

The Language Learning Strategy Use of IsiXhosa-speaking Adolescents in the Second Language Acquisition of English

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Rentia Pretorius

March 2010

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Summary

Research to date on language learning strategy (LLS) use and its influence on second language (L2) acquisition and proficiency has produced variable results. While many researchers feel that LLSs have an important role to play in L2 learning and teaching, a clear definition and classification of LLSs, as well as clear guidelines for LLS application and training, have yet to be established. LLS use and preference seem to be influenced by various factors such as culture, age, level of L2 proficiency and level of education. Therefore, results of specific studies are not necessarily applicable to different groups of L2 learners. This thesis reports on an investigation into the LLS use of first language (L1) isiXhosa adolescents in the acquisition of English. Using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), the study examines the relationship between LLS use as well as LLS preference and L2 proficiency, with an assessment of the gender differences in LLS use. The study found no significant relationship between LLS use or LLS preference and English proficiency. Also, no significant difference was found between the reported preferred LLSs of female and male participants, although male participants reported significantly more high-frequency LLS use, whereas female participants reported significantly more low-frequency LLS use. Conclusions drawn from the results of the study are discussed, followed by suggestions for future research and a brief discussion of the implications of these results for L2 teaching and learning, specifically in a South African context.

Opsomming

Navorsing oor die gebruik van taalleerstrategieë (TLSe) en die invloed daarvan op tweedetaal(T2-)verwerwing het tot dusver uiteenlopende resultate opgelewer. Terwyl baie navorsers van mening is dat TLSe 'n belangrike rol het om te speel in die leer en onderrig van 'n T2, moet 'n duidelike definisie en klassifikasie van TLSe, asook duidelike riglyne vir TLS-aanwending en -opleiding, nog daargestel word. Die gebruik en voorkeur van TLSe word klaarblyklik deur verskeie faktore beïnvloed, insluitend kultuur, ouderdom, vlak van T2-vaardigheid en vlak van opvoeding. Resultate van spesifieke studies is derhalwe nie noodwendig bruikbaar vir verskillende groepe T2-leerders nie. Hierdie tesis lewer verslag oor 'n ondersoek na die gebruik van TLSe deur T1 isiXhosa adolessente in die verwerwing van Engels. Die studie stel ondersoek in na die verhouding tussen TLS-gebruik asook -voorkeur, gemeet deur die Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), en T2-vaardigheid, met 'n beoordeling van die geslagsverskille in TLS-gebruik. Die studie het geen beduidende verhouding tussen TLS-gebruik of TLS-voorkeur en Engelse vaardigheid gevind nie. Daar is ook geen beduidende verskil tussen die aangeduide TLS-voorkeur van vroulike en manlike deelnemers nie, hoewel manlike deelnemers beduidend meer hoë-frekwensie TLS-gebruik aangedui het, en vroulike deelnemers beduidend meer lae-frekwensie TLS-gebruik aangedui het. Gevolgtrekkings wat op grond van die studie gemaak is, word bespreek, gevolg deur voorstelle vir verdere navorsing en 'n kort bespreking van die implikasies van die resultate van hierdie studie vir T2-onderrig, veral in 'n Suid-Afrikaanse konteks.

Table of contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	4
2.1 Defining LLSs	5
2.2 Classifications of LLSs	8
2.3 Overview of LLS research	13
2.4 Influences on learners' use of LLSs	17
Chapter 3: The LLS Use of IsiXhosa-speaking Adolescents in the L2 Acquisition of English: Research Design and Methodology	21
3.1 Methods of investigating LLS use	21
3.2 Participants	23
3.3 Research design and methodology	25
3.4 Data collection instruments	26
3.4.1 The SILL	26
3.4.1.1 Utility, reliability and validity of the SILL	28
3.4.1.2 The rationale for using the SILL	29
3.4.1.3 Problems with the SILL as a tool for assessing LLS use	29
3.4.1.4 Adjusting the SILL: the SILL-X	31
3.4.2 The Proficiency Test for ESL Advanced Level	34
3.4.2.1 Objective of the test	34
3.4.2.2 Rationale and content of the test	34
3.4.2.3 Validity and reliability of the test	35
3.4.3 Background questionnaire and interviews	36
Chapter 4: The LLS Use of IsiXhosa-speaking Adolescents in the L2 Acquisition of English: Results and Discussion	37
4.1 Frequency of overall LLS use	37
4.2 Preferences for specific strategy types	39
4.3 Comparing female and male participants' responses	40
4.4 Results of the English proficiency test	43
4.5 Conclusions	45

Chapter 5: Conclusion	51
5.1 Limitations and strengths	51
5.2 Suggestions for future research	52
5.3 Implications for L2 teaching and learning	53
Bibliography	54
Appendix A: English Version of the SILL-X	62
Appendix B: IsiXhosa Version of the SILL-X	67
Appendix C: Background Questionnaire in English	72
Appendix D: Background Questionnaire in IsiXhosa	76
Appendix E: Results of the SILL-X Showing Frequency of LLS Use for Individual Participants, Indicated as Average Scores	80
Appendix F: Results of the SILL-X Showing Individual Participants' Preferences for Specific Strategy Types	82

Chapter 1

Introduction

The general move in second language (L2) teaching toward a greater focus on the learner has prompted an interest in individual learner differences. Various dependent and independent learner differences have been explored in an attempt to find ways of improving L2 teaching and learning. The focus on one dependent learner variable in particular, language learning strategies (LLSs), originated in the mid-1970s with research on what is known as the "good language learner" (Ellis 1994: 546). Since then, various aspects of LLSs and LLS use have been investigated, for example LLSs used by different groups of L2 learners, the relationship between LLS use and L2 proficiency, and the effectiveness of LLS training in enhancing L2 acquisition.

The ultimate goal of any research that investigates LLSs is to provide practical applications for L2 teaching and learning, not only to improve L2 acquisition and use, but also to empower learners to become more self-directed. Since there is still no consensus about the definition, categorisation, value or effective application of LLSs (Griffiths 2004), the growing amount of research in this field aims to provide clarity on the utility and best practical use of LLSs by the L2 learner as well as the L2 teacher. Some researchers believe that LLSs have the potential to make a significant difference in L2 acquisition (O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990; Dreyer 1992); however, until the nature and extent of this influence are clarified to some degree, successful application will remain hard to determine.

The study reported in this thesis investigates the relationship between the LLS use and English L2 proficiency of isiXhosa-speaking adolescents. The objectives that guided this investigation, as well as their associated hypotheses (based on previous research on LLS use), are stated below.

Objective 1

To determine if there is a correlation between participants' frequency of direct strategy use and their English proficiency as measured by their English mid-year marks.

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between L2 learners' frequency of direct strategy use and their English proficiency.

Objective 2

To determine if there is a correlation between the preferred use of a specific type of direct strategies – memory, cognitive or compensation – and participants' English proficiency as measured by their English mid-year marks.

Hypothesis 2

There is a significant relationship between L2 learners' preferred use of cognitive strategies and their English proficiency.

Objective 3

To compare the frequency and type of preferred direct strategies used by female and male learners.

Hypothesis 3

Female learners use direct LLSs more often than male learners. Furthermore, females show a greater preference for cognitive and memory strategies than males.

To reach these objectives, I collected data from 75 isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 pupils in two secondary schools in the Western Cape Province by means of a widely used LLS questionnaire. These learners live in a community where isiXhosa is the primary language, with their exposure to English limited to school, television and reading material, mostly newspapers and magazines. The community they live in is characterised by severe material poverty, with high unemployment and illiteracy rates, a high incidence of HIV/Aids and limited access to basic facilities like water. Most of the housing consists of informal settlements. These factors undoubtedly influence learners' L1 and L2 use and proficiency. Although such factors were kept in mind in designing and conducting the research reported in this thesis, as well as in interpreting the research results, a thorough discussion of the role of these factors in language use and proficiency falls outside the scope of this thesis.

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 2 provides a discussion of existing definitions and classifications of LLSs and offers an overview of LLS research, including research on the effect of LLS use on L2 proficiency as well as research on factors that influence L2 learners' LLS use. Chapter 3 details the research methodology and design of the study, describing the participants and offering a detailed discussion of the four data collection instruments employed – Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), Van der Schyff's (1991) standardised L2 English proficiency

test, a language background questionnaire and individual SILL-based interviews. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study and discusses them with reference to the three objectives stated above. Finally, chapter 5 concludes the thesis with a brief discussion of the limitations and strengths of the study, some suggestions for future research and a discussion of the implications of this study for L2 English teaching and learning, specifically in the South African context and in cases where the learners are mother tongue speakers of isiXhosa.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Within the field of L2 acquisition, a question that has remained central, especially in recent years, is how to enhance and facilitate L2 learning and consequently increase L2 proficiency. Numerous researchers have studied the characteristics of successful L2 learners, trying to identify skills or knowledge that can be taught to or encouraged in other, less successful learners to make them better L2 learners. Individual learner differences that seem to influence L2 learning include age, aptitude, cognitive style, motivation, self-esteem, first language (L1) and the learner's use of LLSs.

Various researchers have provided evidence of the importance of LLSs in L2 acquisition by showing a link between some measure of L2 competency and the use of LLSs (Oxford and Nyikos 1989; Dreyer 1992; Oxford and Ehrman 1995; Griffiths 2003; Magogwe and Oliver 2007; Chen 2009). Ellis (1994: 529) sees a "mediating role" for LLSs between learner factors and learning outcomes, whereas O'Malley et al. (1985a: 43) believe that the use of LLSs, with appropriate guidance, can be a "powerful learning tool". Oxford and Ehrman (1995: 362) state that LLSs are "very important to ultimate language performance".

Since the 1960s, the emphasis in L2 training has gradually shifted from the teacher to the learner, and from teaching to learning. Currently, there is a strong focus on developing autonomy in language learners, hence the interest in LLSs. The appropriate training in and use of LLSs can make a difference by not only improving learners' L2 proficiency, but also helping them to become more efficient, self-directed and self-confident language learners (Oxford 1990).

This chapter focuses on previous research related to the identification, definition, use and effect of LLSs. I will begin by considering different definitions of LLSs and discuss problems associated with existing definitions (section 2.1). Next, I will look at some of the frameworks that exist for classifying LLSs (section 2.2). I will then give an overview of LLS research to date, referring to research results and some problems of research in the field (section 2.3). Finally, I will highlight the factors that influence the use of LLSs (section 2.4).

2.1 Defining LLSs

Although there has been a great expansion in LLS research since the 1980s, the identification, designation, definition and classification of LLSs remain unresolved and varied. Part of this vagueness is due to the different terms used to describe what Rubin (1975) first labelled "learning strategies", defining them as "strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly" (Rubin 1987: 23). Stern (1983), on the other hand, uses the term "strategy" to describe the general tendencies of a language learning approach and refers to the more definable and observable language learning behaviour (Rubin's strategies) as "techniques". Other terms used to refer to the kind of behaviour or thought that Rubin calls "strategies" include "learning behaviours" (Politzer and McGroarty 1985) and "tactics" (Seliger 1984).

Further contributing to the elusiveness of the definition of LLSs are the different types of strategies that have been identified for L2 acquisition and use. Tarone (1980) divides production and communication strategies into strategies of language use, on the one hand, and learning strategies, on the other hand, with the main difference between the two being the speaker's goal: maintaining communication or learning. She further distinguishes between two types of learning strategy, namely language learning strategies, which focus on acquiring linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge, and skill learning strategies, which focus on becoming a skilled L2 user. Brown (1980) also separates learning strategies, targeting input, from communication strategies, targeting output. However, these demarcations are often not clear-cut, as production is part of the language learning process and therefore communication strategies can help L2 learners to learn the language. Similarly, learning strategies can aid communication. Also, the intention or the goal of the speaker, as well as the outcome of the use of these strategies, is usually hard to determine. Participating in a conversation in the L2, for example, can be used to improve communication, but it is also a strategy for learning new words and testing knowledge.

Some researchers include communication strategies in their classifications of LLSs. Rubin (1981) differentiates between strategies that directly affect learning and those that contribute indirectly to learning, placing communication strategies, for example formulaic interaction, in the latter category. Oxford (1990) also includes communication

strategies (such as asking for clarification or verification) into her classification of LLSs as social strategies, which fall under indirect strategies used to support and manage the language learning task. In an attempt to be as comprehensive as possible, Oxford also lists compensation strategies as a group of strategies that directly involve the target language. As Ellis (1994: 539) states, and Oxford (1990: 22) admits, this inclusion is somewhat contentious, as other researchers classify compensation strategies as communication strategies that are distinct from learning strategies and do not necessarily contribute to language learning, for example switching to the mother tongue or avoiding communication. However, Oxford (1990: 37) believes that compensation strategies "allow learners to use the language despite their often large gaps in knowledge". Using the target language permits learners to reinforce what they already know and obtain new information about the language. Wong-Fillmore (1976: 670) also maintains that it is important for language learners to remain in a conversation, as the activity reinforces general communication and learning. I will return to Rubin's and Oxford's LLS classifications in section 2.2.

Looking at definitions of LLSs by different researchers reveals further problematic issues, as discussed by Wenden (1987) and Ellis (1994). Wenden (1987: 6-7) uses "learner strategies" to refer to "language learning behaviours learners actually engage in to learn and regulate the learning of a second language", "what learners know about the strategies they use" and "what learners know about aspects of their language learning other than the strategies they use" – a broad definition with an emphasis on learner awareness. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 1) define "learning strategies" as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information". They do not include any reference to language in their definition, but rather focus on the cognitive aspects of learning itself. Oxford (1990: 8) includes affective and social aspects of strategy use, and defines "learning strategies" as "actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations". Brown (1994: 114) sees LLSs as problem-solving techniques that are quite specific to the moment, the language learning task at hand and the particular individual performing the language learning task.

Several questions arise from these definitions. It is clear that, according to the existing definitions, LLSs refer to specific techniques rather than general techniques or styles of learning, but it is not clear whether these are mental (unobservable) strategies,

behavioural (observable) strategies or both. Stern's (1983) definition only includes strategies that are directly observable through behaviour, whereas Weinstein and Mayer (1986) include both behaviours and thoughts in their definition. It seems that most definitions and classifications include both mental and behavioural strategies; for instance, Oxford's definition above only refers to "behaviours and actions", but her classification of LLSs includes memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies (see section 2.2 below).

This leads to the question of whether only consciously used strategies should be considered and included in the definition of LLSs. Since they contribute to learning, we cannot exclude subconscious strategies, especially as they may have been conscious, becoming internalised through frequent use (in fact, O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 2) state it as an aim that the use of LLSs should "become automatic" in L2 learners). Alternatively, strategies may be used subconsciously at first but, after learners are made aware of them, their use may become conscious. Yet, if we do include subconscious strategies in the definition of an LLS, it becomes hard to determine what exactly these strategies are, and when exactly and how frequently learners are using them, as they usually cannot report on this usage themselves.

Moreover, the existing definitions of LLSs do not make it clear whether these strategies have a direct or an indirect influence on language learning. Once again, researchers are divided. Rubin (1987: 23) only focuses on learning strategies that affect learning directly. However, Wenden (1987: 8), in the same publication, includes both strategies that contribute directly to learning and those that contribute indirectly to learning. Oxford (1990) also distinguishes between direct and indirect strategies, and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) include, with direct strategies, a metacognitive (and hence an indirect) component in their classification. Nevertheless, there are researchers such as Seliger (1984) who see strategy use as a purely indirect way of learning by providing data for other processes to work on.

For the purposes of this study, I will define LLSs as "conscious or at least potentially conscious" (Ellis 1994: 532) thoughts or actions (i.e., mental and behavioural) that are used to facilitate and enhance an individual's L2 learning in a direct or an indirect manner. In the next section, I will discuss different models of LLS categorisation currently available.

2.2 Classifications of LLSs

Along with the different definitions for LLSs, various researchers have proposed classifications of LLSs. Oxford (1990: 239) advises caution in using the term "*taxonomy*, which implies a clear set of hierarchical relationships". I will therefore use the term "classification" throughout. Earlier research (including Rubin 1975, 1981; Stern 1975; Naiman et al. 1978; Wong-Fillmore 1976, 1979) was mostly descriptive, and focused on identifying and listing strategies that good language learners reported using or that researchers identified through observation. Most researchers followed Rubin in identifying strategies that contributed directly to learning and those that contributed indirectly to learning. From the 1980s, the research focus shifted towards grouping LLSs into more clearly definable categories, and also investigating the nature of LLSs and their influence on L2 acquisition (for example, Wenden 1983; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990). In this section, I will give an overview of the most prominent classification schemes. Research into the nature of LLSs and their influence on L2 acquisition will be discussed in the next section (2.3).

Rubin was one of the earliest researchers in the field to concentrate her research on the strategies that successful language learners use. Rubin's (1981) inventory of strategies used in language learning is based on data collected through a variety of methods, and differentiates primarily between strategies that directly affect learning (clarification/verification, monitoring, memorisation, guessing/inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning and practice) and strategies that contribute indirectly to learning (practice opportunities and using production tricks).

Naiman et al. (1978) base their classification mainly on interviews with successful L2 learners, as well as Stern's (1975) list of ten general characteristics of the good language learner. They identify five primary classes of strategies, namely an active task approach, the realisation of language as a system, the realisation of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring L2 performance. These classes are quite extensive, and each class includes several secondary strategies, which are meant to cover all the strategies used by different L2 learners.

Wenden's (1982, 1986) research brought an important focus to the field of LLS study on what are generally known as metacognitive strategies, i.e. the knowledge that learners have of their L2 learning as well as the way they regulate their own learning. Her interviews with adult foreign language learners¹ led her to identify eight questions that learners might ask themselves in order to direct their language learning, for example "What should I learn and how?". These questions fall into one of three categories, namely knowing about language and language learning, planning current and future learning, and evaluating one's own progress and learning experience.

Noticing the lack of underlying theory in LLS definitions and classifications, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) base their classification on a cognitive information-processing model of learning. They see LLSs as "special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 1) of new information. Based on literature about strategies used in L1 and L2 acquisition as well as a descriptive study done on beginner and intermediate English Second Language (ESL) high school students by O'Malley et al. (1985a), they identified three main categories of LLSs depending on the type or level of processing involved, namely metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective strategies.

Metacognitive strategies have a management function in that they regulate cognitive processes in learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating; for example, planning and rehearsing for an upcoming language task or retrospective self-evaluation. These strategies can be applied to a wide range of learning tasks. Cognitive strategies are usually more specific to individual learning tasks, as they operate directly on input, for instance repetition or grouping. They have an operative function, leading to knowledge or understanding of the L2. Although O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 145) note that the distinction between metacognitive and cognitive strategies is not always explicit, they find their classification practically useful, especially for integrating strategies into instruction. Social-affective strategies, such as questioning for clarification and co-operating with peers, refer to interactional steps taken by learners, and are widely applicable. O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of LLSs with a description of each strategy is reproduced in Table 1 below.

¹ Foreign language learning takes place when an L2 is learnt in an environment where it is not widely spoken. Therefore, ESL refers to learning English in a country where English is widely spoken, whereas English Foreign Language (EFL) refers to learning English in a country where it is considered a foreign language because it is not widely spoken. Throughout, I will use "L2" as a cover term for foreign languages and second languages, and I will only distinguish between the two phenomena where necessary.

Table 1. Classification of LLSs by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) (cf. Chamot 1987:77)

Type	Learning strategy	Description
<i>Metacognitive</i>	Advance organisers	Making a general but comprehensive preview of the concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity.
	Directed attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors.
	Selective attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input.
	Self-management	Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.
	Advance preparation	Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task.
	Self-monitoring	Correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present.
	Delayed production	Consciously deciding to postpone speaking to learn initially through listening comprehension.
	Self-evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.
<i>Cognitive</i>	Repetition	Imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal.
	Resourcing	Defining or expanding a definition of a word or concept through use of target language reference materials.
	Directed physical response	Relating new information to physical actions, as with directives.
	Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language.
	Grouping	Reordering or reclassifying and perhaps labelling the material to be learned based on common attributes.
	Note-taking	Writing down the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information presented orally or in writing.
	Deduction	Consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language.
	Recombination	Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.
	Imagery	Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar easily retrievable visualisations, phrases or locations.
	Auditory representation	Retention of the sound or similar sound for a word, phrase or longer language sequence.
	Key word	Remembering a new word in the second language by (1) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word, and (2) generating easily recalled images of some relationship with the first language homonym and the new word in the second language.
	Contextualisation	Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence.
	Elaboration	Relating new information to other concepts in memory.
	Transfer	Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task.
	Inferencing	Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information.
<i>Social-affective</i>	Cooperation	Working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity.
	Question for clarification	Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation and/or examples.

Oxford (1990: 239) bases her classification on work done by Rubin, Dansereau, O'Malley and Chamot, as well as her own research into LLSs. As her definition shows, Oxford believes that it is important to include the affective and social aspects of language learning. She organises LLSs into two interacting main classes, namely direct (or primary) and indirect (or support) strategies, and subdivides these two classes into six groups. Direct strategies are those strategies that require the mental processing of the target language. Included in this class are memory strategies that help learners to store and retrieve information, cognitive strategies that facilitate the understanding and production of new knowledge, and compensation strategies that enable learners to produce the language even though they may have limited knowledge. Indirect strategies support, coordinate and regulate language learning. This class comprises metacognitive strategies that help learners to manage their learning, affective strategies that aid learners' management of their affective states like motivation and attitude, and social strategies that involve learning through interaction with other people. Each strategy group is further divided into two levels, detailing the behaviours that represent the specific strategies. Figures 1 and 2 below show Oxford's direct and indirect strategy classes separately, including the first level of strategy behaviours.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Memory strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating mental linkages ▪ Applying images and sounds ▪ Reviewing well ▪ Employing action |
| Cognitive strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practising ▪ Receiving and sending messages ▪ Analysing and reasoning ▪ Creating structure for input and output |
| Compensation strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guessing intelligently ▪ Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing |

Figure 1. Oxford's direct strategies (Oxford 1990: 38)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Metacognitive strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centring your learning ▪ Arranging and planning your learning ▪ Evaluating your learning |
| Affective strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lowering your anxiety ▪ Encouraging yourself ▪ Taking your emotional temperature |
| Social strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asking questions ▪ Cooperating with others ▪ Empathising with others |

Figure 2. Oxford's indirect strategies (Oxford 1990: 136)

Ellis (1994: 539) calls Oxford's classification "[p]erhaps the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies to date". However, he feels that it does not make a clear enough distinction between learning strategies and production strategies. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 103) also criticise Oxford's classification for "creating subcategories that appear to overlap". Oxford (1990: 249) admits that certain classifications are "often a matter of judgment or taste", that disagreement will inevitably exist about the classification or even inclusion of some strategies, and that, given the potential number of strategies that learners could use, it may never be possible to create a complete, scientifically substantiated taxonomy of LLSs. However, she believes that compensation, affective and social strategies should be included in any classification system, and that such a system should provide its users with "a comprehensive structure for understanding strategies" (Oxford 1990: 22).

Oxford validates her classification by indicating how each of the 62 strategies she identified is used to attain competence in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The classification also forms the basis of her Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), a questionnaire aiming to assess the strategy use of ESL as well as EFL learners. I have used Oxford's classification as the basis of this study because of the range of strategies it includes and also because its clear organisation makes it easy to apply and understand. Furthermore, Oxford's classification has formed the basis of over 50 major studies and the SILL has been translated into various languages (Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995: 4), which provides researchers with a

comparable set of strategies and therefore research results. The SILL is discussed in more detail in section 3.4.1, also in terms of its utility, reliability and validity.

2.3 Overview of LLS research

Investigations into LLS use started with the examination of the characteristics of "good language learners". Researchers like Rubin (1975, 1981), Stern (1975), Naiman et al. (1978), Reiss (1983) and Chamot et al. (1988) focused on successful (and in some cases, unsuccessful) classroom learners and used, for the most part, self-reporting methods like interviews or questionnaires to determine what strategies competent L2 speakers use to improve their learning and knowledge of the L2. The studies were mostly descriptive and intuitive, and an assumed relationship between LLS use and L2 proficiency led researchers to investigate whether these approaches can be transferred to less successful language learners.

While no definitive list of effective individual strategies or strategy classifications emerged from the research, some general behaviours of successful language learning were established (as discussed in Wenden and Rubin 1987; Ellis 1994; and Griffiths 2004). Efficient language learners take an active and flexible part in their learning in various ways, for example by planning their learning, by taking control of the learning process and by using strategies that suit the task as well as their learning preferences. They have an awareness of language as a system, paying attention to both form and meaning, and are able to think and talk about language in a metalinguistic way. Successful learners seek out opportunities to learn and practise the L2, are willing to take risks in their learning and monitor their own as well as others' performance. Finally, they are aware of and able to manage the affective and other demands of language learning.

Later studies adopted a more empirical approach to determine correlations between general or specific LLS use, on the one hand, and various learner factors and, most notably, L2 proficiency, on the other hand. Other studies investigated the effectiveness of strategy training. Although these studies managed to lend support to the earlier descriptive research, they also delivered mixed results. Politzer and McGroarty (1985) used a questionnaire based on the identified characteristics of good language learners to compare LLS use in different environments (inside the classroom, individual study and

social interaction outside the classroom) with scores on tests carried out before and after an intensive ESL course. While they did not find statistically significant correlations between strategy use in these three environments and gain scores, they did find that certain behaviours led to gains in different aspects of competence, leading them to conclude that LLSs should be used in clusters appropriate to the task, and are not necessarily effective in themselves.

O'Malley et al. (1985b) investigated the effects of LLS training in an ESL classroom environment on a variety of language learning tasks. Separate groups of students received training integrated with language instruction in metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies, respectively, to be applied to vocabulary, listening and speaking tasks required for academic purposes. Although they found mixed results for the vocabulary tasks, mainly because of cultural differences between subjects, they conclude that LLS training can be effectively applied to enhance speaking and listening tasks in a classroom setting.

In a study on a group of highly motivated and educated adults learning foreign languages, Oxford and Ehrman (1995) found medium overall LLS use as measured on the SILL. They ascribe this to the difference between foreign language learning and second language learning, since it has been found that foreign language learners use fewer LLSs than second language learners. Only one type of strategies showed a statistically significant correlation with proficiency ratings taken at the end of training, namely cognitive strategies. This result differs from several other SILL-based studies, in which different types of strategies are significantly and more convincingly related to proficiency. The researchers attribute this to the restricted range of proficiency goals in the specific study, and recommend that different sample groups with a wider range of proficiency outcomes should be used to give a clearer indication of the relationship between LLS use and proficiency.

Very little research on LLSs has been done in Africa and, more specifically, South Africa. Mahlobo (1999: 5) bemoans the "dearth of South African research in applied linguistics", pointing out that the application of foreign research to a South African context may prove completely unproductive. However, some contributions have been made to research in an African context. Kouraogo (1993) investigated the value of LLS research and training in input-poor environments, for instance EFL classrooms in

Burkina Faso, and concludes that further research in such environments can make a significant contribution to both theory and application. Looking at ESL learners in Botswana, Magogwe and Oliver (2007) used Oxford's SILL to determine the relationship between LLSs and a number of learner variables, including proficiency. Their findings that more proficient learners show more overall use of LLSs and that there is a relationship between the preferred type of strategy and effective language learning, are consistent with the findings of similar studies performed in different contexts. Their results also indicate that patterns of strategy use may be more complex than previous research suggests.

In a South African context, contributions have been made by Dreyer (1992, 1996), Van der Walt and Dreyer (1995), and Mahlobo (1999). Dreyer (1996) compared the use of LLSs by Afrikaans, Setswana/Sesotho and English L1 speakers at a South African university. She found statistically and practically significant differences between the three language groups, but warns that teachers should avoid labelling language groups, since individual learners display a unique and complex set of learner variables. Mahlobo's (1999) study focused on a completely different group, namely L1 isiZulu speakers who attended secondary schools that offer ESL both as a medium of instruction and as a subject. Using the SILL as a measure of LLS use, he found a significant relationship between the use of direct strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation strategies) and ESL proficiency; however, no significant relationship was found between the use of indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective and social strategies) and ESL proficiency. Mahlobo concludes that other factors, such as learners' societal, home and school contexts, influence the use of LLSs.

From the studies described above, it is clear that, while most researchers agree that LLSs play some role in L2 acquisition and that LLS training might be valuable, the research, when taken together, does not provide cohesive results. Different definitions and classifications, methods of data collection, participants, measures of proficiency and areas of focus have presented a wide range of results, which makes it hard to draw definitive conclusions or make useful comparisons. Oxford and Ehrman (1995: 363) report that the "proliferation of strategy systems has caused problems for those researchers who believe it is important to compare results across studies", and state that attempts are being made to make the field more coherent by trying to find more rational ways of defining and categorising LLSs. Although there is to date still no single

definition or classification system that is used throughout the field, Oxford's system has been used in a large number of studies, mostly because of its clear structure and the easy application of the SILL tool.

It should also be noted that no causal relationship has been established between LLS use and L2 proficiency, even though many researchers implicitly assume that the use of (certain) LLSs leads to increased language learning and proficiency. Oxford et al. (1989), O'Malley et al. (1989) and Dreyer (1992) all found a significant relationship between LLS use and L2 proficiency; however, none of these studies indicates the causal direction of the relationship. Bremner (1999: 29) argues that, if strategies are merely a feature of proficiency and not a cause, they are not worth studying, and calls for clear evidence of the implied causal direction. Researchers such as McIntyre (1994) and Oxford and Green (1995) contend that there exists a mutual relationship between strategy use and proficiency, but besides making inferences from their own research, they provide no evidence for this claim.

A further problematic assumption that some researchers make is that more effective language learners necessarily use a wider range of LLSs more frequently than less effective language learners. Related to this is the assumption that there are certain strategies that are beneficial *per se*. After studying seven successful language learners, Stevick (1989) notes that although a general pattern can be identified, these learners often deploy distinctly different strategy behaviour from each other. Porte (1988), studying fifteen underachieving language learners, concludes that their strategy use is not so different from that of more efficient language learners. He ascribes their difference in achievement to when and how these learners apply the strategies rather than to the actual strategies they employ. Ellis (1994: 558) suggests that the effective use of LLSs "may consist of the flexible deployment of the right strategies in the right tasks", and that strategies may be more effective when applied in combinations that suit the learner's purpose. Therefore, it seems that effective LLS use is more complicated than merely identifying "good" strategies and teaching learners to deploy these, and it may be more varied and individual than many researchers assume.

Some researchers have proposed ways of overcoming the above-mentioned problems. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 112) recommend that researchers should define the purpose of their study clearly before they determine their methodology. Oxford (1996: 41)

calls for the replication of studies to provide comparable information within and between groups. Bremner (1999: 30) believes that the "study of the relationship between proficiency and strategy use requires a different approach", and that this relationship should be studied over a period of time. Ellis (1994: 559) also maintains that "[m]ore longitudinal case studies are sorely needed" to find solutions to the problems associated with LLS research.

Importantly, though, the fact that there are problems with LLS research does not mean that this research is not valuable. According to Van der Walt and Dreyer (1995: 316), LLS research has "clear practical implications, and concrete proposals for teaching can be given as a result". Ellis (1994: 558) states that the study of LLSs "holds considerable promise, both for language pedagogy and for explaining individual differences in L2 learning". The potential value of LLS research lies not only in its contribution to our understanding of L2 acquisition but also (and some might argue, more importantly) in its practical applications. If the use of LLSs can indeed enhance the rate of acquisition and the ultimate level of proficiency, as well as lead to greater learner independence, continued research is required to ensure a better understanding of how LLSs affect L2 learning.

2.4 Influences on learners' use of LLSs

A number of learner and situational factors have been shown to influence the use of LLSs. While results across different studies are not always consistent, some interesting trends have emerged that may have implications for language teaching.

Several studies (for example, Chamot et al. 1987; Sheory 1999; Khaldieh 2000; Wharton 2000; Magogwe and Oliver 2007) have found a correlation between LLS use and level of proficiency, reporting that students with a higher level of proficiency use a greater range of LLSs with greater frequency. Griffiths (2003) studied a mixed group of adult ESL learners at a language school in New Zealand and found a significant correlation between course level and strategy use, revealing that higher-level students used LLSs more frequently, and also used more sophisticated and more interactive strategies, pointing to a qualitative as well as a quantitative difference. However, not all studies have yielded similar results. A study conducted in the USA with 55 ESL students at university level revealed that students at the intermediate level reported using LLSs

more frequently than either beginning level or advanced level students (Hong-Nam and Leavell 2006). This result was found in only one other study (Phillips 1991, as reported by Hong-Nam and Leavell).

Age also seems to influence LLS choice and use, notably between children, on the one hand, and adolescents and adults, on the other hand. Oxford and Ehrman (1995: 363) report that younger learners tend to use communicative practice strategies, whereas adult learners prefer to make use of their increased ability to think abstractly. Ellis (1994: 541) notes that children tend to use a task-specific approach and use simpler strategies, while older learners use more general, complex strategies. In a study of 480 ESL students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in Botswana, it was found that the primary school learners were less likely to use metacognitive strategies than were the older secondary and tertiary learners (Magogwe and Oliver 2007) – this is probably attributable to the older learners' level of cognitive development.

Most studies investigating gender differences in LLS use (for instance Ehrman and Oxford 1989; Green and Oxford 1995; Yang 1993) found that females tend to use LLSs more frequently than males. Studies by Watanabe (1990) and Bedell (1993) reveal different patterns of strategy use between females and males. Sheory (1991) reports that, in a group of 1 261 Indian college students studying English, females used LLSs more frequently than males, independent of cultural or educational background. Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) did not find a significant difference between the sexes in overall LLS use, but found that females reported a statistically significantly higher level of affective strategy use.

Different strategy use has also been noted for people from different cultural backgrounds. Politzer and McGroarty's study (1985), focusing on "good" learning behaviours, showed that Asian ESL students in the USA used significantly fewer of these strategies than their Hispanic counterparts. Dreyer (1996) reports that Afrikaans and Setswana/Sesotho students at a South African university used significantly different groups of strategies. While these results have practical implications for teaching, she warns against stereotyping students from different cultural groups, as individual differences will always exist between language learners. In a study comparing six sets of ESL/EFL SILL data from six different countries, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) found cultural differences in self-reported strategy use. However, they call for more work to be

done so that a number of data sets are available from each country, which will allow researchers to create customised research tools per country.

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) observed that motivation was the most important determiner of LSS choice in their survey of 1 200 EFL students at a university in the USA. A significant correlation between LLS use and motivation was also found in a study of 107 high school students of Japanese (Oxford et al. 1993a, b). A strong desire to learn a language, for example motivation related to career choice, can also have a positive influence on LSS use, as shown in a study by Mullins (1992), which revealed that 110 Thai students majoring in English displayed medium to high strategy use across all SILL categories.

The educational background of language learners has been shown to influence the use of LLSs as well. For example, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) report that trained linguists learning an L2 used more strategies more frequently than learners who do not have linguistic training. Nation and McLaughlin (1986) compared the performance of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual subjects on specific learning tasks, and concluded that the multilingual subjects were better able to automatically use LLSs. Knowledge and beliefs about the language learning process can also affect strategy choice. A focus on learning may result in the use of different LLSs such as cognitive strategies, whereas a focus on communication may rely more on compensation and communicative strategies.

Two further factors that seem to influence the use of LLSs are the requirements of the task and the language learning setting. In reporting on their longitudinal study of LLS use by foreign language learners, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) note that different language learning tasks elicited different types and also combinations of strategies. This can provide a justification for integrating LLS training into language teaching, as LLSs are matched with specific tasks and the more productive strategies can be identified and focused on. Moreover, the use of LLSs can be influenced by the setting in which the language is learnt. Chamot et al. (1988) observed that social strategies are infrequently used in classroom situations. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) found that foreign language learners reported lower LLS use as opposed to second language learners. They ascribe this to the fact that FL learners usually do not need the foreign language to go

about their daily business and communicate in the wider society, and therefore are not forced to become expert language learners.

Other factors that have been investigated include learning styles (Dreyer 1996; Oxford 1996), personality type (Ehrman 1990), sensory preferences (Rossi-Le 1989), aptitude (Bialystok 1981), self-efficacy beliefs (Magogwe and Oliver 2007), the language being learnt (Chamot et al. 1987) and the status of the institution where the language is being learnt (Watanabe 1990). The factors discussed above do not necessarily predict a higher level of strategy use, but could possibly lead to different, though equally successful, LLS use.

This chapter gave an overview of some of the most significant developments in the field of research on LLS use in L2 acquisition. Amongst other things, research in this field has contributed to a clearer definition and classification of LLSs, and findings about the possible influences and applications of LLSs. Although different studies have yielded different results, there is evidence that the use of LLSs can have a positive influence on L2 development. For this reason, there is a need for additional research on the role of LLS use in L2 acquisition, and, more specifically, the relationship between LLS use and L2 proficiency. The research reported in the next two chapters addresses this need by investigating the LLS use of adolescent isiXhosa-speaking learners of English. The research design and methodology, participants and data collection instruments are described in chapter 3, and the results are reported and discussed in chapter 4.

Chapter 3

The LLS Use of IsiXhosa-speaking Adolescents in the L2 Acquisition of English: Research Design and Methodology

As stated in chapter 1, this thesis reports on an empirical study on the LLSs used by isiXhosa-speaking adolescents in acquiring English as an L2. The current chapter discusses the study's research design, methodology, participants and data collection instruments, while the next chapter reports and discusses the study's results. The current chapter is organised as follows: in section 3.1, I discuss methods that have been used to investigate LLS use in L2 acquisition in previous research, including the method that was used to conduct the research reported on here. Section 3.2 provides information on the learners who participated in this study, and section 3.3 discusses the research design and methodology of the study in more detail. Finally, section 3.4 offers a detailed discussion of the data collection instruments.

3.1 Methods of investigating LLS use

Methods of investigating LLS use that have been employed in previous research include self-reporting methods (such as interviews and questionnaires), formal and informal observation, group discussions, think-aloud tasks, diaries and dialogue journals, as well as different combinations of the above (Wenden and Rubin 1987; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Ellis 1994; Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995; Oxford 1996). While each technique has its own limitations, different data collection methods are suitable for different purposes; for example, think-aloud tasks can provide in-depth information about the strategies used during the execution of a specific language task.

Self-reporting strategy questionnaires are suitable for assessing general or typical LLS use (Oxford 1996: 39), which is what was required for the purposes of the current study. There are several advantages to using questionnaires in data collection. They are usually quick and easy to complete and are an economical way of collecting information. The data are easy to manage and analyse, and results can be displayed for individuals as well as groups. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 88, 94) add that questionnaires, because they are structured and therefore restrict responses to relevant information, can cover a broad range of strategies.

A number of structured questionnaires have been developed to investigate LLS use, for example Bialystok's (1981) 12-item scale based on both classroom and communicative settings, Politzer's (1983) 51-item scale looking at general, classroom and social behaviours, and Chamot et al.'s (1987) 48-item Learning Strategies Inventory based on the four basic language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Oxford's (1990) 50-item SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) seems to be the most inclusive (Ellis 1990: 539) and most widely used (Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995: 1) summative rating scale for determining learners' preferences regarding LLSs, as well as the frequency with which they use these LLSs. The items on the SILL are grouped into direct LLSs, which involve the mental processing of the target language, and indirect LLSs, which involve the management and support of the language learning task. The SILL has been translated into various languages, including Arabic, Chinese, German, Russian and Thai, and has been used in a variety of studies around the world involving different groups of L2 learners (for example Chang 1991; Oh 1992; Oxford and Green 1993; Mahlobo 1999; Khaldieh 2000; Griffiths 2003; Magogwe and Oliver 2007).

Questionnaires, like other self-reporting tools, are not without problems, however. Rubin (1981) found that learners' ability to describe their own strategy use varies greatly even when a structured instrument like a scaled questionnaire is used (see also Mahlobo 1999: 209-210). This is probably related to the unsurprising variation in learners' levels of self-awareness and understanding of their own language learning process. Furthermore, respondents may give unrealistic responses in order to appear "better" in some way, or they may try to respond in a way that they think the researcher wants them to respond. Oxford (1996: 40) refers to this as "social desirability response bias" and claims that the SILL has been proven to be free of such bias, based on a large-scale study by Yang (1992) and Oxford's own investigations comparing SILL responses to information gained through informal interviews.²

Recall from chapter 1 that the research question of the study reported on in the remainder of this thesis is whether or not the use of specific direct LLSs by the L2 learner enhances L2 acquisition and leads to a higher level of L2 proficiency. The objectives that guided the focus of the empirical investigation, as well as their associated hypotheses, are repeated below.

² Note, however, that on the basis of follow-up interviews that they conducted with SILL respondents, Kamper et al. (2003: 173) warn that the SILL averages "tend to give an over optimistic profile of LLS use". I will return to this observation in my discussion of the results – see section 4.5.

Objective 1

To determine (using the SILL) if there is a correlation between participants' frequency of direct strategy use and their English proficiency as measured by their English mid-year marks.

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between L2 learners' frequency of direct strategy use and their English proficiency.

Objective 2

To determine (using the SILL) if there is a correlation between the preferred use of a specific type of direct strategies – memory, cognitive or compensation – and participants' English proficiency as measured by their English mid-year marks.

Hypothesis 2

There is a significant relationship between L2 learners' preferred use of cognitive strategies and their English proficiency.

Objective 3

To compare the frequency and type of preferred direct strategies used by female and male learners (as indicated by their responses on the SILL).

Hypothesis 3

Female learners use direct LLSs more often than male learners. Furthermore, females show a greater preference for cognitive and memory strategies than males.

3.2 Participants

While LLS studies involving speakers of a wide variety of languages have been conducted abroad, few studies of the kind have been done in South Africa. Mahlobo (1999: 5), who conducted his study with isiZulu L1 adolescents, emphasises the need for research in a South African context, stating that "the margin of error can sometimes become so wide as to render foreign literature useless". Other studies based in South Africa include Dreyer (1996), who used Afrikaans, Setswana/Sesotho and English L1 speakers in her study, and Van der Walt and Dreyer (1995), whose study focused on English L1 and L2 speakers in a multicultural secondary school classroom. The choice of participants for the present study contributes to research within a South African context by being the first study to investigate the LLSs employed by L1 speakers of

isiXhosa, the language with the second highest number of native speakers in the country.³

The participants were all Grade 10 pupils attending two English-medium secondary schools (which I shall call School A and School B) in a township situated just outside a university town in the Western Cape Province. Data collection generated valid data for 75 (42 female and 33 male) of these learners. Their ages ranged from 14 to 21, with most participants in the 15 to 17 age group. All participants but one were born and raised in isiXhosa-dominant regions of the Western Cape and Eastern Cape. Furthermore, all participants bar one indicated that their primary caregivers were L1 isiXhosa speakers. The exception was a participant whose parents are L1 Sesotho speakers; however, the participant indicated that he grew up in an isiXhosa community, spoke isiXhosa within the community, and spoke both isiXhosa and Sesotho at home.

These learners, as the background questionnaires (see section 3.4.3) revealed, all attended isiXhosa-medium primary schools and almost exclusively spoke isiXhosa at home and in social contexts. None of the participants indicated that they had started learning English before they went to school; in other words, none of the participants started learning English before the age of six. Their exposure to English was mainly confined to school, as they were taught English as a subject in primary school, and were, at the time that the research was conducted, attending secondary schools that officially used English as language of instruction. I also found, by observing the interaction between teachers and pupils, and through the interviews I had with the six participants who completed the standardised English L2 proficiency test (see section 3.4.2), that English was not the exclusive language of instruction and communication at these schools, but rather that isiXhosa was used frequently by isiXhosa-speaking teachers, who formed the majority of the teaching staff at both schools. All learners also took English as a compulsory school subject. Although most participants indicated that their primary exposure to English was at school, most of them also indicated that they watched English television or films and read English texts. A minority of participants

³ According to Statistics South Africa's Census 2001, 17.6% of the total population of South Africa was native isiXhosa speakers (see Statistics South Africa 2003). The language with the most mother tongue speakers was isiZulu, spoken by 23.8% of the South African population, followed by isiXhosa (17.6%), Afrikaans (13.3%), and Sepedi (9.4%), with English and Setswana in fifth place (8.2%). Furthermore, isiXhosa was spoken at home by 23.7% of the population of the Western Cape – where the study reported here was conducted. In this province, the language with the most mother tongue speakers was Afrikaans (55.3%), followed by isiXhosa (23.7%), with English (19.3%) in third place.

specified that they had some exposure to English within their homes and community. However, during the interviews, it became clear that, in this context, English was spoken with a lot of isiXhosa words and phrases in between – in this case, it was a matter of code mixing rather than "pure" communication in the L2. Few learners reported that they belonged to groups (for example study or sport groups) where they spoke English only.

3.3 Research design and methodology

The principals of both schools were contacted to obtain initial permission for the data collection. After a positive response from both principals, official permission was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department to enter the schools and involve the learners in the data collection. Next, information and consent documentation was handed to all Grade 10 learners at the two schools. These forms had to be signed by the participants as well as their parents, as most of them are minors. Only learners with completed and signed consent forms participated in the study.

A background questionnaire (see section 3.4.3) was employed to obtain information about participants' language histories, and a modified version of the SILL (see section 3.4.1) to evaluate participants' frequency of LLS use as well as their strategy preference. Participants' English mid-year marks, as awarded by their English teachers, were used as a measure of their English proficiency.

I first visited School A, where I collected valid background and SILL questionnaires from 35 learners in two Grade 10 classes. At School B, 40 learners in two Grade 10 classes produced valid background and SILL questionnaires. Participants were allocated participant numbers arbitrarily, followed by an A or a B to differentiate between the two schools.

The learners' mid-year marks for English Second Language were not available at this point. When I did receive the marks, I noticed that there was a great discrepancy between the two schools' marks. At School A, the learners' English marks ranged from 8% to 81%, with a more or less even distribution around the mean, and at School B, the marks only ranged between 7% and 48%, with most marks in the upper half of this range. From the background questionnaires, I knew that the learners in the two schools had similar cultural, educational and linguistic backgrounds, and therefore the

discrepancy in English marks was most likely due to that fact that the allocation of marks was not standardised.

Although I knew that I would not have the opportunity to administer a standardised proficiency test to all 75 learners, I decided to select three learners from each school (one each with a low, medium and high English mid-year mark) and ask them to complete a standardised reading test (see section 3.4.2) as a measure of their English proficiency, so that I would be able to get a better idea of the nature of the discrepancy in English marks between the two schools and also of the general relationship between learners' English marks and their performance on a standardised English proficiency test.

I also used this opportunity to interview each of the six learners that completed the proficiency test to gain a better understanding of their attitudes towards learning English, as well as their English proficiency and their awareness and perception of their own LLS use.

3.4 Data collection instruments

Two data collection instruments were used for the collection of the quantitative data, namely an adapted version of the SILL (originally compiled by Oxford 1990) (see section 3.4.1), and the Proficiency Test for ESL Advanced Level (compiled by Van der Schyff 1991) (see section 3.4.2). Qualitative data were collected by means of a background questionnaire and individual interviews (see section 3.4.3). As mentioned in section 3.3 above, all 75 of the participants completed the modified SILL and the background questionnaire, while six of the participants were also interviewed and asked to complete the standardised proficiency test.

3.4.1 The SILL

Oxford (1990) developed the SILL (version 7.0) based on her comprehensive classification of LLSs (see section 2.2 for a more detailed description of Oxford's classification). The SILL is a structured self-rating questionnaire that is employed to assess the use of LLSs by ESL or EFL learners. The five-point Likert-scale response options (see below) require subjects to indicate their frequency of use in response to 50 statements such as "I use English words in a sentence so I can remember them".

Based on Oxford's classification of LLSs, the SILL comprises six categories, namely memory (remembering more effectively), cognitive (using all mental processes), compensation (compensating for missing knowledge), metacognitive (organising and evaluating learning), affective (managing emotions) and social (learning with others) strategies (Oxford 1990: 299). The six categories are further divided into various subscales, on which the 50 items that make up the SILL questionnaire are based. The SILL data not only give an individual score for each item, but also provide the researcher with a composite score for each of the six categories or types of LLSs.

The current study only investigates the direct strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation) of the SILL (mentioned above) (see section 3.4.1.4 below for the rationale behind this decision). For this reason, only parts A, B and C of the SILL are reproduced in Table 2. The response options to the statements below are: 1 – Never or almost never true of me; 2 – Usually not true of me; 3 – Somewhat true of me; 4 – Usually true of me; and 5 – Always or almost always true of me.

Table 2. Parts A, B and C of the SILL (Oxford 1990: 294-295)

Part A	
1.	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2.	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3.	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4.	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5.	I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6.	I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7.	I physically act out new English words.
8.	I review English lessons often.
9.	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.
Part B	
10.	I say or write new English words several times.
11.	I try to talk like native English speakers.
12.	I practice the sounds of English.
13.	I use the English words I know in different ways.
14.	I start conversations in English.
15.	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16.	I read for pleasure in English.
17.	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18.	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
19.	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20.	I try to find patterns in English.
21.	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22.	I try not to translate word for word.
23.	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.
Part C	
24.	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25.	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26.	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
27.	I read English without looking up every new word.
28.	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29.	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

3.4.1.1 Utility, reliability and validity of the SILL

The utility of a test instrument refers to its value in the application of its results to real-life situations. According to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 6), the value of the SILL is demonstrated by the fact that it is used widely and for a variety of purposes. The widest use of the SILL has been to determine the relationship between LLS use and L2 proficiency (see section 2.3 for examples of such studies), since such a relationship could lead to improved L2 learning and proficiency. Other uses of the SILL include investigating the relationship between learning styles and LLSs (Rossi-Le 1989), the relationship between LLSs and self-efficacy beliefs (Magogwe and Oliver 2007), and the

relationship between LLS use, course level and nationality (Griffiths 2003) (cf. sections 2.3 and 2.4).

The reliability of a test instrument refers to the consistency of scores on that instrument, whereas its validity refers to the degree to which it measures what it claims to measure. The SILL was originally developed and field-tested for use on students at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, in the United States. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient produced an internal consistency measure of 0.95 for this original sample, indicating an acceptable reliability (Oxford and Nyikos 1989). Moreover, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 6) report that the general reliability of the SILL based on several subsequent studies has been proven to be high, especially when it has been translated into the respondent's native language. The validity of the SILL was originally determined by Oxford and an independent language expert (Cuevas). They found it to be a sufficient and clear representation of the range of potential LLSs (Oxford and Nyikos 1989). Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 10) argue that the number of studies that found a relation between language performance and frequency of strategy use as measured by the SILL verifies the validity of the SILL as a test instrument.

3.4.1.2 The rationale for using the SILL

Given its independently verified reliability and validity, the SILL was identified as a suitable instrument for determining the following for the secondary school learners who participated in the current study:

- the correlation between the frequency of use of direct LLSs and English proficiency;
- the correlation between the frequency of use of a specific direct strategy type (memory, cognitive or compensation) and English proficiency; and
- the relationship between the frequency and type of direct LLS use and gender.

3.4.1.3 Problems with the SILL as a tool for assessing LLS use

Although the SILL has been used in at least 50 major studies in different countries involving ESL and EFL learners as a means of determining LLS use (Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995: 4), some researchers have found that it is not entirely suitable for their particular group of participants. Mahlobo (1999: 240) calls the SILL "evidently a useful

instrument", but states that it needs to be adapted to suit the context of the country in which it is being used as well as to be appropriate to the language learner's age and level of cognitive development. To this can be added the learner's general and educational background.

Kamper et al. (2003: 172-173), after finding "alarming discrepancies" between subjects' SILL scores and scores obtained from interviews based on the SILL, point to several problems that surfaced in their case studies. The interviews they had with seven participants in their study who had completed the SILL questionnaire, revealed that participants chose the midpoint response (Somewhat true of me) mostly when they were unsure of the meaning of the question, and that this response actually reflected that the strategy was not used (at least not consciously). They maintain that part of the cause of participants' doubt lies in ambiguities in the wording of some of the SILL items, for example *I look for people I can talk to in English*. Another problem proved to be that there was terminology used in the SILL that most of the participants were not familiar with, for example *flashcards*, *mental picture* and *image*.

Mahlobo (1999: 209-211) also established that the participants' level of ESL proficiency as well as their level of honesty affected their responses. He found that participants' lack of ESL competence prevented them from understanding some crucial concepts evaluated by the SILL, and furthermore did not allow them the skills to execute certain strategies. While this can be seen as a confirmation that more proficient ESL learners use a wider variety of strategies, it has implications for the use of the SILL as a test instrument, in that it may be less accurate, and therefore less suitable, for ESL learners with a low level of proficiency. The inconsistency between participants' SILL responses and their scores in an interview based on the SILL reveals that they did not always give truthful responses, albeit perhaps unintentionally, when completing the questionnaire. This could point to item ambiguity, but other factors may also be involved, for instance lack of self-awareness or an eagerness to seem to perform better.

Kamper et al. (2003: 173) recommend that the SILL should be subjected to a "rigorous item analysis in order to eliminate ambiguous items", as well as items that may not be applicable to a specific language group. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 18), in their evaluation of the SILL as a test instrument of LLS use, call for the creation of "country-by-country SILL norms around the world". Based on the above-mentioned suggestions

from researchers who have employed the SILL, as well as my own evaluation of the SILL, I decided to adjust the SILL in an attempt to make it better suited to the age, background and level of L2 proficiency of the participants in my study.

3.4.1.4 Adjusting the SILL: the SILL-X

My evaluation of the SILL yielded ideas similar to those expressed by Kamper et al. (2003) (see above). Taking into account the sample as well as the aims of my study, I adjusted the SILL in several ways, which I will discuss below, to produce what I termed the "SILL-X" ("SILL in isiXhosa").

Although Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 18) advise that "language researchers must conceptualize language learning strategies in a way that includes the social and affective sides of learning", as well as the organisational side, I decided to exclude these aspects from the present study. Because of the limited scope of my study, as well as my intended focus on the linguistic aspects of LLS use, I decided to assess participants' use of Oxford's direct strategies only, namely memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. Mahlobo's (1999: 227) findings that there is a significant relationship between isiZulu-speaking adolescents' use of direct strategies and ESL proficiency, but not between their use of indirect strategies and ESL proficiency, supported this decision.

I decided to simplify Oxford's SILL and to translate it into isiXhosa to make it more accessible to the participants of this study. Translation seemed appropriate, since all participants attended isiXhosa-medium primary schools, and some of the participants had as little as one year's consistent exposure to English. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 6) found a slightly higher reliability for the SILL when administered in the respondents' L1 rather than their L2. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 92-93) recommend that beginner and even intermediate level language learners should use their L1 in LLS testing, as the demands of processing information in the L2 could interfere with respondents' ability to report on their LLS use.

Furthermore, I adjusted all but one of the items in the original SILL to prevent ambiguity and to aid understanding, as well as to make it more suitable for translation.⁴ For

⁴ The translations were done by an L1 speaker of isiXhosa, Luxolo Jumba, and checked by a fluent L2 speaker of isiXhosa, Hennie Pretorius.

example, I changed *I review English lessons often* (item 8) to *I read through my previous English lessons*. This not only simplified the statement, but also excluded the redundant and possibly confusing word *often*, as the rating scale already calls for an indication of frequency. I also restated item 4 (*I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used*) as two separate statements (namely *When I think of the sound of a new word, I also try to think of a picture to help me remember the word* and *I remember a new word or phrase by thinking of a certain situation in which someone might use the word or phrase*) to make it more easily comprehensible. I deleted item 13, *I use the English words I know in different ways*, as I felt that the item was too vague and open to different interpretations.

I also added two items to the compensation strategies category, one listed as a social strategy in the SILL (*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again* – item 45) and the other a new item (*If I can't think of the right words when I speak in English, I ask another isiXhosa speaker to help me*). I judged these two items to be relevant to compensation strategies used by speakers. While there is some controversy regarding certain types of compensation strategies (see section 2.1 for a more detailed discussion), the reality is that L2 speakers do use these strategies to facilitate communication and, I believe, thereby improve their overall language performance and acquisition. After all of the above-mentioned changes were made, there were 10 items in the memory strategies category, 13 items in the cognitive strategies category and 8 items in the compensation strategies category, giving a total of 31 items.

In order to avoid participants choosing the midpoint response when unsure about an answer, as pointed out in section 3.4.1.3 above, I revised the rating scale to a 4-point scale, with an option (5 – Don't know/not sure) to indicate uncertainty or ambiguity. I was also hoping that analysing the frequency of a "5" response may shed further light on possible difficulties with some of the SILL items in this particular context (see section 4.5). The English translation of the statements in the SILL-X is presented in Table 3 below. (See Appendix A for the English version of the complete questionnaire that the participants received and see Appendix B for the isiXhosa version.) Parts A, B and C reflect the same categories of strategies as in the original SILL. The response options to the statements are: 1 – Never / almost never; 2 – Seldom; 3 – Often; 4 – Always / almost always; and 5 – Don't know / not sure.

I administered the SILL-X in person with the help of staff members at both schools. In addition to receiving the written instructions (see Appendices A and B), participants were also instructed verbally, as a group, to read each statement carefully and then choose the option that is most appropriate to them. An example illustrating what was required of them was shown to the participants. I also pointed out that they should use response option 5 only if they were really unsure about their answer or if they did not understand the statement.

Table 3. The English version of the SILL-X

Part A

1.	I try to link up what I already know with new things I learn in English.
2.	I use new words or phrases when I speak or write to help me remember them.
3.	When I think of the sound of a new word, I also try to think of what the word looks like written down so that it helps me remember the word.
4.	When I think of the sound of a new word, I also try to think of a picture to help me remember the word.
5.	I remember a new word or phrase by thinking of a certain situation in which someone might use the word.
6.	When I learn a new word or phrase, I cover the meaning and only look at the word or phrase again once I've remembered its meaning.
7.	I make up rhymes and songs to remember new words and grammar.
8.	I act out (make movements with parts of my body such as my hands and head) to help me remember new words or phrases.
9.	I read through my previous English lessons.
10.	I remember new words by thinking of what they look like on a page, on the board or on a sign.

Part B

11.	I say or write new words several times to remember them.
12.	I try to talk like English-speaking people.
13.	I practise the sounds of English out loud.
14.	I start talking to people in English.
15.	I watch English TV or English films.
16.	I read books, magazines or newspapers in English.
17.	I write notes, messages or letters in English.
18.	When I have to read in English, I first read through the text quickly, then I go back and read it slower and more carefully.
19.	I look for words and grammar in my own language that are similar to what I learn in English.
20.	I try to find patterns in English words and grammar.
21.	I find out the meaning of an English word or phrase by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22.	When I read or listen to English, I try not to translate word for word, but rather try to get the general meaning of what is written or said.
23.	When I read or hear something in English, I think of a short version (summary) of what is written or said to remember the information/meaning.

Part C

24.	I guess the meaning of English words I don't know.
25.	If I can't think of a certain English word, I use my hands and face (gestures) to explain it when I speak.
26.	If I can't think of the right word when I speak in English, I use the isiXhosa word instead.
27.	If I can't understand what someone is saying in English, I ask the person to explain, repeat himself or speak slower.
28.	If I can't think of the right words when I speak English, I ask another isiXhosa speaker to help me.
29.	I read English without looking up every word I don't understand in the dictionary.
30.	When I speak English with someone I try to guess what the other person will say next.
31.	If I can't think of an English word, I use another English word or phrase that means the same thing.

A similar type of revision of the SILL was undertaken by Magogwe and Oliver (2007), for the purposes of their research involving L2 learners of English in Botswana. While they adapted the scale responses and made slight adjustments to some of the statements, they did not deem it necessary to translate the questionnaire, as they judged their respondents' level of L2 proficiency as high enough for understanding the concepts addressed by the questionnaire in their L2.

3.4.2 The Proficiency Test for ESL Advanced Level

The Proficiency Test for ESL Advanced Level (Van der Schyff 1991) is a standardised 40-item reading competency test developed to suit a South African context.

3.4.2.1 Objective of the test

The Proficiency Test for ESL Advanced Level was developed as part of an attempt to address the needs of the education departments and other sectors of South African society in order to establish testees' level of general language development in English (Chamberlain and Van der Schyff 1991: 12). English is generally and increasingly used in education, business and other social sectors in South Africa, but it is commonly acknowledged that many South Africans lack access to or success in exactly these areas, mostly due to inadequate proficiency in English (see, for example, Parmegiani 2008).

The participants of this study fall within the range of the proficiency test, as it was developed to determine the proficiency level of ESL speakers within the senior secondary phase of education, that is, Grades 10 to 12. The aim of the test is to assess English proficiency, which refers to testees' knowledge and skill inside and out of the classroom, as opposed to their achievement in a specific course or curriculum.

3.4.2.2 Rationale and content of the test

The proficiency test measures reading competence only. As mentioned above, only six participants completed this proficiency test in addition to the SILL-X. While the interviews with these participants indirectly provided an additional indication of their proficiency in English, the proficiency test was regarded as the measure of competence with which the results of the SILL were correlated for this group. The test manual

(Chamberlain and Van der Schyff 1991: 12) states that the test provides a valid indication of testees' proficiency in ESL through their ability to select the correct answer regarding "the denotation and connotation of words, phrases, sentences and reading passages as well as acceptable language use". A classification of the test items is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Classification of the test items of the Proficiency Test for ESL Advanced Level (Chamberlain and Van der Schyff 1991: 13)

Skill being tested	Number of items	Item numbers
Recognising paraphrased meaning of common idioms	2	9, 20
Making <i>general</i> inferences based on the given text	8	1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14
Making inferences related to <i>diction</i> – writer's choice of words in the context	1	29
Making inferences related to the writer's <i>intention</i>	3	12, 13, 15
Making inferences related to <i>setting or atmosphere</i>	1	7
Selecting appropriate language for audience/situation/circumstance	2	3, 22
Accurately communicating summary of intended meaning: headlines, recognising redundancy	2	25, 30
Accurately conveying expanded meaning of summarised text	2	16, 24
Editing: Being consistent about time, i.e. recognising incorrect use of tenses	3	32, 35, 36
Combining of simple sentences to form complex sentences	1	31
Meaningful paragraphing – selecting best opening or concluding sentence or arranging sentences meaningfully	2	2, 27
Selecting precise word to describe something in context	1	17
Selecting words/phrases used deliberately to express or stir emotions	1	23
Recognising correct idiomatic and functional use of verbs	3	33, 34, 40
Recognising correct idiomatic and functional use of conjunctions	1	18
Prefixes and suffixes	1	19
Punctuation	2	37, 38
Word order	2	28, 39
Changing actives to passives	1	21
Changing statements to questions	1	26
Total	40	

3.4.2.3 Validity and reliability of the test

Regarding the multiple-choice format of the test, Chamberlain and Van der Schyff (1991: 12) state that multiple-choice questions are a very effective measure of reading competence, as testees' writing skills do not have an influence on their answers. Poor writing skills can impair responses to open-ended questions; since language learners' writing and reading skills are not necessarily on par, a multiple-choice format, where

testees have to choose the best alternative out of four possible answers, ensures that only their ability to read with understanding and insight is measured.

After initial test runs, leading to the selection of suitable items, viz. items that did not rely on formal English tuition, a final selection of items was tested on approximately 500 learners per grade (Grades 10, 11 and 12) in 1990. The mean of the test results came to 21.0 out of a possible 40, which amounts to 52.5%. This implies that the test can reliably differentiate between testees' proficiency. The standard deviation of the test scores was 8.53, which indicates that there is a wide distribution of raw scores around the mean. The reliability coefficient for the test was 0.89, indicating that the consistency of test results can be regarded as satisfactory.

The validity of the test refers to the degree to which the test measures reading competence. Although the test is only representative of the knowledge and skills that reading competence consists of, a panel of subject matter experts deemed the test sufficient in this regard.

3.4.3 Background questionnaire and interviews

The background questionnaire and individual interviews are the data collection instruments that yielded qualitative data. As mentioned earlier, all of the participants completed the background questionnaire (see Appendix C for the English version of this questionnaire and Appendix D for the isiXhosa version completed by the participants). This questionnaire covered participants' past and present linguistic environment, focusing specifically on their L2 English. I also interviewed the six learners who completed the English proficiency test to get a more complete picture of their attitude towards and exposure to English, as well as to determine how well their (formal) SILL responses correlate with the LLS use which they reported (informally) during the interview.

In this chapter I introduced the research design and methodology of my study (including a detailed discussion of the four data collection instruments that were employed), I provided the rationale underlying the specific version of the SILL that was used to assess the participants' LLS use, and I introduced the learner groups that participated in the study. In the next chapter, I will present and discuss the results of the study.

Chapter 4

The LLS Use of IsiXhosa-speaking Adolescents in the L2 Acquisition of English: Results and Discussion

In this chapter, I report and discuss the results of the study described in chapter 3. In sections 4.1 to 4.3, I report and discuss the results of the SILL-X in terms of the three objectives listed in section 3.1: section 4.1 deals with participants' frequency of overall LLS use; section 4.2 deals with participants' preferences for specific strategy types (i.e. memory, cognitive or compensation); and section 4.3 provides a comparison of female and male participants' results in terms of both frequency of overall strategy use and preferences for specific strategy types. In section 4.4, I return to the question of how well the learners' English marks represent their English proficiency by reporting on the results of the standardised English proficiency test. Finally, in section 4.5, I draw some conclusions on the basis of the results of the study, taken together, also drawing on the interviews conducted with the six participants who completed the English proficiency test.

4.1 Frequency of overall LLS use

The results of the SILL-X for all 75 of the participants are provided in Appendix E, in terms of frequency of LLS use for each of the three strategy types individually and taken together.

Recall that participants were asked to choose one of five options to respond to each of the statements on the SILL-X, namely 1 – Never / almost never; 2 – Seldom; 3 – Often; 4 – Always / almost always; and 5 – Don't know / not sure. For each participant, the average frequency with which he or she uses each of the three strategy types was calculated by dividing the sum of all his or her responses in the particular category (A, B or C – see Table 2 in section 3.4.1) by the number of statements in the category. Items that were given a score of 5 (Don't know / not sure) were disregarded in the calculation of averages. For example, participant 1A's responses to each of the 10 items in Part A of the SILL-X (i.e. those statements relating to the memory category of strategies) were: 2; 4; 5; 3; 4; 3; 4; 4; 3; 3. The sum of these scores, minus the 5 score, is 30. When this sum is divided by 9 (the number of statements in Part A of the SILL-X minus one), it yields

an average frequency score of 3.33 for this participant in the memory category of strategies.

The frequency of overall strategy use was then calculated for each participant by adding the averages of the three strategy categories and dividing the resulting score by 3. These frequency scores were categorised as follows:

- Low = score ≤ 2.5 ;
- Medium = score > 2.5 but ≤ 3.5 ; and
- High = score > 3.5 .

The frequency of overall strategy use is represented in Figure 3 below, which shows what percentage of the 75 participants' responses on the SILL-X indicates low, medium and high frequency of overall LLS use, respectively.

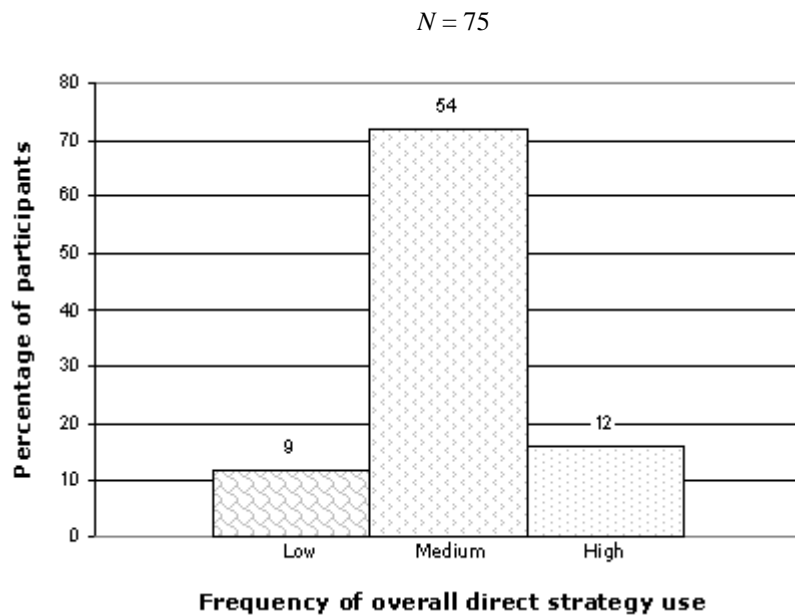


Figure 3. Frequency of direct LLS use: group results (see Appendix E for individual results)

As is clear from Figure 3, a large majority (72%) of learners reported medium frequency of overall strategy use (i.e., received an average score of above 2.5 and up to 3.5). The remaining participants were almost equally distributed between low frequency of overall strategy use (12%) and high frequency of overall strategy use (16%).

As stated in chapters 1 and 3, the first objective of this study was to determine if there is a correlation between participants' frequency of direct strategy use and their English proficiency as indicated by their mid-year English marks. With LLS use as the independent variable and English proficiency as the dependent variable, a Spearman correlation of 0.03 ($p = 0.82$) was obtained, indicating that the relationship between these two measures was not statistically significant. When one considers the last two columns of the table in Appendix E (frequency of overall strategy use and English marks), it is unsurprising that this relationship was not statistically significant. Of the learners with the ten highest English marks in School A, 3 reported high LLS use, 5 reported medium LLS use and 2 reported low LLS use. The learners in School A with the ten lowest English marks comprise 1 high, 8 medium and 1 low LLS users. Similarly, in School B, the top ten English students included 1 high, 8 medium and 1 low LLS users, and the ten lowest marks included 2 high, 6 medium and 2 low LLS users.

4.2 Preferences for specific strategy types

Appendix F gives an indication of the specific strategy type preferred by each of the 75 participants: memory, cognitive, compensation or a combination of two these types. Figure 4 below shows that the largest percentage of participants (36%) reported using cognitive strategies most often, followed by memory strategies (32%) and compensation strategies (26.67%). Four participants' averages showed equal preference for more than one strategy type (cf. participants 46B, 52B, 67B and 75B in the table in Appendix F).

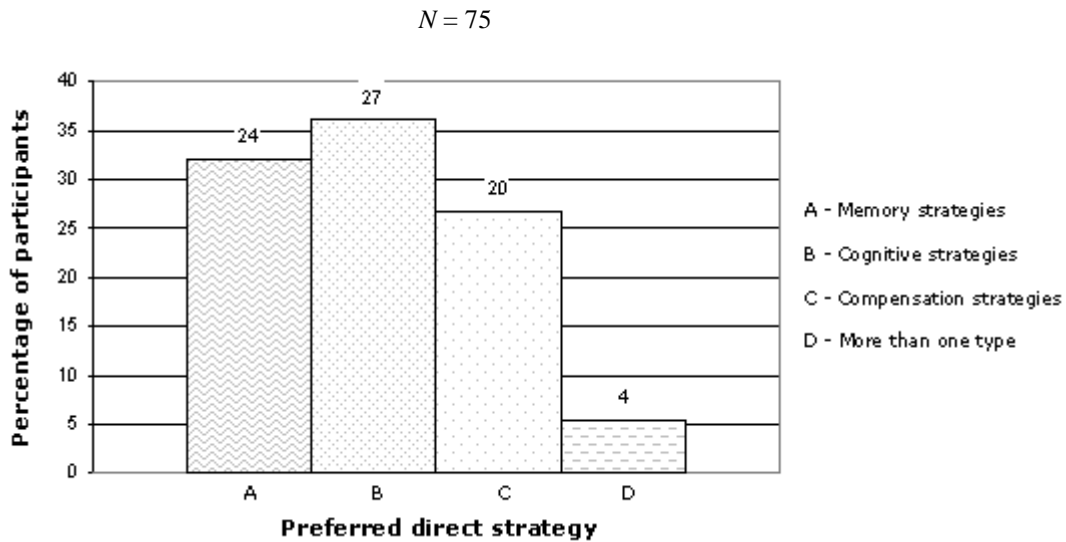


Figure 4. Preferred direct LLS type: group results (see Appendix F for individual results)

Recall that the second objective of the study was to determine if there is a correlation between the preferred use of a specific type of direct strategy – memory, cognitive or compensation – and participants' English proficiency as indicated by their English mid-year marks. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the data yielded a p-value of 0.29, indicating that there was no difference in the average English marks achieved by each group using different strategies.

Again, this is unsurprising when one considers the last two columns of the table in Appendix F. All three of the strategy types are represented in the two groups of learners who received the ten highest English mid-year marks in School A and School B, respectively. From this it is clear that there is no single direct strategy type that can be linked to higher English proficiency (measured in terms of English mid-year marks).

4.3 Comparing female and male participants' responses

Taking into consideration the data in column 2 (Gender) and column 8 (Frequency of overall strategy use) of the table in Appendix E, it was found that while more or less the same percentage of female and male participants reported medium LLS use, 19.05% of the females indicated low LLS use compared to only 3.03% of the males, and 24.24% of the males indicated high LLS use compared to only 9.52% of the females. This is represented in Figure 5.

$N = 75$

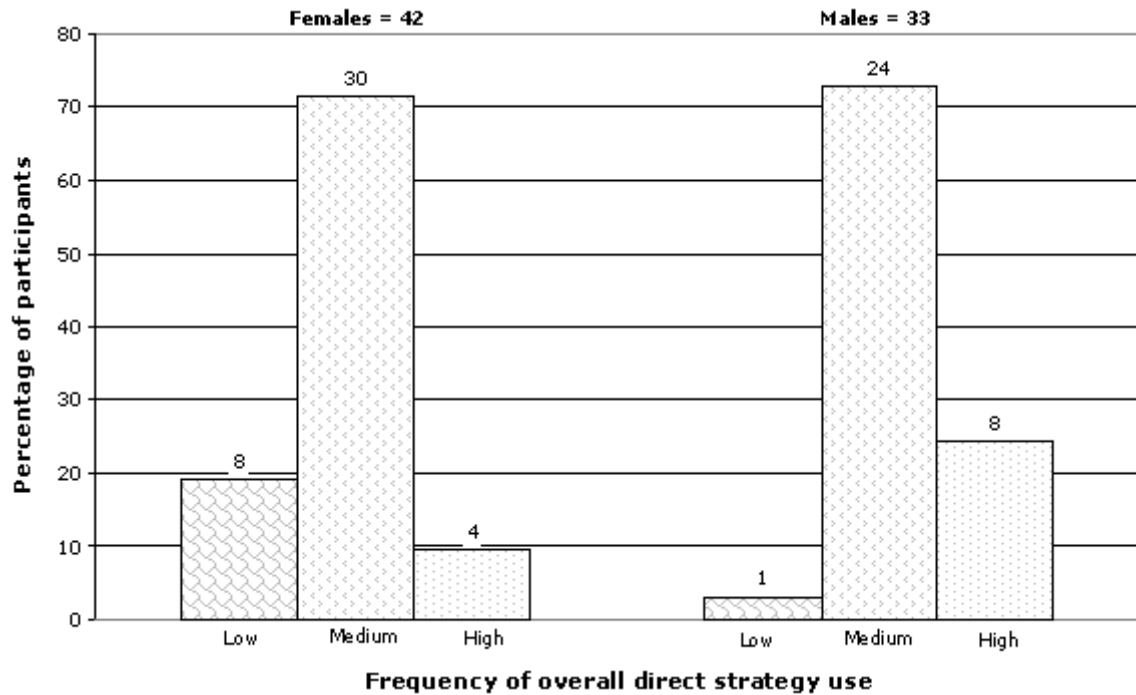


Figure 5. Female and male differences in frequency of direct LLS use

Furthermore, taking into consideration the data in column 2 (Gender) and column 4 (Preferred strategy type) of the table in Appendix F, it was found that the largest percentage of female respondents (38.1%) preferred memory strategies, followed by cognitive strategies (28.57%) and then compensation strategies (26.19%). In contrast, the largest percentage of male respondents (45.45%) preferred cognitive strategies, followed by compensation strategies (27.27%) and then memory strategies (24.24%). This is represented in Figure 6.

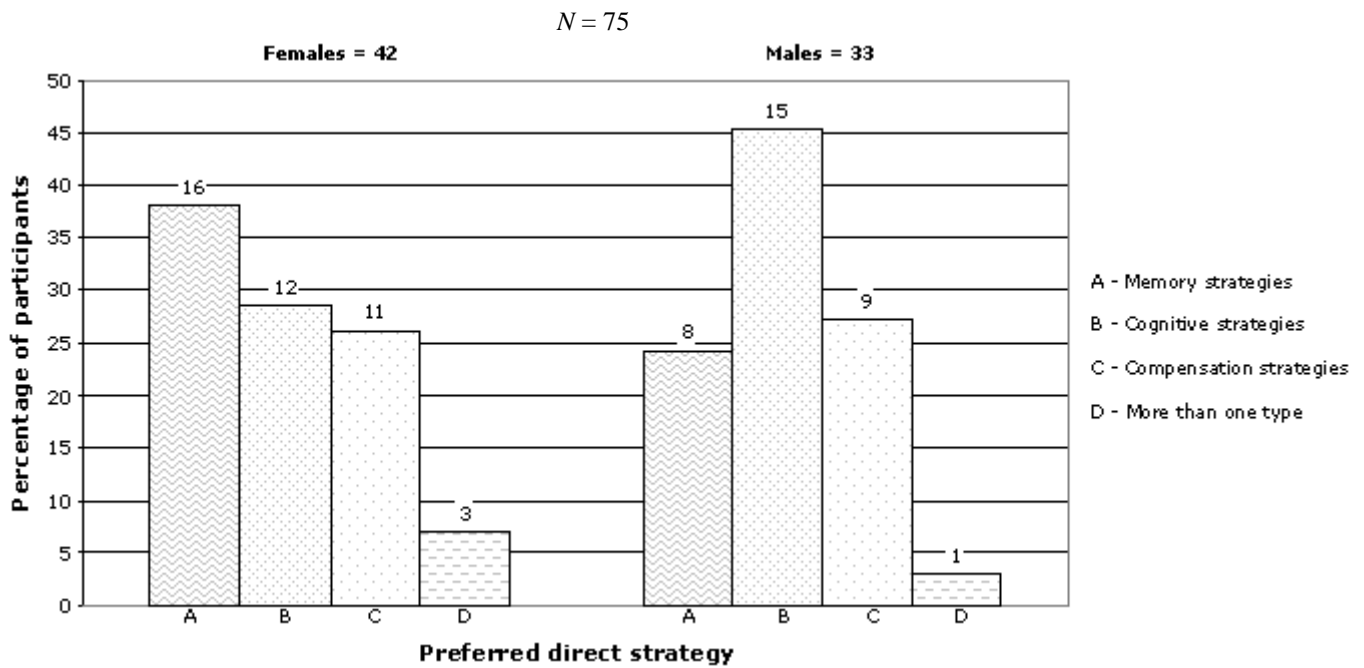


Figure 6. Female and male differences in preferred direct LLS type

Two observations can be made on the basis of the distributions represented in Figure 6. Firstly, the female respondents' most preferred strategy type (memory strategies) is the male respondents' least preferred strategy type. Secondly, the female respondents' preferences are almost equally distributed between the three strategy types (more or less a third of the respondents preferring each of the strategy types), whereas the male respondents as a group show a clearer preference for one particular strategy type (almost half of them preferring cognitive strategies).

The third objective of the study was to determine if gender influences frequency of overall LLS use and/or preference for a specific strategy type. A one-way ANOVA was performed on the differences between female and male strategy use as reflected in the data. While there was no statistically significant difference between the strategy types preferred by females versus males ($p = 0.28$), the analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between females and males in terms of reported frequency of LLS use ($p = 0.028$). Recall that the majority of respondents in both groups (females and males) reported medium frequency of LLS use. However, if one considers only those participants who reported low or high frequency of LLS use, it becomes clear where the statistically significant difference is located: of the 12 female participants who did not report medium frequency of strategy use, 8 reported low frequency and only 4 reported high frequency; in contrast, of the 9 male participants who did not report

medium frequency of strategy use, 8 reported high frequency and only 1 reported low frequency. This is an interesting finding, as the majority of research conducted in this regard showed that females tended to use (or at least reported using) LLSs more often than males (cf. section 2.4).

4.4 Results of the English proficiency test

As explained in section 3.3, there is a large discrepancy between the range as well as the distribution of the English mid-year marks received by learners at the two schools. For this reason, as well as to determine the general relationship between learners' English mid-year marks and their English proficiency, three learners (one learner with a low, one with a medium and one with a high English mid-year mark) from each school were asked to complete the Proficiency Test for ESL Advanced Level (Van der Schyff 1991). The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the English proficiency test

Participant	Mid-year mark (%)	Raw score and description on reading test	Frequency of strategy use	Most frequently used strategy
4A	32	7 – Very poor	2.36 (low)	Memory
11A	62	10 – Poor	2.47 (low)	Memory
19A	81	15 – Low average	3.57 (high)	Compensation
67B	17	13 – Below average	2.78 (medium)	Memory and Cognitive
47B	27	7 – Very poor	2.17 (low)	Memory
68B	48	12 – Below average	2.57 (medium)	Cognitive

Table 5 illustrates that learners' English proficiency as assessed by the reading test is not necessarily reflected by their English marks. For example, in School B, the learner with the lowest mark (participant 67B, who received a mid-year mark of 17%) scored the highest on the reading test. In School A, the ranking of the three learners in terms of their performance on the proficiency test corresponds with their ranking in terms of the marks awarded by their English teacher; however, participant 19A's score of 15, indicating a low average proficiency, does not correspond with the mark of 81% that this learner was awarded by his English teacher. Although the results in Table 5 are based on the performance of only six of the 75 participants of this study, they provide a useful indication that the English mid-year marks awarded to these learners do not correspond with their L2 English proficiency as measured by a standardised proficiency test. Kamper et al. (2003: 171), in their case study of a secondary school isiZulu L1 speaker

in KwaZulu-Natal, also found her performance on the reading and writing tests that they administered to "differ conspicuously with her academic performance in English".

Because of the results of the English proficiency test as well as the discrepancy between the two schools in terms of the range and distribution of English mid-year marks, it was decided to standardise the English marks of the two schools: for each learner, the average English mark of his or her school was subtracted from his or her English mark and the result then divided by the standard deviation. The standardised English marks were then used to re-examine the relationship between English proficiency (as indicated by the standardised English marks), on the one hand, and frequency of overall LLS use and preference for specific LLS types, on the other hand. This re-analysis still did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between English proficiency and frequency of overall LLS use ($r = 0.01$, $p = 0.94$). Also, no statistically significant relationship was found between type of LLS preferred and English proficiency ($p = 0.05$). However, the data indicated a trend that learners with a preference for compensation strategies (C) have a higher ($p = 0.02$) average English mark than learners preferring memory strategies (A). This means that learners who show a preference for compensation strategies tend to be more proficient in English than learners who show a preference for memory strategies. This is illustrated by Figure 7.

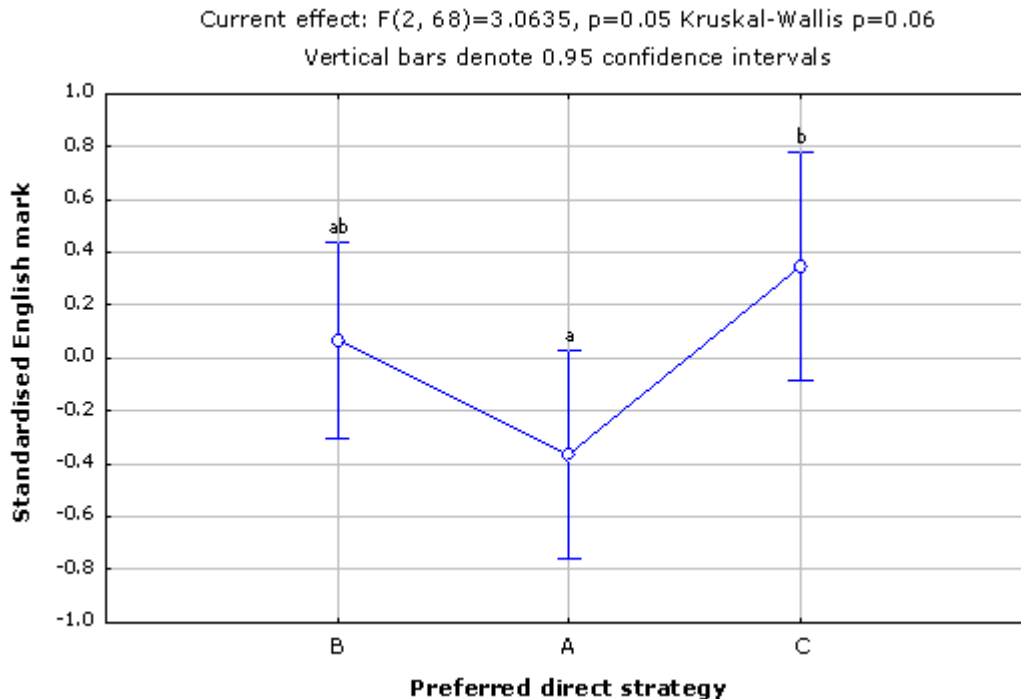


Figure 7. Correlation between LLS use and standardised English marks

4.5 Conclusions

This section focuses on the conclusions that can be drawn from the results discussed above in terms of the objectives stated for this study. The results show that, in this study, there is no significant correlation between participants' frequency of direct LLS use and their English proficiency as measured by their English mid-year marks, with the majority of participants reporting medium frequency of direct LLS use. Furthermore, the results show that there is no significant correlation between learners' preferred type of LLS and their English proficiency as measured by their English mid-year marks. Comparing female and male LLS use, the results show that there is no significant difference between the female and male groups regarding preference of LLS type (memory, cognitive or compensation). However, the difference in the frequency of overall LLS use between these two groups is significant, with females reporting significantly more low LLS use than males, and males reporting significantly more high LLS use than females.

Although some studies have shown a correlation between LLS use and L2 proficiency, overall, this finding has not been established conclusively (cf. the discussion in sections 2.3 and 2.4). This is to a large extent due to different research samples, objectives and methodologies. Mahlobo's (1999) study is similar to the present study, in that it also examined a group of high school English L2 learners in a South African context. Mahlobo used the SILL (unmodified) in his study, and found, in contrast to the present study, a significant relationship between participants' use of direct LLSs and their level of English proficiency. The main difference between this aspect of Mahlobo's study and mine is that Mahlobo used a standard measure of English proficiency. It seems that, in the present study, the mid-year English marks awarded by the respective teachers at each school (all participants at the same school had the same English teacher) was not an adequate measure of the learners' English proficiency. I believe that the results of my study were influenced by two obvious discrepancies. Firstly, the discrepancy between the marks at the two schools was significant and unexpected since the learners had grown up and lived in the same area and had similar backgrounds. Secondly, the discrepancy between learners' marks and their actual English proficiency showed that their marks were probably not accurate indications of their L2 English proficiency. This was clear from the scores on the proficiency test completed by the six learners, as well as their L2 English use during the interview. It follows that the ideal would be to

administer a standardised proficiency test to all participants, and correlate the results with their frequency of LLS use and their preference for specific strategy types. Unfortunately, given time constraints and practical considerations, this was not possible in the present study; but a potential follow-up study using the same group of participants could yield interesting results in this regard. Also, this is an important consideration for future research undertakings.

While the results did not show a significant relationship between preferred LLS type and English proficiency, the statistical analysis did reveal a tendency towards a significant correlation between compensation strategies and English proficiency, especially as compared to memory strategies. This result is even more prominent when using the standardised English marks. A larger sample may provide clearer results in this regard. As discussed in section 2.3, different studies (also different SILL-based studies) have found different types of LLSs to be significantly related to proficiency. For example, Oxford and Ehrman (1995) found a significant correlation between proficiency measures and cognitive strategies only, while Mahlobo (1999) and Chen (2009) found a significant correlation between proficiency measures and both memory and cognitive strategies.

Several factors may influence LLS preference, for instance age, culture and educational background. An interesting trend was seen in the results of the present study, namely the difference between preferred type of LLS in the two schools. In School A, 46% of the participants reported preferring memory strategies, 31% reported preferring cognitive strategies and 23% reported preferring compensation strategies. In School B, these figures are 20%, 40% and 30%, respectively (with 10% reporting more than one preferred LLS type). Therefore, more than double the percentage of learners at School A than at School B reported a preference for memory strategies, whereas learners in School B reported a higher preference for cognitive and compensation strategies. This difference may be related to different teaching approaches and styles of English L2 teachers at the respective schools.

Female and male respondents did not differ significantly in terms of LLS preference. As indicated in section 2.4, some studies do show that females and males display different patterns of LLS use. These studies usually include indirect LLSs (metacognitive, affective and social) though, whereas the present study did not, and females have been

shown to use indirect strategies (especially affective and social strategies) more often. However, the present study does reveal a significant difference between the overall frequency of female and male reported LLS use. While more or less the same percentage of female and male participants reported medium frequency of overall LLS use, female participants reported significantly more low frequency LLS use than male participants, whereas male participants reported significantly more high frequency LLS use than female participants. This is an interesting finding, since research to date links reported high frequency of LLS use to females (cf. the discussion on LLS use and gender in section 2.4). One reason for the current study's result could be that the male participants, especially given their age (i.e. the fact that they are adolescents), are more self-assured and confident about their own abilities, and therefore tend to rate their frequency of LLS use higher than the female participants do. It may also be more important to them to somehow seem cleverer or better (cf. the discussion of problems with self-reporting tools in section 3.1). Alternatively, it could be that the female respondents put more thought into their responses, yielding a more realistic picture of their strategy use.⁵

Besides the measure of English proficiency, the data collection instruments also most likely had a significant influence on the results of this study. Given the low overall English proficiency of the participants as well as their educational context and age, I believe that the adaptation and translation of the SILL helped participants to comprehend the statements in the questionnaire. However, there were one or two words that some learners did not know in isiXhosa. This could be because they learn English in an environment where there is constant isiXhosa-English code mixing and, because of their age, these learners may know some words only in English. Only three of the 31 statements in the SILL-X had more than ten "5" responses, indicating that the respondent is not sure about or does not know how to respond to the given statement. These three statements are: (i) item 3 – *When I think of the sound of a new word, I also think of what the word looks like written down to help me remember the word*; (ii) item 6 – *When I learn a new word or phrase, I cover the meaning and only look once I've remembered the word*; and (iii) item 21 – *I find out the meaning of an English word or phrase by dividing it into parts that I understand*. The number of "5" responses to these items may indicate either that the statements are not clear enough, or that the respondents are not

⁵ Incidentally, the female group has a slightly higher average English mark than the male group; therefore, if there is a correlation between frequency of LLS use and L2 proficiency, as some studies have shown, one would expect the female participants to use LLSs as least as much as, if not more often than, the male participants.

aware that they indeed use these strategies. Kamper et al. (2003) and Bremner (1999) both point out the vagueness of certain items of the SILL, not only in themselves, but also in terms of age and cultural context, and recommend that the SILL should be thoroughly scrutinised to avoid ambiguities and misinterpretation. While I believe that the translation and modification of the SILL for the purposes of this study (i.e. the development of the SILL-X) was a move in that direction, it might have been useful to pilot the SILL-X before actual application to ensure that it is indeed suitable to the context of the participants.

The SILL-X is easy to administer because it is a hard copy questionnaire and instructions could be given to groups of participants. However, some participants found it difficult to understand what was expected of them and needed individual attention. In one school, the lack of discipline made the management of the group difficult. Some participants took a long time to complete the background questionnaire and the SILL-X, and some participants' attention started waning; therefore the shortened version of the SILL (31 items instead of 50) was more suitable than the full version, as participants only had one school lesson in which to complete the SILL-X. In this context, it may be more effective to include the assistance of another person (preferably a mother tongue speaker of the participants' L1) who has an understanding of the objectives of the study when administering any SILL-based questionnaire. I would also suggest very clear instructions, a demonstration and even a short exercise in completing questionnaires before the test is administered.

The SILL is undoubtedly a valuable instrument for profiling learners' LLS use. Because of its clear structure and easy administration, the SILL is a good point of departure for a study of this nature; however, it does need to be adapted to suit participants' age, cultural and educational contexts, and level of L2 proficiency, otherwise the data may become unreliable and consequently unusable. In certain contexts, researchers may wish to focus on certain LLSs that are assumed to play a more important role in the specific learning environment of the participants rather than to investigate the extensive range of LLSs covered by the SILL – this may even have suited the context of the present study better. Moreover, I believe that the SILL should not be used on its own, but should be supplemented by interviews to help researchers and participants alike to gain a fuller understanding of participants' LLS use (cf. Mahlobo's (1999) SILL-based interviews). The disadvantage is that a much smaller number of participants can be included

compared to using questionnaires only (given inevitable time constraints and practical considerations).

The interviews conducted with the six participants who completed the proficiency test were brief, as our time together was very limited. Also, the interviews could not take place immediately after the SILL-X was administered, and had to be conducted at another time. I therefore did not revisit individual SILL-X items, and instead decided to ask general questions regarding the learners' English language use and learning context. All but one of the participants thought that it was important to speak English well and expressed an eagerness to improve their English. The interviewees' oral proficiency ranged from fairly fluent to barely engaging – one interviewee had only been learning English for a year (her understanding was so limited that she answered 'No' to an obviously open-ended question). One wonders how learners like this one access the curriculum with such limited proficiency in the medium of instruction. The three most proficient interviewees indicated that they attended study groups run by the local university every day after school. Another interviewee said that she played soccer with a university team three times a week. In these cases, the language of communication is English only. Besides these occasions, they reported not speaking English at all outside of school, except when code mixing. To find English reading material, these learners generally had to go to the local library. None of the interviewees owned a dictionary, but they seemed to have access to dictionaries at the library or at the study group – neither of the schools seemed to provide learners with dictionaries.

The interviews with participants 67B and 68B gave an indication that these learners either were not aware of their own LLS use or did not carefully consider the statements when they completed the SILL-X. I asked the interviewees what they did when they did not know how to say something in English (compensation strategies). Participant 67B indicated that she explained what she wanted to say (paraphrase); however, her response to item 31 (*If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing*) was 1 – Never / almost never. Similarly, participant 68B replied after some consideration that he used gestures when he didn't know how to express himself in English. His response to item 25 (*When I can't think of an English word, I use my hands and face (gestures)*) was also 1 – Never / almost never. These discrepancies support the suggestion to supplement an LLS questionnaire with individual interviews (cf. Kamper et al.'s (2003: 173) view that the SILL gives an over-optimistic result of LLS use, and

that interviews can help to give a more realistic result). This also gives participants the opportunity to mention strategies which do not appear on the SILL: one interviewee said that she compensated for a lack of L2 knowledge by saying what she can and then letting the (L1) hearers fill the gaps and interpret what she wanted to say.

In this chapter, I reported and discussed the results of the SILL-X, the standardised English proficiency test and the individual interviews conducted with six of the participants. In the next chapter, I conclude by briefly referring to the limitations and strengths of the research reported here, offering some suggestions for future research and speculating about the implications of my findings for the L2 acquisition of English by isiXhosa-speaking learners, as well as the L2 teaching of English to these learners.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, this concluding chapter briefly considers the limitations and strengths of the research reported in this thesis (section 5.1), offers some suggestions for future research (section 5.2) and speculates about the implications of my findings for the L2 acquisition of English by isiXhosa-speaking learners, as well as the L2 teaching of English to these learners (section 5.3).

5.1 Limitations and strengths

The main limitation of this study is the fact that, for practical reasons, I had to use participants' mid-year English marks as an indication of their English proficiency. These marks, being awarded by two different teachers at two different schools, proved to contain discrepancies that seemed to have influenced the results of the study. However, the comparison of the LLS use of females and males was not influenced by the participants' English marks. Another limitation is that I did not have the opportunity to interview all 75 participants, and therefore had to work only with the data collected by means of the SILL-X. Because of the issues involved in self-reporting, as described in section 3.1, interviews could have been used in combination with the SILL-X data to gain a more realistic view of participants' LLS use. This is supported by the additional insights gained by interviewing six of the participants.

Despite these shortcomings, the study addresses the need for more contributions to research in applied linguistics in a South African context, as expressed by Mahlobo (1990), specifically in the area of LLS use. The thesis also contributes to the relatively scarce existing literature investigating the acquisition of English L2 by L1 speakers of an African language. This is an important field of investigation, given the prominence assigned to English in South Africa today. Despite the value that most South Africans attach to English proficiency, the levels of English proficiency of many South Africans remain relatively low, hampering socio-economic advancement in most cases. In the context of South African history, there is still a great need to empower previously disadvantaged groups. One of the best ways to do this is to ensure proficiency in the language of education, business and technology, and in order to identify *ways* of doing this, careful research is needed into factors influencing English L2 proficiency,

specifically in the South African context. I believe that the research reported in this thesis involves precisely such research, given that its primary aim was to investigate the effect of LLS use on English L2 proficiency in a South African context and that its objectives were clearly expounded and addressed.

5.2 Suggestions for future research

Research on the role of LLSs in L2 acquisition in a South African context is still very limited. Much more research is required to determine the true extent to which LLSs can influence L2 acquisition. One possible avenue of research would involve identifying basic LLSs (for example, using new words in speech and writing, reviewing lessons, skim-reading, summarising, and predicting texts or speech) that can aid beginner to intermediate learners in input-poor and resource-poor environments, where learners may not be motivated to learn the target language. More sophisticated strategies (for example, finding relationships between existing and new knowledge, using words in different ways and contexts, and finding patterns in the target language) can be focused on once the learner has a basic knowledge of the target language and its appropriate use. This "back to basics" approach might help learners and teachers alike to develop skills and strategies for effective language teaching and learning.

Another useful study could involve an investigation into the effectiveness of strategy training (see, for example, studies by Cohen and Apehek 1980 and O'Malley et al. 1985b). This would involve two groups of learners from the same school (who are being taught by the same teacher, or at least from the same lesson plans). Both groups would complete a standardised English L2 proficiency test; the experimental group would then receive LLS training integrated into their classroom English teaching, while the control group would not. After a semester (roughly about six months), the two groups would then complete the same proficiency test again, and might also be asked to complete an adapted version of the SILL. A comparison of the scores obtained by the two groups before and after the six-month period might provide an indication as to whether or not strategy training has an effect on strategy awareness, strategy use and L2 proficiency, which, in turn, would indicate whether or not it is worth incorporating strategy training into the English L2 curriculum in the South African context.

5.3 Implications for L2 teaching and learning

Various learner variables play a role in L2 acquisition. In the case of the research reported here, access to resources, the quality of the learning environment (general schooling and English teaching in particular), and the socio-economic status and educational background of parents all play a vital role. While it might be argued that LLS use is much less significant than any of these other factors, it could play a role in facilitating English L2 acquisition and improving English L2 proficiency precisely in such less than ideal learning environments. Furthermore, including strategy training in the L2 English curriculum might be easier than attempting to address any of the other factors mentioned above.

I therefore believe that it is worthwhile to make L2 teachers and learners aware of the language learning process in general and, more specifically, the skills that can be applied to make language learning easier, more enjoyable and more successful. In particular, LLS use should be integrated into the curriculum, not taught separately, but rather as appropriate to specific learning tasks and the context and needs of the learners. Other learner variables, for example level of education and motivation, can provide guidelines as to which LLSs should be taught and at what stages in the curriculum. This also allows for the planning and preparation of appropriate resources.

I trust that, despite its limitations, this study has made a contribution to our understanding of LLS use and its effect on L2 proficiency, particularly in the context of English L2 acquisition by isiXhosa-speaking high school learners in the Western Cape. It is my hope that the body of research into this field will grow to the point where it can make a tangible difference to teaching and learning in South Africa.

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Appendix A: English Version of the SILL-X

Below, you will find 31 statements about learning English. Please read each statement and tell us whether the statement applies to you or not by choosing one of the following options:

- 1 – Never / almost never
- 2 – Seldom
- 3 – Often
- 4 – Always / almost always
- 5 – Don't know / not sure

Make a cross underneath the option that applies to you.

Part A

1. I try to link what I already know with new things I learn in English.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

2. I use new words or phrases when I speak or write to help me remember them.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

3. When I think of the sound of a new word, I also think of what the word looks like written down to help me remember the word.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

4. When I think of the sound of a new word, I also think of a picture to help me remember the word.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

5. I remember a new word or phrase by thinking of a situation in which someone might use the word.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

6. When I learn a new word or phrase, I cover the meaning and only look once I've remembered the word.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

7. I make up rhymes or songs to remember new words and grammar.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

8. I act out new words or phrases to help me remember them.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

9. I read through my previous English lessons.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

10. I remember new words by thinking of what they look like on a page, the board or on a sign.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

Part B

11. I say or write new words several times to remember them.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

12. I try to talk like English-speaking people.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

13. I practise the sounds of English out loud.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

14. I start talking to people in English.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

15. I watch English TV or English films.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

16. I read in English.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

17. I write notes, messages or letters in English.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

18. When I have to read in English, I first read through the text quickly, then I go back and read it carefully.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

19. I look for words and grammar in my own language that are similar to what I learn in English.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

20. I try to find patterns in English words and grammar.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

21. I find out the meaning of an English word or phrase by dividing it into parts that I understand.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

22. When I read or listen to English, I try not to translate word for word, but rather to get the general meaning of what is being written or said.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

23. When I hear or read something in English, I think of a short version (summary) to remember the information.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

Part C

24. I guess the meaning of English words I do not know.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

25. When I can't think of an English word, I use my hands and face (gestures).

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

26. If I can't think of the right words when I speak English, I use the isiXhosa word instead.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

27. If I can't understand what someone is saying in English, I ask the person to explain, repeat himself or speak slower.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

28. If I can't think of the right words when I speak English, I ask another isiXhosa speaker to help me.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

29. I read English without looking up every word I don't understand in the dictionary.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

30. I try to guess what the other person will say next when I speak English with someone.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

31. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

1. Never / almost never	2. Seldom	3. Often	4. Always / almost always	5. Don't know / not sure

Appendix B: IsiXhosa Version of the SILL-X

Apha ngezantsi uya kufumana iintetho ezi-31 malunga nokufunda isiNgesi. Khuwuncede uyifude intetho ngenye usixelele nokuba le ntetho ibhekisela kuwe okanye hayi/akunjalo. Khawusixelele ngokukhetha enye into enyuliweyo phakathi kwezi zilandelayo:

- 1 – nakanye / phantse nakanye (never / almost never)
- 2 – -nqoza (seldom)
- 3 – kaninzi (often)
- 4 – rhoqo / phantse rhoqo (always / almost always)
- 5 – andiyazi / andiqinisekanga (don't know / not sure)

Beka i-X phantsi kwendawo ebhekisela kuwe.

Isahlulo A

1. Ndizama ukuyidibanisa into endiyaziyo nezinto ezintsha endizifunda ngesiNgesi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

2. Ndisebenzisa amazwi okanye amabinzana xa ndithetha okanye ndibhala ngokundincedisa ukuwakhumbula.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

3. Xa ndicinga ngesandi selizwi elitsha, ndizama ukucinga eli lizwi libonakalisa kanjani na xa libhaliswa ukuze lindincede ukulikhumbula eli lizwi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

4. Xa ndicinga ngesandi selizwi elitsha, ndizama ukucinga ngomfanekiso ukuze undincede ukulikhumbula eli lizwi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

5. Ndikhumbula ilizwi okanye ibinzana elitsha ngokucinga ngemeko ethile yokulisebenzisa eli lizwi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

6. Xa ndifunda ilizwi okanye ibinzana elitsha, ndiyayifihla intsingiselo yalo ndiphinde ndiyijonge kuphela xa ndiyikhumbule intsingiselo yeli lizwi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

7. Ndiyazenza iimvano-siphelo okanye amaculo ukuze ndizikhumbule amazwi amatsha negrama/ nemigaqo-ntetho.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

8. Ndizenza iintshukumo ngezahlulo zomzimba wam (ngomzekelo izandla zam nentloko yam) ukundinceda ukuwakhumbula amazwi okanye amabinzana amatsha.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

9. Ndifunda ngezifundiso zam zesiNgesi ezingaphambili.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

10. Ndikhumbula amazwi amatsha ngokucinga ukuba abonakala kanjani na ephephini, ebhodini okanye kwisalathiso.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

Isahlolo B

11. Ndiphinda ngokuwathetha okanye ngokuwabhala amazwi amatsha ukuze ndiwakhumbule.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

12. Ndizama ukuthetha nabantu abasithetha isiNgesi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

13. Ndidla ngokuzithetha ngokuvakalayo izisadi sesiNgesi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

14. Ndiqala ukuthetha nabantu ngesiNgesi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

15. Ndiqwalasela iTV nefilim ngesiNgesi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

16. Ndiyazifunda iincwadi, oolindexesha okanye amaphepha-ndaba.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

17. Ndiyazibhala izikhumbuzi, imiyalelo neencwadi ngesiNgesi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

18. Xa ndifanele ukusifunda isiNgesi, ndiqala ngokufunda amazwi ngokukhawuleza, ndiphinde ndibuye ngokuwafunda ngokungakhawulezi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

19. Ndifuna amazwi negrama akhoyo elwimini lwam afana nawo endiwafundayo ngesiNgesi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

20. Ndizama ukuzifumana iindlela yenkqubo ngamazwi negrama ngesiNgesi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

21. Ndiqwalasela intsingiselo yelizwi okanye ibinzana ngesiNgesi ngokuzihlukanisa nezahlulo zalo endiziqondayo.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

22. Xa ndisifunda okanye ndisimamela isiNgesi, ndizama ukungaguquli lizwi ngelizwi, kodwa ndizama ukuyiqqa intsingiselo jikelele yento ebhaliweyo okanye ethethwayo.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

23. Xa ndimamela okanye ndiyifunda into ngesiNgesi, ndicinga ngendlela yokuyishwankathela ukuze ndikukhumbule ukwazisa.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

Isahluko C

24. Ukuba andiyazi intsingiselo yamazwi esiNgesi ndiyawathelekelela.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

25. Ukuba andikwazi ukucinga ngelizwi elithile lesiNgesi, ndithetha ngezandla zam nangobuso bam.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

26. Ukuba andikwazi ukucinga ngelizwi elilungileyo xa ndisithetha isiNgesi, ndilisebenzisa ilizwi elisisiXhosa endaweni yalo.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

27. Ukuba andikwazi ukuqqa into ethethiweyo ngumntu ngesiNgesi, ndicela lo mtu ukucacisa, ukuphinda okanye ukuthetha ngokungakhawulezi.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

28. Ukuba andikwazi ukucinga ngamazwi alungileyo xa ndisithetha isiNgesi, ndicela omnye umntu othetha isiXhosa andincede.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

29. Ndiyasifunda isiNgesi ngaphandle kokulifuna edikshinari ilizwi ngalinye endingaliqondiyo.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

30. Ndizama ukuthelekisa le nto ilandelayo iya kuthethwa ngomntu xa ndisithetha isiNgesi nalo mntu.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

31. Ukuba andikwazi ukucinga ngelizwi lesiNgesi, ndisebenzisa ilizwi okanye ibinzana elisingisela into efanayo.

1. nakanye / phantse nakanye	2. -nqoza	3. kaninzi	4. rhoqo/ phantse rhoqo	5. andiyazi / andiqinisekanga

Appendix C: Background Questionnaire in English

Subject Number: _____

NB: All information on this questionnaire will remain confidential

A. Personal Information

Surname: _____ First name: _____

Telephone number: _____ Best time to contact: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Sex: Male Female

Year of birth: _____

Place of birth: City _____ Country _____

If you were not born in South Africa, how long have you been living here? _____

B. First Language (Mother Tongue)

1. What is your first language? _____

2. What is the first language of: your mother? _____ your father? _____

3. Which language(s) did you speak at home as a child? _____

4. Is your first language the language with which you are the most comfortable? Yes No

4.1 If you answered 'No' to the question above, please explain:

C. Education and Language Use

1. Which language(s) were you formally educated in? Where (city and country)?

	Languages	Where
Primary / Elementary school		
Secondary / High school		

2. Which language(s) do you use:

at home	
in social situations	
at school	

D. Second Languages: English

1. For how long have you been exposed to English? _____

2. For how long have you been receiving instruction in English as an additional language?

3. Approximately how many hours a week do you use English outside the classroom?

4. Approximately how many hours a week are you exposed to English outside the classroom?

5. Are you using any other means for learning English (for example grammar books, educational video or audio tapes, television)? If yes, please specify:

6. Please rate your linguistic ability in English and any other languages you know (please specify these), **excluding** your mother tongue.

Use the following abbreviations:

- L = low
- I = intermediate
- A = advanced
- NN = near native

	English			
Reading				
Writing				
Speaking				
Listening				
Overall Competence				

Thank you for your time!

Appendix D: Background Questionnaire in IsiXhosa

Subject Number: _____

NB: All information in this questionnaire will remain confidential.

A. Inkcukacha ngobomi bakho

Ifani: _____ Igama lokuqala: _____

Inombolo yomnxeba: _____ Ixesha elingcono lokuthinta: _____

Idilesi: _____

I-imeyile: _____

Ubuni: Indoda Umfazi

Unyaka wokuzalwa _____

Isixeko owazalelwa kuso _____ Ilizwe _____

Okokuba awuzalelwanga apha eMzantsi Afrika, lixesha elingakanani uhlala apha?

B. Ulwimi lwasekhaya (Mother tongue)

1. Yintoni ulwimi lwakho lokuqala? _____

2. Yintoni ulwimi lokuqala luka mama wakho? _____ elikatata
wakho lona? _____

3. Zeziphi ilwimi owawuzithetha okanye ozithethayo ngoku usengumntwana ekhaya?

4. Ingaba ulwimi lwakho lokuqala lulwimi oluthetha nje kakuhle? Ewe Hayi

4.1 Okokuba impendulo yakho nguhayi, nceda ucacise.

C. Imfundo nosetyenziso kolwimi

1. Loluphi ulwimi ofundiswe ngalo? Phi? (chaza isixeko nelizwe)

	Ulwimi	Phi?
Kumabanga aphantsi (primary school)		
Esinaleni (high school)		

2. Zeziphi ilwimi ozisebenzisayo:

ekhaya	
ekuhlaleni	
esikolweni	

D. Ulwimi lwesibini isiNgesi

1. Lixesha elingaka nanni uthetha isiNgesi? _____

2. Lixesha elingakanani ufumana imiyalelo ngesiNgesi?

3. Ngeveki lixesha elingakanani usebenzisa isiNgesi?

4. Ngeveki lixesha elingakanani usebenzisa isiNgesi ungekho segumbini lokufundela?

5. Ingaba uyazisebenzisa na ezinye izixhobo ukufunda isiNgesi umzekelo, umabonakude, iteyipu, ividiyo ezifundisayo njalo njalo?

6. Nceda ubonakalise indlela osivangayo isiNgesi nolunye ulwimi.

Zichaze kanje:

- 1 – Kancinci
- 2 – Kancinci okuphakathi
- 3 – Kakuhle
- 4 - Ngokugqwesileyo

	IsiNgesi			
Ukufunda				
Ukubhala				
Ukuthetha				
Ukumamela				
Xa zizonke				

Enkosi ngexesha lakho!

Appendix E: Results of the SILL-X Showing Frequency of LLS Use for Individual Participants, Indicated as Average Scores^a

Participant	Gender (F/M) ^b	Age	Frequency of LLS use					English mid-year mark
			Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Total average	Frequency of overall strategy use ^c	
1A	F	17	3.33	3.46	3.38	3.39	Medium	40
2A	F	17	3.11	2.91	1.67	2.56	Medium	49
3A	M	16	3.33	2.77	3	3.03	Medium	21
4A	F	17	2.89	2.31	1.88	2.36	Low	32
5A	M	16	3.29	3.11	2.33	2.91	Medium	8
6A	F	16	2.9	2.58	2.88	2.79	Medium	31
7A	F	17	3.13	3	3.14	3.09	Medium	71
8A	F	15	3.2	2.69	2.88	2.92	Medium	42
9A	M	17	2.67	3.2	3	2.96	Medium	51
10A	F	19	2.89	2.78	2.33	2.67	Medium	22
11A	F	16	2.7	2.56	2.17	2.47	Low	62
12A	F	15	2.86	3.25	1.63	2.58	Medium	53
13A	F	15	3	2.38	2.5	2.63	Medium	47
14A	F	19	3.6	3.62	3.63	3.61	High	51
15A	F	21	3.5	3.85	3.38	3.57	High	52
16A	F	18	2.43	2.69	3.25	2.79	Medium	56
17A	M	15	3.22	3.5	3.17	3.3	Medium	52
18A	F	17	3.22	3.23	3.5	3.32	Medium	69
19A	M	16	3.4	3.55	3.75	3.57	High	81
20A	F	16	3.1	3.46	3.63	3.4	Medium	43
21A	F	17	2.3	2.38	2.75	2.48	Low	50
22A	F	18	3.43	2.69	3	3.04	Medium	46
23A	F	18	3.44	3.38	3.25	3.36	Medium	22
24A	M	16	3.44	3.69	3.63	3.59	High	30
25A	M	20	2.89	2.69	2	2.53	Medium	60
26A	F	18	3	3.08	1.75	2.61	Medium	45
27A	M	18	3	3.25	3	3.08	Medium	31
28A	M	15	3.8	3.54	3.63	3.65	High	81
29A	M	16	3.8	3.62	3.63	3.68	High	55
30A	M	17	2.4	2.82	2.75	2.66	Medium	51
31A	F	16	3.13	3.33	2.71	3.06	Medium	52
32A	F	15	2.3	2.77	2.38	2.48	Low	64
33A	F	17	2.67	2.4	2.8	2.62	Medium	59
34A	M	16	3.38	3.1	3.14	3.21	Medium	34
35A	F	15	3.6	3.17	3.38	3.38	Medium	27
36B	F	15	2.5	3.08	2.57	2.72	Medium	35
37B	M	17	3.22	3.46	3.5	3.39	Medium	40
38B	F	14	3	3.08	3.13	3.07	Medium	30
39B	M	17	3.38	3.42	3.75	3.51	High	36
40B	M	15	2.4	2.85	2.63	2.62	Medium	40
41B	F	16	2.9	2.92	2.88	2.9	Medium	33
42B	M	18	2.9	2.75	3.13	2.93	Medium	32
43B	F	18	3.44	3.17	3.25	3.29	Medium	22
44B	M	18	3.4	3.62	3.38	3.46	Medium	29
45B	F	16	2.6	3.08	2.86	2.85	Medium	30
46B	F	15	2.5	2.5	2.29	2.43	Low	38

Participant	Gender (F/M) ^b	Age	Frequency of LLS use					English mid-year mark
			Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Total average	Frequency of overall strategy use ^c	
47B	F	16	2.4	2.23	1.88	2.17	Low	27
48B	F	16	3.1	3.54	2.75	3.13	Medium	42
49B	M	16	3	3.62	2.25	2.96	Medium	46
50B	F	17	3.13	2.36	2.88	2.79	Medium	43
51B	M	19	2.56	2.67	3.13	2.78	Medium	24
52B	F	15	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.4	Medium	39
53B	M	19	3.4	3.5	2.63	3.19	Medium	18
54B	F	15	2.5	2.45	2.43	2.46	Low	46
55B	M	15	3.22	3.25	3	3.16	Medium	30
56B	M	15	3.1	3.23	3.75	3.36	Medium	43
57B	F	15	2.7	3.15	3	2.95	Medium	46
58B	F	19	2.8	2.11	1	1.97	Low	15
59B	M	15	3.78	3.67	3.57	3.67	High	43
60B	F	15	3.22	3.18	2.57	2.99	Medium	15
61B	M	16	2.33	3	1.88	2.4	Low	37
62B	M	15	3.4	3.69	3.63	3.57	High	27
63B	F	16	2.75	3.13	2.5	2.79	Medium	37
64B	F	20	3.56	3.85	4	3.8	High	29
65B	M	16	2.9	2.9	1.75	2.52	Medium	29
66B	M	17	2.9	2.62	2.88	2.8	Medium	27
67B	F	16	3	3	2.33	2.78	Medium	17
68B	M	15	2.7	3	2	2.57	Medium	48
69B	F	20	2.78	3.23	3.38	3.13	Medium	37
70B	M	18	2.5	3	2.71	2.74	Medium	7
71B	M	17	3.33	3.5	3.88	3.57	High	18
72B	M	16	3	3.08	3.25	3.12	Medium	37
73B	M	17	2.5	2.58	2.63	2.57	Medium	39
74B	F	16	3.4	3.62	3.63	3.55	High	32
75B	M	17	3.43	3.5	3.5	3.48	Medium	37
Av totals			3.03	3.08	2.89	3	Medium	

^a Scores range from 1 to 4 where 1 = Never / almost never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Often; and 4 = Always / almost always. See section 4.1 for an explanation of how the scores in the table were calculated.

^b F = female; M = male

^c Low (> 1; ≤ 2.5); Medium (> 2.5; ≤ 3.5); High (> 3.5)

**Appendix F: Results of the SILL-X Showing Individual Participants' Preferences
for Specific Strategy Types^a**

Participant	Gender (F/M)^b	Age	Preferred strategy type (A / B / C / Comb)^c	English mid- year mark
1A	F	17	B	40
2A	F	17	A	49
3A	M	16	A	21
4A	F	17	A	32
5A	M	16	A	8
6A	F	16	A	31
7A	F	17	C	71
8A	F	15	A	42
9A	M	17	B	51
10A	F	19	A	22
11A	F	16	A	62
12A	F	15	B	53
13A	F	15	A	47
14A	F	19	C	51
15A	F	21	B	52
16A	F	18	C	56
17A	M	15	B	52
18A	F	17	C	69
19A	M	16	C	81
20A	F	16	C	43
21A	F	17	C	50
22A	F	18	A	46
23A	F	18	A	22
24A	M	16	B	30
25A	M	20	A	60
26A	F	18	B	45
27A	M	18	B	31
28A	M	15	A	81
29A	M	16	A	55
30A	M	17	B	51
31A	F	16	B	52
32A	F	15	B	64
33A	F	17	C	59
34A	M	16	A	34
35A	F	15	A	27
36B	F	15	B	35
37B	M	17	C	40
38B	F	14	C	30
39B	M	17	C	36
40B	M	15	B	40
41B	F	16	B	33
42B	M	18	C	32
43B	F	18	A	22
44B	M	18	B	29

Participant	Gender (F/M) ^b	Age	Preferred strategy type (A / B / C / Comb) ^c	English mid-year mark
45B	F	16	B	30
46B	F	15	Comb (A & B)	38
47B	F	16	A	27
48B	F	16	B	42
49B	M	16	B	46
50B	F	17	A	43
51B	M	19	C	24
52B	F	15	Comb (B & C)	39
53B	M	19	B	18
54B	F	15	A	46
55B	M	15	B	30
56B	M	15	C	43
57B	F	15	B	46
58B	F	19	A	15
59B	M	15	A	43
60B	F	15	A	15
61B	M	16	B	37
62B	M	15	B	27
63B	F	16	B	37
64B	F	20	C	29
65B	M	16	B	29
66B	M	17	A	27
67B	F	16	Comb (A & B)	17
68B	M	15	B	48
69B	F	20	C	37
70B	M	18	B	7
71B	M	17	C	18
72B	M	16	C	37
73B	M	17	C	39
74B	F	16	C	32
75B	M	17	Comb (B & C)	37

^a See section 4.1 for an explanation of how the scores in the table were calculated.

^b F = female; M = male

^c A = memory; B = cognitive; C = compensation; Comb = combination of two strategy types