or whether it should be isolated from the tasks performed in the TL. Proponents of separate programmes claim that by focusing all their attention on the strategies discussed by the teacher, learners benefit more from the training and acquire the knowledge about strategies much faster than in the case of integrated instruction (Derry and Murphy 1986; Jones et al. 1987). It is believed that concentrating solely on enhancing strategic processing skills is more efficacious.

On the other hand, advocates of integrated strategy training believe that "learning in context is more effective than learning separate skills whose immediate applicability may not be evident to the learner and that practising strategies on authentic academic language tasks facilitates the transfer of strategies to similar tasks encountered on other classes" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 152). Another supporter of integrated training is Wenden (1987), who mentions a significant aspect of strategy training, namely contextualization. She is of the opinion that isolating the instruction should be shunned and that the training should focus on learners' problems connected with their prior learning experience. Then, strategies and their role are highlighted. Introduction of integrated strategy training, also known as content-dependent, was an idea put forward by Dansereau (1985). He recommended starting with strategies that are more general and then moving on to more specific ones.

What is more, many researchers concur that applying LLS in authentic language tasks, which takes place during integrated training, facilitates strategy transfer (Chamot and O'Malley 1987). Wenden's study (1987) showed that students participating in the research dismissed separate training as irrelevant. Another proponent of integrated training is Rubin et al. (2007) also recognize the value of integrated training saying that "all evidence points to a greater effectiveness when promoting process (learning) and product (the target language) is done in an integrated fashion" (p. 142).

4.3.3 Direct Versus Embedded Instruction

Another issue to bear in mind is the distinction between direct and embedded instruction. In the case of the former, learners are informed about the aim and the frequency of strategy training, whereas in the latter learners are provided with numerous activities whose purpose is to elicit the strategies being taught. In the second case, learners are not told anything about the objective of the training and the reasons for which it is implemented.

Oxford (1990) puts forward four levels of information that are possible in strategy training. Level A refers to *encouragement of strategy use in general without special training*. Here, the activities learners are exposed to promote an unselected and wide range of strategies, however, no information about these strategies and no training is given. There is one drawback, though, as learners may concentrate on the wrong strategies. Oxford explains that in such a situation learners will not be able to assess the real value of specific strategies or the manner and moment at which they should transfer the strategies to other tasks.

The next level to be discussed is Level B, called *blind training*. Here, learners are asked to perform tasks which require the use of particular strategies. Quite frequently, learners employ them unconsciously and that is why such strategies are referred to as hidden. Learners are not informed about the importance of these LLS. It was found that thanks to blind training learners' performance improved, albeit only in immediate tasks. What is more, there was no continuation in the use of these strategies and learners failed to transfer strategies to different tasks and situations (Brown et al. 1983). Oxford (1990) goes on to mention examples of blind training: advance organizers, inserted questions, comprehension questions at the end, preview questions. However, to quote O'Malley and Chamot (1990) "learners who are not aware of the strategies they are using do not develop independent learning strategies and have little opportunity of becoming autonomous learners" (p. 154).

The next level, Level C, is called *informed training*. Learners are provided with information about the strategies that are being taught. They know that a particular strategy can be useful and they also know why it is so. For instance, they are taught to rehearse and then given feedback about their enhanced performance. This type of training has many advantages, as it triggers improved performance, maintenance of a given strategy, strategy transfer to other contexts and settings (Brown et al. 1980). However, in informed training the information given is not complete.

Finally, level D includes *completely informed training*. The difference between this training and informed training lies in the fact that at this level learners are provided with complete information about the strategy, its use, the way to control and transfer it. It is believed that completely informed training is more beneficial and brings better results. Although this issue has not been fully resolved, empirical research seems to support the beneficial role explicit or direct strategy instruction (Graham and Harris 2000; Grenfell and Harris 2004; Chamot 2007).

4.3.4 Language Choice

Another issue which deserves careful consideration is the one of language choice. Chamot (2005) perceives this matter as very important when teaching LLS, though it has not received a great deal of attention from researchers. She explains that learners who have just started learning their L2 will most likely lack the necessary vocabulary to comprehend the teacher's explanations and instructions in learning strategies. In the early stages of language learning, Chamot suggests providing the instruction in learners' mother tongue. There is only one condition that has to be fulfilled—the learners and the teacher must be speakers of the same language. Another option is to choose a strategy that is to be taught and give it a name in the TL. Explanation how to employ it should be given in a simple and easy to follow way (Chamot et al. 1999).

Since it is still not clear which language should be used when providing SBI, Chamot (2005, p. 122) suggests addressing this issue as a "context-specific factor". Furthermore, it is possible for the teacher to initially provide strategy instruction in learners' L1, on condition that the teacher and the learners share the same language. The advantage of such an approach is that both the teacher and the class save precious lesson time. On the negative side, though, learners' exposure to the target language is limited (Chamot 2004).

4.3.5 Instructional Implementation

There are many more issues that also need to be taken into consideration. For instance, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) believe that one of the most significant topics is teacher training. Teachers need to be acquainted with the necessary techniques that could facilitate the introduction of SBI. To quote O'Malley and Chamot (1990): "there is a need not only to train teachers in methods of incorporating strategy instruction in their classrooms but also to convince teachers that learning strategies can be effective for their students" (p. 155). Teachers need to learn more about learning strategies, rather than teaching strategies, and learn how to effectively plan and introduce learning strategy instruction. Then, each practitioner can become *a strategic teacher* (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 156). A good strategic teacher takes time to analyze matters like the content that is to be learned or the evaluation and development of the instruction provided. They also participate in interactive instruction during which they model the learning processes. The attention is drawn away from the teacher as the main source of information. It is the learner and their learning process that is of utmost importance.

However, teachers often encounter difficulties when trying to introduce strategy training. Some of the obstacles include curriculum limitations, teacher beliefs, teaching style, comfort with current style or lack of knowledge how to promote

strategies (Vieira 2003). All of them constitute serious problems which hamper further development in the area of strategic intervention. Therefore, it would seem desirable to create specially designed programmes that would help teachers surmount these obstacles effectively.

It is also essential to remember about the instructional materials and their adaptation for strategy training. A number of researchers put forward procedures for designing the scope and sequence of strategy training. They entail identifying and evaluating the strategies already known to learners, elucidating what they mean and giving the learners a chance to practise them (cf. O'Malley and Chamot 1990).

4.3.6 The Strategies to Be Taught

When preparing strategy training, it is vital to select the strategies that are to be employed by learners. The teacher should take several issues into account. To start with, it would be useful to see whether students are not prejudiced against certain strategies. If they are, it does not mean the teacher has to give up the strategies they wanted to introduce. They, as Oxford (1990) suggests, should introduce them gradually so that the students do not feel overwhelmed or inhibited.

What is more, it would also be advisable to select strategies which will be useful and significant to the learners. The strategies should be universal and applicable to a wide range of language situations and tasks (Oxford 1990). Learners' needs and characteristics have to be taken into consideration. One should not forget that these needs will vary according to learners' cultural background, proficiency level, educational background, age, strengths and weaknesses, etc. The strategies introduced should be neither too easy, nor too difficult, so as not to discourage the students.

When dealing with strategy training, Oxford (1990) distinguishes two main approaches. The first one is called *broad focus* and includes four groups of strategies: affective, compensation, social and metacognitive. This approach "trains learners in large segments of the whole strategy classification system, shows students how strategies interact, and may give students a new understanding of the language learning process" (Oxford 1990, p. 205). The shortcoming of broad focus is the fact that it is not possible to evaluate how successful the training was in connection with a specific strategy.

Narrow focus, on the other hand, concentrates on one or two learning strategies. It "leads to less overall training time, reduces the possibility of overloading the learner with diverse strategies, and allows more precise assessment of the effectiveness of the strategy training, but it does *not* allow for multiple strategies to interact to maximize learning potential" (Oxford 1990, p. 205). However, this approach is not tantamount to one-time strategy training which refers to the criterion of time. It seems feasible to conduct strategy training along with a narrow

focus within an extended amount of time. There is also a third possibility of conducting strategy training, namely a *combination* approach which links the two former ones. The teacher starts with a broad focus—they present the LLS whose use is later on rated by the learners. Then, they gradually move on to narrow focus during which carefully selected strategies are trained and evaluated. Oxford strongly supports this approach as it allows for learner choice and self-direction which are essential in strategy training.

4.4 Learners' Metacognition

Learners' metacognitive awareness is regarded as a pivotal issue when introducing strategy training. So as to achieve success in learning the TL, the learner should be sensible of the strategies that could be helpful. That is why metacognition, or in other words, analyzing and thinking about one's mental processes, is so significant. When learners understand their learning processes, they become more responsible for their learning. Anderson (2002) believes that comprehending and being in control of one's cognitive processes are one of the most important skills that the learner should develop in a foreign language classroom. Most studies show that learners engage in metacognitive knowledge, regardless of their age (e.g. Chamot 1999, 2005). There have appeared numerous models aimed at identifying, developing and instructing strategies that stress the importance of metacognition. One of them, proposed by Chamot et al. (1999), comprises four processes: planning, monitoring, problem-solving and evaluating. In the model teachers choose those strategies that could help learners perform specific tasks which they had difficulty with, for instance monitoring one's comprehension.

Another model was put forward by Anderson (2002). It comprises five stages of metacognition: preparing and planning for learning, selecting and using learning strategies, monitoring strategy use, orchestrating various strategies and evaluating strategy use and learning. The first stage is important because learners have to analyze in their minds what they want to achieve and how they wish to do it. As for the second one, if a learner chooses a particular strategy and employs it in a task, it means that they are not only able to analyze their learning but also to make autonomous decisions. Foreign language learners usually have at least a few strategies they use when they encounter a learning difficulty. However, as Anderson (2002) points out, if the metacognitive instruction is to be effective, learners need to receive explicit instruction and need to be informed that not every strategy will work equally well when applied in different tasks. In the third stage, learners monitor the use of LLS. It is advisable for the learner to ask themselves if they are using the right strategy in the right learning situation. The next significant step is strategy orchestration. The learner should be capable of coordinating and associating different strategies. It is the teacher's task to teach the learner how to distinguish between effective and less effective strategies. Finally, there is the stage of

assessing strategy use and learning. To help learners evaluate their progress, Anderson (2002) believes that the learner should answer a few questions: *What am I trying to accomplish? What strategies am I using? How well am I using them? What else could I do?* This way, the learner takes some time to consider their strategies and their effectiveness.

All of the skills put forward by Anderson interact with each other. Therefore, one should bear in mind that metacognition is far from a linear process since there may appear more than one metacognitive process in a language task. Practitioners should not underestimate the role of metacognitive skills, since "allowing learners to think about how they combine various strategies facilitates the improvement of strategy use. (. . .) When learners reflect upon their learning strategies, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve their learning" (Anderson 2002, p. 4).

There are several ways of raising learners' awareness of LLS. To start with, the teacher may engage in a discussion with their students about the strategies they use to learn, new vocabulary or read a text in the TL (Rubin et al. 2007). The teacher might want to write those strategies on the blackboard and then identify their names. Another way is to administer questionnaires. They are time-saving and cost-effective. However, the language used has to be adjusted to students' proficiency level. The next activity suggested by Rubin et al. (2007) is focus groups. Here, learners together with the teacher select a certain skill, for example listening. Then they try to identify their objectives connected with that skill like comprehending a TV show. The teacher divides students into smaller groups which choose one objective, try to analyze the problems connected with it and come up with solutions.

There is yet another way of raising learners' awareness of LLS. Rubin et al. (2007) refer to this activity as *ask a question*. Once a learner provides the right answer, the teacher might ask them how they arrived at this response. This activity might help other learners, especially those weaker ones, understand the notion of a strategy and the possibilities of its use. In a different attempt to make learners morecognizant of LLS, the teacher might encourage students to use journals in which they would write about their feelings connected with performing certain tasks and using different strategies. To make it easier for the learners, the teacher might introduce some additional questions. Rubin (2003) provides a few examples: *What problems do/did you have in class or with your homework? How did you deal with these problems?* (p. 12). Lastly, the teacher might encourage students to read more about the learning process, though it would be difficult to find texts whose language level would match that of students. Many researchers value greatly the role of awareness raising during strategy training and claim that, although very time-consuming, it might yield very satisfying results and prove beneficial in the longer run.

4.5 Requirements of Strategy-Based Instruction

Macaro (2006) believes that strategy training can be efficacious and successful with the proviso that two main issues are taken into consideration: the training extends over a longer period of time and that it entails a focus on metacognition. Rubin et al. (2007, p. 142) enumerate their own four vital steps which each strategy training should contain in order to yield satisfying and advantageous results: raising awareness of the strategies learners are already using; teacher presentation and modelling of strategies so that students become increasingly aware of their own thinking and learning processes; multiple practice opportunities to help students move towards autonomous use of the strategies through gradual withdrawal of the scaffolding; self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies used and transfer of strategies to fresh tasks.

As can be seen, the instruction initially seems controlled or scaffolded. However, in course of time learners are given more freedom and responsibility for employing their strategies in a more independent manner. Rubin et al. (2007) add that SBI should not be regarded as mechanistic because it involves deeper reflection and assessment. What is more, it is affected by numerous factors such as the nature of the task, learners' styles, goals, their prior knowledge or the learning context.

4.6 Strategy Training Models

Researchers have proposed a number of strategy training models. Current ones focus on matters like deepening learners' knowledge about their mental and strategic processes or encouraging them to employ strategies so as to improve their learning (Chamot 2004). The models discussed below focus on issues like researchers' methodological approach and also the strategies promoted in the training.

4.6.1 Ellis and Sinclair's (1989) Model

The instructional material Ellis and Sinclair (1989) developed was designed for EFL and ESL intermediate students. What the researchers wanted to achieve thanks to their training was to increase learners' effectiveness when learning the TL, provide the teacher with the necessary tools to train their learners in LLS and to show them how to combine training with language instruction (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). The training model is integrated and direct.

Ellis and Sinclair (1989) divided their training into two stages. The first one involves discussions about the process of learning a language; learners also discuss their language needs and expectations and talk about their own approach to

learning. The next stage is more complex as it constitutes a combination of seven learning strategies and six spheres of language focus: vocabulary development, grammatical study, listening, speaking, reading and writing, which amounted to 42 activities. The training starts with metacognitive strategies like self-awareness. At this point learners discuss their learning preferences and their attitude towards this process. They also have a chance to gain better understanding of being a language learner. The capacity to recognize language functions and register the strategies that can be used for different language skills fall within the next metacognitive strategy practised, namely language awareness. Other metacognitive strategies include evaluating one's progress, monitoring one's learning and also setting short-term aims.

As far as cognitive strategies are concerned, Ellis and Sinclair (1989) distinguished three types: personal strategies, risk taking and getting organized. As for the first group, learners seek those strategies which they find most suitable. The second type includes being actively engaged in the learning process and, finally, the last one involves organizing one's time and materials efficiently. Having analyzed the three types one may notice that the subcategories frequently overlap. Moreover, some of them are a combination of other metacognitve and social/affective strategies. Again, stress is placed here on the teacher, who needs to devote a great deal of time to become acquainted with this model and to implement it in an effective manner.

4.6.2 Oxford's (1990) Model

The model suggested by Oxford, more thoroughly analyzed in the section devoted to designing strategy instruction, focuses solely on LLS and does not elucidate other aspects of learning a language. The training consists of eight steps. Although the model is meant to be a long-term strategy training, its author admits that it can be transformed into a one-time training. What is more, when conducting the training the teacher does not have to stick to the presented order of steps. In fact, they can implement the steps simultaneously or even change their order. So as to make the training as effective as possible, Oxford (1990) suggests performing it with a training partner. Encouraging others to contribute to the training would also be to the teacher's advantage.

In the first step the teacher has to consider learners' needs and the time they have at their disposal. In the second step the teacher has to select strategies that would satisfy these needs. Oxford encourages teachers to integrate SBI with the usual activities performed in the classroom. The next issue is the type of motivation the teacher will introduce into the training. It should be clear whether learners will receive grades or additional forms of praise for participating in the training. The next step entails preparing materials that would be useful in the instruction. In the

seventh step learners share their comments on the LLS and their effectiveness. Finally, the last step involves careful reconsideration of learners' needs and expectations.

4.6.3 CALLA

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), developed by O'Malley and Chamot (Chamot and O'Malley 1986, 1987) is firmly grounded in cognitive theory and based on the researchers' studies. The aim of their instructional model is to boost the academic language skills of limited English proficient (LEP) students attending upper elementary and secondary schools. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) add that the model is aimed to satisfy the academic needs of three different groups of LEP learners.

The first one consists of students who gained communicative skills either in their school setting or through being exposed to an English-speaking setting. The second group comprises learners who represent an initially proficient level of English and who have developed academic language skills in their L1. These are also learners who still require guidance when transferring concepts and skills from their L1 to the TL. Finally, the last group is bilingual, English-dominant students whose academic language skills in either language still need to be developed. The model aims at acquiring both procedural and declarative knowledge by integrating content topics suitable for a particular level, academic language development, direct instruction and practice in employing LLS (O'Malley and Chamot 1990).

4.6.3.1 Theoretical Background

CALLA is based on Anderson's (1983) cognitive skill model of SLA. Droździał-Szelest (1997) believes that placing the model in cognitive theory can be advantageous in terms of identifying and describing the LLS learners employ at different stages of language development. According to the theory the model hinges on, language is perceived as a complex cognitive skill that is acquired through certain stages. In order to become automatic, it needs extensive opportunities for practice and also feedback. Anderson (1983) believes that skills are acquired through three stages: cognitive, associative and autonomous. This distinction seems extremely useful when analyzing the needs of LEP learners that the model is to satisfy. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) provide an example of a learner who reached the autonomous stage of social language acquisition but who still represented the cognitive or associative stage of academic language acquisition. The problems the learner faced in a traditional learning setting can be triggered by "lack of development of academic language skills, which have been found to lag behind social language skills by as much as 5–8 years" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, p. 192). The researchers add that their model is to cater for such students as the one

mentioned, rather than for those who are at the same stage for both kinds of language skill.

When discussing the theoretical framework of CALLA, it is also worth mentioning the phases suggested by Anderson (1985) which, in his view, accompany language production and reception. Perceptual processing, parsing and utilization are connected with language comprehension. Providing training in attentional processes, for instance in selective attention, is believed to constitute a significant aspect of perceptual processing included in the CALLA model. The approach also places emphasis on utilization because learners are provided with a great many reading and listening comprehension strategies whose aim is to help them use the knowledge they already possess in order to comprehend written and oral messages. Anderson identifies three processes in language production: construction, transformation and execution.

In CALLA, strategies to elaborate prior knowledge are employed so as to express the construction of the meaning. The model also addresses parsing of components during comprehension and transforming ideas into sentences during language production, by means of explicit instruction in LLS (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). CALLA deals with execution in a purely practical way: learners work in small groups in which they concentrate on getting their message across, rather than on paying attention to grammatical accuracy.

4.6.3.2 The Stages in CALLA

The CALLA model consists of five essential stages: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and expansion. During the first stage the teacher sets out to investigate what learners already know about the subject area and what gaps in prior knowledge will need further investigation. The teacher also tries to identify the manner in which students attend to particular types of tasks. The strategies that are most frequently introduced at this stage are elaboration, advance organizers and selective attention.

In the second stage the teacher presents and elucidates new information in English. The explanation is accompanied by demonstrations and visual materials. The strategies taught include selective attention while listening or reading, self-monitoring, inferencing, elaboration, note taking, imagery and questioning for clarification (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). The third stage is learner-oriented as learners have a chance to take part in activities in which they can use the information they learnt in the presentation stage. The teacher's role in this phase is to help learners to assimilate new facts. The strategies practised include: resourcing, self-monitoring, summarizing, deduction, inferencing, elaboration, cooperation. In the evaluation stage learners assess the progress they made. They can do it individually or with the help of other learners or even the teacher. The strategies of self-evaluation, elaboration, self-talk, cooperation, questioning for clarification are practised in this phase of a CALLA lesson. Finally, the last stage, expansion activities, provides the learners with a chance to analyze the new skills they learnt

and to make use of them in real world situations. Students are encouraged to link the information they possess with other concepts, or to assess the value of new concepts they were confronted with.

Though praised by many, the CALLA model has a few limitations. The greatest one is the amount of work teachers have to perform. The approach requires comprehensive knowledge on the part of the teacher who also has to know how to integrate the training into language skills with other areas, which is why the model is not frequently used.

4.7 Research into SBI

The effect that strategy training exerts on language learners has been the subject of numerous empirical studies. A short review of such studies was compiled by Ellis (1994). In order to study the effectiveness of strategy training, Bialystok (1983) conducted two projects in which she observed grade 10 students learning French as their L2. The aim was to investigate how students' capacity to infer the meaning of words in a longer text could be enhanced. The results indicated better general comprehension of a written text when compared with providing learners with a dictionary or picture cues. On the other hand, making use of the dictionary, and not strategy training, helped learners to achieve better results in a vocabulary test. In the second study, strategy training did not lead to such successful promotion of comprehension or vocabulary acquisition as when using cues or a dictionary.

In another study, Cohen and Aphek (1980) provided their L2 Hebrew learners with relatively brief training which focused on learning new vocabulary by means of associations. It turned out that creating associations proved helpful in vocabulary recall tasks and that not making any use of associations frequently resulted in incorrect recall. What is more, the two students who presented a more advanced level of proficiency at the very beginning of the study, appeared to be more successful when employing association in recall tasks. Such results may lead to the conclusion that advanced learners might benefit more from training in forming associations than the less proficient ones.

The third study, conducted by O'Malley et al. (1985a), focused on the influence SBI exerts on vocabulary learning. However, it did not yield interesting results. The researchers analyzed two different types of strategy training introduced among 75 ESL learners presenting an intermediate level of advancement. The learners were of Hispanic and Asian origin. The first treatment group was provided with training in a cognitive strategy, *imagery and grouping*, whereas the second one received training in this strategy and also in *self-evaluation*. Apart from these two treatment groups, there was also one control group. The results of the study failed to show any significant differences between the two treatment groups. However, a comprehensive examination of the data indicated that the two Hispanic treatment groups fared much better than the Hispanic control group, whereas just the opposite was observed among the Asian groups. It was believed that the Asian learners felt

more confident when employing rote memorization rather than the introduced strategies. Such results might imply that when planning to introduce strategy training the practitioner has to take different learning styles and learners' background into consideration.

Tang and Moore's (1992) study, on the other hand, investigated the influence of the teaching of cognitive and metacognitive strategies on reading comprehension in a classroom-based study. The findings showed that training in cognitive strategies yielded positive effects as far as comprehension was concerned. However, gains in performance were not observed after the treatment ended. By contrast, training in metacognitive strategies led to improvements in comprehension that lasted even when the treatment was over.

The aim of Nunan's (1995) programme was to see whether strategy training exerted an impact upon learners' skills, attitude and knowledge. The study involved 60 students and lasted 12 weeks. The training was "designed to help them reflect on their own learning, to develop their knowledge of, and ability to apply LLS, to assess their own progress, and to apply their language skills beyond the classroom" (1995, p. 3). The treatment proved to be effective and reinforced the idea that stress in a language classroom should be placed not only on the content but also on the awareness of language processes (Griffiths 2004).

In another study, during a 6-week training Carrier (2003) implemented listening comprehension strategies among a small-group of high school ESL students. The project comprised the teacher modelling and defining the strategies to be taught, for instance selective attention or note-taking, and further practising. The findings showed that the learners made significant progress in terms of listening comprehension. Kern (1989) examined the impact of direct instruction program of strategies for word, sentence and discourse analysis on reading comprehension. The subjects were 53 university students of French presenting an intermediate level of proficiency. The findings pointed to a positive influence of strategy instruction on reading comprehension among L2 readers. Kern (1989) commented that providing readers with proper strategies directed at improving lower-level text processing makes it possible for readers to infer and synthesize meaning, which is described as higher order processing (Kitajima 1997).

The aim of Kitajima's (1997) study was to investigate whether strategy training drawing learners' attention to referential processes would facilitate their comprehension of a Japanese narrative. The reason why such a subject area was chosen is the fact that Japanese, unlike English, is one of the least referentially informative languages. As Kitajima (1997) adds, the referents are in most cases omitted in a context and the extensive use of zero anaphora triggers problems with comprehension among, for instance, English readers. Therefore, the key elements which play a vital role in readers' comprehension are the text processed (focal part) and the situational information. There were 28 American college students learning Japanese who participated in the study. The subjects took part in four sessions a week for 15 weeks. The experimental group received strategy training that placed emphasis on dealing with referential difficulties and on making use of discourse and syntactic cues. The control group comprising 15 students performed numerous

comprehension activities and translation tasks. The experimental group was provided with strategy training at two levels, syntactical and discoursal. They were taught strategies that could help them recover the referents which were unstated and to create coherent meaning. The results revealed that, on the post-test, the experimental group scored higher in terms of overall comprehension and the rate of referent identification. However, the results should be treated with caution since the number of participants was small and the time allocated to the training may be considered by some to have been insufficient.

One of the few studies conducted in this field in the Polish learning setting is the one by Kusiak (2001) who concentrated on metacognitive strategy-based instruction among Polish secondary school ESL learners. The aim was to examine the relation between increased metacognition and reading comprehension and the impact of metacognition and comprehension on competence in the second language. The training raised learners' metacognitive awareness. The results showed an increase in reading comprehension and an improvement in evaluation strategies.

There have been numerous studies into reading strategy-based instruction (SBI). However, the results are not conclusive and long-term effects have not been investigated. There are still many limitations of such research projects. A risk of culturally biased research instruments, text and task features, the number of subjects, limitations of the research design, subjects' individual characteristics or lack of program transparency are the most frequently mentioned obstacles faced by researchers (Erler and Finkbeiner 2007). There is a need for more clarification concerning the instruction, for instance how long it lasted, whether it was separate or embedded, what variables affected the results, etc. Equally important are cross-language variables leading to variance in cognitive processing in L2 reading (Koda 2005). Moreover, a detailed model of L2 reading which could be used in studies, has still not been designed. Erler and Finkbeiner add that L2 reading is connected with many areas, such as L1 reading, sociology, anthropology, neurosciences or learning psychology; therefore, "avenues will have to be developed in L2 reading strategy research for undertaking multilayered and multidimensional research to understand L2 reading strategies and their use" (2007, p. 206).

As far as research into listening strategy instruction is concerned, many researchers concur that its amount has grown very little (Vandergrift 2004). However, the results obtained imply a relationship between strategy instruction and improved performance (Thompson and Rubin 1996). An example of implementing strategy training can be found in the study by Seo (2000), who examined ten university students of Japanese in Australia. The experiment lasted over 19 weeks and included the following strategies: *identifying key terms*, *elaboration* and *inferencing*. The experimental group benefited from the training, as it scored higher when compared with the control group.

The main area of interest in Kohler's (2002) project was metacognitive strategies. The researcher examined a group of 70 less successful learners of Spanish studying at a US university. As a result of the treatment, learners' listening comprehension increased in comparison with the control group. What is more, the treatment group reported an increase in the number of strategies they used.

However, there was no pre-test administered which could evaluate the learners' listening comprehension. Therefore, it is difficult to gauge the gains in comprehension achieved after the treatment.

Another experiment which focused on strategy instruction was performed by Graham and Macaro (2008). Their study included two treatment groups and one control group. The subjects were students learning French in England. The intervention included certain features that were common to the two treatment groups: materials promoting self-evaluation, awareness raising, accurate inferencing or predicting. The researchers conclude that the intervention had a positive influence on the subjects' listening performance. Those who received the treatment did much better than the students who did not receive any instruction.

Macaro et al. (2007) mention certain problems appertaining to strategy instruction. One of them, apart from the relatively small number of studies, is the fact that it is still not clear how to implement strategy instruction so that it could be most effective. It is also unknown what the most important element of the instruction is. In addition, the researchers call for a better and more detailed definition of proficiency level connected with listening as a language skill, as it could facilitate further research into the area. In addition, Thompson and Rubin (1996) stress the need for the inclusion of other languages, larger groups of subjects and more well-equipped teachers. They also add that SBI should last much longer and that emphasis should be placed on it not only inside the classroom but also outside of it. Furthermore, researchers should pay more attention to the whole process of listening rather than to giving learners a chance to listen. Vandergrift (2004) believes that if students are to be taught how to listen and if their listening comprehension is to be enhanced, more prominence should be given to pedagogic approaches that "do not short-circuit the strategic dimension of listening" (2004, p. 18). What is more, the role of top-down and bottom-up processing should be explored at different levels and for different tasks. By comprehending the connection between processing, proficiency level and task type, the teacher will know what to stress and what to focus on at different proficiency levels for different tasks.

Another suggestion made by Vandergrift (2004) is that researchers should study the conditions necessary for technology improved language learning. This way, they could facilitate the development of learners' listening comprehension strategy. Additionally, learners should be taught how to negotiate meaning, clarify misunderstandings and how to actively participate in an oral exchange with a more advanced interlocutor. The last comment by Vandergrift pertains to more research into the elements of L2 listening, as it would enable teachers to comprehend what they should concentrate on during listening instruction.

As can be seen from the examples mentioned, there have been a few attempts to examine the effectiveness of strategy-based context and its impact on learners' progress. Even though researchers mostly agree as to the beneficial role of the training, there are certain questions regarding the robustness and reliability of some studies (McDonough 1999). As regards intervention studies, not many of those carried out were purely experimental in their design (Hassan et al. 2005), which means that there were few studies which focused on assessing the effectiveness of

the training among a group of learners who were later on evaluated against a similar group of learners exposed to a different kind of treatment or no treatment at all (Rubin et al. 2007). What is more, the vast majority of the studies concentrated on older learners. Hassan et al. (2005) stated that SBI proved to be effective but only in the short run. There was no sufficient evidence to believe that this effectiveness extended over a longer period of time. Scant evidence was also assembled in connection with the positive impact of SBI on listening, speaking and vocabulary acquisition. On the other hand, strategy instruction proved advantageous in terms of learner strategies for reading and writing in a second or foreign language.

Smaller-scale reviews of intervention studies were also observed. Many of the studies conducted did not fully live up to researchers' expectations (Chamot 2005). There appeared a strong need for "additional and rigorous intervention studies with a variety of language students, including children in foreign language immersion and non-immersion programs, school-aged students in bilingual and second language programs, older students with differing educational levels in their native language, and students in different learning contexts around the world" (Rubin et al. 2007, p. 155).

There were also many other issues which needed to be reanalyzed and considered, for instance studies conducted in the areas of the development of teacher expertise "for integrating learner strategies into their classrooms, including teacher characteristics such as teacher approach, attitude, and teacher beliefs" (Rubin et al. 2007, p. 155). Oxford (1990) believes that one of the factors hindering success in strategy training is teachers' beliefs. Traditionally, teachers have taken on the role of instructors or managers. Few of them are willing to change that role and become guides or councillors for fear of losing their authority. Some teachers believe that conducting strategy training will deprive them of their position among learners that they built up throughout the years. They are, therefore, resistant to any changes in the manner they teach.

Rubin et al. (2007) also call for more comprehensive descriptions of SBI research and the instructional methodology that is employed. Emphasis should be placed on the types of strategies taught, the manner in which they were implemented, the degree of instruction explicitness, the kinds of activities learners participated to practise LLS, the way in which the use of strategies was assessed, the time devoted to SBI and whether or not the instruction comprised metacognitive awareness training. The researchers add that there is a need for the assessment of the instruction's impact on language proficiency, and not only on learners' self-report of strategy use. More importance should be attached to longitudinal results of strategy instruction. It is not always clear whether students who were taught LLS keep on employing them, or whether they develop more advanced strategies.

Rubin et al. (2007, p. 156) raise the issue of transferability of strategies onto other tasks which can be boosted thanks to the introduction of metacognitive strategies. They also add that research focusing on strategy transfer in SLA is rather limited, which does not help teachers who would like to gain more insight into this area. Furthermore, they comment on the insufficient number of studies which clearly show the way in which the selection of skills and strategies was designed

to meet students' proficiency level and age. The researchers go on to mention several issues which require further reconsideration. The first one appertains to the advantages and constraints of concentrating on strategies involved in one skill as opposed to stressing the most important metacognitive strategies in any task performed by the learner. In their comprehensive review studies on strategy training, Hassan et al. (2005) chose 38 studies, 24 of which focused on cognitive training, 8 on metacognitive training and the rest on various strategy trainings. The researchers admit that paying attention to one skill may save up a great deal of time and may be managed more easily by the teacher. On the other hand, though, learners may fail to notice the possibility of transferring strategies.

Another issue worth mentioning is the selection of the skill area based on learners' age and the level of their proficiency. Some researchers (Harris et al. 2001; Macaro 2001) believe that strategies focusing on vocabulary memorization could be a good start for beginners. More discussion is needed about the criteria behind the choice of the skill area and the deficiency of programs that would undergo rigorous assessment, in which the same group of learners focuses on each skill area within a longer period of time.

Thirdly, there is the issue of choosing strategies in a certain skill area on the basis of learners' age and proficiency level. Rubin et al. (2007) concede that strategies which draw on advanced grammatical knowledge are more suitable and should be introduced among learners presenting a higher level of proficiency. The last point mentioned is the relationship between factors such as learners' age, motivation and proficiency level and "the optimum number of strategies to be taught over the course of the SBI and even the number to be presented in any one lesson" (Rubin et al. 2007, p. 156). What should also be borne in mind is learners' strategic ability to manage their own learning in an effective manner. This managing entails, for instance, monitoring, assessing and planning. The researchers express a need for more comprehensive research that would assess this ability to self-manage the process of language learning and its connection with numerous factors like personality or attitude.

4.8 Investigating Learning Strategies

Within the last 30 years researchers have directed their attention towards identifying and classifying strategic devices, describing the factors affecting their use, developing and enhancing tools used to investigate the mental processes in comprehending, remembering and using new languages (White et al. 2007). However, not all of the actions undertaken proved to be completely successful, which in Pawlak's (2009d) opinion, "is unfortunate since methodological problems limit the validity and reliability of research findings and preclude comparisons between studies, thus stymieing further development of the field" (p. 65).

There are also certain limitations that researchers are compelled to face. To start with, as White et al. (2007) argue, LLS are for the most part not explicitly

observable. They are mental processes, which forces researchers to rely on learners' accounts which may frequently be imprecise or too general. Identifying strategies in this manner is regarded by some as a daunting task. Ellis (1985) argues that "it is a bit like trying to work out the classification system of a library when the only evidence to go on consists of the few books you have been allowed to take out" (p. 14). What is more, researchers should not assume that strategies are learners' fixed attributes. Strategy use differs according to the task, the time available or the prevailing learning conditions (White et al. 2007). Learners' strategy choice and use are subject to many changes connected with language learning progress and new learning experiences.

Another contentious issue mentioned is the vast number of strategy classification systems. Too many differing categories and strategy examples make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to compare studies and create a coherent theory that would account for the impact of strategies on the process of SLA. A preponderance of quantitative methodology, incorrect operationalization of variables, using wrong statistical instruments or imprecise strategy training designs are other examples of challenges that researchers need to address in the future (Pawlak 2009d).

The following section constitutes an overview of the most frequently used tools for investigating language learning strategies, for example questionnaires, observations, verbal reports, diaries, journals or interviews. Emphasis will also be placed on presenting their advantages and disadvantages.

4.8.1 Interviews

One of the earliest methods employed to investigate LLS is an interview (Rubin 1975; Naiman et al. 1978). In interviews learners are asked to describe their thoughts and actions during the performance of a learning activity. There are three main kinds of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured, all of which will be presented in the following subsections.

4.8.1.1 Structured Interviews

A structured interview is probably the most formal one out of the three types. Here the researcher is in charge of the whole interview and works with a set of predetermined questions. Dörnyei (2007) adds that the greatest strength of such an interview is the fact that the person interviewed concentrates solely on the area of interest and "that the interview covers a well-defined domain, which makes the answers comparable across different respondents" (p. 135).

As for the weaknesses, the interviewee's answers are devoid of spontaneity as the researcher has to mark the replies in accordance with a coding system. Also, by sticking to a specified format of the interview, the interviewer's questions are fixed and lack flexibility. Additionally, Cook (2008) says that the obtained responses do

not necessarily have to be a reflection of the learners' strategies since, as the researcher stresses, our learning behavior is subconsiocus. She mentions an example of a 5-year-old child asked how they learn new words. Cook says that "the answer would be meaningless and bear no connection to how the child is really learning vocabulary" (p. 105).

4.8.1.2 Semi-structured Interviews

In a semi-structured interview the interviewer knows what the course of the interview should be like and which issues should be given prominence. The issues and topics that are raised depend on the direction of the interview. The subjects are often encouraged to elaborate on some of their answers or to give more detailed responses. Due to their flexibility, such interviews are praised and often conducted by many researchers (Nunan 1992). The nature of semi-structured interviews is usually retrospective, which means that the learner's task is to describe in detail what they thought about and what they did while performing a learning task. The results are more reliable if the interview is conducted immediately after the task.

Dörnyei (2007) believes that this type of an interview constitutes a compromise between two opposing ends as, on the one hand, there are predetermined questions, on the other, the interview is open-ended, which is to encourage interviewees to develop their answers. Such a format is advantageous when the researcher who "has a good enough overview of the phenomenon or domain in question and is able to develop broad questions about the topic in advance but does not want to use ready-made response categories that would limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story" (2007, p. 136).

4.8.1.3 Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured interviews, also called ethnographic interviews, are rather unpredictable since the interviewer has very little or no control over the course of the whole procedure. Its direction depends on the subjects' answers. Since the context is far from formal and the atmosphere is much more relaxed than in the two previous types, the interviewee is encouraged to tell much more about their actions or thoughts concerning a certain task. Although there are no predetermined questions, the researcher may ask for clarification or provide the interviewee with some form of feedback as this is what happens during conversations. However, as Dörnyei (2007) adds, the interviewee is interrupted as seldom as possible so as not to disrupt their flow of thought. One of the essential requirements is establishing a good relation with the person interviewed. A friendly atmosphere will make it easier for the interviewee to unwind and give more comprehensive responses.

One of the advantages of interviews is that they offer a richer and more valuable source of information about the strategies used than, for instance, questionnaires do. Subjects are usually eager to give answers and there is always a chance to ask

the learner to explain their answer or provide an example. Equally important is the fact that the learner cannot leave a question unanswered, which often happens in questionnaires (Pawlak 2009d).

One of the drawbacks of interviews is that learners may often forget the details concerning their thoughts and actions accompanying the performance of a task. They may also give answers which they think they are expected to. Therefore, Chamot (2004) suggests conducting a stimulated recall interview which involves videotaping the learner while performing an activity. Then, the interviewer plays back the recording and asks the learner to comment on their thoughts or actions at a specific moment. It is believed that this type of interview is more likely to produce reliable results. Another disadvantage of interviews, as reported by Rubin (1981), is that learners differ in their ability to describe the strategies they employed. That is why, providing learners with tutoring in self-reporting could, in some cases, prove very useful.

The position of interviews among other methods of investigating learning strategies seems to be very stable. Thanks to this way of collating data researchers can gain insight into the use of LLS, frequently depending on cultural, contextual and individual variables (White et al. 2007).

4.8.2 Self-report Questionnaires

Self-report questionnaires are the most frequently used tool for collating data about strategies. Gao (2004) argues that they "have helped to generate a broad picture of strategy use across different learner populations and to establish relationships between various learner factors and learners' strategy use" (p. 3). Though regarded as very efficient, they have their limitations. To start with, designing a good questionnaire is not always an easy task. Respondents may frequently experience difficulty comprehending the questions which may be too complex or simply unclear. What is more, the information obtained this way may be too general and, thus, not satisfy researchers' expectations.

Pawlak (2009d) points to another obstacle, namely the fact that questionnaires fail to capture a clear contextual dimension of using strategies. For instance, if a learner is asked how often they use a dictionary, the answer will not provide additional, and probably more important, information such as under what circumstances and in what way the learner used it. Furthermore, as Chamot (2004) reports, learners may simply not remember what strategies they used, they may describe those that they did not use or may even misunderstand the strategy descriptions in the questionnaire. That is why there are questionnaires which have been based on the tasks that learners have just performed. The reason behind such a form is that learners are more likely to remember and describe in detail strategies they have just employed (Ozeki 2000; Oxford et al. 2004). This approach is not flawless, though. No standardization of the task or follow-up questionnaires have been created, which means that is not possible to make comparisons between studies (Chamot 2004).

Ambiguity in the item wording may constitute another problem. Some learners may have difficulty understanding certain words. Gao (2004) gives an example of the word 'someone', as in the sentence: "I pay attention when someone is speaking" which can be interpreted differently. One learner may think of a teacher, whereas another one of a friend, native speaker, etc. Finally, a number of recent studies show that the repertoire of strategies changes along with the age of the learner (He 2002; Takeuchi 2003). However, the implementation of a questionnaire may not recognize the dynamic and changing strategy use making it seem static (Gao 2004).

On the positive side, questionnaires can be conducted among a large group of respondents, which makes it possible to gather a great deal of information in a relatively short period of time. What is more, if the questionnaire is properly designed it can be successfully used for other purposes and among various groups of respondents. Additionally, the analysis of the results is fairly easy (Pawlak 2009d). What makes questionnaires attractive for the researcher is the fact that they are cost-effective. Besides, Dörnyei (2007) refers to questionnaires as versatile since they can be applied among many people, in different situations and can tackle various areas of interest. It is not surprising, then, that questionnaires have been applied in different LLS studies.

One of the most frequently and extensively used self-report questionnaires is the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990). Its aim is to evaluate learners' strategy use and the relationship with other factors like learning style, proficiency level, cultural background, learning task or gender. The SILL has been designed for English speakers learning a new language and also for those learning English as their second language (ESL). It is divided into six parts which reflect Oxford's (1990) classification: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive, social and affective strategies. Each of the parts mentioned comprises a series of strategic activities (Pawlak 2009d). Learners' task is to place their answer on a five degree Likert scale in which 1 means that the statement is never or almost never true of the learner and 5 that the statement is always or almost always true of the learner. One of the advantages is the fact that it has undergone standardization; it is reliable and effective. On the other hand, it is believed to place emphasis on the quantitative and not qualitative dimension of strategy use.

Another example of a self-report questionnaire in the *Language Strategies Survey* (LSS) developed by Cohen et al. (2003). It is a skill-based method of studying strategy use. White et al. (2007) report on a study which focused on the influence of strategy instruction on language and culture learning while studying abroad. The LSS was revised in order to include 89 items comprising listening, reading, speaking, writing, translation and vocabulary skills (Paige et al. 2004). It appeared that the questionnaire proved to be a reliable and valid tool measuring strategy use in a new field of studying abroad.

Other examples of questionnaires include the *Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory* (MARSI) developed by Mokhtari and Reichard

(2002) and its revised version *Survey of Reading Strategies* (SORS). The former was initially designed for English native speakers, which made it impossible to be used in a non-native context. Therefore, it was improved and extended to evaluate adolescent and adult ESL learners' metacognitive awareness and the perceived use of reading strategies while reading academic materials (Mokhtari and Sheorey 2002). There were three main reasons why the two researchers resolved to develop the SORS. First of all, research shows that there is a positive connection between learners' metacognitive awareness of reading processes and their capacity to read academic texts. Secondly, Mokhtari and Sheorey admit that they could not find any published tools that would measure ESL learners' metacognitive awareness and its impact on the use of reading strategies while reading academic texts. Lastly, many existing instruments neglect strategies that are typical of learners literate in at least two languages, for example translating from English to learner's L1 or using two languages in order to comprehend a text better. There is also one very practical reason: providing teachers and instructors with the necessary tools to evaluate learners and also help them deal with academic texts.

Another instrument worth mentioning is the *Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire* (MALQ) created by Vandergrift et al. (2006). Its objective is to evaluate learners' metacognitive awareness and the strategies employed while listening to oral texts. As White et al. (2007) add, the MALQ can be employed for various reasons like self-assessment, diagnosis or research purposes. The questionnaire does not comprise all the existing listening strategies. It includes those that are connected with: problem-solving, planning and evaluation, mental translation, person knowledge and directed attention.

Learner strategy inventories have also received a great deal of criticism. LoCastro (1994, 1995) points out that these instruments cannot be transferred across sociocultural domains and, as a result, their findings might prove to be invalid. Dörnyei (2005) has also expressed criticism for the SILL, claiming that it is psychometrically imperfect since the scales used in it cannot be regarded as cumulative (Macaro 2006).

The emerging instruments are clearly a sign of progress in the field of investigating strategy use. However, in most cases, they focus on quantitative data, which may be seen as their main drawback. Questionnaires should also include open-ended questions thanks to which researchers could gain greater insight into those strategies that are frequently neglected. It could also help to verify the truthfulness of subjects' answers (Pawlak 2009d).

4.8.3 Diaries and Journals

These two instruments are also often employed to investigate strategy use among learners. Primarily, diaries were administered to observe learners' affective states and the impact they exerted on strategy use (Ellis 1994). In recent times, however,

they have also been used to gain greater insight into LLS. In some cases the diary may have an open-ended formula. Then learners feel free to write down anything that they feel is connected with their learning. In others, additional advice and guidelines are given by the teacher or instructor (White et al. 2007). In fact, Pawlak (2009d) considers extra tips to be essential as they can direct learners' way of thinking, limit the number of their entries and make them more relevant to the whole study. In a study on English philology students' grammar strategies, Pawlak (2008a) helped the subjects by providing them with additional questions like: *What do you do to learn grammar more effectively? How do you evaluate your progress? What problems do you encounter and how do you cope with them?*

Diaries and journals have been praised because they help learners raise metacognitive awareness of themselves and of their language learning. They are also useful when it comes to helping learners develop their autonomy (Nunan 1992; Riley and Harsch 1999; Rubin 2003). What is more, the information on learners' entries can be analyzed from various perspectives. In Halbach's (2000) study diaries were employed to evaluate learners' strategy use, describe the influence of SBI on strategy use and to observe changes in the use of learning strategies. Dörnyei (2007) believes that this tool is an effective way to collate valuable information that could be omitted or even inaccessible when measured by other instruments. Furthermore, thanks to diaries and journals researchers can observe the changes that occurred in learners' strategy use. Because diaries are completed throughout a longer period, researchers can capture the dynamic character of the entries (Pawlak 2009d). Additionally, diaries can provide the researcher with background knowledge which in turn can help, to quote Dörnyei (2007), "resolve ambiguity regarding causal direction between variables" (p. 157).

On the negative side, due to time limitations learners may not be too eager to fill their diaries regularly. In addition, they may complete their entries too quickly and carelessly, which might make their diaries superficial, too short or reproductive and the information present there irrelevant from the point of the researcher (Dörnyei 2007; Michońska-Stadnik 2008). Pawlak (2009d) mentions other drawbacks like, for instance, learners' subjectivity or the difficulty in interpreting and analyzing the gathered data. Chamot (2004) adds that learners may fail to give precise descriptions of the strategies they tend to use. Due to so many serious limitations, it is advisable to use diaries and journals along with other instruments to make the information available more reliable.

Another development in the field of strategy use evaluation is e-journals. They are very useful since they enable researchers to gain information about strategies in distant or previously inaccessible areas, for example immigrants or learners studying abroad. E-journals were used by Paige et al. (2004) to evaluate the effect of strategy-based curriculum culture and language learning abroad. It is worth mentioning that the researchers employed other instruments as well, for instance interviews, profiles and questionnaires.

4.8.4 Observations

Observation is one of the earliest instruments employed to identify LLS (Rubin 1975, 1981; Naiman et al. 1978). Although it can boast a long tradition, the instrument is being treated with caution. First of all, to quote Naiman et al. (1978), "very few overt and systematic techniques or strategies are ever displayed in the language classroom" (p. 65). Secondly, observations do not enable the teacher to gain insight into the mental operations performed by the learner. Also, even if the researcher observes a certain phenomenon, they still do not know what caused it and why it occurred. Cook (2008) says that the main problem associated with observations is interpretation. She goes on to say that teachers are required to "connect what the students appear to be doing with some process in their minds—an extremely difficult feat scientifically: is a silent student someone who is bored, deep in concentration or naturally shy? And we have to observe their behavior in a consistent way so that someone else would make the same deduction from it" (p. 105).

There are also other problems linked with this instrument. In order to record the activities observed in the classroom, the teacher may use either audio/video-taping or note-taking. However, as far as the former one is concerned, learners and teachers may feel uncomfortable and uneasy when being recorded, which may lead to a change in behaviour also known as the *observer's paradox* (Allwright and Bailey 1991). Note-taking, due to time limitations, may also fail to serve its purpose. The teacher may simply not manage to take down everything that took place in the classroom (Droździał-Szelest 1997).

On the other hand, there are also researchers who found observations beneficial. Chesterfield and Chesterfield (1985), who observed young children in bilingual classes, managed to identify a few LLS. This may be elucidated by the fact that children's behaviour quite clearly reflects their mental processes (Pawlak 2009d). Macaro (2001) believes observations can help to identify the ways in which learners try to perform certain activities. One of the biggest advantages of such data is the fact that researchers actually see what subjects do and not what they say they do (Dörnyei 2007). Thanks to this instrument the researcher obtains information about the context in which the target issue appears.

Due to all its faults and the inability to clearly show all the strategies employed by learners, observation should not be implemented on its own. Instead, researchers should complement it with other instruments so as to gain more relevant results.

4.8.5 Think-Aloud Protocols

This instrument has been extensively applied in strategy research projects (Afflerbach 2000; Bråten and Strømsø 2003; Strømsø et al. 2003; Chamot and Keatley 2003). At this point it is worth mentioning a distinction made by Ericsson

and Simon (1987) between *talk-alouds* and *think-alouds*. As for the former, to quote O'Malley and Chamot (1990): "the verbal reporting of the informant is expected to parallel the thought processes, as in performing simple arithmetic or solving a problem in logic." In think-aloud protocols, on the other hand, "the informant encodes the mental processes immediately after they occur and then takes time to describe them to the investigator. (. . .) Respondents are typically interrupted at various points (. . .) and asked to describe what they were just thinking rather than asked to perform a task simultaneously while reporting on their thought processes" (p. 91). It is worth adding that the subjects do not provide the researcher with any additional explanation. Therefore, learners' thoughts accompanying task completion are not changed in any way.

As Dörnyei (2007) stresses, think-alouds are not natural for the learner. That is why, they need additional instruction that could help them complete the task. The subjects should know that emphasis is to be placed on performing the task rather than on thinking aloud. It would be advisable for the researcher to model the process so that the student could have an idea of what is expected of them. Introducing a warm-up activity would be a good solution. However, as Gass and Mackey (2000) report, it is still unknown how such instruction influences the validity of the report since "verbalizations can be influenced by the preceding output (i.e. confounding variables can be introduced)" (Dörnyei 2007, p. 148).

Numerous critical remarks have been made about think-aloud protocols. Ellis (1994) believes that they may be more effective when it comes to describing skill learning, like for instance translation, rather than LLS. He goes on to say that this instrument is not always a practical solution. Learners at a beginning level will use their L1 to describe the strategies they are using, which may exert an impact on the manner in which the activity is performed. Furthermore, as Pawlak (2009d) points out, describing one's action while performing a task is not a natural activity and the researcher cannot be sure that the learner will be able to recreate the mental processes in their minds. In fact, those processes due to the learner's necessity to verbalize their thoughts may be to some extent altered. Another comment, made by Grenfell and Harris (1999), seems to prove the difficulty inextricably linked with this instrument: "it is not easy to get inside the 'black box' of the human brain and find out what is going on there. We work with what we can get, which, despite the limitations, provides food for thought" (p. 54; as cited in Chamot 2005, p. 114).

4.9 Types of Strategy Studies

The type of empirical studies in language learning strategies hinges to a great extent on the specific aim of the research project (Pawlak 2009d). For instance, if a scholar wishes to identify and classify the strategies used by their learners, they will plan and conduct the study in a different way that a researcher who wants to focus on the

relation between specific variables. The following sections will present different types of strategy studies, namely: correlational studies, interventionist studies, case studies, descriptive studies and action studies.

4.9.1 Correlational Studies

Correlational studies are employed to identify the factors that have a significant influence on strategy choice and use and also to identify the relation between strategy use and second language proficiency (Pawlak 2009d). The studies conducted so far have shown that the strategies learners employ depend on numerous factors, such as age, motivation, gender, proficiency level, prior experience, learning style, personality type, cultural background, educational context or type of the task. The nature of these studies is quantitative and a questionnaire survey based on a Likert scale is employed to collect the necessary data on strategy use and the different factors that researchers take interest in. Learners' proficiency level is evaluated on the basis of the final grades or their self-assessment.

There are several issues which the researcher has to take into consideration when conducting correlational studies. The right operationalization of the variables and their precise measurement play an important role. However, one of the obstacles hindering substantial progress in this field is lack of a widely accepted definition of a learning strategy. Furthermore, the proliferation of terms, classification systems and diagnostic instruments make it difficult to objectively assess the frequency of strategy use (Pawlak 2009d). Measuring the variables with which strategy use could correlate is another challenge researchers need to face. The problem may lie in the different definitions used by researchers, different ways of dividing and measuring factors like motivation or learning styles. Lastly, finding a positive and statistically significant correlation between different factors shows nothing more but a connection of some sort between the factors. It is still not enough to create a cause and effect relation (Dörnyei 2007; Ellis 2008).

Although correlational studies seem necessary, as they help to gain insight into the factors that affect L2 proficiency, their results are still inconclusive and too general. Therefore, identifying the learning strategies used by means of different tools within a certain period of time would make the results more reliable (Pawlak 2009d).

4.9.2 Interventionist Studies

Interventionist studies are conducted in order to investigate the effectiveness of strategic training which may focus on helping learners to employ different strategies to enhance their learning and accelerate their progress. The training may also be limited to specific tasks, like listening, reading comprehension or learning new

vocabulary (McDonough 1995). Interventionist studies require the application of experimental methodology. Brown and Rodgers (2002) provide the following requirements for an experimental study: students are randomly selected and assigned to two groups; two experimental conditions or treatments in the teaching of academic writing are provided; and for both groups, a pre-test and post-test are given (p. 21). Chamot (2005) adds that apart from measuring the knowledge about the use of the target feature, the pre- and post-test should also focus on other factors regarded as relevant in the process of language learning, for instance motivation, attitude, proficiency, or self-efficacy. Furthermore, both strategic actions and learners' linguistic abilities should be measured before and after the training.

Unfortunately, there are not many studies which are fully experimental in their nature since they lack a control group or a reliable measurement of the effectiveness of the training. Pawlak (2009d) says that another problem is that the trainings provided differ greatly and so do the ways of assessing their effectiveness, which makes it difficult to make comparisons between different projects and draw general conclusions. The researcher also suggests implementing tools like questionnaires, journals, interviews so as to collect more qualitative data that could help to, for instance, monitor the frequency of strategy use.

4.9.3 Case Studies

Case studies frequently entail reporting the development of an individual's or of a small group of individuals' language competence. That is why many case projects are developmental studies as well as case studies. Brown and Rodgers (2002) state that "case study research comprises an intensive study of the background, current status, and environmental interactions of a given social unit: an individual, a group, an institution, or a community, while developmental research comprises an investigation of patterns and sequences of growth and change as a function of time" p. 21). It is quantitative methodology that prevails in case studies and the necessary data can be gathered by means of various instruments like diaries and journals, observation or interviews.

Case studies have been divided by Stake (1995, 2005) into three types: intrinsic, instrumental and multiple or collective case studies. The first one is employed to comprehend the nature of a certain case. It is the value of a case that attracts the researcher's attention (Dörnyei 2007). The second type is to help to understand a broader issue. The case is not of the utmost importance as it only facilitates the understanding of a different phenomenon. Finally, multiple or collective case studies do not place emphasis on one specific case. Here, various cases are carefully analyzed so as to gain greater insight into a phenomenon.

The number of case studies conducted in the field of LLS is not impressive, which is a shame because, to quote Pawlak (2009d): "it enables to capture the individual, contextual and dynamic dimension of strategic actions, contributing to a better understanding of learners' mental processes, factors influencing those

processes and their impact on the effectiveness of learning" (2009d, p. 77). Case studies can be used for different purposes, for instance to describe, identify or classify strategies, to investigate their influence on L2 learning or to assess the effectiveness of learning strategy training.

There are several advantages resulting from case studies. To start with, they can be applied in small-scale investigations. They also provide great insight "that no other method can yield, allowing researchers to examine how an intricate set of circumstances come together and interact" (Dörnyei 2007, p. 155). Case studies are also useful when analyzing areas which have not been examined yet or (Duff 2007). Additionally, case studies can be complemented with different instruments in mixed method studies.

Despite the advantages of case studies like the possibility of being applied in small-scale investigations, there also appear certain limitations, the biggest one being the generalizability of such studies. As Brown and Rodgers (2002) suggest, researchers conducting case study need to make sure that they document the study in detail and that they do not overstate the implications of their study.

4.9.4 Action Research

The main difference between traditional research approaches and action research lies in the fact that in the former "the implementation of research is left up to the practitioner, within action research paradigms putting research findings into practice is fundamental to the research process and is subject to ongoing scrutiny" (White et al. 2007, p. 111). Action research is conducted by the teacher with a view to gaining better understanding of a particular learning situation or increasing the effectiveness of undertaken didactic actions (Pawlak 2009d). This type of research is usually qualitative in nature and uses instruments like observation, recording behaviours or actions in a systematic manner. An interesting and promising direction for action research is collaborative action research which involves teachers and researchers working together in groups or in pairs and addressing a particular research problem (Burns 1999, 2005). The issues which characterize action research include the improvement of practice and the implementation of changes into "the social enterprise" (Dörnyei 2007, p. 191).

The effectiveness of the research hinges on the collaboration between the teacher and the researcher. Traditionally, as Burns (2005) believes, only research conducted by the teacher was regarded as proper. In course of time, though, when researchers realized that one cannot expect teachers to possess the knowledge and experience necessary to perform meticulous studies, stress was placed on collaboration between teachers and scholars.

White et al. (2007) discuss the relation between action research and strategy training by means of two examples. In the first one teachers set out to help their learners achieve specific goals thanks to SBI. The research comprised six stages. The first one was called professional development and planning. Teachers met

before the project to participate in a development course that included, among others, instruction in strategy teaching techniques or principles of action research. In the second stage, teachers collected data which were later on analyzed. The third step entailed forming hypotheses on the basis of the collected information. Emphasis was laid on research questions that transpired from the data. In the fourth step, the teacher altered their approach according to the hypotheses made in the third stage. The next phase was reporting and evaluation. Teachers analyzed the results with researchers who discussed the implication for further research. Finally the results obtained were disseminated, for instance during conference presentations or in articles.

The second example mentioned by White et al. (2007) involved collaboration between teachers and researchers who wanted to achieve the same aim—increase the literacy of secondary school Hispanic learners by means of strategy training in reading and writing. The learners, aged between thirteen and nineteen, were immigrants to the USA and their L1 literacy as well as English proficiency were very limited. The project was called *Project Accelerated Literacy*. As regards collaboration, the researchers believe that "it is important that teachers participate as equal partners in the research endeavour, rather than as individuals who merely agree to carry out the plans of the researchers" (White et al. 2007, p. 114).

4.10 Studies in New Contexts

Studies in SLA have gone beyond the sphere of the classroom setting and moved to other formal and informal contexts like study abroad or self-access learning (White et al. 2007). Strategy research has also extended its focus, for instance Paige et al. (2004) and Cohen et al. (2005) concentrated on study abroad. With the development of modern technology, there constantly appear new forms of learning and, therefore, new fields to be studied, online learning being one of them. Meskill's (1991) study was among the first ones that focused on learners' strategy use when learning online. The project concentrated on the relation between the learner and the content. White (1995, 1997) conducted a study that compared conventional learning environments and the distance/online ones. The aim was to examine the relation between instructional mode and learners' strategy choice. In order to investigate the strategies used by experienced EFL learners in an online environment Ulitsky (2000) employed interviews, journals and questionnaires.

Another field that researchers have recently taken great interest in is the learning of heritage and indigenous languages. As White et al. (2007) report, there have been numerous attempts to investigate strategy use among the speakers of Maori, the indigenous language in New Zealand. The studies conducted included the use of questionnaires and interviews. Strategies employed by heritage Spanish speakers in the United States have also been the object of interest. Hancock (2002) stresses the need for more research into the continuously growing number of heritage Spanish speakers learning Spanish. More studies in this area would make teachers' work

more efficient and effective. Hancock (2002) mentions Oxford's (1990) scenarios which she regards as a valuable source of information about strategies. However, to quote Hancock (2002): "while the scenarios in Oxford's book are useful to foreign language and ESL teachers and students, none of them involves students learning their own language" (p. 2). She suggests her own scenarios that create a realistic situation a Spanish speaker could find themselves in. Hancock also calls for the development of a LLS inventory, based on the one created by Oxford (1990), that would be specifically aimed at heritage Spanish speakers and their needs. The combination of these tools would increase learners' awareness of the social issues connected with learning their native language; it would also make it easier for them to identify and employ the strategies they enjoy.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the most significant issues associated with strategy instruction. Therefore, emphasis was placed on providing information appertaining to the various aims of the training as well as the different aspects that need to be taken into consideration when designing strategic intervention. The author also focused on the contentious issues inextricably linked with strategies and their implementation in the foreign language classroom. Thus, the chapter dealt with, among others, the general and specific, mental and behavioural nature of language learning strategies. What is more, the chapter addressed the different methods of investigating language learning strategies such as, among others, interviews, diaries or observations. Mention was also made of the various types of studies aimed at investigating LLS. The chapter, theoretical in its form, constituted an introduction to the empirical part of the dissertation. In fact, including this, at times very comprehensive, information concerning LLS seemed indispensable for the understanding of the last chapter.

The fifth and at the same time the last chapter of this volume will be devoted to a research project conducted with a view to investigating grammar learning strategies applied by advanced learners of English in a Polish educational setting and also to examining foreign language teachers' attitude towards implementing language learning strategies in the foreign language classroom.

Chapter 5
Exploring the Effects of Strategy Training in the Foreign Language Classroom

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters were devoted to the discussion of miscellaneous issues connected with the concept of language learning strategies. The author analyzed the different types of form-focused instruction and presented the variables influencing the application of LLS as well as the existing classification systems. The last theoretical chapter focused on the notion of strategy instruction, its models and the conceptual problems related to it. Mention was also made of the ways of investigating LLS. The aim of the present chapter, on the other hand, is to present the results of a study aimed at investigating learner deployed by advanced learners of English.

The following chapter will be devoted to issues such as, among others, the choice of the target form, research questions, the design of the study and the subjects participating in the project. It will also present the results of the study.

5.2 Strategy Training and the Acquisition of Emphatic Devices

The reason why the author wanted to conduct a study into LLS was to gain greater insight into the strategies advanced learners employ when they learn English, particularly its grammar. In fact, to the best of the author's knowledge, there have not been many research projects in the Polish educational context exploring the GLSs learners rely on. The study was pedagogically driven as the author wanted to help her learners to not only master a certain grammatical form, but also become more autonomous and responsible. Prior to the study, the subjects, who were Polish students of English, admitted that they frequently failed to come up with ideas how

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to become a better learner and how to deal with the process of foreign language learning more efficiently. That is why the author decided to introduce strategic intervention.

Three groups participated in a 14-week training during which they were asked to fill in the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning*, also referred to as SILL (Oxford 1990), a background questionnaire, a pre-test, an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test. Additionally, the experimental groups received strategy awareness-raising training and strategy training in emphasis. The choice of the target form will be justified in further parts of the volume. What is more, during the period of 2 months all the subjects were asked to complete their learning diaries in which they shared their thoughts about, among others, learning English grammar, the new strategies they discovered, but also their own strengths and weaknesses at particular aspects of the TL.

The study also included a questionnaire into language teachers' opinions about strategies and strategy training and their willingness to implement it in their regular language classes. The questionnaires were sent to language teachers in primary schools, junior high schools, high schools but also private language schools in different parts of Poland. Details on the questionnaire and the results of the study are presented in the subsections below.

5.2.1 Choice of the Target Form

In her study, the author wanted to examine the impact of strategic intervention on learners' acquisition of a certain grammatical feature. As regards the selection of the target form, the author wanted to make certain that it met several conditions. To start with, it was to be adjusted to the students' level of linguistic proficiency. It was the author's intention to choose a feature that was less popular in the foreign language classroom as investigating the acquisition of a feature most students were familiar with would have been futile. The targeted item had to be challenging and matching the subjects' level. Additionally, she wanted to make certain that the targeted structure accorded with the syllabus of the course. After careful consideration, the author decided that emphasis is a feature that meets the abovementioned requirements. For the sake of the study, mention should be made of this linguistic unit.

When browsing through various coursebooks, one can notice that the notion of emphasis appears rather late, usually at the advanced level. Such a situation may result from the formal difficulty of the feature and the fact that, in many cases, it is applied in fairly formal contexts. What is more, emphasis includes several other items, which makes it more complex.

During the study, the author introduced the notion of emphasis by means of different grammar books (e.g. Side and Wellman 2000). She also designed her own materials aimed at promoting the target feature. Due to time limitations and the resulting inability to cover all theoretical aspects of emphasis, she was compelled to

narrow down the scope of the selected feature. Therefore, the author resolved to focus on *fronting*, defined as moving the object, verb or adverbial phrase to a position just before the subject. Furthermore, the SBI sessions were to cover emphasizing an action with *all*, *what* and *it*, as well as intensifying an utterance by means of powerful adjectives, collocations, adverbs of degree, sentence adverbials and phrases expressing surprise. The instruction was provided in an explicit form, with clear *focus on forms*. The materials were presented in a way that encouraged deductive reasoning.

As for the subjects' knowledge about this particular grammatical feature, the author made allowances for the fact that at least some of them had come across it in their previous years of language learning. Especially the control group, comprising university students, was believed to have been acquainted with, at least the basic, emphatic devices. Indeed, as the pre-tests depicted, there were a few students who were familiar with emphasis. However, having had lessons focusing on a given feature is by no means tantamount to deploying it accurately in spontaneous utterances. Additionally, at this level of the subjects' advancement, it would have been nearly impossible to find a grammatical aspect they had not been exposed to.

At this point is seems fitting to explicate why emphasis is the right form to be introduced by means of the explicit component of FFI. As was mentioned earlier, the target structure is a complex one, usually introduced at an advanced level. Since it is not an immensely popular item and many of its components (e.g. *exaggeration*, *fronting*) are hardly ever employed in the classroom setting, learners are less likely to acquire it in a natural way, that is in informal situations, or when talking to native speakers of the target language. Exposure to the TL, for instance in the form of input flooding, could appear beneficial; however, there is still a risk that learners may fail to recognize the form and, consequently, fail to internalize it. What is more, due to time limitations, the author had to attend to other forms before the end of the school year, hence resorting to an explicit focus on forms.

5.2.2 Research Questions

The aim of the study was to explore the role of strategic intervention in the acquisition of emphasis. The author also wanted to examine foreign language teachers' opinions concerning strategic intervention and its role in the foreign language classroom. The specific questions the study addressed were as follows:

1. What is the impact of strategic intervention in the memory and cognitive group on the acquisition of the target feature operationalized as results on the immediate and delayed post-test?
2. Is the effect of the training, as measured on the immediate and delayed post-test, durable?

3. Did the training affect the frequency of general strategy use, operationalized as the results of the SILL introduced before and after the treatment?
4. What grammar strategies do advanced English learners tend to apply?
5. What is the attitude of language teachers towards the introduction of strategy training in the foreign language classroom?

The data collated in the course of the study were subjected to qualitative or quantitative analyses, depending on the type of research questions. At times, the author made use of a combination of both. Detailed information will be provided in further parts of the volume.

5.2.3 The Design of the Study

The conducted study can be treated as action research because the researcher was also the subjects' teacher. The aim of the project was to gain greater insight into the LLS employed by advanced learners of English and also to enhance the effectiveness of their learning, which constitutes the main characteristics of action research (Dörnyei 2007). The design of the study was quasi-experimental in nature. Three groups of subjects were examined in connection with the acquisition of emphasis. Both experimental groups received strategy-based instruction (SBI). One experimental group received training in memory strategies (memory group), whereas the other one (cognitive group) was exposed to cognitive strategies. The control group did not receive any instruction. The whole treatment extended over a period of 14 weeks (see Table 5.1). The training included seven awareness-raising sessions and six sessions devoted to strategic intervention. The results were measured by means of one pre-test and two post-tests, an immediate one administered at the end of the training and a delayed one administered 6 weeks after the treatment.

Table 5.1 Research timetable

Time	Action/S
Week 1	Questionnaire
Week 2	Pre-test, SILL, diaries
Week 3	Awareness-raising training, diaries
Week 4	Awareness-raising training, diaries
Week 5	Awareness-raising training, diaries
Week 6	Awareness-raising training, strategic intervention, diaries
Week 7	Strategic intervention, diaries
Week 8	Strategic intervention, an immediate post-test, diaries
Week 9	SILL, diaries
Week 10	diaries
Week 14	Delayed post-test

5.2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

In order to gather the necessary data, the researcher made use of different types of instruments. Information was elicited by means of diaries that the author designed herself, a background questionnaire and the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* used to obtain information about the general use of LLS. To provide additional information about language teachers' attitude towards implementing strategy training, the author administered an additional questionnaire which addressed issues such as, among others, Polish L2 teachers' knowledge of LLS and strategy training, and their willingness to learn more about ways of making their students more self-reliant. It was also the author's intention to examine the place of strategic intervention in the foreign language classroom. The results of the main treatment were computed by means of a pre-test (Appendix 1), an immediate and a delayed post-test (Appendices 2 and 3). The pre-test and two post-tests were administered to investigate the mastery of the target form in all groups and to show whether there were any gains in terms of target form acquisition. Apart from the means achieved on the pre- and post-tests, the author also measured the standard deviations (SD) to examine the inter-subject variation among particular groups. In order to establish the statistical significance of the differences between the tests, the author administered *t-tests*. Since no mention has as yet been made of the pre- and post-tests, it seems fitting to provide more information.

The pre-test comprised five exercises. The subjects were not informed that the test was devoted to emphasis. In the first activity, the subjects were instructed to fill in the gaps with one suitable word. In the next activity, the learners completed the second sentence to form a similar meaning to the first one. In the third task, the subjects were requested to find an incorrect word in a sentence. The fourth task appeared to be the most time-consuming one. The learners were required to put the provided words in the correct order to form cleft sentences. In the last exercise, the subjects were asked to transform the provided sentences, emphasizing the part of the sentence which was underlined.

As for the immediate post-test, it should be mentioned that the author did not want to administer the same type of instrument to elicit the target feature. This way, she wanted to decrease the probability of the *practice effect* which could have detrimentally affected the final results. The researcher also wanted to make certain that the tests represented a similar level of difficulty and that the format would be very similar in all three cases. In the first task, the subjects were required to put the provided words in the correct order. In the second activity they were instructed to find an incorrectly used word and provide the right version. In the third task one incorrect word was to be crossed out. The fourth and the fifth exercise included transformations. In the last task the students had to fill in the gaps with one word.

The delayed post-test, administered 6 weeks after the intervention, contained very similar activities to the previous tests. The only difference was the first task in which the subjects were asked to match the provided adjectives with the nouns to form collocations.

The maximum number of points for each test was 35. For each item the subjects could obtain one point. If the provided answer was correct in terms of the form, the subject was awarded one point. Minor spelling mistakes that did not change the overall meaning of a sentence did not affect the final score. Half a point was also awarded when the learners omitted one word or changed the word order, as in the activity in which the subjects were required to put the provided words in the right order (e.g. *What I was planning to do was to persuade him retract his statement* instead of *(. . .) to retract his statement* or *What I wanted to see the most in Louvre was the Mona Lisa* instead of (. . .) *What I wanted to see most in the Louvre was the Mona Lisa*). In the cases of partial inaccuracy of the target form, the learner also received half a point (e.g. *It was only when he took his sunglasses off then I recognized him*). Such a decision was made to recognize the development of the subjects' interlanguage on the post-tests. When the targeted structure was completely incorrect, no point was awarded (e.g. *What I'd like doing today is going shopping*, *All what I did was turning it on*).

5.2.5 Subjects

The study was conducted among 40 Polish students attending junior high school, secondary school and university. The participants were divided into three groups. The two experimental groups were selected at random. One of them received training in memory strategies (memory group) and the other (cognitive group) focused on cognitive strategies. The memory group consisted of 11 secondary school and 2 university students. The cognitive one was composed of 5 secondary school students, 3 junior high school students and 3 university students, whereas the control group comprised 16 Polish first-year university students at the Institute of English Studies (Fig. 5.1) at the University of Łódź. There were 14 male and 26 female subjects taking part in the research project.

The subjects forming the two experimental groups were students attending a private language course, preparing them for their CAE exam, which took place twice a week. The subjects were exposed to 4.5 h of English weekly. The control group attended their integrated skills classes at the university once a week. The

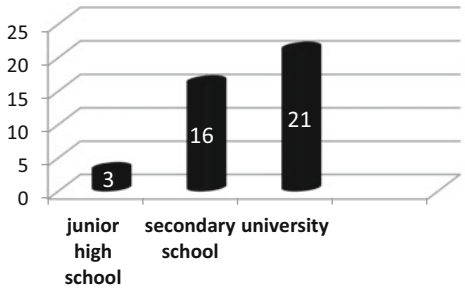

Fig. 5.1 Students participating in the study

lessons lasted 1.5 h. The author decided to include these subjects in her project because she regarded their level of language advancement as comparable. The subjects in the experimental groups were all attending a course preparing them for their CAE examination and their proficiency level was roughly assessed to be C1. The same could be said of the control group comprising first-year university students. One must bear in mind, though, that in every group there were students who conspicuously lagged behind and those who excelled and represented a much higher level than all the others. Since the author had conducted classes with the experimental groups in the previous years and with the control group in the previous semester, she was able to evaluate their linguistic abilities.

A few weeks before the training the author conducted a pilot study among a group of 15 first-year students at the Institute of English Studies at the University of Łódź. The subjects attended their integrated skills classes held once a week and lasting 1.5 h. The study included the administration of the SILL and a discussion about the different strategy types put forward by Oxford (1990). The instrument was a version for speakers of other languages learning English. The subjects were also to perform two activities. In the first one, each student received a set of different tasks (1990, pp. 27–29). The aim was to guess the embedded LLS. The subjects worked in pairs and were encouraged to browse their notes about strategies. In the second task, the subjects worked in 5 groups of 3. Each group received a summary of a different situation (1990, pp. 31–33). The task was to consider the LLS that would be effective in a given situation. The study was conducted to see how long it would take to implement the SILL and discuss the different strategy types.

One week prior to implementing the training, the researcher asked the subjects to complete a background questionnaire that would help her to learn more about issues such as, among others, the duration and intensity of learning English, the subjects' reasons for learning this particular language, and their attitude towards learning grammar, etc. In order to shun any possible misunderstanding, the language of the questionnaire was Polish.

As for the subjects' age, the average in the memory group was 17.9 years, 17.6 in the cognitive one and 19.6 in the control group. Apart from attending their additional language course, the subjects in the experimental groups were exposed to English at school, which constituted four 45-min sessions in the memory group and three in the cognitive one. The university students received 8 h of English exposure weekly, which involved, for instance, practical grammar classes, phonetics and literature. As for their language advancement, the majority of the subjects in the memory and control group evaluated their proficiency level as above average. In the cognitive group 8 students (72.7 %) perceived their level as intermediate and, one student (9 %) as advanced, while the remaining three students (27.2 %) as above intermediate. One student (7.6 %) in the memory group and 4 (25 %) in the control group considered their level to be advanced.

The next issue in the questionnaire referred to the reasons why the subjects engaged in learning the TL. An overwhelming majority of the students (37) admitted that they wanted English to help them in their future professional career. There

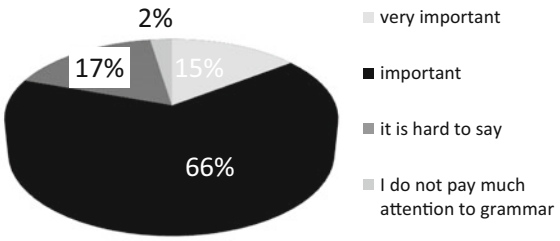

Fig. 5.2 The subjects' opinions on the importance of learning grammar

were 33 students who wanted to take an exam (matura, CAE, CPE) in the future. One of the most predominant reasons was their willingness to communicate freely and effortlessly with foreigners and to comprehend news and films in English. The majority of the students (63 %) said they learnt English for pleasure and satisfaction. English was perceived as a tool that might prove invaluable in professional life.

The next question appertained to the importance of learning grammar. The possible answers to the question *how important is learning grammar for you* were as follows: *very important*, *important*, *it is hard to say*, *I do not pay much attention to it* and, finally, *other skills are more important*. The results are demonstrated below (Fig. 5.2). The majority of the subjects (27) wrote that grammar was an important component of learning English, whereas 5 treated it as very important. Only seven students found it difficult to define the role of grammar in the process of language learning and one person admitted that he did not pay much attention to it. There were no students who believed that other skills deserved more attention; however, in open-ended questions they recognized the significance of a wide range of sophisticated vocabulary.

It is comforting to learn that students are cognizant of the value of grammar when learning a language. In their questionnaires, many students confessed that they needed grammar as they did not want to appear foolish when talking to a foreigner. Some students added that they become irritated when they listen to grammatically incorrect utterances and that they would like to shun such situations themselves, which often results in their fear of talking in public. Therefore, they pay a great deal of attention to grammatical correctness. Some students admitted that knowing grammar and being able to use it the right way boosted their confidence. One student from the control group wrote that she eschewed talking in public if she knew she could make a grammatical mistake. These gaps in grammar knowledge proved to inhibit the students from active participation in a lesson, discussion, etc.

There were also students who acknowledged the role of vocabulary when learning the TL and when communicating in it. However, they stated that having a wide range of vocabulary and using it in a grammatically incorrect way would be highly disconcerting. Thus, they did their utmost to learn grammar. As for the learners' exposure to the TL outside the language classroom, the results revealed that the overwhelming majority listened to English songs and watched English

movies. Regrettably, only five students read English newspapers and magazines often and very often, while seven did so from time to time. The Internet was another frequently mentioned source of exposure, as 33 students (82.5 %) browsed it on a regular basis. The least popular source of exposure was computer games; 27 subjects (67.5 %) said they rarely or very rarely played them. The fact that only five subjects (12.5 %) confined their contact with English to doing their homework is optimistic.

The last question referred to whether the students talked to others about their ways of learning grammar. The author wanted to see whether the students applied any social strategies like, for instance, cooperating with peers or cooperating with proficient users of English. The results showed that the subjects were not eager to exchange their ideas concerning grammar learning. Exactly half of the students surveyed said they did not talk to anyone about grammar or the ways they learnt it before a test. Many of them added that they did not feel such a need. Moreover, 14 students wrote that they rarely exchanged their ideas about learning grammar with others. Only two subjects wrote that they sometimes did so and four admitted to talking to others regularly.

At this point it is worth discussing the notion of mortality among the subjects. Initially, there were 12 subjects in the cognitive group. However, 1 week before the end of the treatment, one student withdrew from the course. As for the subjects' participation in the training, there were times when the subjects in the experimental groups were absent from their classes, especially in the cognitive group. The reason was the approaching matura exam and the subjects' intensive preparations. However, these absences were rare. It should be mentioned that the subjects were all present during their pre-tests and post-tests.

5.2.6 The Instructional Treatment

The researcher started her project by introducing a questionnaire that was meant to provide her with more background information about her subjects. The next step was the administration of a pre-test and the SILL which took place in the second week of the project. The reason why the SILL was introduced was that the researcher wanted to know more about the subjects' frequency of LLS use before the treatment. The participants were also asked to complete their first diary entries. Since both the pre-test and the SILL are rather time-consuming, the author decided to distribute them separately, so as not to take up too much lesson time. Even though the lessons were fairly long, as they lasted 2.5 h in the experimental groups, the author could not devote all that time to her research project predominantly due to ethical reasons. Additionally, asking the subjects to complete a questionnaire, the SILL and a pre-test during one lesson, though logistically completely feasible, would have put a strain on learners and, consequently, could have adversely affected their concentration.

In the third week of the project, the author started introducing awareness-raising sessions which lasted 4 weeks. Then, she implemented six sessions of strategic intervention. Just after the end of the treatment, in the eighth week, the subjects completed the SILL to see whether any changes had occurred in the frequency of general strategy employment. What is more, as advised by Pawlak (2006), no mention of the target feature was made between the immediate and the delayed post-test so as not to affect the final results. However, there was a risk that the subjects would revise their knowledge of the targeted structure at home, on their own. Of course, such situations cannot be avoided since there are always students who attend to their school duties very seriously and conscientiously.

5.2.6.1 Diaries

One of the reasons why the author resolved to make use of this research tool is the fact that it helps to capture the dynamics of the target feature (Pawlak 2009d). The researcher has a chance to observe how the frequency of strategy use changes and how students' attitude towards the target feature is altered in course of time. What is more, Rubin (2003) adds that diaries and journals help learners' to raise their metacognitive awareness of their learning process. When completing their entries, learners become more cognizant of the behaviours they engage in when they learn another language. Of course, diaries as such are not enough to collect all the necessary data. Therefore, other research tools were also included throughout the study.

The aim of implementing diaries was to gain greater insight into LLS the subjects employed and also to examine the results of the introduced strategy training. This particular tool was meant to make the subjects more reflective of their learning. As for the students' reactions to this instrument, many of them admitted that they had never completed learning diaries, predominantly because no one had ever informed them about the beneficial role diaries may play in the process of language learning.

With a view to eliminating or at least reducing the number of irrelevant entries, the author decided to introduce additional questions that could help the subjects complete their diaries and provide information that would be pertinent to the whole study. The queries entailed the following:

- *Do you monitor your progress in learning English grammar?*
- *Which learning strategies do you use most/least often when you learn English grammar?*
- *Have you ever thought about ways of learning grammar more effectively?*
- *Do you use additional resources to learn grammar?*
- *How do you cope when you do not understand a new grammatical issue/structure?*
- *Do you plan how to learn grammar?*

Since the main focus of the study was grammar strategies, the additional queries focused on this particular subsystem. This way the researcher could obtain much more information on the issue in question. For the sake of clarity, the questions were provided in English and in Polish. The learners were also free to choose the language. Most students produced mixed entries; that is, they started writing in English but later on switched to their mother tongue. Surprisingly enough, even more advanced learners eventually turned to their mother tongue. The subjects were told that they were free to add any other comments that would refer to language learning strategies and the process of learning the target language.

As regards the intensity, diaries were completed throughout a 2-month period. The researcher prepared her own copies of diaries and distributed them at the end of every lesson, twice a week. This way she wanted to avoid situations in which students would complete their diaries in a slapdash manner just before the lesson. The subjects were given a few minutes to share their thoughts concerning their use of LLS. An exception was made in the case of the control group. Since the classes were held once a week only, the researcher allowed the students to take their diaries home to complete them. At the beginning of every lesson, she made sure that the students filled in their entries. Bearing in mind the dismissive attitude of some students, there was a risk that the diaries would be completed carelessly and without due attention. However, because of logistical reasons, there was no alternative way to gather the required data in the time the author had at her disposal.

Once the process of collecting information was over, the researcher subjected the obtained data to qualitative analysis which comprised the identification of language learning strategies, especially grammar learning strategies. In their diaries the subjects were also encouraged to share their opinions about the training, the application of diaries and their value. The aim of this tool was to see how the learners benefitted from the strategic intervention and what their reaction to the training was. The strategies were identified using Oxford's classification system (1990).

5.2.6.2 Awareness-Raising Training

Prior to implementing strategy treatment, the author resolved to introduce a few sessions devoted to raising the learners' awareness of strategies. In fact, this metacognitive component is considered by many scholars to be a significant one, boosting the effectiveness of strategic intervention (Rubin et al. 2007). It is believed that learners should be made cognizant of the very notion of LLS and their role in the process of learning. There are miscellaneous ways of raising learners' strategy awareness. However, since they were elaborated on in detail in the previous chapter, the author will focus solely on the actions undertaken in the course of the research project. Awareness-raising sessions did not vary among the experimental groups.

Session 1

The first two lessons of the treatment were devoted to administering the SILL, the questionnaire and the pre-test. The third lesson, and at the same time the first session of the awareness-raising training, referred to analyzing the results of the SILL. When calculating the scores achieved by individual students, the teacher resolved to create a separate profile for each student which clearly showed which strategies learners applied most and least often. The profile also included the overall average obtained in the inventory. Before distributing these papers, the teacher had a short discussion about strategies with the students. Having written the word *strategies* on the blackboard, the teacher asked her students to tell her in which walks of life they could encounter this word. The students associated strategies with the army, business and politics. Language learning was mentioned as the last field. The students were then asked to give a few examples of the strategies they used to, for example, study for a test, learn new vocabulary, listen to the news, etc. They mostly mentioned memorizing, taking notes, associating and using imagery. The next question appertained to the purpose of strategies when learning a foreign language. The students unanimously agreed that strategies helped to absorb knowledge more quickly and effectively. Thanks to the hints provided by the teacher, the students came to the conclusion that strategies are supposed to facilitate becoming independent and self-reliant when learning the TL.

The next step involved distributing learners' profiles and Oxford's typology of LLS. The learners analyzed their scores looking at the provided key. Then, together with the teacher, they focused on the first type, that is memory strategies. The teacher briefly explained the aim of memory strategies and concentrated on discussing the different subtypes which were thoroughly explicated and supported with numerous example. Encouraged by the teacher, the learners also came up with their own examples for each strategy subtype. Once the analysis was over, the teacher asked the students to work in pairs and decide which types of memory strategies they found most and least useful.

The discussion was followed by a short exercise in which the students were instructed to cross the odd-man-out. They were provided with six sets of different words taken from the coursebook and closely connected with the currently analyzed material. The students could discuss their choices with their partners. Having done that, the whole class tried to justify the right choices. Lastly, they were asked to tell the teacher which strategy was embedded in this task. Without further hesitation, they agreed that it was *grouping*.

The last activity associated with memory strategies was a story. Each pair was provided with a set of six pictures connected with the current unit in the coursebook. The students were requested to create a story based on what they saw. The only limitation in the task was the fact that the students could not write down their sentences. They were expected to rely only on their memory. After the task, the teacher asked the class to try and identify the strategy which was connected with the activity. All of them opted for *imagery*. Some added that the task also involved the use of *structured reviewing* since when telling the story, they had to go

back to the very beginning and repeat everything one more time. At the end of the 35-min session, the teacher distributed learning diaries and asked her students to share their reflections after the training.

Session 2

The procedure during the second session bore some resemblance to the first one. The teacher started by distributing the students' profiles and then the handouts with, this time, cognitive strategies. The subjects could see how often they employed cognitive strategies in their learning. However, before analyzing the different types of cognitive strategies, she resolved to have a quick revision of memory strategies to see what the learners remembered from the last lesson. Having done that, she focused on cognitive strategies and their subtypes by providing explanations and examples. Then, working in pairs, the students were asked to find the LLS they used more and less often and those they regarded as advantageous when learning the TL. After 3 min of pair work, the students shared their answers with the rest of the class.

In the next activity the students were given four small blank cards. Their task was to fill the cards with four words taken from the currently analyzed chapter. Then, not showing the card to their partner, they were instructed to explain the word so that the other person would guess it. They were free to use dictionaries, should a need arise. Once the task was over, they were required to tell the teacher which strategy they practised. Even though the lesson focused predominantly on cognitive strategies, the students agreed that they employed a memory strategy, namely *using mechanical techniques*. Still working in pairs, the students received a small card with a general topic; for instance, transport 50 years ago, entertainment/technology in the twenty-first century. The topics were based on the material from the coursebook. The subjects' task was to exchange their ideas and opinions and engage in a 5-min discussion, which they eagerly did. Having done that, they identified the strategy they used as *practising naturalistically*.

The last task was of a different sort. The students were requested to match different words with different sounds. They were also told to find rhymes for the words provided. This task required the use of a strategy called *formally practising with sounds and writing systems.*

Session 3

The third session was devoted to compensation strategies. It was one of the longest lessons as it continued for 60 min. Fortunately, the classes in that particular setting lasted longer than in other language schools, which made it possible for the researcher to prolong the treatment. Before discussing the new topic in detail, the teacher revised the two previous kinds of strategies, i.e. the memory and cognitive ones. Since the two groups differed slightly in the amount of the material covered

during their course, the tasks varied and addressed different issues. In the memory group the teacher analyzed a CAE practice test (reading comprehension), which the subjects had completed a few lessons before, and the vocabulary from that test which could be incomprehensible to the students. The researcher focused on the last part of the test, namely multiple matching. The students were asked to read the short texts and answer specific questions referring to each of the extracts. As usual, the students tried to identify the strategy used. They came to the conclusion that it was *getting the idea quickly*. Thanks to this activity, the students had an opportunity to observe how theory can be combined with practice. Most of them did not even know that the actions they perform when completing a practice test are actually learning strategies.

In the cognitive group the teacher distributed handouts which appertained to a grammatical issue the students had problems with, namely expressing preferences about the past. Once the theoretical aspects were discussed, the students were encouraged to do a set of tasks and then asked to identify the strategy they had used. After some time they decided that the strategy they practised was called *reasoning deductively*. The next part of the training was devoted to elucidating compensation strategies and practising. The issue which needs to be addressed at this point is language choice. In the vast majority of cases, the teacher resorted to the TL when explaining the different types of LLS. However, when she observed that the students still did not comprehend what a specific strategy meant, she employed the mother tongue to make sure that everything was clear. Additionally, when the students themselves were at a loss to elucidate a specific type of strategy, they occasionally employed Polish. It must be stated, though, that it was English that was the dominant language.

Having gone through the theory, the subjects engaged in a short discussion with their partners. They were invited to talk about those compensation strategies they used most and least frequently when learning English. Later they shared their opinions with the rest of the class, which appeared to be a very valuable experience as others could learn more about efficacious ways of learning the target language. Then, the subjects received a set of ten topics closely connected with the currently analyzed material. They were instructed to select one that they found most appealing and give a short, 3-min talk in their pairs. Next, the second student in the pair was asked to perform the same activity. Even though the classes were held in the evening, the subjects in both groups showed great enthusiasm and eagerness and participated in the task actively.

In the third task, the students worked in groups of four. Each group received a set of eight pictures which they were first required to put in the right order. Then, they had to fill in the bubbles to create logical and coherent dialogues. This exercise was probably the most time-consuming, but also one of the most engaging and stimulating tasks. Once it was over, the subjects read their stories out loud and tried to guess which strategy they used. Most of them agreed that it was *guessing from other clues*. The last activity to be performed was filling in the diary in which the students could comment on the new strategies they learnt.

Session 4

The fourth session was devoted to metacognitive strategies. As usual the learners were first asked to go back to the previous strategies and briefly describe them. Such a step was to ensure that the learners would not forget the strategies introduced a few sessions before. Then, the teacher asked her students if they knew anything about metacognitive strategies. The researcher explicated that they facilitate the coordination of learning the TL. Once the analysis was over, the learners were asked to work in pairs and decide which of the strategies they find most and least effective. This activity was followed by a short discussion during which the learners were free to share their thoughts referring to the new strategies. The next stage involved filling in a specially designed questionnaire (Oxford 1990, pp. 179–180) which was to help the learners identify their language learning objectives. In the first part of the questionnaire, the students were told to focus on setting long-term goals for themselves. They were also instructed to decide which language skills were of greatest importance to them and what proficiency level they wished to achieve. The second part of this task appertained to short-term objectives which the learners were encouraged to identify. The subjects were advised to keep their questionnaires in their notebooks so that at the end of the course they could have a look at the goals and objectives identified and see whether they managed to fulfil them. Having finished completing the questionnaire, the students correctly identified the strategy employed as *setting goals and objectives*.

The next part of the session also included a questionnaire (Oxford 1990, p. 182). This time, however, the learners were asked to evaluate their progress in four language skills by answering questions referring to each of them. On the basis of the four questions to each skills, the subjects were required to rate themselves on a three-point scale, where (1) meant *doing just fine*, (2) stood for *not too bad* and (3) represented *serious problems*. Finally, they were asked to guess the strategy they used. They agreed that it was *self-evaluating*.

The last part of the session, as usual, involved the diaries. When looking at the completed diaries, one could easily notice that the subjects felt much more confident when compared with their first entries which, in most cases, were very short and lacked pertinent content. They also showed more enthusiasm and willingness to share their reflections.

Session 5

This 60-min session focused on introducing social strategies. The teacher started by distributing the students' profiles and then the copies with information about the target strategies. Before analyzing each strategy, the teacher revised the LLS discussed during the previous meetings. Then, the students were encouraged to come up with their own examples of specific types of social strategies. In the next stage the students shared their opinions about these strategies with each other. The next two steps of the awareness-raising training were closely connected with the

current material in the students' coursebook, namely art and culture. The teacher distributed a copy of Shakespeare's *Sonnet 130*. In pairs, the subjects were invited to analyze the meaning of the sonnet and decide what message the poet was trying to convey. At the beginning, some of the students felt slightly overwhelmed at the thought of discussing Shakespeare's work in its original version but soon they got used to it and performed the task. After around 10 min the students read the sonnet aloud and commented on its main message. Finally, the students were encouraged to identify the social strategy used to perform this task. Having analyzed the sonnet, many students felt proud that they were capable of performing this seemingly difficult task. Apart from *cooperating with peers* they also identified *becoming aware of other's thoughts and feelings* and *translating*.

In the sixth stage of the lesson, the subjects engaged in a different task, though still connected with English culture and art. The teacher placed three pictures of three famous English bands on the blackboard. The students were requested to guess their names and try to find a feature that was common to the three bands. Once the bands were named (Blur, Coldplay and Oasis), the teacher explained that all of them formed a well-known and influential movement in British music, Britpop. Next, each participant of the study received a text about Britpop. The task was to fill in the gaps with the words provided in the box. Before the learners performed the exercise, the text was read aloud, together with the words in the box. After around 10 min the students checked their answers. Afterwards, they engaged in a short follow-up activity, that is a discussion about the causes of the emergence of the movement and then tried to identify the strategies they employed. Since some students were working with their partners, they mentioned the strategy of *cooperating with peers*. However, the predominant social strategy in this case was *developing cultural understanding*.

Finally, the last part of the training was devoted to completing the learning diary. Judging by the length and content of the entries, one may easily notice that the subjects became accustomed to performing this activity and felt much more confident when doing so.

Session 6

This session was the last one devoted to the analysis of the different types of LLS. This time, affective strategies were the focus of the lesson. The most frequently employed affective strategy was *using music* and *using laughter*. The least popular one, on the other hand, was *writing a diary*. The subjects admitted they hardly ever committed their thoughts about learning to paper. It was also very rare for them to share opinions about the TL with other students.

The first task entailed the *use of music* and *getting the idea quickly*. The activity was a continuation of the previous lesson about Britpop. The subjects received a copy with the lyrics of one of the most famous songs associated with Britpop, *Wonderwall* by Oasis. The song contained some gaps, though. The purpose of the task was to listen to the song and fill in the missing words. The second task involved

the use of the affective strategy called *making positive statements*. The teacher asked her students to think of five ways in which they might encourage themselves to do a certain task and also to find at least five things they are good at when it comes to learning English. The latter task appeared to be extremely difficult for the vast majority of students, even those who represented a much more advanced level of proficiency. Such a situation might have been caused by the students' low self-esteem and lack of faith in their linguistic abilities.

Session 7

The last session included a variety of strategies. The teacher resolved to make use of the resources suggested by Oxford (1990). In the first task each student received a set of different activities (1990, pp. 27–29). The task was to guess which LLS were embedded in the activities provided. The subjects engaged in pair work and browsed all their notes about strategies. In the second task the students worked in groups. Each of the four groups received a synopsis of a different situation (1990, pp. 31–33) that they were supposed to analyze. The subjects were told to consider the strategies that would be successful in a given situation. The students willingly exchanged their suggestions within their respective groups and treated the task as a challenge. Once the time was over, each group read aloud the description of the situation they were given and shared the strategies they suggested. Other groups were free to add their own ideas. The session, as usual, was followed by filling in the language learning diaries.

Interestingly enough, when the subjects were told that it was the last lesson devoted to the different types of strategies, most of them expressed their disenchantment. They admitted that they enjoyed these lessons. However, such reactions should be treated with caution as the enthusiasm might have stemmed from the fact that the students treated these lessons as a break from the coursebook and regular classes. Focusing on LLS added some variety to the lessons and it may have been this factor that spurred the students to work harder than usual.

5.2.6.3 Strategic Intervention

Since it is believed that only integrated and direct training can yield the best results, the strategic intervention conducted was closely integrated with the curriculum. The learners were informed about the aim of the study, as well as its frequency. During every lesson, within the period of 6 weeks, the students received handouts with information and exercises on emphasis (Side and Wellman 2000, pp. 197–210). The reason why the author relied on this particular coursebook was that it was one of the few books that tackled the notion of emphasis so comprehensively. Every session focused on a different element of emphasis (e.g. fronting, cleft sentences) and was always accompanied by the same exercises for each group. Once the students performed the mandatory activities, they received an additional set of

tasks related to LLS. Both groups received different tasks. The groups, as was mentioned earlier, were randomly divided into the cognitive and the memory one. Each of them was expected to perform activities that entailed the use of strategies matching the type of the group. The memory group focused on tasks that promoted emphasis through memory strategies. The cognitive group, on the other hand, concentrated on exercises devoted to cognitive strategies. The control group did not receive any additional exercises apart from those performed by all three groups.

Session 1

During the first session the students learnt about the basics of emphasis, namely the different ways in which the speaker/writer may add stress to specific elements in the sentence or utterance. Then, the teacher focused on the section devoted to fronting, the reasons for using it and its types. Mention was also made of introductory phrases such as *the thing*/*problem*/*point*/*truth*/*question is*, *the fact remains*, etc. Having analyzed the theoretical aspects of fronting, the subjects performed activities which included, for instance, ticking the sentences that entailed the use of fronting, doing transformations, or rearranging words in each line to make a sentence that would comprise an example of emphasis.

In the next stage of the session, the teacher distributed the copies she herself designed. As was mentioned, each group received a different set. The memory one was given four tasks. In the first one, the participants were instructed to put the provided sentences into the right columns. Stress was placed here on the strategy of *grouping*. The second task required the creation and use of emphatic structures. Altogether, there were five pictures presenting people in different situations. The aim was to produce a sentence, which referred to a given picture, containing emphasis. However, the students were not allowed to write it down. Instead, they were expected to rely on their memory. The subjects identified the strategies employed as *imagery* and *associating*/*elaborating*. In the third task, the participants underlined the right word or phrase (*grouping*) and in the last one, finished the provided sentences using emphatic devices (*placing new words in a context*).

The cognitive group, on the other hand, focused on certain cognitive strategies. The students underlined emphasis in the provided sentences (*highlighting*). Then, the teacher read the sentences out and the students were asked to repeat them (*repeating*). The third task focused on translating a few sentences with special attention paid to emphasis. In the fourth task, the subjects were requested to create a short summary of specific aspects of emphasis. Finally, in the last task, the students were asked to find different pieces of information about fronting using different sources like Internet websites, grammar books, or coursebooks (*using additional resources*). They were also asked to bring what they had found to the next meeting. The last element of the lesson in both groups was filling in the diaries.

Session 2

During the second session the teacher resolved to draw the learners' attention to other ways of forming emphatic constructions. Mention was made of stressing an action with *what* (Wh-cleft sentences) in sentences like, for instance, *What Sam did was to break the window*. Other examples of emphasis included employing *all i*nstead of *what*, using introductory phrases and cleft sentences. The subjects were informed that cleft sentences are used in a variety of cases, for instance to place emphasis on an action by using a gerundive construction or to stress a prepositional phrase. The subjects showed particular interest in Wh-cleft sentences as they found them useful for oral exams. It should be mentioned that both of the groups were examination groups which were aiming to take the CAE exam. Therefore, they paid great attention to any ways of enhancing their oral performance.

Having become familiar with the theoretical aspects of cleft sentences, both groups engaged in numerous activities. In the first task, the memory group was required to put the provided sentences in the right columns which included emphasizing an action, a prepositional phrase and time. The strategy embedded in this task was correctly identified as *grouping*. In the second activity, the learners were provided with pictures showing people in different situations. The subjects had to create a meaningful sentence to each picture using emphasis. The learners were additionally told that they were free to use the structures they applied during the first session. This way the memory group also employed *structured reviewing*. Once they had created their sentences, they could share them with their partners. A few minutes later, the teacher asked a few subjects to read their sentences aloud. The students showed great creativity, which only proved their commitment to performing the task. Then, the learners were asked to underline the right word or phrase, and, finally, finish the provided sentences using emphasis. The session was completed by filling in the diaries.

The cognitive group received the same theoretical set about emphasis. The activities, specifically designed for the treatment, differed, though. The first task required underlining the emphatic part. This way, the learners could use highlighting when learning grammar. In the second task, the students worked in pairs. One student generated a sentence which contained emphasis, and the other had to repeat it without a single mistake. Then, the students took turns. The third activity included translation. The fourth one, on the other hand, focused on summarizing what they had learnt that day about the following: *cleft sentences*, *emphasizing an action with WHAT* and *using ALL instead of WHAT*. In the last activity, the learners were asked to search for additional theoretical material about that day's lesson. The learners were encouraged to email their findings to the teacher who then combined them forming a new document, and sent to it to the whole group via the Internet. This way, the learners were provided with extra materials, verified and edited by the teacher. The materials obtained in this manner could serve as a useful source of information before future tests. It should also be mentioned that the materials

received from the subjects were very detailed and carefully prepared, which showed the learners' willingness to perform the task and to cooperate. The group was a highly motivated and conscientious one; therefore, such commitment is hardly surprising.

Session 3

The third session of the training was a continuation of the previous one. The learners were requested to perform different activities devoted to cleft sentences. The memory group started the session by employing *imagery*. Their task was to create a story on the basis of the provided images. They had to remember to use cleft constructions in every sentence. They were also told that they were free to change the order of the pictures. In the second task, the subjects created their own sentences using the phrases given. All of them contained cases of cleft sentences. The students rightly identified the strategy employed as *placing new words in a context*. Most of the formed sentences were very personal, which made them more memorable. The third task involved matching sentences with the right columns in a table. The categories included talking about an action/series of actions, talking about the only thing, emphasizing time and emphasizing a prepositional phrase. Once the students had performed the task, they were asked to name the strategy used. This time, it was *grouping*. The last task involved the strategy of *semantic mapping*. The learners wrote what else, apart from nouns, can be stressed by the use of cleft sentences. The session was completed by filling in diaries.

The cognitive group also concentrated on tasks devoted to cleft sentences. They started by underlining cases of cleft sentences in the sentences given (*highlighting*). Then, one student read a sentence from exercise one and asked their partner to repeat it (*repeating*). The next activity involved translating sentences from Polish into English. The learners were expected to identify the strategies they used in each of the activities. In the fourth exercise, the learners were provided with words which they were supposed to put in the right order. They were instructed to remember about the use of cleft sentences. This way, they applied the strategy of *recombining*. They recognized the already familiar elements and then joined them to create logical and grammatically correct sentences. The last activity required the use of *getting the idea quickly*. The students received five excerpts from a book by Ildefonso Falcones, *Cathedral of the Sea*. Each extract included at least one case of emphasis which they were told to find and underline. This task was very appealing as the learners had a chance to notice that the structures discussed during regular lessons also appear outside the classroom setting and can actually be useful and meaningful. If a learner recognizes the value of a given grammatical structure, they are more likely to remember it and, hopefully, make use of it outside the classroom.

Session 4

During the fourth session, the learners focused on other ways of emphasizing a statement such as powerful adjectives, collocations, adverbs of degree, exaggeration, sentence adverbials or, finally, phrases that invite surprise. The subjects had a chance to familiarize themselves with miscellaneous sophisticated words and expressions, which attracted their attention. Once the teacher analyzed the theory, she went on to distribute sets of exercises with embedded strategies.

The memory group first concentrated on listing the ways in which a statement can be emphasized (*reviewing*). Then, they were invited to create examples of sentence adverbials and fill in a diagram (*semantic mapping*). The next task involved forming sentences with the words in the box. The words and expressions included collocations, sentence adverbials and strong adjectives. The subjects correctly identified the strategy employed as *placing new words in a contex*t. In the last activity the learners were required to invent a logical and consistent story on the basis of the provided images (*imagery*). They were also told not to write anything down and to rely solely on their memory. It is worth mentioning that their stories were fluent and told in a confident manner, which might suggest some progress when compared with the stories this group invented at the beginning of the treatment. Then, it took them much more time to ponder on what they were to say.

The cognitive group started their session by underlining emphasis in the provided sentences. Working in pairs, they read those sentences aloud and asked their partners to repeat them. They could move on to the next sentence on condition that the previous one was repeated in exactly the same form it was read. In the case of a mistake, the learner had to start from the beginning. Next, the subjects focused on finding examples of emphasis in the fragments of the aforementioned book, *Cathedral of the Sea*. The session also included an activity in which the learners were required to translate sentences from Polish to English. Finally, the learners were asked to look for more information about that day's lesson in different resources, such as coursebooks or the Internet, etc. They were encouraged to send their findings to the teacher, who later on corrected them and combined them to form one document which every student received during the next lesson. After the session was over, the learners were given 5 min to complete their diaries.

5.3 Results and Discussion

The aim of the following sections of the present volume is to report on the findings obtained in the course of the conducted study. The aim of the research project was to gain greater insights into the role of language learning strategies in the foreign language classroom and also to investigate foreign language teachers' opinions concerning the implementation of LLS in a formal classroom setting. The order in which the results are addressed accords with the order in which the research questions were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

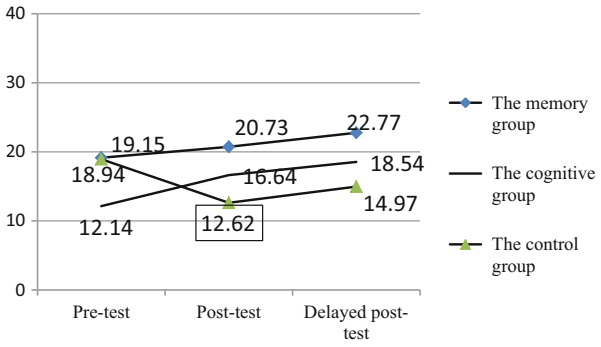

Fig. 5.3 The mean scores on pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests measuring the subjects' mastery of emphasis ($N = 40$)

5.3.1 The Impact of Strategic Intervention and Its Durability as Measured on the Pre-tests, the Immediate and Delayed Post-tests

The three groups participating in the study completed three tests: a pre-test, an immediate post-test and a delayed one. All the means achieved on the tests are depicted in Fig. 5.3. On the pre-test, the memory group (MG) achieved the result of 19.15 points. On the post-tests the results were as follows: 20.72 and 22.77. Such scores are indicative of the fact that the strategic intervention exerted a beneficial impact on the subjects' acquisition of the target form. The difference between the pre-test and the delayed post-test reached 3.62 points and, though not remarkable, it implied that the treatment was not only effective but also durable, in the case of the memory group even 6 weeks after the end of the intervention.

In the cognitive group (CG) the mean scores were as follows: 12.14 points on the pre-test, 16.64 on the immediate post-test and 18.54 on the delayed post-test. Although the scores were noticeably lower than in the previous group, the progress made is much more impressive than in the memory group as it amounted to 6.4 points. Judging by the results achieved on the test, one may infer that the subjects also benefitted from the training as regards the acquisition of the target form. When compared with the two experimental groups, the control one scored quite highly on the pre-test. The mean achieved was 18.94 points and was much higher than the one scored by the cognitive group. The mean achieved was 18.94 points and was much higher than the one scored by the cognitive group.

However, the mean achieved on the immediate post-test, 12.62, is highly surprising and at the same time disappointing. Since the control group comprised solely first-year university students at the Institute of English Studies, they were exposed to a larger number of hours of classes conducted in English than the experimental groups.

Therefore, one might ponder over the unsatisfactory results. There are a few reasons for such a situation. To start with, the subjects' attitude could have affected the overall results. Since the vast majority of the group relied solely on their

exposure to the target form inside the classroom and failed to complete their home assignments, it was doubtful whether they would improve their performance on future tests. Additionally, the immediate post-test took place in the middle of the semester when the students did not feel that they need to start revising for their final exams, which could have exerted an impact on their scores on the post-test. As for the delayed post-test, the mean increased to the level of 14.97 points. Bearing in mind the dismissive attitude of some of the subjects in the control group, this mean might seem somewhat startling. The reason for such results may lie in the fact that that at the end of the semester the subjects were scheduled to write the final test on all the material that had been covered within the last 5 months. This could have spurred them into action and, as a result, they managed to improve their performance on the final post-test. Although the scores on the delayed post-test increased, they were still lower than the ones achieved by the experimental groups.

The obtained results show that it was the memory group achieved the highest mean scores on both post-tests, however it would be somewhat risky to say that it benefitted from the training most. Both experimental groups made progress in terms of the use of the target form. Their performance increased over time, even though the treatment was over. It is worth mentioning that the teacher made sure that there was no exposure to any forms of emphasis after the treatment so as to shun the influence of any additional factors. Of course, there is a risk that some students attended to the form on their own outside the classroom setting, either to revise the material or simply for fear they would soon be compelled to write a test on that particular linguistic feature. However, such situations are very difficult, if not impossible, for the teacher to avoid. The two experimental groups that had undergone the treatment managed to achieve much higher results on the immediate and delayed post-tests. As was mentioned above, the differences were considerable. In the memory group they amounted to 3.62 points when comparing the delayed post-test and the pre-test, and 6.4 points in the cognitive group. The differences between the two post-tests reached 2.04 points in the memory group and 1.9 point in the cognitive group. On the basis of these scores one can conclude that the intervention proved efficacious and durable even 6 weeks after the end of the training.

The author also computed the standard deviation (SD) for the groups participating in the study (Fig. 5.4). Analyzing the scores in the memory group, one can see that the level of SD was rather high as measured on the pre-test and amounted to 4.3 points. This could have resulted from the different level of language proficiency among the group members. Some of them had already been acquainted with the notion of emphasis, whereas others had not heard of it. This visible discrepancy diminished on the immediate and delayed post-test by 0.86 points. Such disparity was not observed in the cognitive group, which implies that the inter-subject variation was not as conspicuous as in the two remaining groups. Initially, the group's SD amounted to 3.6 points, then dropped to 2.44 points, only to reach 3.24 on the last post-test.

The observed increase in the SD value on the post-tests could have resulted from the fact that there were students who still lagged behind and who probably needed more time to absorb the target feature and who, occasionally, missed their classes

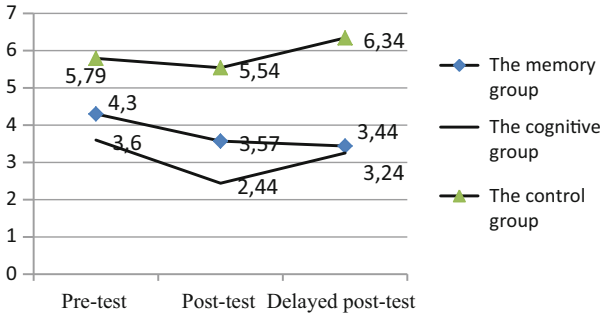

Fig. 5.4 SD achieved on pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests measuring the subjects' mastery of emphasis ($N = 40$)

Table 5.2 T-test results achieved by the memory and the cognitive group

	Mean		SD		Significance (two-tailed t-test)
MG	CG	MG	CG	MG	CG
Pre-test	19.15	12.14	4.3	3.6	Pre → Pre: $t = 4.25$, $p < 0.05$, $df = 22$
Immediate post-test	20.73	16.64	3.57	2.44	Ipost → Ipost: $t = 3.19$, $p < 0.05$
Delayed post-test	22.77	18.54	3.44	3.24	Dpost → Dpost: $t = 3.06$, $p < 0.05$

because of their pending matura exam which, understandably, was their top priority. Therefore, the results they achieved were considerably lower, which in turn affected the overall value of the standard deviation in the whole cognitive group.

Having analyzed the descriptive statistical data, the author conducted the *t-test* (Table 5.2). The first one appertained to the two experimental groups. With 24 students altogether, the number of the degrees of freedom (*df*) was established at 22, while the significance level *p* was set at 0.05. As the table reveals, the obtained values were much higher than the established critical value for *t*, namely 2.074. The scores achieved on the immediate post-test amounted to 3.19 and 3.06 on the delayed post-test. The results achieved statistical significance and also imply high proficiency gains on the part of the subjects.

The second *t-test* was conducted with a view to examining the results achieved by the memory and the control group (Table 5.3 below). There were 29 students altogether: 13 in the memory group and 16 in the control group. Therefore, the number of the degrees of freedom was set at 27, with the critical value of *t* established at 2.05. When one investigates the results on the immediate and delayed post-tests, one can see that they reached statistical significance. The obtained values are much higher than the established critical value for *t* as they amount to 4.58 on the immediate post-test and 3.98 on the delayed one.

As regards the cognitive and control group (Table 5.4), the number of the degrees of freedom was set at 25, with the critical value of *t* established at 2.06. The value obtained on the immediate post-test (2.27) appeared higher than the value of critical *t*. However, the score on the delayed post-test (1.73) proved highly

Table 5.3 The mean scores, SD and levels of statistical significance on the pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests measuring the memory group's (MG) and control group's (ContG) mastery of emphasis

	Mean		SD		Significance (two-tailed t-test)
MG	ContG	MG	ContG	MG	ContG
Pre-test	19.15	18.94	4.3	5.79	Pre → Pre: $t = 0.108$, $p < 0.05$, df =27
Immediate post-test	20.73	12.62	3.57	5.54	Ipost → Ipost: $t = 4.58$, $p < 0.05$
Delayed post-test	22.77	14.97	3.44	6.34	Dpost → Dpost: $t = 3.98$, $p < 0.05$

Table 5.4 The mean scores, standard deviation and levels of statistical significance on the pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests measuring the cognitive group's (CG) and control group's (ContG) mastery of emphasis

	Mean		SD		Significance (two-tailed t-test)
CG	ContG	CG	ContG	CG	ContG
Pre-test	12.14	18.94	3.6	5.79	Pre → Pre: $t = 3.5$, $p < 0.05$
Immediate post-test	16.64	12.62	2.44	5.54	Ipost → Ipost: $t = 2.27$, $p < 0.05$
Delayed post-test	18.54	14.97	3.24	6.34	Dpost → Dpost: $t = 1.73$, $p < 0.05$

disappointing. Such a low score might be attributed to, as was the case with the previous t-tests, the difference in the values of SD. It should be stressed that the standard deviation in the control group, as measured on the delayed post-test, reached the highest value of 6.34 points, which suggested that the subjects were heterogeneous and some of them needed more time to acquire the target form. This, most surely, exerted a negative impact on the final results of the study.

As regards the cognitive and control group (Table 5.4), the number of the degrees of freedom was set at 25, with the critical value of *t* established at 2.06. The value obtained on the immediate post-test (2.27) appeared higher than the value of critical *t*. However, the score on the delayed post-test (1.73) proved highly disappointing. Such a low score might be attributed to, as was the case with the previous t-tests, the difference in the values of SD. It should be stressed that the standard deviation in the control group, as measured on the delayed post-test, reached the highest value of 6.34 points, which suggested that the subjects were heterogeneous and some of them needed more time to acquire the target form. This, most surely, exerted a negative impact on the final results of the study.

5.3.2 The Training's Influence on the Frequency of General Strategy Use, Operationalized as the Results of the Sill Introduced Before and After the Treatment

Prior to implementing the training, the researcher wanted to examine the potential gains in the use of general LLS among the subjects. The author wanted to see if the

provided training exerted any impact on the application of strategies. To collect the relevant data, she administered the SILL in both groups—once prior to the strategic intervention (SILL 1) and once after the treatment (SILL 2). Detailed results presenting, among others, the general means for particular strategy types in the two groups or individual students' means on the two SILLs, have been presented in the sections below.

Figure 5.5 demonstrates that the general use of LLS in the majority of the cases increased after the treatment. The biggest rise noticed amounted to 0.4 point (S2). There were, however, cases where the application of strategies once the intervention was over stayed exactly the same as before the treatment (S4, S7, S13), which might imply that in these particular cases, the training failed to alter the general strategy use. There were no cases of a decrease in strategy use, which is a positive sign.

Figure 5.6 presents the means achieved by individual students in the cognitive group. As can be seen, when compared with other subjects, some students made considerable progress in terms of strategy application (S2, S9).

There were also students whose strategy use stayed almost the same throughout the treatment (S1, S3, S7), which is always dissatisfying given the amount of time the author devoted to awareness raising sessions and the treatment. Although the

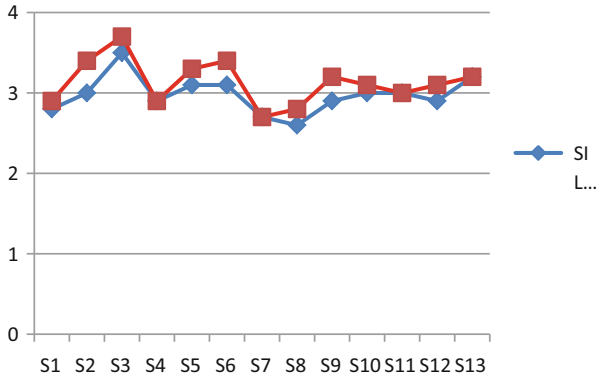

Fig. 5.5 The means achieved by individual students in the memory group on the SILL prior to and after the treatment

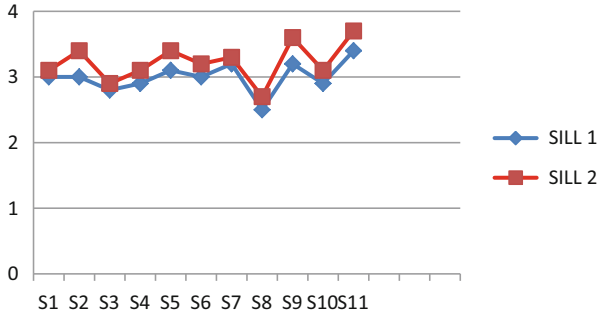

Fig. 5.6 The means achieved by individual students in the cognitive group on the SILL prior to and after the treatment

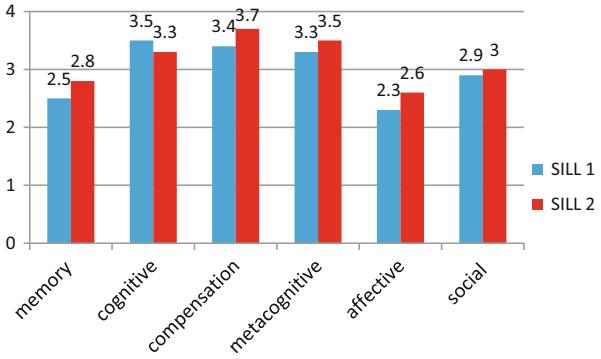

Fig. 5.7 Mean scores for strategy types achieved by the memory group on the SILL prior to and after the treatment

general mean for the cognitive and memory group rose, the reported increase, which amounted to 0.2 points in both groups, is certainly too small to form the basis for any final conclusions. In this case, it would be more appropriate to talk about certain tendencies observed in both groups.

As Fig. 5.7 below depicts, the use of memory strategies in the memory group was moderate with a mean of 2.5. The treatment led to a slight increase in the use of these strategies. The result scored by the group falls in the moderate use category, which Oxford (1990) describes as between 2.5 and 3.4 points.

Given the amount of time devoted to introducing and promoting memory strategies among the subjects, the final mean (2.8) is less than impressive. However, it should be borne in mind that not every student will be eager to apply these particular strategies as they might simply not correspond with their learning preferences. As for cognitive strategies, the subjects reported their high use (3.5) before the treatment. The final value dropped to 3.3. points but was still relatively high. As the results indicate, the use of compensation strategies also changed, though, again, the differences in the means are rather small and amount to 3.4 prior to and 3.7 after the intervention. Metacognitive strategies also proved to be more frequently applied after the treatment (3.5). Since they can prove extremely useful when trying to successfully coordinate the process of foreign language learning (Oxford 1990), it is comforting to learn that the application of these particular strategies increased. Finally, the use of affective and social strategies also rose, though the changes, as was the case with other strategy types, were slight.

The rise on the use of different strategies could have stemmed from the frequent awareness-raising sessions conducted at the beginning of the treatment. Many learners became cognizant of the plethora of existing strategies and started applying them.

As for the means achieved by the cognitive group (Fig. 5.8), one can also observe a general increase in strategy use. Surprisingly, the biggest rise pertains to LLS which were not the main focus of the intervention, namely the compensation and social ones. Their use rose by 0.4 points when compared with the means prior to the treatment. Other strategies whose use increased after the training include cognitive (+0.2), metacognitive (+0.3) and affective (+0.2) strategies. Since

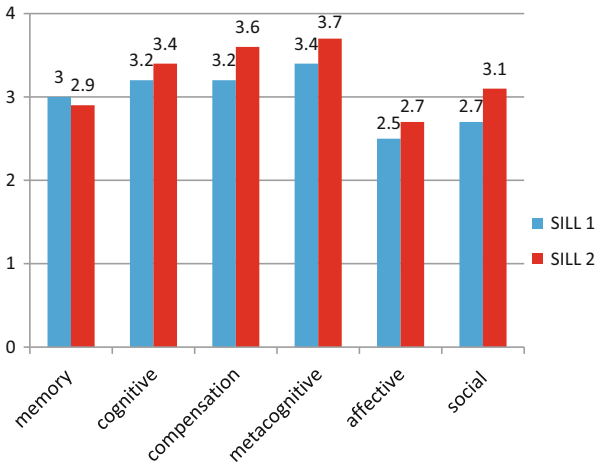

Fig. 5.8 Mean scores for strategy types achieved by the cognitive group on the SILL prior to and after the treatment

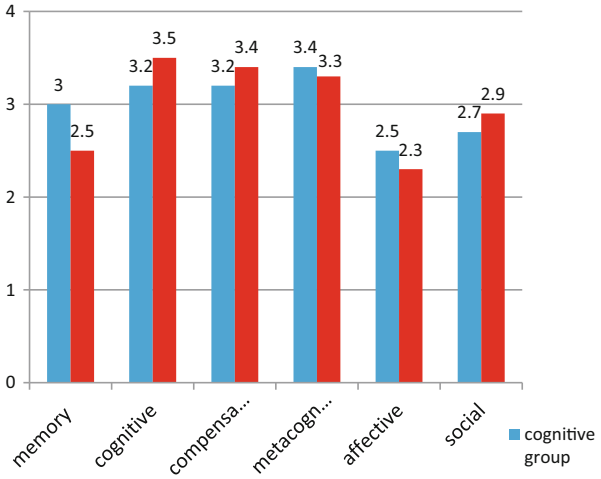

Fig. 5.9 Mean scores for strategy types achieved by the cognitive and memory group on the SILL prior to the treatment

emphasis in this group was placed on cognitive strategies, one would expect a more dramatic increase in the use of these strategies.

Similarly to the previous group, the subjects participating in the study might have been more attracted to different strategies. What is more, if the training had extended over a longer period of time, the results could have been different and the reported increase more considerable. The use of memory strategies, on the other hand, decreased by 0.1 point. Such a situation should come as no surprise since the subjects received minimal exposure to memory strategies.

Figure 5.9 depicts the two groups' strategy use before conducting the training. As the results show, there was a difference between the two groups in terms of memory strategies which were applied rather moderately.

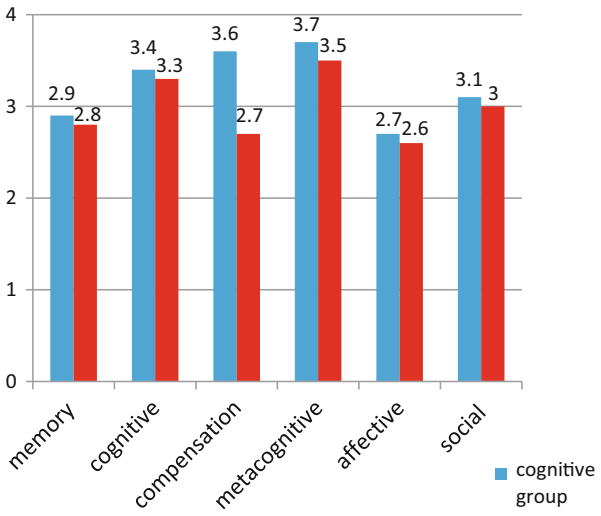

Fig. 5.10 Mean scores for strategy types achieved by the cognitive and memory group on the SILL after the treatment

The two experimental groups reported medium use of these strategies, though it was the cognitive group that applied memory strategies more often. As for cognitive strategies, high use (3.5) was observed among the memory group, whereas the cognitive group fell in the moderate use category with a result of 3.2 points. Similar findings among both groups were revealed in terms of compensation strategies. The application of metacognitive strategies also appeared very similar among the two experimental groups. Affective strategies were the least common strategies with an average of 2.5 in the cognitive group and 2.3 in the memory one. Both groups reported moderate use of social strategies.

As for memory strategies, one can see (Fig. 5.10) that the groups achieved very similar results. The scores fall in the moderate use range and, taking into account the time spent on awareness raising sessions and the treatment as such, they could have been higher. Similarly, no substantial differences were observed in terms of cognitive, affective and social strategy use. Compensation strategies, on the other hand, were much more frequently applied in the cognitive group (3.7).

The difference between the two groups reached 0.9 points. The findings might seem somewhat surprising as no special emphasis was laid on these particular LLS. Although the two groups did not differ to a large extent in their application of metacognitive strategies, the results are higher when compared with those prior to the treatment. In fact, this is the first time that two groups fell in the high use category. These scores are certainly a positive signal as they point to the subjects' increasing awareness of the process of language learning which is essential if the learner wishes to achieve success.

On the basis of the provided results, it may be concluded that the frequency of general strategy use increased in the two groups with the means amounting to 3.0 and 3.2 points in the cognitive group before and after the treatment, and to 2.9 and 3.1 points in the memory group. Although the reported changes are far from

impressive, they are an optimistic and encouraging sign and bode well for potential future studies of this sort. They do point to certain positive changes in terms of strategy application. They also reveal an increasing level of language learning awareness among the subjects, which researchers regard as indispensable for success. However, it should be mentioned that the increase in the frequency of use cannot be solely attributed to the implementation of strategic intervention as there could have been other variables that exerted an impact on the final results. In fact, the treatment as such could have been one of the many factors contributing to the rise in the means. Since the study was conducted during the subjects' extracurricular classes, one cannot exclude the influence of regular school classes or the subjects' exposure to different strategies outside the formal classroom setting. Unfortunately, it seems impossible to prevent such situations and, therefore, they should be taken into consideration when discussing the results of the project.

5.3.3 Grammar Strategies Employed by Advanced Learners of English

The following part of the volume will be devoted to analyzing the data obtained from the learning diaries administered among advanced learners of English. The data were subjected to qualitative analysis during which the present author identified the reported learning behaviours in connection with GLSs. The strategies were classified according to the categories suggested by Oxford (1990). The aim of the research project was to explore the grammar strategies that advanced learners of English apply. For this reason, the author asked her 40 subjects to complete their diaries over a period of 2 months. The reason why such a timescale was chosen was the risk that further entries could in fact produce irrelevant contributions, especially since many students were beginning to show signs of fatigue. The diaries were completed at the end of every lesson in the experimental groups. Since the author could not devote extra lesson time to the diaries during her classes with the control group, she asked the subjects to fill in their entries at home. This could have affected the content of the diaries but, due to logistical reasons, there was no other way of dealing with the matter. In order to elicit data that would be pertinent the study, the author included additional questions that narrowed down the focus:

- *Do you monitor your progress in learning English grammar?*
- *Which LLS do you use most/least often when you learn English grammar?*
- *Have you ever thought about ways of learning grammar more effectively?*
- *Do you use additional resources to learn grammar?*
- *How do you cope when you do not understand a new grammatical issue/structure?*
- *Do you plan how to learn grammar?*

Analyzing the subjects' diary entries, one should mention that some of them made considerable progress in terms of learning to express their feelings about language learning. At the beginning, the information was scant or even non-existent. Surprising as it may seem, some students did not manage to write a single sentence within the time provided, claiming they were at a loss for words and ideas. Once the strategy training was introduced and the subjects learned more about LLS, their entries rapidly expanded and, more importantly, provided the author with abundant and meaningful information. That does not necessarily mean that all the entries were fruitful. On the contrary, some provided dubious results, while others did not contain any relevant data whatsoever. Fortunately, such cases constituted the minority and did not exert a profound impact on the final results. The researcher was startled to read the extremely extensive entries of some students, particularly those who were rather shy and unwilling to be active in class and who sometimes had to go to great lengths to give a talk in front of their classmates. While some subjects showed some deal of reluctance when asked to complete the diaries, others seemed pleased as they had a chance to share their reflections. Many students admitted that the reason why their learning success left much to be desired was their laziness and apparent lack of self-discipline, though some of them decided to combat this obstacle.

One of the greatest advantages of completing diary entries was the fact that the students became more reflective in terms of LLS and learning grammar, which is depicted in the sentences below[1]:

- *Although I never thought of the strategies I used, I reckon it is very useful to be aware of them;*
- *I didn't even know that there are so many learning strategies. (. . .) I think that thanks to such lessons I will choose more wisely the strategies which could help me to learn;*
- *Strategies opened my eyes;*
- *Completing my diary made me analyze the things we do during the lesson;*
- *Thanks to these strategies learning grammar seems easier.*

Surprisingly enough, the control group, which consisted of first-year university students, expressed rather mixed feelings about completing their learning diaries. An overwhelming majority stated that the diaries were neither helpful nor harmful. Entries presenting such a stance include the following:

- *I don't find writing such a diary tremendously useful (. . .) I don't think it changes anything. But it was a new and interesting experience;*
- *I found writing this diary neutral;*
- *Completing my diary didn't help me learn. It didn't disturb me either;*
- *I'm afraid I don't benefit from writing it down here;*

[1] The majority of entries were written in English. Others, were translated from Polish into English.

- *Frankly speaking, this diary doesn't help in any way, but it also doesn't disturb me. It doesn't motivate me whatsoever;*
- *As far as grammar is concerned, I don't think that the diary helped me in any way.*

Such opinions could be justified if the subjects regularly monitored their progress and achievements and if they frequently thought about ways of improving their skills or, in other words, if they were more responsible for their learning. Then, a diary could seem unnecessary. However, in their diaries, the majority of the students (62 %) revealed that they did not monitor their progress in learning English grammar. It is also somewhat confusing to learn that 68.7 % of the subjects have never thought about ways of learning grammar in a more efficacious manner. Some opinions, on the other hand, were rather strong. Fortunately, they were very scarce and constituted the minority:

- *(. . .) it* [writing the diary] *doesn't influence any field of my life in a positive way.*

There were also a few positive comments in which the students voiced their strong approval of the diaries and their impact on the process of learning the TL and its grammar. Although they did not constitute the majority, such entries are an optimistic sign and bode well for the subjects' future in terms of language learning.

- *I found writing the diary useful because it made me think about the ways of learning. It is useful because I often consult other students who also complete their diaries and we exchange our ways of learning and often try to use them;*
- *Completing this diary made me realize how senseless my attitude to learning is. I am slowly thinking of changing this situation. It is possible that conscious learning will be more profitable;*
- *This diary is useful because I can see what is difficult and I can see if I have made any progress.*

Another useful and interesting finding referred to strategy transfer. There were numerous entries which clearly showed the subjects' willingness and readiness to employ LLS in other contexts:

- *I think that such classes are helpful when learning subjects different than foreign languages;*
- *These lessons help me to learn other languages and even mathematics;*
- *Classes on language learning strategies helped me to learn grammar but also physics or history. (. . .) now I employ diagrams, group certain events. It seems to me that these strategies will be useful in the future;*
- *Repeating the material after every lesson is the best strategy as it helps me to learn many subjects like biology, history, physics and chemistry.*

The most significant part of the diaries referred to information concerning GLSs among advanced learners of English. The findings revealed that the most popular strategies the subjects used in order to learn the TL grammar were cognitive strategies. Altogether, the author identified 11 different cognitive strategies. Within this group, *repeating* appeared to be the most popular strategy. There were

18 subjects who reported its frequent use. The participants admitted that in order to remember a given structure they often repeat it aloud or in their minds, which helps them to absorb it much faster. The second most widely applied strategy was *formal practice*. There were 15 subjects who resorted to this strategy when learning English grammar. The participants said that to become more familiar with a certain structure, they had to practise it in numerous different exercises. The third most popular grammar learning strategy was *practising naturalistically*. One of the examples included watching American and English films and soap operas. Many subjects confessed that, in their opinion, it was the best method to learn the target language and its grammar which, in these cases, is presented in everyday language and a more natural setting. Other forms of practising naturalistically were listening to the radio, reading books or magazines in English. Some respondents said that they would often chat with their foreign friends in order to brush up their grammar skills. Others admitted to watching the British news on a regular basis.

The fourth most widely applied cognitive strategy for learning grammar was *using additional resources*. This strategy was predominantly used among the control group consisting of university students. Ten of them said that if the coursebook they use does not live up to their expectations in terms of grammar explanations, they resort to other sources like the Internet, their old notes or different grammar books. The use of this strategy is a positive sign as it shows the subjects' inquisitiveness and their eagerness to expand their knowledge concerning a target form.

Another cognitive strategy that emerged in the course of the study was *deductive reasoning*. As the findings demonstrate, eight subjects found this strategy efficacious. The respondents said they usually familiarize themselves with a certain theory and then try to use it when completing different exercises. Four subjects frequently applied highlighting, summarizing and note-taking. The students said that they often needed to make their own notes as it helped them to remember more about a given form. When writing, they usually focused on the most significant points. Additionally, when reading about grammar, they highlighted the information they found most useful. Other cognitive strategies the subjects resorted to included *translating* (1), *recombining* (4), *recognizing patterns* (1).

The second most popular strategy type was memory strategies. Within this group of strategies one could distinguish *placing structures into a context* as the most widely applied GLS. The results reveal that 11 subjects used this strategy very often when learning grammar. The students said that it was much easier for them to memorize a structure if they placed it in a meaningful sentence. There were also a few cases (8) of *rote learning*. While some students said that they willingly used this strategy on a regular basis, others claimed that, as much as they did not like it, they had to use it because, in their opinion, it was the only strategy that yielded satisfactory results. *Associating* was frequently applied by four subjects who believed that learning a certain grammatical concept was much easier if they related it to a familiar concept. *Imagery* was frequently used by only 2 subjects who often connected the new material with certain pictures in their minds. Some admitted that they were able to remember the number of the page on which the targeted form

appeared. Other students said that *structured reviewing* was very effective. The least frequent strategies in this group were *using mechanical techniques* (3) and *grouping* (2).

Metacognitive strategies proved less popular. The predominant strategy for learning grammar in this group was *seeking practice opportunities*. Only 4 subjects showed their support for this strategy. They claimed they were very eager to apply a given form outside the formal setting. It is somewhat surprising, though, that none of the subjects *set goals and objectives* as it would have made the sequence of metacognitive strategies more logical.

Organizing was applied by the same number of subjects. *Self-evaluating* and *self-monitoring* were used by two subjects only. As regards the former strategy, the two subjects admitted to monitoring their knowledge before and after learning a target form. They also said they were pleased to see they made progress. Two other subjects confessed that they frequently pay attention to the grammatical mistakes they make and try to correct them.

Compensation strategies did not attract the subjects' interest. The most popular strategy here was *getting help*. In their diaries, five subjects said they apply it regularly when learning grammar. Interestingly, this strategy was reported only by the students in the control group. This might prove greater inquisitiveness on their part as compared with the experimental groups. The subjects who confessed to applying this strategy believed it was the best way to learn English grammar when all other methods failed. When faced with a grammatical obstacle they could not overcome on their own, they usually consulted their academic teachers or friends. Additionally, there was one person who often tried to *paraphrase* a certain target feature and one who tried to *guess its meaning* from the provided clues. In the entries produced, there were no records of social or affective strategy application. The subjects did not find any of these strategies useful when learning English grammar. This might be indicative of the fact that the learners still did not fully comprehend the beneficial role of these strategy types in the process of language learning.

In their diaries, the subjects were also supposed to mention the strategies they applied least often when learning English grammar. Regrettably, the students focused mainly on the ones they preferred the most and did not provide the author with many examples of strategies they regarded as irrelevant or ineffective. However, the least frequently applied strategies that emerged in the entries were memory strategies with seven subjects reporting their very low use of *rote learning*. The majority of the participants who mentioned this strategy said it is useless to learn anything by heart since understanding is the most important issue when learning a new concept. Other memory strategies include *acting out activities* (1), *using imagery* (1) and *using mechanical techniques* (1). Besides, there were six subjects who did not find *organizing* effective. Furthermore, two other students rarely applied *self-monitoring* when learning grammar, while one student said he never set goals and objectives when focusing on a certain grammatical aspect. Finally, there was one student who reported low use of the compensation strategy of *cooperating with peers*. The least popular cognitive strategies included *formal*

practice (1), *summarizing* (1), *translating* (1) and, surprisingly, *practising naturalistically* (1). The student who mentioned the last strategy said she finds watching films in English senseless as, in her opinion, she does not benefit from it in any way.

The diary also referred to the subjects' monitoring their progress when learning English grammar. The majority of the participants admitted that although they occasionally monitored the process of learning the target language grammar, it was surely not their most popular strategy. In the memory group, ten subjects said they engaged in monitoring, whereas three said they did not feel such a need. In the cognitive group, the results were quite similar: the majority said they monitored their achievements, three participants sometimes did so and only two never did it. The results in the control group were slightly more disturbing, given the specific educational profile of the subjects. According to the entries, nine students monitored their progress but as many as seven never did it. Assuming that English philology students are much more language aware than junior high school or high school students, it is surprising to learn that there are quite a few students who do not bother to have a closer look at their learning and draw certain conclusions from the mistakes they make. Of course, this was only a very small group of university students and the results could have been completely different if a larger group had been engaged. Therefore, making any generalizations should be avoided.

Another issue that the diaries addressed was whether the students ever thought about ways of learning grammar more effectively. In the memory group, ten students said they did and admitted to employing strategies like *formal practice*, *repeating*, *using additional resources* or *cooperating with peers* for that matter. Only three subjects never considered enhancing the way they learn grammar. However, two participants said that the training helped them to notice new and useful strategies which they were now willing to use. In the cognitive group most of the subjects thought about improving their learning and only four did not. Surprisingly, as many as 11 students from the control group did not show any interest in improving their grammar learning. It might stem from the fact that they, rather wrongly, assumed that their level, grammar-wise, was high enough and they did not need to alter anything whatsoever. Another reason might be, as some students openly admitted, their insolence and a complete lack of motivation, which prevented them from improving their English grammar. Finally, five students said they tried to come up with new strategies, however, these attempts were often futile.

In their diaries, the subjects were also asked about the steps they took when they encountered a grammatical problem. In all three groups, the subjects expressed their willingness to employ additional resources. The most popular sources of obtaining information included the Internet, grammar books, as well as current and previously used coursebooks. When they encountered obstacles, some students often consulted the teacher or their friend. They asked for clarification/verification and cooperated with more proficient users of English. Apart from that, some students decided to learn the target features by heart. Other strategies employed in order to cope with difficult features include *associating*, *analyzing expressions*, *formal practice*, *using linguistic and other clues*.

The last question appertained to the notion of planning. The subjects were encouraged to write whether they plan their grammar learning. The results were mixed. In the memory group only three people tried to plan their learning, whereas in the cognitive group as many as 8. The majority of the control subjects said they never planned their grammar learning.

5.3.4 Teachers' Attitude Towards Strategy Training

One of the aims of the empirical studies into LLS is to investigate the learning strategies students apply when they focus on particular L2 skills. However, when one examines the current literature one can see that not many studies include language teachers' point of view and their thoughts on learning strategies and their implementation during language courses. That is why the present author wanted to look at strategies from a different perspective and, therefore, resolved to examine Polish L2 teachers' attitude towards LLS and strategy training. Since many teachers frequently complain that the curricular programme makes it hard to cover all the topics, the present author also wanted to learn whether, in the opinion of practitioners, it was feasible to devote extra lesson time to conducting strategic intervention. For this reason, she created her own questionnaire which she electronically sent to approximately 2,200 schools in different cities in Poland: primary schools, junior high schools, high schools and private language schools. The author wanted to obtain data from many different sources. Therefore, the questionnaire was sent to big cities and to villages as well. The aim was to obtain as many responses as possible that would help learn more about L2 teachers' beliefs about strategic intervention and its place in the foreign language classroom. Although the researcher sent a great many emails containing the questionnaire, the turnout was rather limited and amounted to 121 answers.

5.3.4.1 The Instrument

The author resolved to use a questionnaire as she wanted to obtain qualitative data on L2 teachers' view on strategy training. To obtain as many relevant answers and reduce the risk of possible misunderstanding, the author provided the subjects with additional and basic information strategies and SBI. Since the questionnaire was sent to teachers of different languages, it was administered in Polish and consisted of two parts. The aim of the first part was to obtain background information about the subjects, such as the teachers' title: probation teacher, contract teacher, nominated teacher or certified teacher. This way the author could learn more about the subjects' work experience. The author also wanted to know what degree the subjects had and what institution they worked in. Additionally, the questionnaire included issues like job seniority, the language taught, the subjects' age and their sex.

The second part contained 12 questions that referred to the teachers' knowledge about LLS and their experience with SBI. Half of the questions required a yes/no answer. Others included a wider range of answers: *yes, definitely*; *rather yes*; *hard to say*; *not really*; *definitely not*. Although there were no open-ended questions, the teachers were provided with extra space where they could share their comments on LLS and their implementation.

5.3.4.2 Subjects

Since the aim of the thesis was to learn more about LLS applied by advanced learners of English, the author's initial intention was to focus solely on high schools teachers as they work with more advanced language learners. However, for fear of obtaining an insufficient number of responses, which in course of time proved justified, she resolved to widen her scope of interest and include teachers working in other educational contexts. Therefore, as the findings reveal, there were ten probation teachers, 38 contract instructors, 25 nominated practitioners and 33 certified pedagogues. These titles refer to the teachers' ranks. Probation teachers in Poland have the lowest rank. However, after around 2 years they can become contract teachers. The next rank can be achieved after approximately 5 years. Finally, certified teachers attain their rank after additional 4 years. There were also 11 teachers working at a private language school and 4 academic lecturers. As far as the subjects' degree was concerned, 102 (84 %) teachers had an M.A. and 15 (12 %) held a B.A. degree. Additionally, there were 4 (4 %) teachers who obtained a Ph.D. degree.

The results are presented in Fig. 5.11 below. As for the institutions, the findings revealed that 41 subjects worked in high schools, 37 in primary schools, 38 in private language schools, 27 in junior high schools, 10 at a university, 6 in private primary schools, 5 in private high schools and middle schools, 3 in private colleges and vocational schools and, finally, 2 in comprehensive schools. Of course, there were numerous cases of teachers being employed in more than one institution. The study revealed that there were practitioners who had as many as four different workplaces.

As regards the duration of language teaching, the average amounted to 10.18 years. The subjects' average age was 33.74 years. As for the gender variable distribution, there were 14 men participating in the study and 107 women. The vast majority of the subjects (84 %) were English teachers. However, there were also

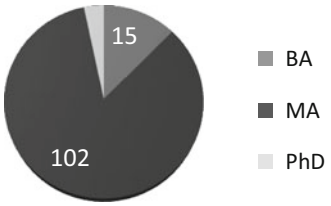

Fig. 5.11 The degrees held by the respondents

11 (9 %) German, 2 (2 %) French, 4 (3 %) Russian and 2 (2 %) Spanish teachers. At this point, it should be mentioned that it was not the author's intention to focus solely on English teachers. She wanted to include in her study as many other languages as possible. That is why the questionnaires were also sent to numerous different language schools in Poland. However, it was English that appeared to be the most frequently taught language among the subjects in the study.

5.3.4.3 Results

In the first item of the questionnaire, the respondents were requested to say if they had been acquainted with the notion of a learning strategy. An overwhelming majority of the teachers (84 %) provided a positive answer. They stated they had encountered this term during their studies, workshops, conferences and when reading magazines for teachers. In the second item, the subjects were asked whether they were familiar with the concept of strategic intervention. The majority of the respondents (62 %) replied they did not know what strategy training was. Those who did know found out about it during their studies and various conferences. It is somewhat surprising to learn that so many subjects knew the concept of language learning strategies but had never heard about their implementation in a foreign language classroom. The next question focused on implementing strategic intervention. The subjects were asked whether, in their opinion, training can facilitate students' foreign language learning. As many as 98 respondents said that L2 students could benefit from the intervention, while 23 respondents found it difficult to answer the question. Such results might seem perplexing because, as the second question shows, the majority of the subjects were not familiar with strategic intervention, yet they believed in its beneficial influence on L2 learning. Confusing though they are, the results show that teachers view strategy training as a useful tool that can help learners in the process of foreign language learning.

In the fourth question, the teachers were asked to say whether they had ever conducted strategy training and, if so, how long it lasted. Although only 46 teachers had conducted strategy training, it is comforting to learn that there are practitioners who are willing to devote their time to raising strategic awareness among their students. Out of the teachers who implemented strategy training, there were altogether 2 probation teachers, 20 contract teachers, 6 nominated teachers, 12 certified teachers, 2 academic lecturers and 4 teachers at a private language school. Analyzing the data, one can notice that strategy training was implemented by the teachers who had greater work experience. The training was conducted predominantly during English lessons, though there were also five cases of strategic intervention during German lessons, and one during Russian and Spanish. On the other hand, no training was reported during French classes.

The findings reveal that, in the majority of the cases (38), the teachers focused on implementing one-time strategy training. Usually, they concentrated on one strategy and analyzed its value in the process of learning the target feature. Most of the teachers in this group said that their training lasted between 15 and 30 min, during

which they talked to their students about the strategies they applied most and least often. Additionally, the practitioners showed their students the strategies they themselves found beneficial. Other subjects said they spent literally a few minutes on the intervention. In the majority of the cases, the intervention was separate and indirect. Only six teachers participating in the study conducted long-term strategy training. Such a type of intervention is longer than one-time training and it covers several different strategy types. Unfortunately, there were also teachers who did not mention the duration of their training. 34 of those who did stated that the training yielded the expected results, while 11 found it difficult to say. There was only one person who did not find the training effective; however, no reasons were provided.

In the sixth question, the practitioners were asked if they were considering the introduction of strategy training during their foreign language classes. Altogether, 62 subjects, which is slightly more than half of the teachers surveyed, answered positively and 29 negatively. There were 30 respondents who found it difficult to answer the question. One of the causes of the subjects' unwillingness to implement strategy training might have been lack of time during the school year, an issue which will be addressed in further parts of the survey, or insufficient knowledge concerning the value of LLS.

The next item in the questionnaire pertained to the students' attitude to the training. 74 teachers believed their students would be keen on participating in it, whereas 4 of them were of the opposite opinion. As many as 43 respondents did not know the answer. Another issue the questionnaire tackled was whether the syllabus made it possible for teachers to implement additional activities in the form of strategic intervention. The findings demonstrate that 13 teachers found it hard to provide an answer and 52 said that it was impossible to focus on any additional activities during the school year. However, as many 66 said it was feasible to introduce strategic intervention. Although the difference between these two groups is not considerable, it is an optimistic sign as it shows that, with some effort, it is possible to raise students' awareness of strategies and introduce the training. Such results oppose the prevailing assumption that language teachers constantly need to rush throughout the whole school year in order to cover all the obligatory lexical and grammatical material and that it is impossible for them to focus on any extra language activities.

The ninth question referred to the subjects' willingness to introduce strategy training during additional and unpaid classes. The author decided to include this query as she wanted to know if, in the face of the very limited time during regular classes, the teachers were eager to conduct extracurricular lessons in the form of strategy training. Surprisingly, as many 70 teachers (nearly 58 %) said they would gladly conduct the training, which is a very encouraging sign as it shows that, contrary to common belief, practitioners are ready to sacrifice their private time only to help their learners become more autonomous. In contrast, 22 subjects found it difficult to say and 29 opposed such an idea. There were even cases when the teachers expressed their indignation at the very thought of working extra hours because, in their opinion, they devoted an inordinate amount of their free time to preparing classes, correcting tests, etc. Such opinions, however, constituted the minority.

In her questionnaire, the author also wanted to know if teachers talked to their students about their LLS. An overwhelming majority (88 %) of the subjects said they do. Thanks to such in-class discussions, learners are provided with an opportunity to share their strategies with other, also weaker, students who can learn a great deal from their classmates. Some of the subjects admitted that they frequently tell their students about the strategies they themselves applied when they were students. Also, 78 % of the respondents admitted to talking to their fellow teachers about effective ways of helping their students learn the TL. These findings demonstrate that teachers are willing to cooperate with others and exchange their ideas to help their students. The results also show the practitioners' deep concern for their students' progress.

Finally, in the last question, the subjects were asked if they were willing to expand their knowledge concerning LLS and strategic intervention by reading professional journals or attending conferences. There were five practitioners who said they would not like to find out more about LLS. The majority of this group constituted young and less experienced teachers with an average of 4 years spent on teaching the language. There was also one very experienced practitioner who spent the last 34 years teaching and who dismissed LLS as irrelevant in her teaching practice. On the other hand, it is comforting to learn that 95 % of the teachers surveyed responded that they were willing to learn more and broaden their horizons. The obtained results are a very optimistic sign as they show that, even if some teachers were not familiar with the notion of strategy instruction or language learning strategy, they are eager to find out more about these terms.

At the end of the questionnaire, the subjects were provided with extra space to share their thoughts related to LLS. Although most teachers did not include any additional comments, there were some who expressed their opinions. Several of the subjects said they were very intrigued by the topic and asked the author for some additional sources they could browse to expand their knowledge. They also shared with the author the methods they used to motivate their students to learn certain target features. Other teachers complained about the limited teaching time they have at their disposal during the year. They said that the syllabus makes it very difficult to devote extra time to conducting, at least a few, sessions of strategic intervention. Additionally, some subjects said that they have to blindly follow the imposed programme as they are evaluated by their directors of studies at the end of the year. The basis for such assessment is the results achieved by students on, in this particular case, the junior high school exams. Therefore, their top priority during the school year was to cover all the necessary material for the exam, which left no time for any additional activities. Others claimed that the training and its effectiveness depend, to a great extent, on the students' attitude and that it is frequently difficult to encourage them to participate in such activities. One of the teachers confessed she was greatly disappointed with a lack of workshops at her institution that would show teachers how to implement strategy training. She said she felt she lacked the necessary tools to introduce the training and, thus, felt unable to help her weaker students who lagged behind. Another teacher said that the workshops organized in her workplace are usually very general and teachers simply do not benefit from them.

Although the questionnaire helped the author gain insight into L2 teachers' attitude towards strategic intervention, there were certain flaws which prevented more comprehensive data collection. To start with, the number of participants was insufficient to produce conclusive results. Although the author sent her questionnaire to a plethora of institutions, only a handful responded to her request. Furthermore, the questions also require several adjustments as some of them are too general. For example, the fourth one could have been expanded to elicit more relevant data. In the question, the author wanted to know whether the subjects introduced strategy training in their language classes and, if so, how long it lasted. To obtain more precise responses, the question should have included additional hints related to the duration of the intervention. Regrettably, there were teachers who, despite admitting to implementing strategy-based instruction, did not mention its duration. The author should also have asked about the materials that teachers used and the area they wanted to improve thanks to the intervention, for instance vocabulary or a certain grammatical feature. Additionally, some of the answers were inconsistent. The majority of the subjects (106) said that they regularly talked to their students about LLS. However, when asked if they were acquainted with the concept of SBI, 75 of the subjects responded negatively. Furthermore, the fifth question definitely needs revising. Here, the author wanted to know if the conducted training yielded the expected results. It was not made clear, though, in what terms the success should be measured. Hence, many subjects provided answers solely on the basis of their subjective assumptions and not relying on, for instance, more objective tests measuring the acquisition of, for instance, a certain grammatical feature.

Although the questionnaire was not flawless in its design, it nevertheless provided a valuable source of information about L2 teachers' attitude to strategic intervention and their desire to enrich their knowledge in that area. Therefore, on the basis of the questionnaire that the author administered, it may be concluded that language teachers see eye to eye on the beneficial role that strategy training plays in the process of foreign language learning. In addition to this, more than half of the subjects said they were willing to conduct strategy training during their lessons, even if it meant sacrificing their free time and working overtime. Although only 46 of the subjects surveyed conducted strategy training in their classes, it is comforting to learn that some teachers are cognizant of the facilitative impact of strategy-based instruction and are ready to use it to promote the application of learning strategies. Regrettably, most of the intervention was short and indirect. Therefore, greater emphasis should be placed on the need for direct and integrated strategy training as it is believed to be the most efficacious one, which is supported by Oxford (2011) in the following words: "(. . .) many experts promote the direct teaching of strategies within the context of the L2 curriculum, because this gives students the chance to practice the strategies with real L2 learning tasks" (p. 19) and "learners benefit from having direct strategy instruction woven into their regular L2 course" (p. 180). The fact that teachers frequently talk to their students about boosting their language performance thanks to strategies is also a positive sign. Their willingness to share their ideas with other teachers as well as their eagerness

to learn more about strategies and their implementation are also very reassuring. Of course, one cannot exclude the possibility that many teachers provided answers that they thought were expected of them. This is a risk frequently associated with questionnaires. More comprehensive studies could provide a wider picture, so needed in the field of strategy-based instruction.

Conclusion

The main aim of the present chapter was to investigate the effect of strategy training on the acquisition of a grammatical feature. The research questions that the author wanted to answer addressed the following issues: the impact of strategic intervention on the acquisition of the target feature, the durability of the effect as measured on the immediate and delayed post-test, the relationship between the training and the frequency of general strategy use, the most popular grammar learning strategies applied by advanced language learners and, finally, foreign language teachers' opinions concerning strategy training. Having analyzed the results of the study, one may conclude that the training had a positive impact on the acquisition of the target form in both experimental groups. What is more, the effects of the intervention proved durable, even 6 weeks after the end of the treatment, which is certainly a very optimistic finding. The two most popular grammar strategies applied by the subjects were cognitive and memory strategies.

The subsequent section, which is also a conclusion to the present volume, will include a more comprehensive analysis of the results obtained. It will also focus on the implications and the numerous limitations of the described project.

Conclusions and Implications

The main aim of the present volume was to examine the language learning strategies employed by advanced learners of English. Additionally, the present author also wished to explore the impact that strategic intervention exerts on the acquisition of a grammatical form. It should be stressed that many researchers believe that grammar learning strategies have frequently been neglected in strategy-oriented research and that placing more emphasis on this particular subsystem is required (Oxford 2011). That is why the empirical part of the thesis was party devoted to GLSs. It was the author's intention to gain greater insight into the GLSs the more proficient learners of English applied when they engaged in the process of target language learning. This way the author wanted to contribute to the slowly growing body of research devoted to grammar learning strategies.

Prior to introducing the concept of LLS and their classification in her thesis, the author resolved to include more comprehensive information about the notion of grammar such as, among others, its types and models and the different ways of implementing it in the foreign language classroom. Thus, Chap. 1 was devoted to the concept of grammar and form-focused instruction (FFI). In Chap. 2, on the other hand, the focus of attention was shifted to introducing the concept of a language learning strategy and the factors influencing its application. The author included cognitive factors, such as, among others, aptitude, field dependence or independence; affective factors like motivation; situational and social variables such as nationality, the learning context and, finally, learners' background. Chapter 3 addressed the different taxonomies put forward by scholars. It also focused on grammar learning strategies and the studies conducted in this area. In Chap. 4 the author concentrated on the notion of strategic intervention and the ways of its application in the foreign language classroom. She also presented the contentious issues connected with strategy training. Chapter 4 constituted a theoretical introduction to the more empirical parts of the dissertation where emphasis was laid on presenting the findings obtained in course of the study.

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While the first four chapters were more theoretical in their content, Chap. 5 reported on the results of a study conducted with a view to examining the strategies applied by advanced learners of English. The author also focused on the influence of the training on the general use of strategies. Another area of the author's scientific interest included Polish language teachers' opinions on the value of strategies and strategic intervention.

Although the reported findings, due to certain limitations discussed below, do not allow the present author to formulate powerful conclusions, they do leave some space for discussion. In her research, the author subjected two groups of advanced learners of English to strategy instruction. One of them received training in memory strategies, while the other in cognitive strategies. The aim was to explore the impact of the training on the acquisition of a grammatical feature, that is emphasis. The findings revealed that it was the memory group that achieved better results in terms of target form acquisition, as evidenced by the short- and long-term results. Additionally, as the immediate and delayed post-tests demonstrate, the impact of the treatment proved durable even 6 weeks after the intervention. Although these results should not be perceived as final due to the miscellaneous limitations elaborated on below, they prove the beneficial role that memory strategies can play when learning target language grammar. The training demonstrated that thanks to the exposure to memory strategies the learners were able to acquire the target feature and achieved better results than students exposed to cognitive strategies only. Although, as was mentioned above, the author cannot draw final conclusions, she believes that thought should be given to more frequent application of memory strategies in L2 lessons, especially when stress is placed on formal aspects of the target language. Promoting the use of memory strategies could appear advantageous and facilitate the acquisition of the targeted features.

Another area of interest included the influence of strategy training on the general use of language learning strategies as measured on the SILL administered before and after the treatment. The results pointed to an increase in the frequency of general strategy application, which proves that the implementation of the training may help learners to develop a wider range of learning strategies. One of the factors that contributed to the increase in strategy use was the introduction of awareness-raising sessions. Making students cognizant of LLS and their value could accelerate and facilitate the process of L2 learning. It is advisable for teachers to allocate their lesson time for discussions about learning strategies and their application when learning another language.

Other issues addressed in the present volume pertained to the ways in which students and teachers perceived strategies and strategy instruction. The diaries the learners completed illustrated their positive attitude to the notion of LLS and their application in the foreign language classroom. On the whole, it is comforting to learn that the subjects used a variety of strategies when focusing on L2 grammar. However, it would seem advisable for language teachers to place greater emphasis on metacognitive strategies, such as, for instance, *organizing*, *self-monitoring*, *self-evaluating* or *setting goals and objectives*. Although these strategies are essential in the process of learning the target language, not all learners apply them. To some

extent, the results obtained reflect the situation in strategy-oriented research. Oxford (1990) explains that "learners use these [metacognitive strategies] sporadically and without much sense of their importance". She also adds that "in several studies (. . .), students used metacognitive strategies, with planning strategies most frequently employed and with little self-evaluation or self-monitoring" (p. 138).

Additionally, the produced entries demonstrate that the introduction of strategy training and awareness-raising sessions can help students to become more self-confident and to facilitate the mastery of L2. As many students reported, their diaries encouraged them to become more reflective and think more about their learning and the effectiveness of the strategies they are applying. Time-consuming though diary introduction may seem, it might appear very beneficial to regularly ask students to complete their learning diaries. This would not only help teachers to gain greater insight into their students' learning preferences but also help the students become more reflective. Many scholars believe in the facilitative role of diaries which "are commonly regarded as an invaluable tool in research into language learning strategies and have been recommended for collecting this type of information in a number of recent publications" (Pawlak 2008a, p. 114).

In her study, the author also wanted to gain greater insight into the manner in which Polish L2 teachers perceive strategy training. On the basis of the teachers' responses concerning strategy training, it can be concluded that introducing strategy-based instruction in a foreign language classroom can exert a beneficial impact on the students' mastery of the target language. Those teachers who decided to conduct strategy training during their language lessons claimed that it yielded positive effects. Additionally, despite the numerous factors which hinder the introduction of the training on a regular basis, such as curricular restraints or lack of knowledge on the teachers' part, many practitioners stated that the application of strategy-based instruction can produce satisfactory results and the time and energy invested in its introduction will certainly not go in vain. However, since the vast majority of the subjects were teachers of English, it would be advisable to include in future projects a greater number of teachers of other languages as well in order to provide more comprehensive results. Regrettably, the findings of the questionnaire focus predominantly on teachers of one foreign language, which, together with the limited number of participants, does not allow the present author to form any generalizations on the choice made by Polish L2 teachers.

In addition, the teachers questioned indicated their willingness to not only learn more about the notion of LLS and strategy training, but also to introduce it during their L2 classes. This is a very optimistic sign which illustrates the practitioners' willingness to devote their precious lesson time to making their students cognizant of learning strategies and of their value in the process of L2 learning. It also shows that Polish L2 practitioners are keen to improve their knowledge by attending conferences, workshops or reading scientific journals. Hence, there is an incessant need for strategy-oriented research that could produce results that would be satisfying to linguists and practitioners as well. There is also a need to organize conferences and workshops devoted strictly to LLS and strategic intervention that could provide teachers with practical knowledge about, for instance, the ways of

introducing strategy training during their lessons. Many teachers taking part in the questionnaire survey admitted that they wanted to learn more about LLS but they needed more guidance from a professional.

Another solution would be to provide teachers with professional training in LLS in their own institutions, though due to financial limitations that might be difficult to achieve. What is more, some of the subjects complained about the evident dearth of written materials that would help them conduct the training. While there is a preponderance of strategy guidebooks for language learners, the number of such publications aimed at teachers only is still insufficient. Providing instructors with access to such books would make it possible for them to fathom the concept of SBI at their own pace and also supply them with useful and practical tips. Another issue that should be taken into account is the language of such texts. It is essential for guidebooks for teachers to be written in a lucid manner that would allow practitioners to easily conduct the training.

Although the study presented in the thesis provided useful information, it was not devoid of miscellaneous limitations. To start with, the number of subjects was certainly too low to provide any conclusive results. The number of students attending private language classes is usually very limited. Therefore, involving a more numerous group in future studies would seem highly advisable as it could allow the researcher to look at the area of LLS from a wider perspective. Additionally, the selection of the control group could also raise certain doubts. The author's decision to include a group of sixteen first-year university students at the Institute of English Studies resulted from the fact that they represented a very similar level of L2 advancement to the two experimental groups.

Another issue worth discussing is the one of the duration of the whole study and the instruction itself. Although the study extended over a period of 14 weeks, it might not have been enough to guarantee conclusive results. Since the top priority of the experimental groups taught by the present author was preparation for the CAE exams, it would have been unethical to devote an excessive amount of the subjects' time to strategy training. That is why, the author was forced to limit the time of the training and of the whole study. Consequently, the findings which demonstrate the effects of the training might in fact show only certain tendencies, rather than conclusive results, and could have been affected by miscellaneous factors. To start with, if the author had focused on a different target form, the final outcome could have been considerably different. When examining the effect of SBI on the acquisition of certain grammatical forms of the TL, it would be recommended to include a variety of linguistic features, which would allow for making broader generalizations. What is more, the results could have varied if the author had included different groups in her study, age- and level-wise. Moreover, exploring the application of learning strategies among, for instance, third-year university students at the Institute of English Studies could also have led to dissimilar results due to the specific profile of such students and their increased language awareness. It should be, therefore, stressed that potential future studies should extend over a longer period of time and address a wider range of target features so as to produce more comprehensive results.

Bearing in mind the issues mentioned above, the author must admit that while the results of this project cannot be regarded as conclusive and certainly call for more thorough research, they do have potential. The area of LLS certainly requires more in-depth exploration. Such studies are crucial as their findings demonstrate how to boost learners' self-confidence and help them gain more autonomy in the process of foreign language learning. They also facilitate teachers' work as they shift the responsibility onto the students who become more self-reliant and learn how to manage their own learning. Attention should also be paid to combining research projects with practitioners' needs and to supplying teachers with more practical solutions that could make it easier to integrate strategic intervention into regular L2 courses.

Appendix A Pre-test

A. Fill in the gaps with a suitable word.

1. ………..…I want is a new car.
2. ……..is I who am in charge of this department.
3. Why……..…did she marry him?
4. It was …….a lovely party.
5. I'd like a bottle of your…………....best wine.

Adapted from Swan, M. 1995. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: OUP.

B. Complete the second sentence so that is has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given

1. I like weekends because I can go to the cinema with my family.

   The thing I………………… ……………………………… ……………………………………

2. I don't understand why I never seem to have any money.

   What………………… …………………………………… ……………………………………

3. I really feel like going shopping today.

   What………………… …………………………………… ……………………………………

4. Brad Pitt didn't play Batman.

   It………………… …………………………………… ………………………………………

5. I hate winter because the days are so short.

   The thing………………… ……………………………… ……………………………………

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Adapted from Kay, S. and Jones, V. 2009. Inside Out. Oxford: Macmillan.

C. In each of the following sentences there is a word which should not be there. Cross it out.

1. What is annoys me so much about her is the fact that she never helps with the washing up.
2. I hated going to visit my parents when I was a child. All what we ever did was watch TV.
3. What is I like about my school is the qualified staff.
4. All which he ever talks about is volleyball.
5. It was just only when I got home that I realized someone had stolen my keys.

Adapted from Norris, R and French, A. 2008. *Ready for CAE*. Oxford: Macmillan; Swan, M. 1995. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: OUP.

D. Write the words in the correct order to make cleft sentences.

1. secretary/Mr Harding/to/my/sent/that/was/yesterday/it/bill/the/
   . . . . . .
2. Louvre/the Mona Lisa/I/most/in/to/see/wanted/what/was/the/
   . . . . . .
3. I/it/first/was/heard/on/the/the/radio/news/that/
   . . . . . .
4. that/his/happened/what/was/broke/the/a/of/middle/down/car/in/forest
   . . . . . .
5. broke/and/I/all/did/it/to/was/window/the/touch/
   . . . . . .
6. France/famous/first/they/was/that/it/in/became/
   . . . . . .
7. when/was/wallet/I/had/got/that/home/it/realized/stolen/only/somebody/I/my/
   . . . . . .
8. invite/to/me/because/parties/is/it/perhaps/chef/a/that/am/I/dinner/their/never/people/
   . . . . . .
9. the/Gary/broke/who/was/it/chair/
   . . . . . .

10. the/fact/what/I/is/strange/find/his/father/talks/never/about/he/that/
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Adapted from Kay, S. and Jones, V. 2009. Inside Out. Oxford: Macmillan; Norris, R. and French, A. 2008. *Ready for CAE*. Oxford: Macmillan; Swan, M. 1995. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: OUP.

E. Transform the following, emphasizing the part of the sentence which has been underlined.

1. How old is she? That's what I want to know.

What. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

2. He lost his job, so he started up his own business.

He lost his job, so what he. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . .

3. He thinks about his sports car and nothing else.

All. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

4. I only found out she'd moved when I spoke to Jim.

It wasn't. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

5. I didn't recognize him until he took his sunglasses off.

It was only. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

6. I don't know what the noise is. I just turned it on, that's all.

I don't know what the noise is. All. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . .

7. What I liked most about the film was the main actor.

It. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

8. They got divorced in May, not June.

It. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

9. Many people don't know he is a religious man.

What. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . .

10. Tina got pregnant so <u>they bought a bigger house.</u>

    Tina got pregnant so what they………………… …………………
    ……………………………………………

Adapted from Norris, R and French, A. 2008. *Ready for CAE*. Oxford: Macmillan.

Appendix B Immediate Post-test

(a) Put the words in the right order

1. unreasonable/us/of/nothing/is/about/what/whatsoever/are/they/there/asking/
   . . . . . .
2. a/gambler/a/many/time/has/compulsive/he/proved/be/to/
   . . . . . .
3. more/I/what/that/is/she/responsible/think/be/should/
   . . . . . .
4. married/that/money/his/she/was/it/only/of/him/because/
   . . . . . .
5. did/was/again/beginning/start/and/he/go/to/back/the/to/what/
   . . . . . .
6. and/he/my/number/phone/took/call/to/promised/me/phoned/eventually/that/he/later/until/was/not/week/that/it/but/
   . . . . . .
7. him/retract/statement/his/what/planning/am/is/I/do/to/persuade/to/
   . . . . . .
8. boring/maths/school/was/learning/it/they/most/found/at/
   . . . . . .

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9. country/the/left/thirty/he/after/only/was/came/he/back/years/several/age/the/of/and/it/that/at

   ………………… ………………………………………
   ……………………………………………
10. friends/be/all/I/was/that/we/should/happened/him/told/would/it/work/not/that/and/

   ………………… ………………………………………
   ……………………………………………

Adapted from Swan, M. 1995. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: OUP.

(b) In each sentence there is one word incorrectly used. Find it and correct it.

1. All you have to do is call me and inform me about everything what went wrong.
2. It is not learning English that I dislike and learning German.
3. It wasn't before she took her sunglasses off that I realized it was her.
4. Although they claimed to lead a happy life, they both knew it was his unfaithfulness what was slowly ruining their marriage.
5. All I love about you is your generosity.

(c) In each sentence there is one word which should not be there. Find it and cross it out.

1. It was in June that when she got married.
2. It was only while when I saw him that I understood everything.
3. Strange as for it may seem, I hate beer.
4. This is the very most thing I fear.
5. That he passed the exam was pure comprehensive luck.

(d) Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one. Use the word given.

1. Your place of birth does not determine your accent as much as where you spend your childhood. BROUGHT

   It's where………………… ……………………………………
   ……………...rather than your place of birth.

2. You're only likely to get a small pay rise from him. OFFER

   All………………… ……………………………………
   ………...………….a small pay rise.

3. That we are highly successful is an inescapable fact. REMAINS

   The……………… ……………………………………….
   ………….highly successful.

4. It's difficult to believe he failed that test. HARD

   That………………… ……………………………………
   ……………….to believe.

5. The witches leave the stage and Macbeth enters. ON

   Off. . . . . .Macbeth.

Adapted from Side, R. and Wellman, G. 2000. *Grammar and Vocabulary for Cambridge Advanced and Proficiency*. Harlow: Pearson.

(e) Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one.

1. The baby was born in 2009, not in 2008.

   It. . . . .

2. You broke my heart.

   What. . . . .

3. I spent $100 on that dress.

   It. . . . .

4. I went to see my agent.

   My agent. . . . .

5. He took Jane to a lovely restaurant.

   Where. . . . .

(f) Fill in the gaps with one word.

1. . . . . .he never had was a loving family.
2. I'm sorry but you keep on forgetting that. . . . .is she who's in charge.
3. All. . . . . .happened was he dropped the phone.
4. It's true! I. . . . .give you the money back!
5. You keep on asking me this ludicrous question. . . . . . .after year.

Adapted from Swan, M. 1995. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: OUP.

Appendix C Delayed Post-test

(a) Match the adjectives to the nouns. There are some adjectives which do not match the context.

eternal boiling comprehensive sheer arrant rank extortionate utter unshakeable unmitigated dead
………………optimist
………………madness
………………disobedience
………………stupidity
………………nonsense

(b) Fill in the gaps with one missing word.

1. Why……......……..did she do it?
2. I'd like a bottle of your……………....….best champagne.
3. She managed to do the task………....…Nobody helped her. (do not use *alone/unaccompanied*)
4. After all, ..……..is you who are the manager.
5. ……….....I need is a break.

(c) In each sentence there is one word which should not be there. Cross it out.

1. All what I dream about is holiday.
2. It was when only I saw him that I knew he wasn't lying.
3. It was not until yesterday that when he phoned back.
4. What is I can't stand about him is his manners.
5. They do not only look similar, they have the same opinions as well.

(d) Put the words in the correct order.

1. that the change never remains fact will she

   ……………………… ……………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………

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2. his anger was inquiries with the room what everyone did he in
   . . . . . .
   . . . . . .
3. sure you is reaction problem never can the his be of
   . . . . . .
   . . . . . .
4. when made it had was I me he noticed only texted mistake that what I
   . . . . . .
   . . . . . .
5. husband was love true it not was understood met I I that what until my future
   . . . . . .
   . . . . . .
6. she wrong is who the in is it
   . . . . . .
   . . . . . .
7. family never and returned happened he what abandoned was his
   . . . . . .
   . . . . . .
8. for I going all advice do was to useful was some ask
   . . . . . .
   . . . . . .
9. front behave I you the have of in time to again guests time and told
   . . . . . .
   . . . . . .
10. money she us do to pay all the back is willing is owes she
    . . . . . .
    . . . . . .

Adapted from Swan, M. 1995. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: OUP.

(e) Using the words given complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one.

1. You don't know whom you can really trust until there's a crisis.

   It is only. . . . . .
   . . . .know whom you can really trust.

2. He was made redundant so he set up his own business.

   He was made redundant so what. . . . . .
   . . . .

3. I honestly don't know how it happened. I just opened it.

   I honestly don't know how it happened. All. . . . . .
   . . . .

4. He accomplished a remarkable feat by winning the trophy.

   For him. . . . . .
   . . . .feat.

5. I realized who I was talking to when she took off her hat.

   It was only. . . . . .
   . . . . . .her.

6. You have to work harder. It's the most significant thing at the moment.

   All. . . . . .
   . . . .work harder.

7. How old was she? That's what I'd like to know.

   What . . . . . .
   . . . . . .

8. What I really enjoyed about this book was the gripping plot.

   It. . . . . .
   . . . .

9. People don't even realize that she is a very generous young woman.

   What . . . . . .
   . . . . . .

10. They got married in October, not in November.

    It. . . . . .
    . . . . . .

Adapted from Norris, R and French, A. 2008. *Ready for CAE*. Oxford: Macmillan.

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