STRATEGIES OF VOCABULARY LEARNING OF AAU FRESHMEN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Strategies of Vocabulary Learning of AAU Freshmen Learning English as a Second/Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is an important component of foreign/second language acquisition. Knowledge of vocabulary is crucial for learning language skills in reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Both language teachers and learners feel that learning vocabulary is a difficult task, because there are too many different vocabulary items in any language. Each item has different meanings and these meanings are dynamic.

This thesis addresses the issue of vocabulary from the learner's point of view. It provides a detailed analysis of strategies for English vocabulary acquisition by Ethiopian tertiary level students. In doing so, it draws from two domains of second/foreign language learning, namely, vocabulary and strategy. Within the framework of these two domains it focuses on L2 vocabulary acquisition strategies. It is primarily concerned with identifying strategies learners use at this level of learning.

It investigates two related aspects of the learning process- the interaction between systemic(linguistic) and strategy knowledge in a classroom learning context. It is assumed that the learning context may determine the rate and type of strategy use.

Processes involved in vocabulary acquisition are examined first, the concept of 'strategy' is surveyed next as it is found along with other related concepts such as 'process' 'study habits' and 'techniques' or in learning and communication strategies. The concepts of both 'vocabulary' and 'strategy' are combined next through reviews of the literature.

Vocabulary acquisition strategies are investigated through a *two stage* and *four phase* design where two sets of data (quantitative and qualitative) were collected at each stage using a multi-method approach comprising questionnaires, interviews and think-aloud. At *stage one* data for the pilot study were collected and analysed. At *stage two* data for the mainline study were gathered from 143 learners.

The data are analysed using quantitative and qualitative techniques. The results shed some light on learners' profile of strategy use, first, of the entire sample population, second, of two achievement groups of students.

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CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This Chapter sets the scene for the present study of vocabulary acquisition. It states the purpose of the study, and surveys the background to the educational system in Ethiopia. Regarding this, emphasis is put on the teaching/learning of English (ELT) in general, and of vocabulary in particular. It also provides the assumptions, and describes the organisation of the thesis.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

This thesis aims at providing a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the strategies of vocabulary acquisition (or simply vocabulary acquisition strategies, hereafter VAS) used by the Ethiopian students at first year university level to cope with the academic demands put on them by tertiary level education.

There are two purposes for this analysis, viz, a principal one and a secondary one. The main purpose is to provide pedagogical recommendations for vocabulary instruction for students learning ESL/EFL at first year university level. The secondary purpose is to throw light on second language learning (L2) theory as far as VAS are concerned. In other words, the study is part of the endeavour to integrate strategy with linguistics, especially with the acquisition of lexical meaning. We, therefore, place this thesis within the context of ELT in the Ethiopian situation and within L2 acquisition and strategy research. The former justifies our focus on vocabulary teaching-learning problems at tertiary level classrooms and the latter justifies our focus on VAS in L2.

In order to make clear these two points, it is essential, first of all, to survey the ELT (English language teaching-learning) situation in Ethiopia; secondly, to try to examine the theoretical issues relevant to the study. ELT in Ethiopia can be best

understood by looking at modern education system in Ethiopia, language use and language policy, the place of the English language in Ethiopia.

Since university education is a continuation of the lower (i.e., senior and junior high schools) levels of the educational system in the country, an attempt is made to examine the ELT situation at these levels within the general frame of educational problems in the country.

The section on the overview of the tertiary level education gives a brief description of Addis Ababa University (AAU), its various programmes, including its staff and students. A greater emphasis is put on the Freshman Programme and freshmen, and the Institute of Language Studies (ILS), since the subjects for the present study were selected from the Freshman Programme and the ELT is catered by ILS. This section also presents an effort made to evaluate ESL vocabulary instruction in AAU. Finally, the Chapter ends with the statement of the importance of the study, formulating the research questions and assumptions, and stating the organisation of the thesis.

1.3 Modern education in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the largest countries in Africa with an area of over 1,220,000 square kilometres and a population of nearly 51 million. Modern education was introduced into the country in the first decade of this century, although Ethiopia had had a centuries-old religion-oriented traditional system of education associated with the Orthodox Church and Islam. Modern education was a product of Western culture both in form and content. The first government school was opened in the Capital, Addis Ababa, in 1908 (McNab, 1989:). Around this period and shortly afterwards, several primary and secondary high schools were established in some regional towns. The development of higher education was not implemented until 1950 when the new Addis Ababa University (AAU), the then University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA), was founded. UCAA graduated its 13 first Bachelor's Degree students in 1954.

1.4 Language Policy in Ethiopia

Although the exact number of languages in Ethiopia is not yet known, it is widely believed that there are more than 81 languages in the country. The 1995 language survey shows that, with the exclusion of two languages, namely, Geeze and Gaffat, which are said to be functionally inactive, there are 79 languages.

Some earlier literature, for example, Bender, et al (1976) say there are "seventy plus" known languages in Ethiopia which are divided into four families:

a) Semitic, consisting of 12 languages including Amharic, the official or the working language of the country;
b) Cushitic, consisting of 22 languages including Oromo with 11 million speakers;
c) Omotic, with 18 languages; and
d) Nilo-Saharan, comprising 18 languages.

Bender, et al. (1976) identify four languages which are so important in the life of the country either by the number of their native speakers or the range of their use as second languages that they may be called the 'major languages' of the country. These are Amharic (the official language), Tigrigna, Oromo and English (functional).

Amharic was declared the official language in the 1955 revised Constitution of Ethiopia (Negarit Gazeta, 1955 in McNab 1989). It was the language of instruction in the primary school, particularly in government-run schools, until 1992. This policy has long been opposed and bitterly criticised by speakers of other local languages.

However, it was taken as a unifying and integrative force on the part of the government. McNab (1989:86-7), citing Markakis (1974), describes the situation as follows:

> Amharic became one of the most important symbols of, and also the means for achieving, national integration in the cultural sphere. As the language of government, Amharic was the tool in the struggle for political integration, Amharic skills being necessary for inclusion in national political life.

Since 1992, following the change in government, several mother tongue languages (hereafter L1) are being used as medium of instruction in formal primary education (Grades 1-4).

Likewise, the use and status of English has also changed since 1992. This and some related issues are examined in the next section.

1.5 The role of English in Ethiopia

Officially, as pointed out earlier, the introduction of the English language into Ethiopia dates back to the beginning of this century, when the first modern school was opened in 1908 (McNab, 1989). English was then taught as a subject along with Italian, while French was used as the medium of instruction.

After the end of the 5-year Italian occupation of Ethiopia, however, English became the medium of instruction, replacing French, at all levels. According to the information documented by the British Council (British Council 1986), English acquired its position as the second official language next to Amharic. The shift from French to English as a medium of instruction could be seen as being a reflection of the new and growing link with Britain - a link which developed during the exile in Britain of the former Emperor, Hailesilassie, and was further strengthened by the military assistance given by Britain which helped end the Italian occupation.

Starting from the first quarter of the century, therefore, English has been playing an important role in Ethiopia, not only in the education system, but also in other areas, namely, in business, government, and international relations. This could be the reason why Bender et al (1976:12) write:

> English has a negligible number of native speakers in Ethiopia, but at the present time it has a crucial position in education, commerce, government, and international communication, and from this point of view it can be regarded as a major Ethiopian language.

1.5.1 English Outside the Educational System

Outside the educational system, English in Ethiopia is used in international organisations such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the International Livestock Centre for Africa (ILCA), to mention a few, all of which have their headquarters in Addis Ababa. The importance of English in Ethiopia is thus enhanced by the fact that Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, is also the seat of many international organisations.

English is also used in government, in the country's banks, insurance corporations, hospitals, airlines, and in external relations, both diplomatic and business, and so on. Laws are published in both Amharic and English. The country's currency and postage stamps are printed in both languages, and English usually appears side by side with Amharic in government notices, receipts and forms (Cooper, 1976). In addition to some international English newspapers and magazines, there is also an English daily, *The Ethiopian Herald*, and the national radio and television stations broadcast programmes in English. Very recently some private newspapers have started appearing in English. Almost all cinema and television films are in English. But the most significant role of the English language in the modernisation and development efforts of Ethiopia has, however, been in the educational system.

1.5.2 English in the Educational System

An Ethiopian pupil, at the age of 4 to 6/7, goes either to an Orthodox Church school or to a Quranic school or to either a government, or a non-government school. For our discussion regarding the role of the English language in Ethiopia only the latter two school types, government- and non-government schools, are of direct relevance. English in the government schools needs to be discussed separately from English in non-government schools, since the ELT situation in these schools is quite different. We shall consider first English in government schools, and then outline the ELT situation in non-government schools.

1.5.2.1 English in Government Schools

i) English in Primary Education

Before 1992, the primary objective of primary education (Grades 1-6) in the country was to provide pupils with basic education in science and social science in Amharic.

It also aimed at preparing pupils for the next higher level, academic and vocational (technical, commercial, agricultural, and sports) education.

In 1958-9, Amharic was introduced as a medium of instruction in the primary schools and taught as a subject from Grade 2 onwards. English was taught as a subject from Grades 3 to 6. This meant that ELT was to be delayed until Grade 3. The reasons were: (1) English was a third language for a large number of pupils, and therefore, (2) it was a burden for the pupils at such an early stage (Tesfaye Shewaye and Taylor, 1976). English was given a weekly four or five periods in grades 3 and 4, and five or six periods in grades 5 and 6. Textbooks consisted of New Method Primer (West), Pictorial English Grammar (French). Exclusively, teachers at this level were Ethiopians who had graduated from teacher training institutions (TTI). It was a self-contained stage as it ended with academic national examination.

ii) English in Secondary Education

Before 1992, the secondary school education consisted of two levels, viz, the junior (or Grades 7-8) and the senior secondary (or Grades 9-12).

1. English in Junior Secondary Education

At junior level a 2-year course was provided. It was a continuation of the primary education (Grades 1-6) where a wide range of academic and vocational courses was offered. This level in the government school education system was and still be critical in that English starts here as a medium of instruction, and serves as entry into continued academic studies and vocational education. The aim of the English courses in the junior secondary grades is "to provide an intensive course in English language skills" (Ministry of Education, 1963). Again, all English language teachers are Ethiopians. This level of education was and still is a self-contained stage, since it ends with a national examination.

2. English in Senior Secondary Education

This was the level in which a 4-year course was provided. In the first two years (Grades 9 and 10), all students follow the same general academic and vocational

courses. Starting from Grade 11, they were streamed into Science, Arts, and Vocational courses leading to the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE), the national examination which determines entry to the tertiary level, including university level education.

English continued as the language of instruction and was taught as a subject throughout both junior and senior secondary schools. Teachers at this level are Ethiopian graduates trained at AAU or from colleges as well as expatriates, mainly Indians.

This state of affairs of language and education has partially changed since 1992. Since then English is being taught as a subject starting from Grade 1 rather than from Grade 3. Amharic is no longer a medium of instruction, except in some regions, mainly where it is spoken as an L1. Changes have also been introduced into education levels. Grades 1-4 are labelled First Cycle of Basic Education and Grades 5-8 referred to as Second Cycle of Basic Education. The last level, Grades 9-12, has two cycles, viz, First Cycle of Secondary Education (Grades 9-10) and Second Cycle of Secondary Education (General education and training policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, June 1992, Vol. 2, pp. 37-43). English continues as a medium of instruction from Grade 7 onwards. The coursebook, English for New Ethiopia (19) and additional supplementary reading materials are being used.

1.5.2.2 Non-government schools

These are mission, international community, and privately owned schools. The non-government school type provides primary and secondary education and mostly independently of the state-run schools, although particularly privately owned schools are required to function within the general framework of the National Curriculum prepared by the Ministry of Education.

Below are six features that are generally believed to characterise these schools and their students as far as ELT is concerned:

1. Children start learning English at nursery level, and also begin studying the basics of main subjects in English as early as Grades 1 and 2.
2. Class size in these schools is small, ranging from 25 to 35 pupils per class, which is at least 3 times less than in government-run schools.
3. They are staffed with experienced Ethiopian and native speakers of English.
4. The textbooks are different from the ones that are prepared for students in government-run schools by the Ministry of Education.
5. Nearly every year, a high rate of passes and the highest scores on English in ESLCE is from these schools.
6. Generally, English language teachers and students at the University believe that students who come from these schools are more fluent in English than those who come from government-run schools.

1.6 English Teaching Materials

Before 1967, teaching materials for English were imported from Britain, probably entailing the question of level and suitability to different contexts (Teshome Wagaw, 1979).

In 1968 work started on the adaptation of the NEW OXFORD ENGLISH COURSE (NOEC) for Uganda to NOEC for Ethiopia for primary level students and preparation of the Oxford Secondary English Course (OSEC) for secondary schools and the books were Ethiopian -oriented.

The OSEC series attempted to include skills other than linguistic ones.

1.7 Learning and Teaching Style in Ethiopian Schools

Literature reviewed in Hailemichael (1993) states that the teaching methodology adopted by teachers in the schools is characterised by the lecture method whereby the teacher does most of the talking and the students listen passively or copy down notes from the blackboard. This has encouraged rote learning, too much teacher-dependence and examination consciousness (Teshome Wagaw, 1979; Madsen 1976). It appears to be endemic in many countries in Africa and Asia (Ellis, 1986;

Rea, 1986), where the teacher is believed to be all-knowing. The teacher's role is to give knowledge, while the learners' role is to receive it.

Routine lecturing on the part of teachers and rote learning on that of students have, therefore, given rise, in the case of English, to "the abdication of English teaching in favour of examination teaching" (Madsen, 1976), which means that students are encouraged to memorise "lay formulas" that do not help them to develop skills and strategies in learning in general, and language learning and use in particular.

According to Ellis (1994: 277-8), this type of style is an example of traditional approach to language teaching-learning where the target language is perceived primarily as an 'object' to be mastered by learning about its formal properties, the teacher typically acts as a 'knower/informer' and the learner as an 'information seeker'.

1.8 Education at Tertiary Level: AAU

Tertiary level education in Ethiopia is provided by various colleges, teacher training institutions, and universities (AAU, and Alamaya Agricultural University). We will be concerned only with AAU, since, as we mentioned earlier, this study is based on students learning at AAU.

The AAU has been established with faculties of Arts, Science, Medicine, Engineering, Education, Law, Business and Administration, and Institute of Language Studies, and other research institutions. Its stated objectives are to provide manpower needed for industrial and agricultural development, to train professionals and teachers for the country's demands. The University offers a whole range of studies in its faculties. For most of the disciplines, the University programmes end in 4 years leading to the bachelor's degrees. In some cases this may end in 5 or 6 years. Programmes leading to master's and doctoral degrees are also being conducted.

The teaching of English which starts at the primary level continues throughout junior and secondary schools up to the second year of university education. The medium of instruction and communication in AAU is the English language. For example, staff meetings and discussions are conducted in English.

Given that English plays an important role both in the educational system and outside of it in Ethiopia, the question that follows is: "Is it a second or a foreign language in the Ethiopian situation?". We have no easy answer to this question as it is extremely difficult to defend its status either as a second or a foreign language. However, based on what has been said so far about the importance of English in Ethiopia and its role in the educational system of the country, we would rather place it somewhere in the middle of a second-foreign language continuum and refer to it simply as 'second language (L2)', unless and otherwise special specification is needed.

1.8.1 Academic Staff and Students

A good deal of information on AAU is found in Bhagavan (1989). According to Bhagavan, the total number of full-time academic staff in 1987/88 was 762, of which 17 per cent were expatriates from different countries. 62 per cent had Bachelor's and Master's Degrees or their equivalent while the remaining, 38 per cent, had a Doctorate Degree or its equivalent (Bhagavan, 1989).

Bhagavan also says that between the years 1977-87, student numbers quadrupled to a total of 17,992, of which 4929 were studying in the University's Extension Programme (evening classes), 2234 participating in summer courses and 288 in the School of Graduate Studies. 10541 were regular students in the University's undergraduate programme, of whom 2860 were freshmen. Of the latter, according to Bhagavan, 56 per cent registered for natural sciences and engineering subjects. This accelerated rate of increase in student enrolment has created tremendous pressure on the manpower and material resources that are available.

1.8.2 Faculties and Programmes

Furthermore, Baghavan (ibid.) examines student life on AAU campus. With the growing number of students in the University and the resultant spread of available material resources, student life on the campuses has been far from being satisfying to them. Bhagavan (1989:9) describes the situation as follows:

> The rapid growth in student numbers without commensurate rise in the financial resources and physical assets of the University has led to sharp deterioration in the quality of the dormitory accommodation, catering, library, laboratory, classroom and other infrastructural facilities and services.

A frequent source of complaint has been the inadequacy of food and the non-availability of textbooks in sufficient numbers. A number of students, particularly freshmen, have been reported to have fainted as a result of long hours of study and inadequate food (Hailemichael, 1993).

With little or no assistance as to how s/he should go about his/her university studies, the student is left to himself or herself. In a study of the problems and the environment in which the AAU student lives, Yusuf Omer Abdi (1981:2) writes:

> Ethiopian students are seen struggling on their own to swim safely in the academic world. Some students use their own personally fabricated trial and error approach in gaining academic success. Some get amateurish advice from their teachers, parents and friends.

1.8.2.1 The Freshman Programme

This study, as stated earlier, is set to examine ***Strategies for Vocabulary Acquisition*** (or ***VAS***) of first year students. These learners will be represented by the students in the Freshman Programme of the Social Sciences stream or 'College' of Social Sciences as it is sometimes called.

The Social Sciences stream has various faculties and institutions which, in turn, divide up into various departments. These include the Institute of Language Studies, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics, and the Freshman Programme.

All newly admitted students have to pass through one-year of what is called the 'Freshman programme' (FMP). It is in this Programme that students from all over the country come together and take common courses, irrespective of their ELT background.

They are assigned to various sections of different common courses randomly or according to alphabetical order.

This programme has been viewed as a stepping stone to the students' main areas of specialisation which start in the second year, and to remedy and strengthen their academic performance. Its establishment is based on the recognition of the following fact by the University:

> The general imbalance between the standards of the secondary schools and the required academic strengths for admission into proper university level education in the various colleges has been one of the most challenging problems that the University has had to face over the years.
>
> AAU, 1980:27

At the end of the FMP, during which students take broadly related courses in social, physical and life sciences, and courses in first year English, they are allocated to various departments in which they pursue their major fields of study. Students in the Social Science stream are assigned to such departments and institutions as History, Economics, Law, Administration, Institute of Language Studies, etc. Placement is generally based on students grade point average (GPA) and their choices, but there have been cases in which students with low GPA's have been shared out by the departments on a lottery basis.

The Service English programme, one of the responsibilities of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature consists of three courses offered over a period of three semesters. The academic year is divided into two semesters, each sixteen weeks long. In the first year two courses, viz, Freshman English 101A and Freshman English 101B are taught in the first and second semesters respectively. The second

year English course, Sophomore English, is given in the first semester. Each course has three credits and is compulsory. Instructors meet a class, consisting of 35 to 40 students, two or three times a week for a total of four hours for Freshmen English and for three hours for Sophomore English. Students have to pass examinations in each of the courses in order not only to graduate, but also to register for the course that is a continuation of another course. For example, a student who fails in Freshman English 101A cannot register for 101B. All the English language service courses, except Sophomore English, are pre-requisites for the next higher courses. Teachers are expected to teach 9 to 12 hours weekly.

1.8.2.2 The Institute of Language Studies (ILS)

The Institute of Language Studies (ILS) has four departments: (1) Ethiopian Languages and Literature, Foreign Languages and Literature, Linguistics, and Theatrical Arts. There are also the so called 'Language Units' offering non-credit (i.e. not counting for students' main stream studies) language programmes in French, Italian, Arabic, German, and Russian to mainly interested staff and students. Some of these seem to have ceased functioning for various reasons. Very recently the French Unit has began a diploma programme offering credit courses.

The ILS came into existence in 1978 after the restructuring of the Faculty of Arts. The ILS was to act as both a teaching and research unit in matters pertaining to language studies or applied linguistics.

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literature offers a four year Bachelor's Degree in the teaching of English. It also trains non-teaching personnel in journalism and public relations. One of the most important tasks of the Department, however, is to offer service courses in English to all first and second year students (except second year Medicine) in the various faculties and colleges of the AAU.

The Department of Linguistics offers linguistic courses to students of other faculties and departments (the Faculty of Education, the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, Library Science), chiefly to students of the Department of Foreign

Languages and Literature, who, after graduation, join the Ministry of Education to teach English in the secondary schools, and to non-teaching students who become professionals relating to journalism and public relations. The courses that the Department offers to these students focus on the 'formal' aspect of language in general and the 'formal' elements of the English language in particular (i.e. Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics). The Department also offers courses in theories of language acquisition and language teaching. Starting from 1996 the Department is offering courses to students majoring in linguistics.

1.9 Objectives of Teaching English at the University

The rationale for the teaching of Service English in the University is to bridge the gap between school and university skills, mainly language skills; that is, to help students improve their proficiency in English so that they can function effectively in their academic studies (Mosback, 1977, Hailemichael 1993). The expectation is that the courses in English will help students to be able to follow their university studies more effectively.

The editor of the first year English textbooks, Conroy (1985) states in the preface to the first textbook that the course will be an "aid to improving the students' academic efficiency in the university studies ". The programme aims and objectives are as follows:

> ... to improve the students' skills in following textbooks and lectures in other subjects and to encourage thoughtful and logical expression in their second language.

The syllabus for the two first year courses focuses on structure and vocabulary items with writing upto the simple paragraph level. The Department course description for each of the three courses (May, 1989:24) reads as follows:

(a) Freshman English 101A (FLEn 101A)

> FLEn 101A is a revision course in which students practise the fundamentals of English structure (i.e. present tense, past tense, future tense, reported speech, nouns, and articles). It includes reading comprehension and

vocabulary exercises (a sample of vocabulary exercises will be reviewed shortly).

(b) Freshman English 101B

Comprehension, vocabulary building (lexical work, word building affixes and noun compounds); idiomatic usage, phrasal verbs, and prepositional phrases; structure and usage (i.e. relative clauses, conditional sentences, infinitives and gerunds, passive voice, and sentence combination); reading; simple paragraph writing.

In 1996 a new coursebook for Freshman English is published in two volumes: College English volume I and II. The two volumes are meant for First and Second semesters, respectively. The first volume has already been utilised in the First semester of the 1996/97 academic year. The second volume is also ready to be used shortly.

The objective of College English, as stated in the INTRODUCTION section of the coursebook (pp. 3-4), is to help students to be more independent in their studies and cope with the demands of academic life in a university or college setting.

The coursebook also aims at helping students to improve how they use English for academic purpose, their language skills (abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing, learning vocabulary and grammar) and academic practices (such as reading, understanding, taking notes from lectures, writing academic essays, and so on). In this regard, College English is different from Freshman English 101A&B in that the former coursebook is skill-based while the latter are language-based (the main focus being on vocabulary, grammar and comprehension).

(c) Sophomore English 201

It includes vocabulary building via affixation, pronunciation, spelling, grammatical areas necessary for writing tasks. Elements of paragraph and essay writing with emphasis on the following discourse patterns; description,

narration, exposition, and argumentation. Formats for report writing and letter writing.

1.10 English Teaching in AAU: A Brief Historical Sketch

The place of vocabulary in the teaching of Freshman English courses (FLEn 101A and FLEn 101B)

The English language abilities of university freshmen and their skills for learning it have been evaluated at different times by different researchers. For example, in a study of the English reading abilities of University freshmen in Arts and Science streams, Langmuir (1967: 10) found that the average first year students' comprehension level was at the forty-third percentile for native-speaking grade nine students. Teshome Wagaw (1990:159) notes:

> Most freshmen arrived at the university with... below acceptable levels in English language skills, reading speed, vocabulary, comprehension, problem solving, and analytical ability...

As Teshome Wagaw rightly observes, vocabulary, among others, is one of the areas where freshmen show linguistic deficiencies. Studies on the general ESL problems of freshmen and students in higher classes; for example, on individual differences (Taddele 1990), student errors (Mamo 1981), and on the English language proficiency of freshmen (Mekonnen 1984) express similar views on the question of their vocabulary difficulties.

Taddele's (ibid.) study, for example, shows that compared to the performance of our freshmen on a vocabulary task with that of students learning English in an EFL situation at the same level, the former (ie, freshmen at AAU) performed lower than the latter. It was also found that the freshmen at AAU felt that part of their language difficulties result from inadequate vocabulary (Hailemichael, 1993).

In spite of these apparent deficiencies, the place of vocabulary in the freshmen classroom is relegated to a secondary position, a greater emphasis being given to the teaching of reading comprehension, and grammatical structure. This situation is

rather getting worse in recent years as reflected in the examinations for the two parts of the Freshman English courses (FLEn 101A, and 101B). Teshome Demissie (1992) examined 6 years exam questions for these courses with respect to the weighting and distribution of questions measuring reading, vocabulary, and writing. Regarding the weight and distribution of questions measuring freshmen's vocabulary knowledge, Teshome Demissie reports: 'in the first 4 years 101A exams vocabulary questions made up for 33 per cent of the marks. This has now fallen considerably to 18 to 20 per cent of the exam'.

This undoubtedly reflects the ongoing neglect of the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to the development of other skills of University freshmen.

We seem, rather, to act on the assumption that if we teach our students grammar and reading comprehension, they will build their vocabulary automatically on their own while engaged in these activities. Informally teachers are always giving students advice on how to overcome vocabulary learning difficulties. Most teachers might agree that explicit learner training would be more effective for learning vocabulary. However, they are discouraged from doing this, since they must follow closely the coursebooks that do not allow for this, as shown below.

1.11 The Freshman English Coursebooks: An Evaluation of Vocabulary Exercises

The vocabulary exercises in Freshman English 101B were examined to determine what skills the exercises attempt to develop in the learners; that is, what the exercises require the students to do. FLEn 101B is 'a sequel to Freshman English 101A and retains the general objectives and format of Freshman English 101A' (Conroy 1985; in the Preface), implying that the two textbooks are similar in every aspect and thus analysing one of these textbooks is the same as analysing the other.

The textbook presents a total of five exercise formats. These are described below.

a) Find the words in the passage which are closest to the meanings given below.

b) Fill the blanks with the most appropriate words from the list below. Complete the following definitions.

c) Match the words in Column A, from the passage, with words which mean approximately the same in Column B.

d) Construct grammatically correct and meaningful sentences using the following words.

e) Form adjectives, nouns, verbs...using suffixes

The above five exercise types fall into the following two basic exercise types:

Type 1

Formats (a) and (b):

The learners recognise a word in the context and match the meaning to it (a). This type is similar to type (b) in which the learner has to recognise a context and match the meaning of a word to it. However, (b) is different from (a) in that it requires the learner to already known and be able to supply the missing word. So although the word supplied is not unknown (since it was encountered in the passage), the exercise still can be useful to develop the skill of using context to discover meaning because it obliges the reader to focus on and appreciate the importance of context. So, a) and (b) may be claimed to be 'word recognition exercises' (Williams, 1985:121, Ellis, 1994), which have been designed to develop the skill of identifying the meaning of 'unknown' words in context.

Type 2

Formats (c) to (f):

This type can be referred to as 'vocabulary development exercises' (Williams, ibid.). These are concerned with 'the systematic expansion in the learner's brain of target word-stock, with the objective of enabling the learner to *use* the words thus learned in speech or writing' (Williams, ibid.). The two types are complementary approaches designed to assisting our freshmen to surmount vocabulary difficulties: recognition and development.

Evaluation of the Exercises

Two main criticisms are made here of the exercise types presented above. First is that Type 1, 'vocabulary recognition' exercises, in particular provide the learner with only limited help in learning the strategies that are required for the successful comprehension of unknown vocabulary. According to Dunmore (1989:344), they may offer rehearsal in skill use; but, they do not promote an awareness in the learner of the variety of means which should be at his/her disposal. The exercises focus the reader's attention on the meaning of certain words in a text which s/he has finished reading. But having read the text, the learners have presumably already assigned a meaning to any unknown words encountered. Thus, they fail to offer help to learners in understanding the vocabulary and the text as the text is being read.

Moreover, they fail to draw the learner's attention to significant textual features, an awareness of which might lead to the learning of a useful strategy for assigning meaning to vocabulary and a corresponding improvement in reading skills. As Dunmore (1989) notes exercises of this type does not teach the generalisable strategies which constitute the skill of using the context to discover meaning.

If Alderson and Alvarez's (1979) view that second language learners should be taught how to attribute meaning to unfamiliar words is correct, the exercises of Type 1 are unlikely to be sufficient.

The second criticism is directed at Type 2 which, in fact, gives learners a distorted view of lexical meaning. Words may have stable elements of meaning, but there is also the negotiable aspect of lexical meaning (Carter and McCarthy, 1988; Robinson, 1993, 1986). Thus, the common use of exercises in which words (offered as synonyms) have to be matched to other words in a text or out of context seems likely to 'encourage the learner to see words as replaceable, discrete entities' (Dunmore, ibid., P.344).

The point is that the exercises should 'teach the use of strategies rather than test the use of the strategies' (Dunmore, 1989:345), since the university freshmen need them to cope with their vocabulary and reading difficulties.

The present study is based on this and other factors that have been discussed above.

1.12 Choice of Topic and Angle of Research

As a teacher of 'formal' linguistics, particularly the 'formal' properties of the English language, and theories of language acquisition (both first or L1 and second or L2) at the tertiary level, we consider it vital that we should explore ways of best helping students in areas where they have linguistic difficulties. One such area is the vocabulary of the English language. There are many good reasons for studying how learners in the tertiary level learn vocabulary. Perhaps, the principal one is that if students can have adequate knowledge of vocabulary, they will comprehend better lexical meaning in general and academic or technical text, and they will be prepared to gain new knowledge from reading in tertiary level educational context.

Thus, a study of how our freshmen handle new vocabulary items provides the opportunity to reconsider our approach to the vocabulary lesson in the classroom setting. In addition, the study of strategies of L2 vocabulary acquisition will be informative about ESL learners' problems in coping with a large mass of vocabulary and multiple meanings. In order for teachers to help their students, it will certainly be fruitful to know what processes and techniques learners employ in order to sort out the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context and consolidate or integrate features of new items with previous experience. Information about these processes and techniques is also useful for coursebooks preparation, syllabus design, language testing, and so on. That is, how do students sort out the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary item from written context? Do they rely on individual words, context, general knowledge to discover the meaning of new vocabulary? What do they do to integrate, restore, and retrieve, word-meanings for use? Is there a relationship

between the pattern of strategy use and performance on the overall English proficiency tests?

In other words, what techniques or strategies do students at this level use to learn ESL vocabulary? This is, among others, the central point of the study: the identification and analysis of the ESL vocabulary procedures of the tertiary level students. In so doing, this thesis draws from two main domains of L2 theory, viz, strategies and vocabulary.

Research on both is rather scanty, though developing. In fact, vocabulary in L2 acquisition research has been a neglected area (Carter and McCarthy, 1987, 1988). With the coming of the communicative approach to language teaching, the traditional roles of students and teachers have shifted. This approach has transformed, according to Oxford (1989), the traditional, non-communicative, teacher-centred classroom into a 'innovative, communicative, student-centred classroom'. (Oxford et al 1989:35).

Such changes in classroom roles and structure have forced learners to take a greater degree of responsibility for their learning. Instead of initially focusing upon the teaching act and viewing learning as adapting to teaching, in this reconceptualisation of the instructional process, which is labelled 'the learning-teaching process' (Hosenfeld 1977:52). Hosenfeld writes: "Students provide the first input into instruction in the form of learner strategies and teaching consists of adapting to this input". (Hosenfeld 1977:52).

As such there is a focus on the learner and the identification of learner strategies, especially of learning strategies (LS). This is reflected in studies by O'Malley, et al (1985a,b; 1990), Rubin (1975, 1981), Naiman et al. (1976), among others, aiming at developing students' metacognitive, cognitive and social awareness.

Within the framework of focus on the learner and his or her learning strategies, the thesis focuses on ***strategies of vocabulary acquisition***. Tentatively, the thesis

counts on the definition of strategy: conscious, but not necessarily observable effort involved in assigning meaning to unfamiliar vocabulary in a text and integrating information about word-meaning to be learned. In actual application this means that the thesis combines two processes of vocabulary acquisition at tertiary level, viz, inferencing or guessing (processes of vocabulary recognition) and approaches to the task of vocabulary learning (processes of vocabulary development).

1.13 Significance of the Study

But why should we be concerned with helping tertiary learners to develop the skill for successfully coping with new vocabulary? The answer, we suggest, is threefold. First, tertiary level learners in this study, like all L2 learners, need adequate knowledge of vocabulary for all learning tasks in the target language (TL), particularly for reading comprehension (Alderson, 1984; Nation and Coady, 1988, Ulijn, 1981; Coady, 1993), which forms the core of any ESL programme. Vocabulary knowledge is the "cornerstone of literacy" (Beck and McKeown, 1985). It is also the case that "vocabulary learning involves the acquisition of a range of skills... to be able to recall meaning, infer meaning, comprehend a text, communicate orally, spell correctly, etc". (Stoller and Grabe, 1993:30).

Experience, first as students and then as teachers or instructors has shown us that more than any of the preceding levels, the tertiary level demands students to read extensively and explore and function effectively on their own. They are expected at this level to take greater responsibility for their work than they did at school. This calls for the development of capacities on the part of students for an independent approach which greatly contrasts with their methods of study in school. Second, even if we dedicate ourselves to teaching as many words as we can, we simply do not have the time in a typical three-hour a week ESL course to teach students all the vocabulary that they need. Third, it is unlikely that we can teach them the multiple meanings of lexical items, nor can the textbooks that aspire to achieve this objective.

There are two ways in which learning vocabulary in L2 differs from learning vocabulary in L1. First, in the former it is a strong goal-oriented perspective and, second, in many cases, they have some knowledge of learning strategies from their own L1 learning experience. The assumption that these skills of learning transfer from L1 to L2 automatically has left ESL vocabulary instruction with the impression that there is very little or no need to teach the process of vocabulary acquisition, particularly learning vocabulary through the medium of reading. Yet, as Alderson (1984) notes, not much is known as to whether this is so, since most studies have not provided enough information to address these questions fairly and they lacked background information about learners' L1 reading skill and linguistic proficiency.

Contrary to the assumption of transferability of learning skills from L1 to L2, particularly from the perspective of learning vocabulary through reading, two problems can be anticipated: (1) L2 learners would simply access the standard meaning for that form and not look to the context for confirmation ('short-circuiting') and, (2) L2 learners sometimes misuse context clues due to impoverished vocabulary knowledge. Yet, vocabulary exercises in L2 textbooks do not provide learners with skills to cope with these difficulties.

As in teaching and learning other aspects of L2, the contribution of the learner to learning vocabulary has certainly been underrated. Teaching how to learn vocabulary is believed to lead the learner to greater autonomy and more meaningful learning. Oxford (1990:ix) notes that although learning strategies are used by students themselves, teachers play an important role in helping students develop and use strategies in more effective ways. Thus it is only logical that English language training at the University should adopt this direction and aim to help students develop appropriate language learning strategies so that they can get the greatest benefits from the language courses in the classroom and outside the classroom. But learner independence cannot successfully evolve just like that; learners need to be helped by their teachers towards that end. G. Ellis and B. Sinclair (1989:2) describe the role of the teacher as follows: "Learner training aims to help learners consider the factors that affect their learning and discover the

learning strategies that suit them best so that they can become more effective learners and take on more responsibility for their learning".

This points at a fundamental shift away from the traditional educational practice of placing greater emphasis from what to learn towards an emphasis on how to learn, i.e., to the process of learning.

The theoretical basis for learner training emanates from the assumption that learners differ in the way they try to learn something. They employ different learning strategies at different times which vary according to the nature of what has to be learned and the learner's motivation, level of proficiency, the ability to choose the appropriate strategy for the right task. The second assumption is that the more aware learners are about language and language learning, the more effective they become at taking on greater responsibility for their learning. (Ellis and Sinclair, ibid.).

Finally, learners who are aware of how they should go about their learning can be in a position to transfer their learning strategies to other subjects, especially in the ESL context. As Oxford (1990:20) notes: "Strategy learning is especially necessary in the area of second and foreign language learning. Language learning requires active self-direction on the part of learners; they cannot be spoon-fed if they desire and expect to reach an acceptable level of communicative competence.

Vocabulary acquisition is said to be the most promising area for learner training (O'Malley, et al, 1985; see Ellis 1994). However, there is a considerable gap between the objective of the new shift in teaching and the actual ESL classroom practice. A study that aims at narrowing this gap regarding approaches to vocabulary will no doubt prove purposeful and, therefore, have some influence on the quality and success of L2 learning experiences.

1.14 General Assumptions and Research Targets

The major assumption of this thesis is that vocabulary acquisition in L2 at tertiary level is primarily an act of interaction between the learner and the vocabulary item

in reading or listening materials and there are factors that determine the degree of interaction, and secondly, the integration of the information drawn from the interaction with what is already existing in the learner (previous vocabulary knowledge). It is assumed that there are sets of strategies that help learners to integrate what they obtain through interaction with their knowledge base and the degree of interaction is influenced by existing knowledge structure (script, Schank and Abelson, 1977; frames, Minsky, 1975; story schemata, Thorndike, 1977).

As seen from this perspective, working out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary in texts and the vocabulary learning task become a question of accessing previous knowledge, viz systemic knowledge on the one hand and schematic knowledge on the other. In actual practice, this means that when an unfamiliar vocabulary item is met, for example, in texts or utterances, some idea about the meaning of the vocabulary item may be developed arising from the general understanding of textual clues and/or personal experience. As the learner reads further through the text, processing of the new item in the light of the different contexts (provided by the author) may result in a new unit provided that the learner's intention is detecting its meaning. Thus, three stages of processing the new item may be recognised:

1) forming a rough notion of the target item (TI) on the basis of information drawn from systemic and/or schematic knowledge;
2) intentional search for a synonym (at low level units such as words or higher level units such as sentences or texts) to verify the previous notion of the meaning of the TI;
3) replacing the TI by the synonym, with space reserved for further verification within the textual frame of meaning provided by the author and the learner himself or herself.

Moreover, in order for the learner to be able to retrieve the TI readily, he or she needs to elaborate the meaning of the TI by relating it to the richness of personal experiences. So, in the fourth the learner.

4) elaborates or integrates the target word-meaning ('new') information with previous ('given') one.

The overall point is that the thesis hypothesises that learning L2 vocabulary is a multidimensional process involving not only systemic knowledge or "grammatical competence" (knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structure, and so on), but also "strategic competence", (Canale and Swain, 1980: 30) an aspect that has been largely ignored in L2 textbooks and teaching methodology.

In Canale and Swain's model, the term "strategic competence" is used to refer to communication strategies, which can be differentiated from learning strategies by their function. As Tarone (1991) notes, learning strategies have learning as a goal, and communication strategies are directed toward maintaining communication. For the purpose of the present study, the term is used to refer to knowledge of learning strategies- the main focus of this thesis.

Building on these assumptions and the foregoing discussions, this thesis, therefore, aims at the following objectives:

a) identifying variety of VAS used by tertiary level learners by employing multiple data collection procedures (such as language learning strategy questionnaire, interviews and think-aloud techniques);
b) identifying strategies that can be associated (if at all) with our freshmen; and
c) to determine whether strategies vary according to learners' levels of performance on formal tests.

As our interest is also focused on the essential characteristics of an efficient (or inefficient) learning process, we have classified the subjects in this study into three groups: high achievers, mid-achievers, and low achievers that vary significantly on the measure of the overall achievement. Hoping to find strategies or process that can characterise students learning vocabulary of English in a second or foreign language setting and that would differentiate between two of the three groups (high achievers from low achievers), we gathered and analysed two sets of data: quantitative and

qualitative sets. While the former set was gathered through a questionnaire, the latter was collected through an unstructured interview and think-aloud techniques. Data from the questionnaire and the interview have to do with subjects' strategy knowledge, while data from the think-aloud techniques is believed to provide information on actual use of inferencing or guessing strategies.

1.15 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into eight Chapters and organised into three parts. The first part which includes Chapters 2, 3, and 4 provides the conceptual setting to the research problem. Here the concept of strategy in general and vocabulary acquisition strategies in particular is discussed.

The second part, which contains Chapters 5 and 6, is concerned with the data elicitation and description of the procedures used for data analysis. This part, therefore, is a precursor to the third part which comprises Chapters 7 and 8. It covers the general discussion of the results as well as the pedagogic implications and recommendations based on results from data analysis. This part therefore provides the possible answers to the main questions asked in Section 1.14 of this chapter.

The eight Chapters can be summarised as follows:

Chapter *one* introduces the problem under investigation, and the educational system in Ethiopia, the ELT situation and factors affecting it at all levels of the educational system in the country, as well as the aims of the thesis, its underlying assumptions, including its overall organisation.

Chapter *two* reviews views and approaches to the vocabulary learning process, focusing on the theoretical perspectives.

Chapter *three* looks at issues concerning the definition and categorisation of learning strategies. Regarding the latter, an attempt is made to compare classification schemes suggested by L2 acquisition researchers, for example, Rubin (1981, 1987),

O'Malley, et a.l (1985a,b; 1990), and Oxford (1990), highlighting information integration aspect involved in strategy use.

Chapter *four* reviews literature on language learning strategies in general and vocabulary learning strategies in particular.

Chapter *five* describes the methodology used for data collection. It provides a two-phase and a four-stage model that was used to collect data.

Chapter *six* is a description of procedures followed in the analysis of the data collected.

Chapter *seven* reports some major results, pointing at strategy-types identified in various data, strategy use pattern of the whole of the sample population and variability between two types of students in the use of the strategies.

Chapter *eight* is an account of interpretations and discussion of some of the major results as well as implications that can be drawn for pedagogy.

1.16 Summary

This Chapter is a survey of the educational system of Ethiopia, including the role of English and the ELT situation in this system. It is intended to serve as background for the present study. The role of English at all levels of the educational system is examined. The teaching of English at the tertiary level in general and the teaching of vocabulary in the Freshman Programme is the central point of the survey in this Chapter. The forthcoming sections also provide the general outline of the organisation of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO
APPROACHES TO VOCABULARY LEARNING PROCESSES: A REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As has been pointed out in chapter one, the objective of this study is to identify, describe, analyse and explain, as much as possible, strategies used by EFL students learning vocabulary at tertiary level. In other words, theoretically this study is based on views about theories of L2 acquisition, especially theories of L2 vocabulary acquisition and language learning strategies. The present chapter and the two chapters that follow, therefore, are directed at the review of the literature on the theoretical path of the study.

The present chapter reviews the literature concerning approaches to explain processes of vocabulary acquisition and theoretical models associated with them.

Vocabulary learning (learning vocabulary of L1 or L2) is a complex process. The complexity lies at least in five areas. Firstly, there are too many vocabulary items in a language. Secondly, many of them have various meanings. Thirdly, some are domain or subject specific, while others are general. Fourthly, some represent concrete objects, whereas others represent abstract entities, ideas, feelings. Fifthly, relationships that exist between one item and the other is complex.

Information on each of these areas requires the learner to *restore* and *retain* for efficient *retrieval*. Any theoretical model that attempts to explain vocabulary learning processes is valid only if it adequately accounts for factors that facilitate or hinder storage, retention and retrieval of word-meanings. In connection with this, a considerable number of models have been suggested in the literature. We felt that it is not possible and practical to review all the available models due to limitations of space and time and thus we have decided to focus on only four major models, namely, the dictionary, thesaurus, discoursal and prototype models or theories.

These are presented in the historical order of their application to the teaching-learning of vocabulary. The model which we call the 'dictionary model' serves as our starting point, which stresses the role of 'form' in vocabulary acquisition. This is followed by the 'thesaurus model'. This model stresses the role meaning plays in learning vocabulary. This, in turn, served to lay the ground work for the more 'discourse-oriented model', which stresses the importance of previous knowledge to the learning of vocabulary-the frame of learning assigned to the 'prototype' theory.

The review is primarily designed to illuminate the main hypotheses, strategies that learners are expected to use in each model, and point to main weakness and to examine the predictions that evolve from each model.

2.2 Vocabulary Acquisition Models

A cursory glance at the history of the approaches to the English language will reveal that the teaching of vocabulary has not shown any major evolution since the 1930s. The grammar -translation method, whose goal was the reading of literature, viewed vocabulary as a tool for reading literary texts. Most textbooks merely provided a bilingual list of the new words and needed to decode the reading section. Students were expected to memorize new words.

The Direct Method, with its emphasis on the exclusive use of the target language in classroom instruction, assumes that students will learn vocabulary in context as an integral part of each lesson. In this approach, vocabulary is left to 'take care of itself'.

With the advent of structural linguistics, particularly American structuralism, and the audio-lingual methodology of the 50s and 60s, vocabulary learning became subordinate to the learning of grammatical structures. It was presented with structures to be learned through memorization. The basic principle of ESL vocabulary acquisition that emerges from these approaches is, therefore, *memorization* (Hereafter specific strategy names vs category types, will be italicised).

At present, communicative approaches are replacing the previous methods. The goals of these approaches, include the ability to function appropriately and accurately in a variety of contexts. Vocabulary is viewed as an essential element for carrying meaning, and thus, its acquisition is emphasized (for the discontent with the actual practice in classroom, see McCarthy, 1984).

In these approaches, vocabulary items are presented in one or two ways: presenting items grouped by semantic fields and/or relating the semantic fields to the learner's background (schema theory) through reading passages. In the former approach the learner is required to *analyse* the shared features of the items in the group. In the latter case required to *relate* the vocabulary items to be learned to situations through activities, one consequence of L2 vocabulary research for pedagogic purposes.

The vocabulary learning strategies suggested in the models discussed above are: *memorisation, analyses* and/or *relation* or *elaboration.* The discussion in the next section in connection with models of vocabulary acquisition and language learning strategies is organized around these three points. Issues related to *memorisation* are treated under the "dictionary model", analyses under the "thesaurus model" and, finally, *relation* or *elaboration* under the "discourse model", in that order. Much of the review is based on McCarthy (1990) and Carter and McCarthy (1987/88).

2.2.1 The Dictionary Models

This model describes learning L2 word-meanings as involving memorising word lists of paired words or "paired associates". The word lists contain, as is the case in real dictionaries, a word and definitions and explanations, or synonyms and derivations or etymology in the target language, or translation equivalents in the learner's mother tongue. The definition or translation equivalents can be accompanied by a picture or other mnemonic representation, and students are expected to memorize items in the word list.

The number of items in the word list is kept to the minimum. For example, Ogden's (1930) and Richard's (1943) word list consists of 850-word vocabulary with 12,425

meanings (Nation 1983:11). Another example is Michael West's (1953) A General Service List, which has 2,000 words with semantic and frequency information drawn from a corpus of 2 to 5 million words.

The idea of a "minimum vocabulary" has come out in the Vocabulary Control Movement of the structural approach to language teaching. This view of structural approach has largely been reflected in Fries (1945) and Lado (1964). As mentioned previously, the problem of learning a foreign language, it was maintained, was not learning its vocabulary, but mastering its sound system and its grammatical structure; and all the learner needs as first is basic vocabulary to practise the basic syntactic structures.

Approaching vocabulary learning from this perspective requires students to memorize words and meanings in the word lists. It has been assumed that items that are memorized would enhance retention. The classic example of memorization is Ebbinghaus (1885, quoted in Lado, 1964:36) which dealt with the memorization of syllables in a particular order (serial learning), or of one syllable or word with another in a pair (paired associate).

Claims are made for the efficacy of such learning procedures and has shown that large quantities of vocabulary can efficiently and quickly be learned by such means (Nation, 1983, Chapter 9; Kellogg and Howe 1971; see also Tinkham 1993).

In this connection, too, Atkinson (1975) and Atkinson and Raugh (1975) have argued for the usefulness of the 'keyword' method which calls for the establishment of an acoustic and imaginal link between an L2 word to be learned and a word in L1. For example, the Spanish word *pan* "bread" can be learned by imagining a loaf of *bread* in a pan (Thomas 1987:44). A visual association through an association of sound is then made between the keyword and the new word's meaning.

Research reviewed in Thompson (1987) has shown that the keyword technique is effective in improving both immediate and delayed recall of vocabulary in several foreign languages (Atkinson and Raugh, 1975; Rsugh et al. 1977).

Moreover, it was reported that it has a comparably facilitating effect on foreign vocabulary recall for both high and low language ability individuals (Pressley, et al. 1980). The method is also said to work better for learners with richer vocabularies (Pressley, et al. 1982).

The principle of vocabulary learning which emerges from the dictionary models is, then, that the more words are analysed in terms of imagistic and other associations, the more likely it is that they will be retained and easy for retrieval. We can, hence, tend to hypothesize that those subjects of the present study who reported they used the keyword method would perform on vocabulary tests better than those who did not. However, the dictionary model or its tenet-the keyword method- is not without criticism. This method is criticised for involving a shallow processing procedure, as discussed below.

Criticism

Craik and Tulving (1972) depth-of-processing theory provides a theoretical basis for questioning the adequacy of the dictionary model for L2 vocabulary acquisition. In this connection, our main focus will be the 'keyword' method, which is part of this model.

Craik and Tulving argued that retention is dependent on the level at which information is processed. When a stimulus is processed at the shallow sensory level, the stimulus is not analysed for meaning and related to existing cognitive structures. As regards retrieval, they suggested that retrieval is also enhanced by deep processing. In the same line, Cook (1989) characterizes vocabulary leaning by memorization as follows:

> How well people remember something depends on how deeply they process it. Repeating words as strings of sounds is low-level processing and badly remembered (p.40).

Clearly, the implication is that *memorization* is useful neither for retaining what is learned nor for retrieving when the word is called for use, since it involves sensory level processing. The dictionary model can also be criticised for undermining the contribution of the learner to the teaching and learning process. In this model the learner is considered as a passive receiver of whatever the teacher provides him. This contradicts the current conception of language acquisition theories advocate learners learn in their own way, rather than in what is prescribed for them.

We, therefore, incline towards any effort that shows learning the vocabulary of a L2 is not just memorizing equivalent words between languages or within the target language, but learning the meaning relationships. One of the endeavours of this kind in the literature is the model that hypothesizes meaning based organization of the lexicon, which we call the "thesaurus model".

2.2.2 The Thesaurus Models

The thesaurus models seem to have arisen in objection to the dictionary models' assumption that the organization of words in the mind is alphabetical, and thus, learning the formal aspect of vocabulary in word lists ultimately would lead to achieving the desired objective. As regards meaning, the dictionary models propose that the meaning of individual words is fixed.

Conversely, the thesaurus models' supporters, (eg. Lehrer, 1974, 1969; Trier, 1930,; both are quoted in Lyons 1977; Collins and Quillian, 1969; Collin and Loftus, 1975), see this as simplistic and problematic view. They argue that words cannot be treated as if they were a bundle of separate items attached to one another in a random way, and suggest that words in a language are interdependent and interwoven semantically. They argue that words are best understood in terms of relations rather than in isolation, as in looking at the word *orange* in relation to *red* and *yellow*, or *warm* by considering it as the area between *hot* and cold.

Harvey (1983) summarizes the aims of the these frames as follows:

1) to get away from the concept of the vocabulary list;

2) to enable students to play a more active part in thinking about possible ways of classifying English lexical items; and

3) to provide a framework that would lend itself to classroom exploration and student-centred elicitation and focus of classroom activities in recent years, perhaps partly due to more modern, communicative methodologies (P.243).

The question, however, is, how exactly does the learner cope with these relationships? More specifically, how does he make use of these relationships for storage, retention and retrieval of new vocabulary items?

Two theories within these models put forward somewhat different answers to this basic question: The theories are: the semantic field theory (SFT) and the componential analysis hypothesis (CAH). Each of these is discussed succinctly below. We shall start with the SFT since, as shown above, the CAH is built on the SFT's view about lexical organization.

2.2.2.1 The Semantic Field Theory

Mackay (1965:76) defines the concept "semantic field" as being made of basic key-words, which command an army of others. He writes:

> The semantic area may be regarded as a network of hundreds of associates, each word of which is capable of being the centre of a web of associations radiating in all directions. A word like *man* might have as many as 50 such associates - chap, fellow,guy, gentleman, etc., (quoted in Crow and Quigley, 1985:499- 500).

Learning theorists, working in the area of memory and retention or recall, have shown the superiority of retention or recall of data that have been organized into logical semantic categories. Craik and Lockhart (1972), for example, suggested that retention is dependent on the level at which information is processed: As one moves from the shallow sensory level of processing to the deeper semantic level, memory processes become more permanent. Semantic level processing of vocabulary relates to using semantic strategy or strategy of elaboration. In using elaboration, focus must be on meaning of the new word and the learner must act upon the meaning of the new word in a way that is considered integrative in relation to already existing

semantic systems. *Elaboration*, therefore, provides the learner a meaningful context, although a limited and not fully communicative one. Anything that is learned in contexts and processed sufficiently, is, indeed, not only retained but also easily recalled or communicated.

Craik and Lockhart (1975) suggest that retrieval is also enhanced by *elaboration*; that is, further processing as a certain depth of memory. This goes beyond merely associating a word with its definition. This requires the students to relate the new word, on the one hand, to other words in the 'field', on the other hand, to their own familiar experiences. Following Channell (1988) it is therefore assumed that any model which is built on psychological processes of learning a L2 and linguistic descriptions of the target language lexicon must be more effective than one which does not.

This brief examination of the semantic field hypothesis as a model of L2 vocabulary acquisition systematically leads to a model that attempts to account for how the learner copes with similarities and differences between vocabulary items within a lexical field.

2.2.2.2 The Componential Analysis Hypothesis

The componential analysis or as often called "Semantic Feature Hypothesis" (E.V. Clark, 1973, 1975, 1977) was constructed within the framework of the more general componential semantic models of Postal (1969) and Bierwisch (1970). Postal and Bierwisch described meanings of words as composed of a set of universal primitives that are likely to be derived from human percepts. The universal primitives are clustered according to somewhat language-specific combinatorial rule, and they constitute the underlying representation of words' intention (see: Dromi, 1987:45).

Applied to language acquisition, Clark hypothesized that upon hearing a new word, the child observes one or two of the most salient features of the object or the event to which the word is applied, and infers that these are the only semantic features that are associated with the meaning of that word. Thus, children first produce the word,

for example, *doggi* for all [+furry-legged] animals regardless of the fact that the underlying semantic meaning of "dog" in adult language includes other features as well (eg. [furry], [+small], [+barks]).

It is argued that through repeated experiences with a new word, the child realizes that his or her use of the words does not correspond with the way it is used by adults. Thus, the child further differentiates the conditions for its use, adding new features. In other words, if we assume that learning vocabulary in L1 and L2 proceeds in the same pattern, CAH predicts that the L2 learner acquires general terms (eg. furniture) before more specific ones (eg. table, chair, coffee table, arm chair) within the same semantic field. S/he is encouraged to build up the idea of the vocabulary as consisting of such components while learning it out of context or reading texts.

Though, the thesaurus models certainly tell us more about procedures for L2 vocabulary learning than isolated dictionary models, they are far from complete. First, literature shows that words referring to concrete objects are learned first than abstract or general terms such as *furniture* (Dromi 1987). If this is proved to be true, then, it is hard to believe that the more abstract word, for example, *vehicle* comes to the learner before the word *bike* or *car*, with which s/he interacts everyday.

In the literature (Carter and McCarthy 1988; McCarthy 1990; for a review Channell 1988) potential usefulness of word forms (eg. sound system, derivational patterns, etymological information) in decoding and retrieving word-meaning has been reported. This aspect of L2 vocabulary learning is ignored in the literature supporting the thesaurus models.

Moreover, recent studies of L2 acquisition reveal that conceptual schema are an important tool of the communicative approach to language teaching Widdowson (1978) and of semantically oriented language skill development that presupposes adequate knowledge of vocabulary, such as reading comprehension (Bartlett 1932; Anderson 1984; Rumelhart 1983; Widdowson 1983, 1984, Li 1985; Mason 1992).

However, the thesaurus models seem not to have been concerned with the important role of cultural and individual differences in schemata in L2 vocabulary acquisition. Now, let us move to a model which is particularly based on a schema theoretic model, which emphasises the role of background knowledge more than any of the models that we have reviewed so far.

2.2.3 Discourse-oriented Models

2.2.3.1 Spectrum Intersection Theory

Discourse-oriented models are concerned with the role of vocabulary in text, in particular to the ways in which vocabulary is used to negotiate meanings across spoken or written sentence boundaries. Arising out of a variety of strands and offshoots, discourse models have built, on the one hand, in lexical semantics and, on the other hand, with ever growing concern with the role of the learner in the learning of vocabulary, a concern with what and how the learner might learn McCarthy (1990) and Carter and McCarthy (1987/88).

In fact, there is no as such a discourse model. Rather, a discourse model includes any models, hypotheses, and views that minimally try to account for the interaction between, on the one hand, the learner and the new word-to-be-learned, on the other hand, linguistic and non-linguistic factors within the context in which the new word is encountered. These may include theories of word meaning in context, background knowledge, learning strategies (eg. inferencing or guessing), theories of the properties of texts, and, of course, theories of lexical meaning acquisition, and so on.

These factors are not isolated entities, rather they are interrelated and interwoven phenomena of language acquisition in general. For ease of presentation, we would like to classify them into

a) trends of vocabulary acquisition, which will include a brief consideration of Anthony's view of lexical meaning, vocabulary learning strategy by Twaddell, and viewing vocabulary learning as a dynamic process (Lord),

b) learning vocabulary in context,

c) schema theory, and

d) vocabulary acquisition and the prototype theories.

A brief account of each of these factors, which we would to refer to as 'antecedents' of the discourse models, is as follows:

(a) Vocabulary Acquisition as Spectrum Intersection

At the time when scholars were concerned with the analysis of texts beyond a single sentence (for the historical development of interest in discourse analysis, see McCarthy, 1990), Anthony (1975) proposed a model of vocabulary acquisition that might be called 'spectrum intersection theory' (Ibid.). It is more discourse-oriented theory of lexical meaning which is based on structural clustering in the lexicon. The theory focuses on the learning skill of students at the tertiary level. Anthony argues that as learners become more proficient so they have to learn to rely more on their own inferential skills by decoding words in *context.* That context may be spoken or written, and the extent of decoding may stretch to several sentences before a word can be understood.

Lexical meaning, according to Anthony, can only be properly accounted for by a theory which takes into account precisely the distinction between potential meaning and discourse meaning since a given lexical form is bound to many different referents in the non-linguistic world. Anthony thus treats the lexical word, not as having meaning in itself, but as an empty form capable of bonds to different kinds of meaning.

Anthony makes a distinction between two forms of a word-meaning in discourse: repertory meaning and lexical meaning. Once a word enters into a company of other words, Anthony argues, it can be called a 'repertory word' with a 'repertory meaning'. But when someone utters the word, for example, 'pitch' communicatively in discourse, usually but a small portion of its repertory is in focus. The lexical word has

then become a 'discourse word', and that part of the associated repertory of meaning which is in focus is called its 'lexical meaning'. Thus, 'lexical meaning' is that area of the meaning spectrum which is intersected in discourse.

Anthony was joined by Judd (1978), who argued that words learned in isolation are generally not retained; the full meaning of words (which includes their sociolinguistic contexts) can only come from encountering them in a rich linguistic environment.

(b) Vocabulary Learning and Strategies

A little earlier, Twaddell (1972 and 1973) was arguing strongly for shifting the responsibility to the learner through teaching him guessing strategies that will enable the learner to tackle unknown words and lose his reliance on dictionaries and teachers (see also Bright and McGregor 1970, pp.30-2; Nation and Coady 1988; Naggy et al. 1986). The basis for Twaddell's argument seems to be the fact that the number of words in a language is enormous, and thus it is impossible to teach learners all the words they need to know.

(c) Vocabulary Acquisition as a Process

Around this time, too, vocabulary learning is seen as a *process*, not a *thing*, and attempts are made to understand L2 vocabulary acquisition in the light of how L1 vocabulary is acquired. Drawing upon Vygotsky's view that the relationship between thought and words is a 'dynamic' one, Lord (1974) maintained that if we adhere to the view that words are 'items' to be acquired in certain quantities at certain rates, vocabulary learning will not take place, and thus we need to study first-language acquisition to understand the process of second-language lexical acquisition.
First-language acquisition shows that, according to Lord, vocabulary expansion proceeds against a back-ground of fuzziness of reference, the development of conceptual notions for words, the instability of meaning. Lord's observation is concerned with an approach to the question of acquisition of meaning.

These three views which attempt to tackle the puzzling question of L2 vocabulary acquisition viz Anthony's and Judd's the spectrum intersection theory ('discourse'),

Twaddell's vocabulary acquisition strategy for guessing-meaning, and viewing vocabulary acquisition as a process as explained by Lord are strands and offshoots that feed the models what we call today "discourse models of vocabulary acquisition".

The views have shared a common notion that vocabulary is better learned in context or, in language in use. This, in turn, relates to the view that vocabulary learning proceeds against a back-ground of fuzziness of reference, the development of conceptual notions for words, and instability of meaning.

One very immediate and clear implication of the notion of the "instability of meaning", or "fuzziness of reference" is that students learn unknown words not just by memorizing equivalent words or putting them in contexts, but through understanding meaning relationships between one word and all the other word in the target language. This may be just a necessary condition.

What is more important is, the students should be able to process the context successfully in order to relate the meanings of the new words to his previous knowledge. This, in turn, is dependent on learners' abilities of guessing meanings in context.

The discourse models, thus, systematically combine together the various views and procedures which are crucial to successful L2 vocabulary acquisition. The models encourage the learners to play an active role in understanding the relationship between words in the target language, infer meanings of unknown words, and relate the meanings of vocabulary items to already known word-meaning.

All these significant pedagogic views which we have been discussing in this chapter are systematically compatible with one word-meaning acquisition theory, namely, the prototype theory.

This theory has been initiated by a psychologist, Eleanor Rosch, and elaborated by other cognitive psychologists (eg. Anglin, 1977; Brown 1977, 1979; Carey 1982; Fillmore 1975, 1978; Bowerman, 1978, 1980; Barrett 1982 and 1986).

As we shall see below, the theory attempts to explain, among other things, the slippery nature of word meanings, the role of schematic knowledge in learning vocabulary, and how the learning of vocabulary takes place.

2.2.4 The Prototype Theory

This theoretical model, termed the Prototype Model, has been developed to account for human categorisation behaviours. The model proposes that the membership of an entity in a category is a matter of degree, which involves a cluster of 'typicality conditions' relating to appearance and behaviour.

In the Prototype Model, category membership can be rated. It is suggested that each category is centred around one member which is the "best exemplar" of that category. The "best exemplar", i.e., the prototype, is the core of the category and it is "surrounded by" other members that are not as representative for the category. However, these members share attributes with the "best exemplar". The members of a category that are furthest from the core are termed peripheral members, since they share the least with the "best exemplar". This is similar very similar to what Vygotsky (1962) describes as an "associative" complex.

In an "associative" complex, each member of the class is related to another member of the class by means of one or more shared properties. However, all the members of the class do not share one or more attributes. In general, the claim of the MP is that it is possible to measure degree of membership in a category by calculating the number of attributes that an entity shares with the prototype, which may be called "identification criteria and knowledge".

Rosch devised an experiment which she carried out with more than 200 psychology students : "This study has to do with what we have in mind when we use words

which refer to categories" runs the instruction (1975:198). The students were asked to rate how good an example of the category each member (eg. Orange, lemon, apple, peach, pear, melon) was on a seven-point scale : rating something as '1' meant that they considered it an excellent example; '4' indicated a moderate fit; whereas '7' suggested that it was a very poor example, and probably should not be in the category at all. It was reported that the results were consistent when other psychologists repeated the experiment (Aitchison 1987:53 quoting Armstrong et al. 1983).

Kuczaj (1982) summarized the prediction of the model as follows:

1) It is easier to learn categories in which the natural prototype is central to a set of variations than it is to learn categories in which a distortion of a prototype in central and the natural prototype occurs as a peripheral member;
2) The natural prototype will tend to be learned first, whether or not it is central to the category; and
3) Subjects tend to "define" the categories as set of variations on the natural prototype ('operationally, they will identify the natural prototype as the "most typical" examples of the category.

Very recently, (Aitchison 1987) elaborates these points as follows:

1) The realization that individual words need not be used in their prototypical sense can explain a number of puzzling problems, especially cases in which people are unsure of whether they are dealing with the 'same' word or not. One such cases is when the same word picks up different sense in different contexts, as the verb *go* does in the following sentences:

> The staircase goes from top to bottom of the building.
> The lift goes from top to bottom of the building.
> The janitor goes from top to bottom of the building.
>
> Aitchison 1987:57

Aitchison noticed the meaning of the word *go* in these sentences is ambiguous, since the janitor is clearly moving but the staircase is not. But a prototype approach allows one to treat this as all one word, *go* (Aitchison ibid :57).

In its prototypical use, *go* involves something moving from one point to another. However, according to Aitchison, the same word can be used untypically, so that something can extend from one point to another, with no movement involved. Alternatively, says Aitchison, something can leave one point but never get to another, as in:

> The train goes at ten o'clock.

Drawing upon this discussion, Aitchison's concludes:

> Judging something against a prototype, therefore, and allowing rough matches to suffice, seems to be the way we understand a number of different words.

2) Prototypes show how people deal with the fuzziness of word meaning, and how new or ambiguous ('damaged') examples or words can be assigned to existing categories. Aitchison has reported one experiment-the oddity of odd numbers'- which is puzzling researchers.

A group of researchers found that some odd numbers were felt to be 'better' odd numbers than others, for example, the subjects reported that 3 was a better example of an odd number than 23 (Armstrong, et al. 1983; cited in Aitchison 1987:59). Following Osherson and Smith (1981), Aitchison's explanation of this puzzle is that we need to make a distinction between identification criteria and stored knowledge.

As some people argue, another problem which arises in specifying a prototype is where to stop. There seems to be no end to the amount of general or what McCarthy (1990:47-8) calls "encyclopaedic" knowledge, which words carry with them in connection with other types of knowledge, including history, perceptual, and social

knowledge. After all the lexicon of a language is, according to Richards (1974), 'a **reservoir of the experience** of all the speakers of the language' (p.69).

The Prototype Model is only an example of a possible theory to account for the immense flexibility of lexical items whose acquisition calls for the interaction of many factors: what is to be learnt interacts and relates to what is already known, but what is already known by individuals is not identical; an emphasis on the learner's development of abilities through s/he own learning processes which the teacher should stimulate rather than determine, and processes involved in learning vocabulary, for example, the processes of "decomposition" and "reconstruction" of meaning that were reported by Bowerman (1978, 1980) and Barret (1986) in child language, and so on.

Barrett (1986), who is said to be responsible for the extension of the theory (Dromi 1987), reports that he observed a gradual process by which the child learned to appreciate constituents in the general event scheme. Barrett suggests the term "decontextualization" for referring to the process of disembedding one component of the scheme and attaching a word to designate it. He also incorporates two new notions, as noted by Dromi (1987:60), early holistic representation and abstracted contrastive features, to explain how related words (eg., names of objects and actions) become mutually exclusive semantically.

The Prototype Model theory, as extended consistently, now takes a modular form, and predicts that the time, or "age", of the word (and/or the child) will have a strong impact on the course of linguistic performance. Furthermore, the extended model predicts that a wide variety of pathways to meaning will be identified even within a single lexicon (Carey, 1982; Drome, 1987). Drome reported that this latter prediction was strongly supported by the experiment that he (Dromi, 1983) carried out in one subject's lexicon of 337 Hebrew words.

In general, as Aitchison (1987) notes: “Prototypes seem to explain a lot"(p.59).

2.3 Summary

The review in this chapter shows views and attempts made to explain the complexity of learning vocabulary that arises from the fact that vocabulary items (words) are:

1) enormous in number;
2) dynamic; and
3) slippery

and it is very difficult to teach learners all the vocabulary they need to know and teachers' assistance is limited to keeping learners up with the ever changing of word-meanings. Even if it is possible for the teacher to update learners with new word-meanings, they (vocabulary items) assume different meanings in different contexts.

The crucial question here thus is "What can be done about vocabulary learning or teaching, particularly about L2 vocabulary?" The next chapter reviews literature directed at this particular problem.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have considered theories that attempt to identify and explain processes involved in vocabulary acquisition. In this chapter we look at what has been said about language learning strategies from a theoretical perspective.

The study draws heavily on the works of Interlanguage (IL) theorists like Corder (1967) and Selinker (1972). They have argued that 'input' does not equal 'intake', that learners vary enormously in both the ways they set about learning an L2 and also in what they actually succeed in learning. It is a reaction against an approach to L2 acquisition which is based on the underlying assumption that all learners analyse input and store information about the L2 in much the same way. The argument is supported by the works of learner variability theorists like Gardner (1985), Skehan (1989), Horwitz (1987a), Wenden (1987a), Carroll (1981), and others. All of them show that learners have strong, pre-conceived ideas about such issues as the nature of language learning, cognitive and affective states, and the strategies that are likely to work best. The implication of such an argument is that it is possible to develop an approach to language teaching which takes advantage of the learners' natural tendency to make sense of language and their potential ability to learn HOW to learn.

Insights derived from these efforts have led researchers and teachers to consider the task from the learner's point of view and in changing the focus of classroom from a teachers-centred one to a learner-centred one. In particular, there is growing interest in defining how learners can take charge of their own learning and in clarifying how teachers can help students to become more autonomous.

The learner-centred approach to language learning is a derivative from the shift in focus from teaching methodology or techniques to learning strategies which, in form, has been derived from advances made in linguistic and psychological theories.

One problem in addressing issues of learning strategies is the proliferation of terms referring to the same construct. So, the term 'strategy' has been labelled in the literature as 'process', 'behaviour', 'technique', 'consciously employed operation', and the like.

Another difficulty is in providing a fair and precise definition. The concept 'strategy' was originally introduced in L2 acquisition research by Selinker (1972), who divided it into two broad areas of learning and communication strategies. Since then various definitions of strategy have been proposed. And yet there has not been any one definition of strategy proposed that has satisfied writers in this area.

A wide range of descriptive typologies and taxonomies have also been established. These, too, are not easy to tie down. That is, there is little or no consensus in the literature concerning either the definition or the identification and classification of strategies. The source of this lack of agreement is not clear either. What is clear perhaps is that the study of strategy, or to be precise, language learning strategies, is a recent development and both definitions and classifications are being refined and redefined.

Likewise, at this early stage of the present study, we try to clarify and define the term 'strategy' and certain terms which we think are of importance to the present discussion. No attempt will be made, however, to examine all the dimensions of learner variables listed in the related literature (for example, see: Ellis, 1994; Skehan, 1989; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; and Altman, 1980). This is because little is known about many of these dimensions and the attempt to define them will result in greater confusion. Moreover, we are primarily concerned not with all the factors that influence learning, but rather with one of these factors of one particular type, namely, 'language learning strategies'.

To begin with, a general distinction is made between 'learner strategies' and 'teacher strategies'. In its simplest form, with respect to the learner's use of resources available in the classroom and outside the classroom applying sequences of activities (both conscious and subconscious) to encounter difficulties in performing a language learning task and enhance learning, 'learner strategy' is distinct from what the teacher does as a teacher, 'teacher strategy'. The distinction between the two types of strategies and the concurrent shift in emphasis from the latter to the former has been brought about through developments in linguistic and psychological theories, as discussed below from a historical perspective.

3.2 Developments in Linguistic and Psychological Theories

The development of teaching methodology has been closely connected with an ever-widening interpretation of "language" itself, and thus, knowledge of a language. For example, during the reign of the audiolingual method of language teaching, when knowledge of language was defined purely in terms of 'speaking', the language teaching method was geared to dialogues and structural drills (Lado, 1964; Rivers, 1964).

However, developments in linguistics and in the psychology of learning in the 1960s revealed many inadequacies and limitations of the audiolingual method. Language was then viewed as structured linguistic elements following the analytical principles of structural linguistics particularly of American structuralism. Knowing a language was then defined in terms of knowing the units in a sentence. Meanwhile, the structural approach to language teaching came under strong criticism. As Strevens (1977) points out, structuralism has not solved the problem of how to move from language manipulations to communication.

Following later developments in linguistic theory, especially following the emergence of transformational generative grammar (Chomsky 1956), the inadequacies of structuralism have become more evident. Since then language has been viewed as a set of grammatical rules and, consequently, knowledge of a language has been conceived as knowledge of syntactic rules. This view of language and knowledge of

language, in turn, has given way to viewing language as a sociolinguistic one, which has led to the over-riding importance of the role of language as communication and of the social context of language (Hymes 1972).

The two basic outcomes of viewing language as a 'social' phenomenon have been (1) the application of the communicative approach to language teaching, particularly to L2 teaching, and (2) the growing interest in both L1 & L2 acquisition research and the subsequent developments in language instructions.

When we consider developments in psychological theories of learning, the usual point to start with is behaviourism (Skinner, 1957). From the behaviourist point of view of language and learning, language is not a mental phenomenon, it is rather behaviour. Like any other forms of human behaviour it is learnt by a process of habit-formation devices such as *imitation*, *reinforcement* and *repetition.*

From the behaviourist perspective, second language learning consists in overcoming the differences between the first and second language systems. Lado (1957:2 and quoted in Littlewood, 1984:17-8) commented on the learner's problem as follows: 'Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult'.

The behaviourist view of language and learning was strongly challenged from the 1960s onwards, especially under the influence of Noam Chomsky's linguistic theories (or as normally referred to as 'mentalist/innatist' theory) and cognitive psychology.

In the literature (for example, Ellis 1994) scores of cognitive theories are offered. Ellis, for instance, provides 12 types of cognitive theories of language learning (L1 or L2). According to Ellis, basic to all these theories is that they are based on the same assumption which reads as follows:

> ...learners form mental representations or 'rules' and that these rules guide the learner in using the L2 in performance. A 'rule' consists of some form of abstract generalisation of language property- the fact that past tense forms of English consist of a verb stem + -ed. (Ellis, p.32).

Ellis also notes that a 'cognitive' view considers the mechanisms of language learning to be general in nature. Ellis (p.295) writes: 'It sees the process of learning a language- whether a first or a second one- as essentially the same as any other kind of learning'. Language learning engages the same cognitive systems: viz, 'perception', 'memory', 'problem-solving', 'information processing', and so on, as learning other types of knowledge. He further notes that in a cognitive view, language learning is treated as 'skill learning', analogous to learning how to ride a bicycle, although possibly more complex.

This branch of a cognitive theory, which views language learning as skill learning, emphasises that the 'use of a second language is a performance skill, and as with other kinds of performance skills, it has a 'cognitive' aspect and a 'behavioural' aspect (Littlewood, 1984:74). According to Littlewood, the 'cognitive' aspect involves the internalisation of plans for creating appropriate behaviour. For language use, these plans derive mainly from the language system- they include grammatical rules, procedures for selecting vocabulary, and social conventions governing speech. The 'behaviour' aspect involves the automation of these plans so that they can be converted into fluent performance in real time. This occurs mainly through 'practice' in converting plans into performance, i.e., through productive language activity, with receptive activity playing a less clearly defined role.

Furthermore, Littlewood identifies two types of practice, viz, 'part-skill practice' and 'whole-task practice'. The former type involves isolating and practising tasks when a skill is being learned, while the latter type is employed to practise the total skill, requiring the component parts to be integrated during performance.

Littlewood also offers the hierarchical structure of five elements involved in performing a task, of which only four of these are of importance for the present study.These are summarised as follows:

1) An overall communicative goal (the highest level in the hierarchy);
2) Developing a strategy to achieve this goal (the strategy one chooses has different components;

3) Decide on specific topics or components in order to carry out each of the tasks; and

4) Acting on the task.

Insights derived from developments in both linguistic and psychological theories have led researchers and teachers towards the recognition of the role the learner can play in the language learning-teaching process.

This has now become one of the leading educational goals of research on learner strategies, autonomous language learning. It is held that insights derived from such research can guide the development of learner-training activities so that learners become not only more efficient at learning and using their L2 but also less teacher-dependent and more self-dependent (Wenden, 1987).

The notion of 'autonomous language learning' should not be understood as one that discomforts teachers by reducing their role as 'all-knowing' to a secondary position. Teachers will assume new responsibilities. According to some language learning strategy researchers (Wenden, 1987; Rubin, 1987; O'Malley, et al. 1990; Oxford 1990), one important role of the teacher would be to provide an environment which facilitates the identification by students of those strategies which work best for them. The second role of the teacher would be to suggest alternative strategies for organising learning and to encourage students to consider which strategies work best for them.

The whole concept of an autonomous learner can be explained by discussing a learner-centred approach to language learning. Before that, however, mention must be made about the use of terms 'learning' and 'acquisition' (Other terms will be defined where it is felt to be appropriate to do so). According to one theory of L2-acquisition, 'learning' is defined as conscious knowledge of language rules that does not typically lead to fluency or acquisition, and is derived from formal instruction. 'Acquisition' on the other hand, occurs unconsciously and spontaneously, does lead

to fluency, and arises from naturalistic language use (Krashen, 1976; 1981 and 1982).

However, it may be that learning and acquisition are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary (McLaghlin, 1987; Bialystok, 1978). Stevick (1980), for example, argues that acquisition and learning represent different ways of internalising language- the acquired and learned systems do not remain separate, but can 'bleed' into one another.

Thus, in this thesis the term 'learning' is used as a cover term for both 'learning' and 'acquisition' and at times we use them alternatively, as in 'L2-learning' or 'L2-acquisition'.

3.3 A Learner-centred Approach to Language Learning

The shift in emphasis from teaching to learning implies many changes in the classroom instructional process. To create a classroom in which learning becomes effective, teachers need a thorough knowledge of the learner and the language and how it develops within the learner. This has long been suggested by Corder (1981:7), who writes: "The efficient language teacher must work with, rather than against, natural processes, facilitate and expedite rather than impede learning." This can happen best when we know what those 'natural' processes are. These can be considered from two angles, viz, the psychological and pedagogical.

3.3.1 Psychological Perspective

The psychological implication of the shift and perhaps be better explained by considering, first, how the child develops the L1, and then, relating it to L2 acquisition, since, as Bialystok (1991) notes, L2 is an extension of L1 acquisition. That is, the task of learning L2 is built on processes that were already developed for an L1.

Research in L1 acquisition provides evidence that language learning is a process whereby the child interacts with the system (i.e the meanings and functions of

language and the symbols to represent them first in oral and later in written forms). While constructing one system he also uses this system to construct another system, namely, labels the world around him. Thus, the child is using language and learning through language (Halliday 1982). Here the emphasis is that language learning is a complex activity which entails not only learning language, but also learning through language and learning about language, which are interrelated. The question, then, is, "How does the child perform this complex task?"

Findings from empirical research attribute the child the mental capacity to explore and discover the 'world', to carry out his learning on his own (Jaggar 1985, Bowerman 1980). According to Jaggar, knowledge is not something that exists outside, it is rather constructed within the learner. All knowledge involves discovery. Knowledge of the language is one of relations within the system and with what has been acquired previously. Bowerman (1986) has shown that the child is capable of performing fine analyses such as decomposition and novel recomposition of meaning that he extracts from what he already knows. The child reveals himself as a problem-solver rather than a rote learner,

> There is evidence that children make less progress in learning when parents try to teach them to talk by selecting, reinforcing correct usage and rejecting incorrect forms, or when parents pursue a topic of conversation of their own choice beyond the interest or their child. (King 1985:21)

These instances of L1 acquisition reveal that if the L2 learner is given the opportunity for learning on his own, s/he will learn better than otherwise.

Understanding the way children acquire language has also stimulated cognitive scientists to question the existing theories of learning in general, as Hunt (1982:29), for example, questions:

> Do we learn what we learn primarily as a result of mere repetition or of comprehension-or of linkage of new material to previously known material?

Implying the renewed interest in understanding what language teaching ought to be. This examining of children's L1 acquisition is important in providing us with the theoretical impetus for understanding how learners approach the task of learning an L2 and it is attributed to a changing view on the nature of the mind put forward by the theory and research in the field of cognitive science. It is also evident that some students approach the task of language learning in more successful ways than others. This is another factor, as discussed below, which has necessitated research in strategy, which is believed will ultimately lead to the programme- a learner-centred approach.

3.3.2 Pedagogic Considerations

Experience as well as findings of empirical studies has shown us that students approach the L2 learning task differently. That is, all things being equal, some students will be more successful than others in learning L2. According to Rubin (1987:15),

> ...given the same language environment, the same target language, the same native language and the same language level, some learners will be more analytic in their approach to the learning task while others will be more intuitive, some will prefer to use written materials to access in FL while others will prefer to hear the language.

For example, studies (Wesche 1981; Skehan 1986) identify two types of learner, the memory-driven and the analysis-driven. The former prefer to treat learning a language as a memory problem, while the latter are more drawn to the analytical potential of the course they are doing (Skehan 1992:193). Wesche (1981) has shown that matching learner type with appropriate methodology produced disproportionate success, while mismatching had the opposite effect.

The causes for learner differences have been described from different perspectives. Corder's (1967) observation encapsulates most of the points made in the literature. According to Corder, this is a question of the interaction between the learner and the material to be learned, which identifies the learner as an agent in acquiring the target language (TL). Corder states:

> The simple fact of presenting a certain linguistic form to a learner in the classroom does not necessarily qualify it for the status of input, for the reason that input is "what goes in" not what is available for going in, and we may reasonably suppose that it is the learner who controls this input, or more properly his intake...(p.165)

One aspect of learner difference, according to Corder's view, includes the current state of the learner's knowledge of the TL, that is, the internalized IL: representation of rules and structures that the learner has acquired. The second aspect involves the procedures, processes, and other psychological values that make up the learner's cognitive apparatus: the mechanisms for perception and learning, which may be independent of linguistic knowledge *per se*.

One of the leading goals of research on strategies, as often maintained by researchers (eg. Holec 1981; Wenden, 1987; Ellis and Sinclair 1989), is autonomous language learning. It is suggested that insights derived from such research guide the development of learner training activities so that learners can become not only efficient at learning and using their second language but also more capable of self-directing these endeavours, where the term "learner training" refers to activities that help learners expand their repertoire of strategies and refine their knowledge of the learning process (Wenden 1987:13;), and 'even at the end of a language course' (Widdowson 1981, 1983).

Consequently, there has been a steadily growing interest in considering the task from the learner's point of view and in changing the focus of classroom from a teacher-centred one to a learner-centred one. In particular, there is a growing interest in defining how learners can take charge of their own learning and in clarifying how teachers can help students become more autonomous (Ellis and Sinclair 1989).

Also, in spite of wide differences between existing theoretical approaches to learning, most learning theorists would agree that learning is best achieved when the students play an active role in the process. Wenden (1987:17) defines being active as follows:

> "Being active means when students cannot just be given information, rather they must have opportunities to internalize information in ways in which are meaningful to them".

Internalisation-working through the information-is an active process in the sense that Corder observed about twenty five years ago. Hence, students need to work with new ideas and new experiences to make them their own. And as students become responsible they use a great variety of strategies. But, what is strategy? Why is that defining, classifying and describing strategies difficult? What are the approaches to strategy study? Are strategies of language learning and communication same or different? or of comprehension and production?

The next section attempts to bring together and assess different views concerning these questions. Thus, we start with clarifying the term "strategy" and try to point out some of the questions associated with defining it.

3.4 Defining Strategy

Strategies have been referred to as 'techniques', 'tactics', 'potentially conscious plans', 'consciously employed operations', 'learning skills', 'basic skills', 'function skills', 'learning behaviours', 'cognitive abilities', 'language processing strategies', 'problem-solving procedures' (Wenden 1987:7). This proliferation of terms may indicate the elusive nature of the term and the lack of one comprehensive theoretical method to guide research in strategy. In this section we will examine what a 'strategy' means to different researchers and how it is different from other related concepts (e.g. 'process') in an attempt to arrive at a definition of 'learning strategy'.

There seem to be two distinct approaches to define 'strategy': the theoretical approach and the 'criterion' or 'construct' approach. While the former is concerned with generating a list of specific features from a cognitive perspective (Wenden, 1987; for a review Ellis, 1994), the latter provides what a 'strategy' consists of in a somewhat general form (Bialystok 1984; Faerch 1984; Faerch and Kasper, 1983b). We will start with the theoretical level and build on to the criterion level.

3.4.1 The Theoretical Approach

The following list (Wenden, 1987; Ellis, 1994) characterises how the term 'strategies' has been used:

1) Strategies are both general approaches and specific actions or techniques used to learn an L2 (repetition, rehearsal)
2) Strategies are problem-oriented, i.e. the learner deploys a strategy to overcome some particular learning problem (e.g. learners utilize them as a learning need).
3) Some strategies are deployed consciously, some may become automatized (i.e. learners are generally aware of the strategies they use and can identify what they consist of if they are asked to pay attention to what they are doing/thinking).
4) Some strategies are observable (e.g. asking questions), some are not (e.g. making a mental comparison). That is, some strategies are behavioural (directly observable) while others are mental (unobservable).
5) strategies contribute directly and indirectly to learning (asking questions contributes indirectly while acting on the response to the question contributes directly).
6) Strategies are amenable to change.

(Wenden 1987:7)

This may mean that strategy use may vary as a result of both the kind of task the learner is engaged in and individual learner preference (Ellis, 1994), or that strategies can be taught (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley, et al, 1990; Chamot, 1993).

This list is said to be analogous to stages of processing new information, viz, selection, acquisition, construction and integration (Weinstein and Mayer 1986; cited in O'Malley, et al 1990), and a two-stage of framework of memory, viz, construction and integration of cognitive psychology perspective (Anderson, 1981, 1980, 1982).

Through 'selection', learners focus on specific information of interest in the environment, and transfer that information into working memory. In 'acquisition',

learners actively transfer information from working memory into long-term memory for permanent storage.

At the 'construction' stage, learners actively build internal connections between ideas contained in working memory. The information from long-term memory can be used by providing related information or schemata into which the new ideas can be organized. In the final process, 'integration', the learner actively searches for prior knowledge in long-term memory, and transfers this knowledge to working memory. 'Selection' and 'acquisition' determine *how much* is learned, whereas 'construction' and 'integration' determine *what* is learned and how it is organized.

The idea is that each stage involves distinct strategies and they can be differentiated along these dimensions. These can be synthesised in terms of Anderson's (1980) three stages of skill-learning and summarised in O'Malley, et al (1990):

1) the cognitive stage, where the learner is involved in conscious activity resulting in declarative knowledge,
2) the associative stage, where the learner strengthens the connections among the various elements or components of the skill and constructs more efficient production sets, and
3) the automatic stage where execution becomes more or less autonomous and subconscious.

According to these writers (1990), Anderson's theory provides for two interpretations of the term 'strategy'. One view that is favoured by Rabinowitz and Chi (1987) is that strategies only occur in the early cognitive stage when they are conscious; they cease to be 'strategic' when they are performed automatically. The other view is that strategies occur in all three stages of development. Initially, such sets exist only in declarative (rule) form; they are conscious and can only be accessed through controlled processing. Gradually, they are proceduralised, until a point is reached where the learner is no longer conscious of employing them.

Faerch and Kasper (1983 and cited in Nunan 1991: 168) refer to learning strategies ('mental processes which learners employ to learn and use the target language') as procedural knowledge. Ellis (1985: 165 and cited in Nunan (1991:168) provides the typology of procedural knowledge.

As we pointed out earlier, one of the major problems for learning strategy theorists has been the development of a comprehensive classification scheme of learning strategy types. Very recently, a variety of taxonomies and classification schemes have been proposed (eg. O'Malley, et al 1990; Oxford 1990; Ellis 1986). Two levels can be identified in all classifications. The first distinguishes broad classes by identifying strategies according to function. The classification is usually binary, distinguishing between strategies in pairs: social-cognitive (Fillmore 1976), learning-communication (Bialystok 1984, Tarone 1981), production-reception (Faerch 1984, Ellis 1986b), cognitive-metacognitive (Chamot,et al; O'Malley, et al 1990, 1987), direct and indirect (Rubin 1981; Danseauru 1986, 1983; Oxford 1990).

The second level documents the range of strategies that can occur to serve any of these functions. Thus, one finds taxonomies of communication strategies (Tarone 1977), social strategies (Fillmore 1976), learning strategies (Stern 1975, Naiman et al 1978; Rubin 1975, 1981), and so on.

Variations of this sort in approaches to the classification of learning strategies make it difficult to compare research findings.

3.4.2 The Criterion or the Construct Approach

The forefront proponents of the criterion-based approach are perhaps Bialystok (1984) and Faerch (1984), and Faerch and Kasper (1983b), who discuss at length three major criteria which they believe characterize strategy. The criteria are:

1) problematicity
2) consciousness, and
3) goal-relatedness or intentionality

'Problematicity' refers to the notion that strategies are adopted by learners when problems in their comprehension/learning or production are perceived. Faerch and Kasper (1983b) point out that the criterion of problem-orientedness presupposes a distinction between goals which the individual experiences no difficulty in reaching and goals which present themselves to the individual as 'problems'. In their terms, only plans that relate to the latter type of goals are considered strategies.

'Consciousness' refers to the learner's awareness that the strategy is being employed for a particular purpose, or the awareness of how that strategy might achieve its intended effect. Many researchers seem to be very dubious about the 'consciousness' part of strategy (Faerch and Kasper 1983b; Bialystok 1984). Bialystok, for example, expresses her concern as follows:

> Consciousness does not determinate among the varieties of behaviour-most mental processes are relatively automatic but it is difficult to accept 'automatic' as equal to 'unconscious' (p.101).

Likewise, Sharwood Smith (1979) has pointed out that different individuals may be more or less able to become aware of their own internal operations, implying a consciousness-raising process. The opposite situation can also be true in which individuals may automatize what was at one stage a consciously employed plans. Thus, following Faerch and Kasper (1983b:35), plans can be classified as:

1) plans which are **always** consciously employed;
2) plans which are **never** consciously employed;
3) plans which to **some** language users and/or
   in some situations may be consciously used and which
   in other situations are used unconsciously.

Consciousness, in the sense that it is used in this discussion, refers to plans or part of plans that are used in the execution of a behaviour.

'Intentionality' or 'goal-relatedness' refers to the control over these strategies so that particular ones can be selected from the range of options and deliberately applied to achieve certain effects. This seems to implicate that intentionality or goal-

relatedness can be placed on the top in the hierarchical relationship of these criteria. In fact, this is what Faerch (1984) suggests, as illustrated below.

1. Goal-relatedness
2. Consciousness
3. Problematicity

Figure 3.1

In this directional relation, problematicity implies consciousness and goal-relatedness, whereas the opposite is not necessarily the case. The figure shows that goal-relatedness is a highly general aspect of human behaviour, and, that consciousness holds true of some goal-related tasks and that and individual may be conscious about behaviours without experiencing problems.

3.4.3 The Theoretical Approach vs the Criterion Approach

Overall, the two approaches overlap to a large extent. Both approaches recognise that strategies are called forth when there is a (learning) problem. Decisions on whether there is a need for a calling for a strategy and the decision that follows on the choice of certain strategies from a wide range of them is a conscious act.

However, this is not to imply that the criterion approach is the same as the theoretical approach. The approaches differ, among others, with respect to their orientation. The criterion approach puts more emphasis on the 'production' side of 'strategy', while the theoretical approach is directed at the 'comprehension' side of it. A brief explanation is needed about the difference between 'production strategy' and 'comprehension strategy'.

Though the distinction is not a clear-cut case, the literature provides us with three types of strategies: production, communication, and learning (Tarone, 1983, 1980; Faerch and Kasper (1983a, b). The first two (production and communication) are strategies of *use*; the latter (learning) is a strategy of *decoding*, *understanding*, and *facilitating comprehension* (written or spoken). So, the criterion approach serves the purpose of use, whereas the theoretical approach serves the purpose of learning. In

other words, the two approaches are intended to serve different purposes, and the present study is concerned with the learning 'strategy'. But what is a learning strategy? An answer to this question is attempted in the next section. For now, we will stick to the issue that emerges from the discussion above and that can be related to both those approaches: differentiating 'strategy' from 'process'.

3.5 Strategy vs Process

The distinction which has received the greatest attention where strategy studies in an L2 is concerned is that of 'strategies' and 'processes' (Faerch and Kasper 1980, 1983d; Bialystok, 1983/84; Wenden, 1987). They are very often used interchangeably, which may imply that they overlap and that they may come from the same class of categories.

Information on these two overlapping terms comes from two different but related sources. One is the literature on learning strategies; the other is the literature on communication strategies. Differences in the conceptualization and descriptions of the two constructs can be sensed in the two sets of literature. In spite of variation in conceptualization, the definition of "strategy" in both sets of literature points consistently in the same direction and to a few defining features. We will start the review with the learning strategy literature and move to the communication strategy literature where the distinction between 'strategy' and 'process' has been assessed extensively. Only three of the definitions (Rubin 1975; Stern 1975; Skehan 1983) will be considered here, believing that they contain most of the features of "strategy" cited elsewhere in the literature.

To start with, Rubin (1975:43) refers to strategies as the "techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". Stern (1975: 310) defines it as: "General more or less deliberate approaches used with specific techniques". Skehan (1983:1) proposes that strategies are ways in which the learner chooses to approach the task of learning, choose to use his ability to solve the L2 problem.

Common to all these three definitions is that strategy is 'a means for doing something'. There is, of course, variation. For example, in addition to 'a means for', it is 'more or less conscious' (Stern's position), 'optional' (Rubin's and Skehan's position). The idea that strategy is a' problem-solving' device is implicated in Stern's and in Skehan's definition. As we shall see below these are the recurrent features of strategy.

By reference to the speculation we made earlier that the interchangeable use of these two terms implies that both terms refer to the same class of phenomenon, the various views within the communicative strategies literature will be demonstrated. For example simplification is understood as the act of simplifying- the strategy of communication and the process whereby specific meanings are communicated on specific occasions (Levenston and Blum 1977:52)

Some researchers use the term 'strategy' when referring to a specific subclass of process, thereby implying an opposition between non-strategic vs strategic processes (Selinker 1972). Selinker identifies a number of processes which, he believes, can account for the formation of an IL. Five of those he isolates as being of vital importance are:

1) language transfer,
2) transfer of training,
3) strategies of second language learning,
4) strategies of second language communication, and
5) overgeneralization of TL material.

He offers 'simplification' of the TL as an example of (3), but it is unclear why such a strategy does not assume equal status with the processes of (1) and (5). But, for Widdowson (1979:193) all of the processes which Selinker refers to are tactical variations of the same underlying simplification strategy,

> which lie at the heart of communicative competence, and which are not restricted to people engaged in the learning of a second language system. Hatch notes that these factors could be used to explain differences found among learners, and also differences in the data from that of first language learners, while still preserving the notion of

> a universal learning process underlying both first and second language learning. (Widdowson, 1984:91).

Another way of handling the categories 'process' and 'strategy' has been put forward by some researchers who regard them as relating to the same superordinate class of mental activities but as being distinguished into subclass by certain defining criteria (eg. Levenston and Blum 1983:125). They use, for example, a temporal criterion/dimension as defining criterion. In this model, 'strategy' is defined as: "... the way the learner arrives at a certain usage at a specific point" and 'process' "as the systematic series of steps by which the learner arrives at the same usage over time".

This temporal criterion implies that a single usage can indicate a certain strategy. Thus if one traces a learner's specific usage to his L1, the strategy used will be taken as a *transfer*. If the same specific usage is repeated over time by the same learner in the same contexts then one can say that a certain aspect of the learner's interlanguage has been formulated as a result of a process of transfer. In this view, the distinction between processes and strategies is not necessarily one of +/- consciousness rather, as Blum-Kulka and Levenston would say: "The difference is one of levels of analysis; processes are underlying cognitive principles we are searching for in analysing strategies (1983:125). Process can therefore be inferred from strategies, in the same way as strategies can be inferred from IL performance. In a different attempt, Bialystok (1978) distinguishes between the two by the obligatory/optional criteria, strategies being optional mental activities.

In general, linguistic 'process' is used in a sense in which it is primarily used in opposition to product (for example, in expressions such as 'process-product distinction or process-oriented and product-oriented). Brown (1976:36) defines the term 'process' as: "... a continuing development involving a number of changes". Likewise, Klaus and Buhr (1976: 990) have defined it as: "... a dynamic sequence of different stages of an object or system". This is consistent with the use of the term 'process' which underlies in expressions such as 'the process of L2 acquisition'.

In addition to the concept 'process', there are a number of constructs that are intimately associated with 'strategy'. One is the concept of "general study habits". The other is "techniques". A few words also need to be added about the distinction made in the L2 learning literature between the term "strategy" and these terms.

3.6 Strategy vs Study Habits vs Technique

In the literature (Taddele 1990; Moreno and Di Vesta, 1991), the term "study habits" has been used to refer to individuals' general approach to the learning process as a whole, including second language learning, to their practical routines in tackling instructional material and to the sources and opportunities they exploit to obtain a better understanding of what they are required to learn, while using the term language learning "techniques" to refer to the practical methods learners employ specifically to facilitate and maximize their ability and knowledge of the second language (Taddele p.400). Taddele conceptualises the latter as "tactics" not as "strategies".

On the other hand, Naiman et.al. (1978) and Rubin (1975) have associated the term "techniques", which is different from strategies, with specific aspects of language learning. Thus, one can say, for example, the techniques of vocabulary acquisition, of grammar acquisition, or of listening comprehension, and so on (O'Malley et al 1990:6). In the 'study method-technique/tactic' distinction, the difference seems to be between one of 'generality' (study methods) and 'specifics' (techniques/tactics), and thus, the former category subsumes the latter. In the case of Naiman et al's definition, too, it is clear that the concept 'strategy' embodies the concept 'techniques'. So the operation of general study methods seems to be more inclusive than either strategy or technique; and the operation of strategy than technique.

Overall, the discussion above sheds light on three major problems associated with research into learning strategies: (1) it is not clear whether learning strategies are to be understood as mental behaviour or as behavioural and therefore observable, or both. Some researchers, for example, Oxford (1990 and 1989), appear to see them as behavioural, whereas others, for example, Weinstein and Mayer (1986) see

them as both behavioural and mental; (2) the exact nature of the concept 'learning strategies'. The distinction between this and other related behaviours (such as 'process', 'techniques' or 'tactics') is not a clear-cut case; (3) whether learning strategies are to be seen as conscious or subconscious. Some see them as conscious or 'deliberate actions' (Chamot 1987), whereas others see them as subconscious (Seliger, 1984), as the term 'conscious' is reflected in his definition of 'strategy'. He defines strategy as 'basic abstract categories of processing by which information perceived in the outside world is organised and categorised into cognitive structures as part of a conceptual framework' (1984:4). Also, (4) lack of coherent taxonomy of learning strategy types; and (5) absence of a coherent theory which researchers can make use of to interpret and explain their findings and thus situation is research and theory, rather than 'theory and research' (Skehan, 1989).

Given the difficulties associated with providing a complete definition of the term, 'learning strategy' here may be defined as a device learners employ consciously or unconsciously but intentionally to facilitate their learning. This definition is based on the recurrent features mentioned in Section 3.5 and contains some aspects of both the critorion and theoretical approaches assuming that definition of a concept like 'strategy' cannot be an 'either-or' case.

Bearing these problems in mind and considering the recurrent features mentioned above, we now move on to what has been done sofar regarding learning strategies and what has been obtained.

3.7 Studies on Strategies

As has been pointed out in the opening section of this Chapter, the theoretical impetus for examining 'what learners do in learning and using an L2' can partly be attributed to research in L1 acquisition process. Macnamara (1972) observed that children could not possibly learn the complex rules of the system, including all the exceptions to those rules, in the short time it takes to master a first language if they treated the problem as one of learning a linguistic system. Rather, Macnamara argues, children must have some other 'strategy' for approaching language learning.

That strategy, according to Macnamara, is to figure out what meanings make sense in context, and then to map linguistic structures on to those meanings.

Research attempting to find empirical and experimental evidence for Macnamara`s suggestions has looked at the questions :

1) what are some of the strategies that comprise this hypothesis-testing approach to language learning by children, and
2) to what extent are they appropriate procedures for adults learning an L2?

The findings from child L1 acquisition research have stimulated a variety of studies of L2 learning/acquisition which have examined whether or not the examples of children`s learning strategies also characterize adult L2 learning in the use of these strategies.

As regards the first question, results from IL, (`the intermediary form of an L2 that often contains elements of both the native and the target language) studies have revealed that strategies referred to as 'universal' or as sometimes called `linguistic' strategies are operative in L1 acquisition. Selinker (1972), whose name is perhaps most often associated with research on IL, identifies a number of strategies, five of which have been cited in the previous section (Ibid. p. 14).

Researchers in this area have collected ample data on the subsets of those strategies, for example, the use of *context* (Clark, 1973a), *overgeneralization* of word meanings (Clark, 1973b; Huttenclocher, 1974; Anglin, 1977), *simplification* (Blum and Levenston, 1978), *over-application* of certain terms (Lightbown, 1978), use of *formulaic expressions* or islands of reliability Bowerman, 1982; Dechert, 1982; Hakuta, 1974), *transfer* (Taylor 1975a,b). Raupach (1982) notes that one kind of strategies is to repeat whole phrases without adjustment, to avoid possible problems in variations. These are believed to be fundamental to child L1 acquisition.

As regards the second question, though there seems to be conflicting evidence, the majority of researchers seem to agree that, like children learning L1, adults also use

these strategies in L2 learning. For example, Corder (1967) suggests that the process of language acquisition is essentially the same for both first and second language learning: the basic capacity for language acquisition and the strategies employed in both processes are fundamentally the same. These IL studies have made clear that strategies help L2 learners to cope with the learning task. The studies also implicate that the strategies divide into learning and communication (eg. Selinker, 1972).

3.8 Learning Strategies and Communication Strategies

Normally, the concept 'strategies' is divided into sets of learning and communication strategies. Corder (1981) has observed some distinction between learning strategies and communication strategies. According to Corder learning strategies contribute to the development of an IL system, whereas communicative strategies are used by the speaker when faced with some difficulty due to his linguistic ends outrunning his communication means. This distinction is further elaborated by Tarone (1983) who thinks that the term 'communication strategies' relates to the attempt of two participants in a discourse to agree on a meaning in a given situation where meaning structures do not seem to be shared (p.65), while 'learning strategies' are used in an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the TL.

Rubin's (1987:25-26) Learning strategies, realized through both cognitive and metacognitive strategies- can contribute directly to learning. Communication strategies are less directly related to language learning since their main focus is on the process of participating in a conversation (i.e functional practising) and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker has intended. Communication strategies are used by speakers when faced with some difficulty due to the fact their communication ends outrun their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by a co-speaker (Corder, 1983; Tarone 1983).

The relationship between communication strategies and learning strategies is not always so clear since in the process of clarifying meaning, learners may uncover new information which they then store in their language system. Thus, although use of

communication strategies may lead to learning, the purpose for their use is to achieve better communication (for a review, see Rubin, 1987; Ellis 1986b). Bialystok (1983:101) attempts to clear the confusion as follows:

> One expedient for highlighting their differences is to consider the extent to which the strategy is based on a feature of the learner or a feature of the language. The former results in learning, the latter in communication. Both may be accompanied by varying degree of learner control.

Bialystok further stresses that learning strategies refer to activities in which the learner may engage for the purpose of improving TL competence and hence are revealed by the learner. Communicative strategies, on the other hand, are revealed through linguistic analyses of the learner IL. Bialystok further argues that communicative strategies indicate the extent to which the learner's utterances in the TL are affected by the native language (Taylor 1975), or the procedures used to express concepts for which TL words are unknown (Tarone 1977), the extent to which and the manner in which the lexicon of the TL is simplified (Blum and Levenston 1983).

Thus, just as in the case of 'strategy' and 'process' on the one hand, and 'strategy', 'general study habits' and 'techniques there in the other, there are also differences in opinions about the precise nature of learning strategies and communicative strategies and the attempts made to differentiate the two sets of strategies have not been successful.

3.9 Language Learning Strategies: Typology

The literature on learning strategies in L2 acquisition emerged from a concern for identifying the characteristics of effective learners. Research efforts concentrating on the "good language learner" (Naiman et al 1978; Rubin 1975) had identified a number of learning strategies. Rubin characterises a good language learner (as adapted by Naiman et al., 1975) as follows:

The good language learner

- is a willing and accurate guesser;
- has a strong drive to communicate, or to learn from communication;
- is often not inhibited (He appears to be foolish if reasonable communication results);
- is constantly looking for patterns in the language;
- practises
- monitors his own speech and speech to others;
- attends to meaning where he realises that in order to understand the message, it is not sufficient to pay attention to the grammar to the language or to the surface form of speech. (Rubin, 1975).

Skehan (1989) also quoted in Ellis (1994) regroups these into three categories:

- learner's capacity to impose himself on the learning situation, which Naiman *et al* refer to 'an active task approach';
- technical predispositions (or in Naiman *et al*'s description ' realisation of language as a system');
- learner's capacity to evaluate, which Rubin refers to as 'monitoring'. (Skehan, 1989).

In other descriptive studies, for example, O'Malley et al (1990; 1985a), Oxford (1986; 1990) and Wenden (1983, 1986), have attempted to identify broad classes of learning strategies, to which a large number of specific strategies can be assigned. Though classification schemes differ, a large number of items overlap and this makes it possible to take Oxford's (1990) framework to demonstrate learning strategies classification. It is true that Oxford's scheme is 'the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies to date and subsumes virtually every strategy previously mentioned in the literature' (Ellis,1994:539).

In this scheme, a general distinction is made between direct and indirect strategies. The former consists of 'strategies that directly involve the target language' in the sense that they 'require mental processing of the language' (1990:37 also quoted in

Ellis 1994:539), while the latter 'provide indirect support for language learning' (1990:151).

Each class is divided up into three categories and each category, in turn, is broken down into distinct specific strategies. The two larger classes and the categories are shown below.

Direct Strategies (DS):

1. Memory
2. Cognitive
3. Compensation

Indirect Strategies(IDS):

4. Metacognitve
5. Affective; and
6. Social

Memory Strategies consist of strategies which help learners to remember more effectively. The strategies included under this category are: *Grouping*, *Placing new words into a context* to remember them, *Making associations*, *Remembering events*, *Listing and relating* words, *Imagery*, *Semantic mapping*, etc.

Cognitive Strategies involved the use of mental processes in order to understand and produce language and comprised strategies such as *Comparing* the target item (TI) to items already known in L2 or L1, *Repeating* part or whole of the TI, *Resoursing* (Watching TV, Listening to radio in the target language (TL) and *Reading* textbooks),

Practising sounds and *Using TIs for writing*, *Making morphological analysis*, *Reading for pleasure*, *Looking patterns*, etc.

Compensation Strategies consisted of strategies that learners employ to compensate for missing knowledge. These are: *Guessing* the meaning of unfamiliar words while reading or listening, *Use of lexical relations* (e.g., using Synonyms) and *Paraphrasing* as clues for guessing, *Not reading word-by-word*, *L2-based guessing*, *Dictionary use*, etc.

Metacognitve Strategies contained strategies involving *organising* and *regulating* language learning. *Finding practice opportunities*, *Evaluating progress*, *Be a better learner*, *Planning for study*, *Doing more reading* are some of the examples of Metacognitive strategies.

Affective Strategies included strategies learners utilise for managing their emotions and consisted of strategies such as *Lowering anxiety*, *Encouraging oneself* through positive statements, *Talking with someone about one's felling*, etc.

Social Strategies comprised strategies learners employ for learning language through cooperating with others. Such strategies involve *Practising with students*, *Developing cultural awareness* of native speakers of the TL, *Asking questions* in the TL for clarification and verification, etc.

Learning strategies classification schemes such as this are indications of a considerable progress that has been made through time not only in classifying them, but also the growing interest in exploring them from various perspectives, which we will be examining in the next chapter.

3.10 Summary

Problems that defining learner strategies entails and difficulties with developing a coherent taxonomy of learning strategy types have been some of the points raised in this chapter. More importantly, the theoretical background of the present study from linguistic and psychological perspectives have also been considered, focusing, primarily, on cognitive theory. The reason for this is that it describes models of L2 acquisition which match our experiences with second or foreign language learning and intuition. The next chapter looks at "review of related literature'.

CHAPTER FOUR
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

4.1 Introduction

In chapter three, we examined some of the principal concepts and major difficulties that are associated with the term 'learning' or 'learner' strategies and the problem of developing a coherent taxonomy of learning strategy types. The endeavour is two fold: (1) to describe the variables associated with the definition of learner strategies in an attempt to arrive at a definition of L2 vocabulary learning strategies. There we have opted for a general definition, building on the concurrent features observed in the literature reviewed and composed of some elements from both theoretical and criterion approaches to defining strategy a "learning strategy is a device learners employ consciously or unconsciously and intentionally to facilitate their learning. (2) to show the various schemes proposed for the classification of strategies in general and learning strategies in particular focusing on only one of these systems of classification.

However, no mention has been made concerning the findings in the literature that investigates learning strategies in L2 acquisition, more precisely L2 vocabulary acquisition, which the present study attempts to explore. In this chapter we present a selective review of some earlier and relatively recent studies on learning strategies, concentrating on previous research on English vocabulary learning strategies and seek to provide a critical analysis, as much as possible, of the findings.

The purpose of the review is to establish a framework for describing the topics and issues treated in subsequent chapters, which have been detailed in chapter one of this study.

First of all, it is useful to survey, in general terms, the literature on language learning strategies that has been reviewed by previous researchers. This provides the

researcher with the main assumptions of research into learning strategies, which will be useful to understand the nature of research on vocabulary acquisition strategies. This will be followed by review of research on vocabulary learning strategies, which is central to the present chapter.

Review of the research in this area is broken down into two parts, corresponding to the two sets of strategies employed in learning L2 vocabulary: (1) vocabulary development strategies, and (2) vocabulary recognition strategies, in the sense that the two types of learning strategies have been defined in chapter two. Finally, research on learning strategies in the Ethiopian ELT situation will be considered.

4.2 Studies of Learning Strategies: An Overview

As Ellis (1994:529), drawing upon Skehan (1991:285), has noted, the study of learning strategies has been an 'explosion activity' in recent years. There is, then, an enormous variation of the research in the kind of assumptions made, in the type learners studied, in the procedures used to obtain information about strategy use, in the ways in which learning success or failure has been assessed, and in the primary objectives of the investigation:

1) to identify and describe the type of learning strategies used by a particular group of learners;
2) to investigate the effect of learning strategies on language learning outcomes;
3) to identify factors affecting the use of learning strategies;
4) to concentrate on factors that account for learner variability; and
5) to train learners in specific learning strategies.

It is impossible to provide a comprehensive review of the bulk of research in this area of second or foreign language acquisition. We have, therefore, resorted to survey reviews made by four L2 acquisition researchers and their associates (Rubin 1987; O'Malley et al. 1990; Ellis 1994; and Oxford et al. 1995). In the first part of the present chapter, we will consider these reviews, concentrating on issues pertinent to the present study.

To begin with, Rubin (1987) provides a review of a number of studies, mainly earlier ones. Her review examines the literature starting from Carton (1966), to whom Rubin traces back the origin of research on language learning strategies, upto Cohen and Aphek (1981) through Naiman et al's. (1978) study of 'the good language learner', and Bialystok's (1979/1981) research which shows the effects of the use of two functional ('use') strategies: inferencing and functional practising, and two formal ('language form' strategies): monitoring and formal practising.

Much of the research reviewed by Rubin, including her's and an associate's work (Rubin 1975, 1981; Rubin and Stern 1979), focuses on identifying strategies that 'good language learners' report they *do* to learn a second or foreign language, or are observed doing while performing language tasks.

Three of the twelve studies that Rubin reviews are directly related to the present study. One is Carton's (1971) article which provides a detailed discussion of inferencing of the meaning of unknown words as a strategy used by second language learners. The second is Hosenfeld's (1977; 1984) research that examines the guessing behaviours of successful and unsuccessful second language learners obtained by using the "think-aloud" type of introspection. A "think-aloud" is a self-report data elicitation procedure that requires learners to reflect on what they *do* and think while performing experimental tasks (see chapter four for the details). The third is Cohen and Aphek's (1981) research in strategies ('mnemonic devices') for L2 vocabulary acquisition using anecdotal reports by asking respondents to record the associations they made while learning vocabulary lists. In 'anecdotal reports' respondents will be asked to 'record the associates they made while learning vocabulary lists' (O'Malley et al. (1990).

These three studies will be reviewed in some detail in section below. Insights that can be obtained from the review of the former two studies are believed to shed light on the 'learning vocabulary in context' aspect of the present study, whereas the 'vocabulary development' aspect will benefit from the insight drawn from the third

study. Studies that have been reviewed by Rubin indicate progress made in research on learning strategies over time.

O'Malley et al. (1990) organize research in L2 learning strategies that they reviewed into three groups, corresponding to the objectives of the studies:

1) studies designed to define and classify learning strategies,
2) those intended to describe strategy applications with specific tasks or certain types of learners, and
3) studies intended to validate strategy effectiveness.

Research in the first set (1) seeks to distinguish types of learning strategies, mainly between Metacognitive and Cognitive strategies, in the sense of the terms described in chapter two of this study.

Research in the second set (2) concentrates on obtaining a 'general understanding of learning strategies and the types of individuals who used them', while the set in (3) focuses on 'the influence of strategies on L2 language learning outcomes' (O'Malley et al. 1990:104). The present study allies with those studies in type (2) above and thus they are given due considerations in this chapter. Research in category (3) has been further classified into three subsets according to the methodology used to elicit data, procedure used to analyse the data, and type of the investigation: (1) studies that used anecdotal reports, (2) correlational, and (3) experimental or training.

The present study differs from all three types of investigation in that it attempts to describe naturally occurring strategies without experimental manipulation and uses data collected through multiple data gathering procedures such as questionnaires, interviews and think-aloud techniques as these are described in some detail in chapter four. It differs from correlational studies in that the data collected for the present study are analysed with descriptive statistics, primarily using *frequency*.

Returning to the review of literature, O'Malley et al. also provide a review of data collection procedures based on self-report that have been used to analyse the ways students apply learning strategies to enhance L2 acquisition, which may be considered as a fourth category.

After reviewing research in each of these three sets, O'Malley et al. have made three major observations, and these are summarized as follows:

1) learners can report on their own learning processes, and self-reported strategy use is associated with learning outcomes;
2) the nature of the task and years of prior exposure to the language determine the strength of association between strategy use and learning outcomes; and
3) O'Malley et al. list use of *elaborative associations* (Cohen and Aphek 1981), *monitoring* (Bialystok 1981), and *asking questions for clarification*, and *self-monitoring* (Politzer and McGroarty (1985) as 'having meaningful relationships with second language acquisition' (O'Malley et al. 1990:112).

As O'Malley, et al. (1990:113) noted, these studies leave a variety of questions concerning the use of learning strategies in second language acquisition unanswered. One question, among others, is the need to understand in greater detail the types of second language learning tasks with which strategies are used, the frequency with which different strategies appear, the conditions under which they are used, and the characteristics of the individuals or groups who use them.

Our focus, therefore, is partly a response to what these researchers have demanded in that we are interested in identifying the types of strategies of L2 vocabulary learning, and the frequency with which the strategies appear in learning the English vocabulary. In addition, we are interested in discovering *who* uses *what* strategy and to what extent. We are also interested to 'know' *why* a group of learners use a set of strategies at certain rate.

Ellis (1994) has added two more categories of research to O'Malley et al.'s list of studies. One category comprises studies that seek to identify factors that influence

learners' use of learning strategies. The other category consists of studies of learning strategies used by children.

With reference to research in the first set, Ellis identifies five categories of studies, corresponding to five groups of factors that affect strategy use (both type and frequency of use). These are summarized below.

1) Beliefs about language learning (for example, Wenden 1987a),
2) The strength of motivation (for example, Oxford and Nyikos 1989),
3) Personality types (for example, Ehrman 1990),
4) Learner's personal background (for example, Ehrman 1990; Chamot et al. 1987),
5) Situational and social factors (Politzer 1983; Chamot et al. 1988).

These studies suggest that a range of factors determine the use of learning strategies.

Leaving aside the more psychological factors (such as personality traits and attitude), we concentrate on five specific factors that have direct relevance to the present study and thus need further considerations are:

1) level of proficiency;
2) the learner's learning goal;
3) task performed;
4) motivation; and
5) beliefs about language learning.

That is, no attempt will be made to examine the impact of all the factors listed in the Ellis's review. This is not because they are uninteresting or insignificant, but rather because the factors selected above are considered to be of greater importance for L2 acquisition in a formal setting. In addition, these factors can be easily diagnosed and changed.

A brief account of these factors of our interest will be provided below, recognising that the boundary between them is not a clear-cut case. Before that, however, we will continue with the issue in point.

Ellis provides us with eight general observations after reviewing the five sets of research on learning strategies (Ellis 1994: 555-556). These are stated below.

1) The strategies that learners elect to use reflect their general stage of L2 development. For example, he suggest that strategies that relate to the functional use of language and that involve processing chunks of language precede those that involve close attention to form and single words. O'Malley and associates also suggest that the use of cognitive strategies precedes over metacognitive strategies.
2) Successful learners appear to use learning strategies more frequently and in qualitatively different ways than learners who are less successful. For example, successful adult beginners seem more adept at the use of memory strategies;
3) Successful language learning involves attention to both form and meaning, and good language learners appear to be able to switch the focus of their attention while they are performing a ask even as beginners;
4) Different kinds of learning strategies may contribute to different aspects of L2 proficiency. Thus, strategies that involve formal practice may contribute to the development of linguistic competence, while strategies involving functional practice aid the development of communicative competence;
5) Learners need to employ strategies flexibly by selecting those strategies that are appropriate for performing a particular learning task;
6) Because of 5, Metacognitive strategies involving goal identification, planning, monitoring, and evaluation assume considerable importance, at least for adults.;
7) The more successful adult learners are better able to talk about the strategies they use; and
8) The learning strategies used by children and adults may differ; social and interactional strategies may be more important with young learners.

4.3 Factors Affecting Strategy Use

i) Beliefs about Language Learning

Learners' beliefs about language learning is one aspect of learner differences, which, according to Wenden (1991:39), is of two types: (1) knowledge about the nature of language, and (2) knowledge about the language learning process. Regarding the former type, Rubin and Thompson (1982) list three characteristics of language: creativity, systematicity and similarity. Knowledge of these defining characteristics, they think, are of importance to 'more successful' learning. Regarding the latter type (knowledge about language learning), Wenden (ibid) believes that learning a second language is not the same as learning biology, nor is it the same as learning to drive a car, although learning to drive, like language learning, is a form of procedural knowledge. The contention is that learners' 'philosophy' about these types of factors may influence their use of strategies.

There is evidence to support this contention, viz, the link between learners' believes about language learning and the use of strategies. For example, Wenden (1987a also quoted in Ellis 1994:541) found that learners who emphasized the importance of learning tended to use cognitive strategies that helped them to understand and remember specific items of language, while learners who emphasized the importance of using language employed few learning strategies, relying instead on communication strategies. Learners who stressed personal factors did not manifest any distinct pattern of strategy use.

However, Wenden did not attempt to investigate the relationship between learners' beliefs and learning outcomes.

Bialystok (1981b) also found that Grade 10 and 12 learners of L2 French in Canada varied in the extent to which they believed that language learning involved *formal* as opposed to *functional practice*, and that this influenced their choice of strategies.

Affective states are the second components of learner difference which can also affect the choice and frequency of strategy use.

sources than the former type does. Evidence for this, that task type influences strategy choice, comes from Chamot et al. (1987) and Chamot (1988), and O'Malley, et al. (1985a). Chamot and associates note that vocabulary tasks had a marked influence on learners' choice of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies and vocabulary tasks led to the use of the cognitive strategies of *resoursing* and *elaboration* and the metacognitive strategies of *self-monitoring* and *self-evaluation*. Listening tasks, in contrast, led to *note-taking*, *elaboration*, *inferencing*, and *summarising* as cognitive strategies, and to *selective attention, self-monitoring*, and *problem-identification* as metacognitive strategies.

iv) Language Learning Experience

A general distinction is made between 'second' and 'foreign' language learning contexts. 'Context' here refers to linguistic environments or the type of access that the learner has to input in L2 and how much contact individual learners have with the L2. A foreign language learning (FLL) context is where the target language is not commonly used as a medium of communication outside the classroom (e.g., learners of L2 English in China). In contrast, a second language learning (SLL) context is where the L2 serves as a native language for the majority (e.g., English in Britain, United States), or it serves as an official language when the majority speaks other local languages (e.g., L2 English in India, Nigeria, South Africa).

A general assumption is that the learning that takes place in these two contexts is different and leads learners to differences in the type of proficiency they of acquire. Other things being equal, these differences can be explained by reference to differences in the type of learning that takes place in these contexts. As the learner in a FLL context has no direct contact with the target language and thus with authentic input through direct participation, s/he develops only basic knowledge of the target language. In contrast, the learner in SLL context has direct access to the target language and opportunities for direct participation in authentic conversations, and thus s/he acquires high level of L2 proficiency.

ii) Motivation and Learning Goal

Affective states such as motivation or the strength of learners' motivation can be expected to have influence on the quantity of learning strategies they employ. Oxford and Nyikos (1989), in a study of students of foreign languages in universities in the United States, found that 'the degree of expressed motivation was the single most powerful influence on the choice of language learning strategies' (1989:294). Highly motivated learners used more strategies relating to *formal practice*, *functional practice*, *general study*, and *conversation/input elicitation* than poorly motivated learners.

The type of motivation may also influence strategy choice. In the same study, Oxford and Nyikos reported that *formal practice* and *general study* strategies were more popular than *functional practice* strategies, perhaps reflecting the students' strong instrumental goal of fulfilling course requirements and obtaining good grades in a programme that stressed analytical skills.

Rosna and Sahil (1994) also found that university students who participated in their study used Metacognitive strategies to a considerably 'high' level and suggest that university students are concerned about their grades, and they undoubtedly monitor their learning progress. Politzer and McGroarty (1985) also pointed out that learners' goals are likely to determine strategy use. For example, the strategy of asking the teacher how an expression is used may be seen as relevant by the student concerned with developing communicative competence, but not by one concerned only with reading technical literature in the L2. It does not follow, of course, that students will always be correct in their assumptions about which learning strategies are best suited to their particular goals (Abraham and Vann's (1987).

iii) Task Type

O'Malley, et al (1985a, 1990) make note of two types of language learning tasks, viz, 'discrete' and 'integrative'. A vocabulary learning task is said to be discrete, whereas a listening task is seen as an integrative, since, according to these researchers, the latter type requires consolidation and integration of more information from different

sources than the former type does. Evidence for this, that task type influences strategy choice, comes from Chamot et al. (1987) and Chamot (1988), and O'Malley, et al. (1985a). Chamot and associates note that vocabulary tasks had a marked influence on learners' choice of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies and vocabulary tasks led to the use of the cognitive strategies of *resoursing* and *elaboration* and the metacognitive strategies of *self-monitoring* and *self-evaluation*. Listening tasks, in contrast, led to *note-taking*, *elaboration*, *inferencing*, and *summarising* as cognitive strategies, and to *selective attention, self-monitoring*, and *problem-identification* as metacognitive strategies.

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Krashen (1976, 1981, 1982) distinguishes two ways in which knowledge in an L2 can be developed: 'acquisition' and 'learning'. Acquisition takes place subconsciously as a result of participating in authentic communication and understanding what has been said or written, and it may correspond to learning in a SL context. Learning, which, according to Krashen, involves conscious attention to linguistic forms, may correspond to learning in a FL context.

However, studies show that the correlation between these two settings and proficiency depends on the 'pedagogic approach' d'Anglejan (1978 also cited in Ellis 1994:215). Ellis concludes that 'there is no *necessary* connection between setting and type of learning' (Ellis 1994:215).

Based on the studies that he reviewed (e.g., Corder, 1977b), Ellis characterises the two types of pedagogic approach, viz, 'traditional' and 'innovative' approaches, as follows:

(In) *A traditional approach*:

- involves explicit teaching of the language;
- few opportunities for learning naturalistically;
- the language is perceived primarily as an 'object' to be mastered and learning its formal properties;
- the teacher typically acts as a 'knower/informer' and the learner as an information seeker

In the case of *innovational approach*es,

- the emphasis is on the use of the target language in 'social behaviour';
- different role relationships are possible;
- the teacher can be 'producer' or 'referee' and the learner 'actor' or 'player'.

There is evidence to suggest that both these factors- the setting in which learning takes place and approaches to language instruction- determine strategy choice and levels of use.

With regard to the former, differences between the learning strategies used by learners in SL context as opposed to those used in FL context have been reported. In earlier studies, for example, McNamara (1973) observes that the social conditions that prevail in natural and formal contexts may predispose learners to engage in *informal* and *formal* learning strategies. The former type of strategies can be understood as those that involve communicative function, whereas the latter as those that are utilised for learning grammatical structure, vocabulary, pronunciation.

In more recent studies, for example, Chamot et al. (1987) noted that the FL students that they investigated reported to use some strategies not mentioned by ES students (O'Malley, et al. 1985a). These strategies included *rehearsal*, *translation*, *note-taking*, and *contextualisation*. These researchers also noted that FL students also reported relying on Cognitive strategies, in relation to Metacognitive and Affective/Social strategies, to a lesser extent than the ESL students.

As regards the relationship between language instruction and strategy selection, Oxford (1989b) found that of the various factors investigated, language teaching methods (and language learning level) strongly correlated with learners' choice of language learning strategies.

However, there is no consensus in the literature concerning the role of learners' background in determining strategy selection. Contrary to the results from empirical research reported above, Willing (1988: 150-1 and also cited in Nunan, 1991:170) claims that he did not find any relationship between biographical data and strategy choice, and it would be useful to reconsider this state of affairs.

Very recently, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) have provided an extensive review of research on learning strategies of second and foreign language learning in an

attempt to assess a worldwide use of the Inventory of Language Learning Strategies (SILL) (Oxford 1986-1990). The review appears in three sets, depending on the three English learning environments: learning English as a second language (ESL), learning English as a foreign language (EFL), and what Oxford and Burry-Stock called a "hybrid" of ESL and EFL.

The review provides, among other things, detailed results concerning use of learning strategies in these environments, and the results appear to be directly related to whether students are in an ESL, or EFL or ESL and EFL (in a hybrid) setting. Students in the first context (ESL) reportedly used a greater number of strategies very frequently than those in latter two environments. The researchers suggest that students in the EFL contexts did not necessarily want to become expert language learners and were not using most kinds of strategies frequently.

With reference to the five factors that we have chosen for consideration (such as, learner experience in L2 (English) learning, type of instruction', goal and the way vocabulary is approached in the classroom) in relation to learning strategy use, the following claims can be made with respect to O'Malley et al. (1990), Ellis (1994), and Oxford et al. (1995):

1) Learners can report on their own learning processes, and self-reported strategy is associated with learning outcomes;
2) Years of prior exposure to the language learning determine the strength of association between strategy use and learning outcomes;
3) Because of 2, the strategies that learners elect to use reflect their level of proficiency or achievement;
4) High achieving learners use learning strategies in qualitatively and quantitatively different ways than low-achieving learners;
5) High-achieving learners are better able to report the strategies they use than low-achieving learners;
6) Learning environment influences strategy use; and
7) Specific learning tasks predispose learners to use particular strategies.

These underlying assumptions have been centred around research that seek to investigate strategies of L2 acquisition in relation to a wide range of language learning tasks. We expect the assumptions to be of importance to research on specific language learning tasks, like research on strategies of L2 vocabulary acquisition. The next section will look into findings of research on strategies of English vocabulary learning.

4.4 Research on Learning Strategies: The Ethiopian Case

Direct empirical research into learning strategies in second or foreign language acquisition in the Ethiopian ELT situation is a relatively recent endeavour. A number of studies, primarily BA theses on strategies of vocabulary acquisition conducted with high school students, are available. However, the efforts of most of these studies were to identify the problems Ethiopian students encounter in learning English vocabulary and attributing the difficulty to what most of the studies referred to as the "traditional method" teachers used to approach vocabulary lesson rather than identifying strategies learners used.

In this section we will review three studies of learning strategies in the Ethiopian situation: one concerned with learning strategies in relation to a range of language learning tasks (Taddele 1990), and the other one, which is more pertinent to the present study, focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of three vocabulary learning or teaching strategies and the extent of to which these are implemented in Freshman English courses (Dessie, 1988). The third one measures the effectiveness of reading strategies (Girma, 1994).

It is perhaps appropriate to start our review with Dessie's work (M.A thesis), since his work has direct relevance to the present study. Like the present study, Dessie conducted the research with freshmen in the Social Science Faculty at AAU. Dessie's work has to do with strategies of English vocabulary learning, which is also the focus of the present study. However, this is not to imply that the present study is the same as Dessie's work. The two studies differ, among other things, with

respect to, firstly, their methodological orientation. Dessie's work is experimental, while the present study is descriptive and employs, as described in Chapter Five, a multi-method approach to data collection (see Chapter Five); secondly, Dessie's work attempts to measure the effectiveness of three vocabulary learning strategies, which he calls 'modern vocabulary teaching methods' viz, *contextual clues*, *word structure* and *sentence structure*, while the present study attempts to **identify** as many strategies as possible that freshmen claim to **use** and determine what reported strategies can be associated with the subjects as a whole and with two groups of students at different performance levels, and so on. Dessie reported that means of the post-test showed significance difference between the experimental and the control groups in favour of the former group and attributed the difference to the methodology or the strategies employed in teaching vocabulary.

Taddele's (1990) work (Ph.D thesis) is important for two related reasons: (1) it is the most comprehensive and useful to understand the profile of learning strategy (or as Taddele refers to this as 'general study habits' and 'English language learning', as has been pointed out in Chapter Two) use of the Ethiopian students and thus it serves as a frame of reference, and (2) it embraces most of the assumptions claimed in the research on learning strategies that was reviewed earlier in this chapter.

Taddele's thesis includes descriptions and statistical analysis of a number of factors which influence individuals' success or failure in L2 learning, which have been looked at in chapter two of the present study.

To Taddele, both sets of learning strategies (General study habits (GSH) and English language learning techniques (ELLT)) have a causal relationship with individual differences in L2 acquisition, as does second or foreign language learning aptitude, motivation, or anxiety. Consequently, Taddele hypothesizes that use of both GSH and ELLT would be essential for learning and would explain success in second language learning (p.133).

The subjects in his study were 188 second year AAU students in the College of Social Science learning Freshman English, in the sense that ELT in Ethiopia has been described in chapter one. Data on the two sets of strategies were collected with a questionnaire consisting of 25 items for GSH and 24 for ELLT on a five-point scale: Rarely (=1), Sometimes (=2), Frequently (=3), Generally (=4), Almost Always (=5). Achievement data were collected on three subsets of TOEFL (Listening Comprehension, Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension and Spoken English) and students' previous (First Year) Cumulative Grade Point Average. Taddele divided the subjects into four groups according to their achievement on the TOEFL: first high, second high, first low, and second low.

Results from this study seem to suggest that use of the two sets of strategies was differentially associated with proficiency, as the use of GSM shows higher correlation coefficients with each of the skills measured than use of ELLT. The results also show that each set of strategies had more association with a specific learning tasks than others. For example, use of GSM appeared to have more associations with tasks related to writing (.62), but less with tasks related to listening (.51). Similar observation can be made regarding use of ELLT. This set of strategies had relatively high correlation coefficients with tasks related to listening and reading (.49 and .48, respectively), but low correlation coefficients with tasks related to writing (.38).

Drawing upon these results, Taddele concluded that the specific techniques and the major strategies suggested by the 'good language learner' researchers were directly connected with levels of subjects' proficiency in English.

In addition, Taddele sought to identify 'popular' strategies in an attempt to discover the relationship between levels of proficiency among three of the four groups of learners (first high, second high, second low), and use of specific strategies associated with each group. The results show that there were consistent differences between first high, second high, and second low students on use of both sets of learning strategies. He found that the highest proficiency group (first high) used more

frequently and a wide range of strategies than the second high, which in turn used more strategies more frequently and a wide range of strategies than the low proficiency group (second low). Thus, a linear relationship was shown between strategy use and language proficiency. The general superiority of more proficient language learners over less proficient concerning use of learning strategies is also evident in Chamot et al.'s (1988) study.

Taddele has attributed these differences in proficiency and in strategy use among the three groups to the social or situational factors (such as watching TV, reading newspapers and journals in English, and so on), as he had framed his study within the socio-psychological model (Gardner 1985). This means, the proficient group appeared to have benefited from exposure to these factors which enhance second or foreign language learning. This is a possible interpretation, considering the biodata of the three groups. Taddele reported that the proficient group came from high schools situated in urban part of Ethiopia, where the social and situational conditions for learning could be met easily. On the other hand, Taddele reported that low proficient group came from the rural part of the country, where these conditions were lacking. The differences in strategy use between high proficient and less proficient Ethiopian students in Taddele's study suggest that learners' ability to use a broad range of strategies more frequently may depend on the social and situational factors.

The results reported in Taddele's study have matched most of the assumptions claimed in previous studies, which have been reviewed in chapter two of the present study. What is lacking in Taddele's work is whether specific task types predispose learners to use particular strategies, an issue which O'Malley et al. (1985, 1990) demanded to be addressed before progress can be made towards learner training in specific language learning strategies. Taddele's effort cannot afford this, because his study sought to account for individual differences among Ethiopian university students on a range of language learning tasks (listening, writing, reading and speaking). Our endeavour to examine the type of learning strategies Ethiopian university students use is hoped to fill the gap that exists between research interest

in exploring learning strategies on a wide range of language learning tasks and a specific language learning task.

Another study from the Ethiopian ELT situation that deserves attention is Girma's (1994) MA thesis on *Reading Strategies of AAU First Year Students.* Girma reports that the results from a questionnaire and guided interview suggested that most of the subjects had relatively low awareness of reading strategies that may facilitate more successful reading. He also notes that a number of reading strategies that were considered to be appropriate and likely to hinder the reading process were used very frequently and valued highly by the students (Ibid: ii).

As there is no any other research in the Ethiopian situation was found that has been done with the intention of bringing to light strategy use pattern and knowledge of AAU students, it was not possible to compare the results reported in either Dessie's, Taddele's or Girma's work with those from other similar studies.

4.5 Research on Strategies of English Vocabulary Acquisition

As mentioned above, a general distinction is often made between vocabulary development strategies and those that are used for learning vocabulary from context. The former category is sometimes referred to as vocabulary "development strategies", whereas the latter is called word or vocabulary "recognition strategies" (Williams 1985: 121).

The term *development strategies* refers to those strategies learners use to enhance retention and retrieval, with the objective of being able to *use* the vocabulary items thus learned through guessing or inferencing in speech or writing for different purposes, including passing language tests. Literature has recorded a group of strategies which are very often termed as Mnemonics or Memory devices (see Cohen and Aphek, 1987; Thompson, 1987; Pressley, Levin, and Delany, 1982; also Stoller and Grabe, 1993; for a review) as vocabulary development strategies.

The term *recognition strategies* refers to strategies 'learner reader' employs in sorting out and learning the meaning of new words in context (We use the term 'learner reader' to refer to the type of students we have in mind who learn English in the classroom situation and read with the objective of meeting course requirements vis-a-vis leisure reading).

Although both types of strategies are treated separately here for easy of presentation, the present study assumes that they are not distinct. Theoretically, this means that the function of both types of strategies is similar, viz, to integrate and consolidate information obtained about new vocabulary items with knowledge that already exists. That is, for the learner, the process of merging vocabulary items as discret units into larger and integrated units is not automatic, but rather influenced by use of strategies (both frequency and type). As we have seen earlier in this chapter, strategy use is affected by psychological and social/situational factors.

In other words, the L2 vocabulary learning strategies mediate between these factors and achievement on vocabulary learning tasks.

There have been few empirical studies of EFL/ESL vocabulary acquisition strategies that seek to integrate the two sets of strategies. Most of the studies in this area of enquiry have been restricted to exploring search set in isolation, and fail to reflect on the overall process of L2 vocabulary learning with regard to use of language learning strategies.

This section will explore research on strategies of English vocabulary learning. First, we will consider strategies of vocabulary development. Second, we will concentrate on research on vocabulary recognition strategies and some *theories of reading*, which are useful to describe learners' use of inferencing or guessing strategies.

4.5.1 Review of Empirical Research on Vocabulary Development Strategies

From our personal experiences with learning foreign languages, we witness that some word-meanings stick to the mind while others fade away quickly. Words of the

latter type are probably not committed to memory efficiently, and if so, are not stored in such a way that they may be easily retrievable when necessary. In other words, not all word-meanings that learners attempt to learn in context or are studied in a vocabulary list will be committed to memory efficiently for some reasons (Levenston 1979) so that they can be retrieved readily. Research in memory suggests that retention and retrieval of new information is closely tied to 'cognitive depth' (Craik and Lockhart, 1972).

What this means is that the more we actively work out a solution to a problem, i.e., the more commitment we make to the task of learning something, then the more likely we are of storing this information permanently. In order for learners to go about deepening their processing of vocabulary, literature offers us a group of strategies which are labelled as "development strategies", as has been described above. The fundamental principle which is common to all these strategies is, therefore, that efficient and elaborated vocabulary learning can only take place when 'depth of processing is involved' (Craik and Tulving, 1975). This section deals with two classes of "vocabulary development strategies", viz, Mnemonic devices, Semantic feature analysis or a composite of the two types of strategies.

i) Mnemonics Devices

One group of strategies that language learners use for retention and retrieval or *use* are very often known as "mnemonic techniques" (Cohen, 1987; Thompson, 1987; for extensive reviews), which means "aiding memory" (Higbe, 1979). Mnemonics are said to work by utilizing some well-known principles of psychology: 'a retrieval plan is developed during encoding, and mental imagery, both visual and verbal, is used' (Thompson, 1987:47). Thompson recognises three features of mnemonic strategies which are useful to our discussion in the latter part of this section. They :

1) help individuals learn faster and recall better because they aid the integration of new material into existing cognitive units and because they provide retrieval cues;
2) can be adapted voluntarily, and once learned are difficult to forget; and

3) are adaptable to individual differences, and most users report that they enjoy using them.

Much of the empirical work done in this area has dealt with the first feature; that is, how vocabulary development (memory) strategies can help individuals learn faster and recall better.

In the majority of cases, the research approach used to investigate these strategies has been what is very often called "instructional", in which the effects of one or more strategies are compared to other strategies or non-strategies, which are technically known us the "experimental" and "controlled" groups. The research is concerned with the 'keyword method' (Pressley, Levin, and Delaney, 1982, Atkinson, 1975), 'semantic processing' (Anders and Bos, 1986; Siegltiz, 1983; Channel, 1981, 1988; Crow and Quigly, 1985; Beck, McKeown, and Omanson, 1987), and combination of these two- 'keyword-semantic' (Brown and Perry, Jr, 1991). As we shall see below, the theoretical foundation for all these strategies is schema theory as outlined below. A cursory review of these strategies is as follows.

I (a) Keyword Strategy

Of the three strategies, the keyword is perhaps the best known and most researched mnemonic technique. As has been mentioned in Chapter Two where we have dealt with the various aspects of learning strategies (such as definition and classification), the use of keyword method calls for the establishment of an acoustic and imaginal link between an L2 word to be learned and a word in L1 which sounds similar. In a sense, therefore, the keyword approach also makes use of the students' background knowledge by creating an association link between a new word and a known word, phrase, or image which is acoustically and/or visually similar.

The keyword strategy has been shown to be effective in improving both immediate and delayed recall of vocabulary in several foreign languages (Atkinson and Raugh, 1975, for example), and unfamiliar L1 words (Pressley, Levin and Miller, 1981). It was found to be more effective for memorizing vocabulary in both first and second

language than other methods, such as finding roots, learning synonyms, or using meaningful contexts (Pressley, Levin and Delaney, 1982).

I (b) Semantic Processing

Unlike the keyword method, there is no single semantic processing technique. It ranges from a simple association of a word with its definition (in L2) or translation (in L1) (Cohen and Aphek, 1980) to semantic feature analysis (SFA) (eg. Andres and Bos, 1986; Channel, 1981) and the deeper semantic level processing for meaning and relating it to existing cognitive structures where memory traces become permanent (Craik and Lockhart, 1972).

However, two defining characteristics of semantic processing are recognized in the literature (eg. Perry, Jr., 1991): Focus must be on the meaning of the new word, and the learner must act upon the meaning of the new word in a way that is considered integrative in relation to already existing semantic systems. These characteristics of semantic processing techniques coincide with Beck, et al's (1987) pedagogic suggestion that "students should be required to manipulate words in varied and rich ways, for example, by describing how they relate to other words and to their own familiar experiences" (p. 149).

ii) Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA)

SFA is a technique which allows students to learn new vocabulary by tapping prior knowledge through understanding the similarities and differences between words by categorizing vocabulary based on common attributes. It has been suggested that SFA helps to see semantic relationship between and among words as well as between their own background knowledge and new information (for a review see Carter, 1987; Carter and McCarthy, 1988; Anders and Bos, 1986; Richards, 1976). Johnson, Toms-Bronowski and Pittelman (1981) investigated the effectiveness of SFA in teaching vocabulary to elementary students, and they have suggested that the strategy was valuable for helping students understand the relative nature of synonyms and the various connotations of related vocabulary.

In a similar vein, Channel (1981) and Crow and Quigley (1985) have suggested a *semantic field approach*, which is essentially similar to SFA, for advanced ESL students. All these researchers agree that SFA or semantic field approach leads to better vocabulary retention because new lexical items are introduced into the semantic network (also see Stroller and Grabe, 1993:34), which is consistent with the knowledge hypothesis of schema theory - 'instantiating new concepts into cognitive structure' (Anderson, 1980).

'Association' is an aspect of the Semantic Feature Analysis. Research in memory suggests that words are stored and remembered in a network of associations (Stevick, 1976: 18). These associations can be of many types and be linked in a number of ways, such as spelling, sound and meaning (see Nattinger, 1988, 1987; McCarthy, 1990; for a review of research). Research also shows that language learners constantly associate new materials with what are already known to them, and those who are successful in doing it retain and retrieve the new information better than those who do not.

For example, Cohen and Aphek (1980, 1981) studied the role of mnemonic associations in the retention of vocabulary over time. They found that in most instances FL students tried to memorize words. Cohen and Aphek also identified eleven categories of associations, primarily based on meaning correspondence between the target word and words in the L1. They concluded that the use of such strategies facilitated the retention of vocabulary over time. Cohen and Aphek also pointed out that there were some strategies which prevented learning: (1) poor memory techniques (2) poor inductive inferencing strategies, and (3) poor deductive reasoning.

iii) Keyword, Semantic and Keyword-Semantic

Brown and Perry Jr. (1991) compared the effect of these strategies on ESL vocabulary acquisition among Arabic-speaking students at two levels of proficiency. The students received 4 days of instruction, and sat for cued-recall and recognition measures 1 day and 9 days after treatment. Brown and Perry Jr. reported that the

keyword method, which was measured immediately after treatment, facilitated vocabulary acquisition for lower proficiency students.

According to this study, the combined keyword-semantic strategy increased retention above the other strategies for both the recognition and cued-recall tests. They interpreted these deferential effects of the strategies in terms of the prediction made from the depth-of-processing theory (Craik and Lockhart, 1972; Craik and Tulving, 1975), which states that information processed at the semantic level produces better memory traces than that processed at acoustical levels, and second, when elaboration occurs at a number of levels, memory traces are even stronger.

These findings are especially interesting because they are consistent with the assumption made in recent strategy research literature that, all other things being equal, success in language learning can be attributed to the use of a variety of strategies (Rubin, 1987; O'Malley, et al., 1990).

On the other hand, some researchers are dubious about the findings of experimental studies such as this. For example, Meara (1980) cites three problems with the "very impressive evidence" on the keyword technique, which we assume is equally applicable to other 'controlled' studies. First, such experiments ignore the complex patterns of meaning relationships that characterize a complete and fully formed lexicon. Second, they do not study real language learners but, instead, laboratory subjects. Third, although the technique clearly aids recognition, it is less clear whether it leads to active control over such vocabulary.

4.5.2 Strategies of Vocabulary Acquisition in Context

4.5.2.1 Vocabulary and Reading

Traditionally, four language skills- speaking, listening, reading, and writing- are recognized as skills to be mastered for one to become proficient in an L2. Of these, reading is believed to be the most crucial for a student entering into an L2 academic environment. Our own learning and teaching experience in an FL situation has shown us that reading is the primary means by which academic knowledge is

transmitted to students as both secondary and tertiary levels, and it is also a useful secondary source of information that might be missed in a class discussion or lecture. For foreign students, whom we know in person and whose command of spoken English is quite tenuous, reading is the skill they most often depend on to help them get through a programme of study.

There is a general agreement among researchers on the relationship between vocabulary development and reading such that learning both L1 and L2 vocabulary in context must be a major way of increasing vocabulary knowledge (McKeon and Curtis, 1987; Mezynski, 1983; Huckin, Hynes and Coady, 1993).

This proposition has long been supported by findings through empirical research, especially in an L1 situation. For example, Goodman's (1965) study revealed that children were able to read words in the context of a sentence which they were unable to read when the words were presented alone. Tulving and Gold (1963), for example, found that as the amount of information in a sentence increased, the time required to recognize a target word decreased.

This example shows the supportive role of context in vocabulary acquisition. It follows then that if the L1 learners rely on context to develop their knowledge of vocabulary items, so too should L2 learners.

On the other hand, there is also a general agreement that vocabulary knowledge influences proficiency in reading. It has been suggested (Anderson and Freebody, 1981) that knowledge of word meanings enables one to comprehend text, or that students who know more word meanings will be able to comprehend more difficult texts by virtue of that knowledge.

Very recently, Sherin Mohammed (1992) studied English reading strategies of Yemenese university students and discovered that their reading ability suffered from the lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge.

It is also the case that learning vocabulary is also learning the conceptual knowledge associated with the word and thus teaching vocabulary may mean teaching background knowledge or conceptual knowledge. Carrell (1988) writes as follows stressing this point:

> Knowledge of vocabulary entails knowledge of the schemata in which a concept participates, knowledge of the network in which that word participates, as well as any associated words and concepts. (1988:243).

The points that have been raised in this section indicate, among other things, the mutual assistance that prevails between reading and vocabulary knowledge. But how does an L2 learner reader develop vocabulary knowledge from reading?

4.5.2.2 Guessing or Inferencing

Definitions of guessing and inferencing/inferring vary among researchers some preferring the distinction between word-level (guessing) and comprehension/text-level (inferring/inferencing), whereas others prefer to use both interchangeably for word-level processing of meaning in context. The third group of researchers use guessing for 'a blind attempt' or something that does not involve any sort of thought and reserving inferencing/inferring for 'intelligent guessing'. For purposes of discussion in this thesis, we use the term 'inferencing' in the sense Bialystok (1980) uses: 'the use of available information to derive explicit linguistic hypotheses' (p.26). The information used for this purpose may be linguistic or non-linguistic that may be drawn from the reading material, the reader, or both. We use the two terms 'guessing' and 'inferencing' interchangeably following the use of the term in the literature under review.

To begin with, guessing is said to be the most important strategy of learning vocabulary in context (Widdowson 1978; Huckin, Haynes and Coady, 1993; Clarke and Silberstein, 1977; Kruse, 1979; Hosenfeld, Arnold, Kirchofer, Laciura, and Wilson, 1981). Clarke and Silberstein (1977) have pointed out the importance of guessing as follows:

> Guessing vocabulary from context is perhaps the most important [relative to morphological analysis and monolingual English dictionary] of the vocabulary attack skills. Students must be made aware of the number of language clues available to them when they are stopped by an unfamiliar word. They should realize that they can usually continue reading and obtain a general understanding of the items.(p.145).

Widdowson (1978:86) argues that explanations of usage, such as those found in glossaries or dictionaries, encourage the learner in the harmful belief that "reading is simply a matter of recognising given and fixed meanings as they occur". For him lexical guessing is central to reading:

> If the learner is to acquire the communicative ability of reading then he must develop an inferencing strategy whereby he is able to derive meanings from context. (Ibid.)

Thus, this strategy has a number of advantages over other strategies for learning words in reading, such as using the dictionary. Three of these are as follows: a) it is not dependent on a dictionary or glossary or a teacher; b) when using context clues, the reader's attention can remain on the text, thus reducing the possibility of interrupting the reading process; and c) the use of inferencing is not restricted by space and time and thus the learner can make use of it everywhere he goes and at any time.

However, these advantages assume that learner readers are skilled guessers. If they are not good, can teachers be of help? As mentioned in chapter one, seeking the answer to these questions is part of the general objective of this thesis.

A number of studies show that the use of contextual guessing by L2 learners is not unproblematic (Bensoussan and Laufer, 1984; Haynes 1993). Haynes (1993) drawing upon Twaddell (1973), for example, has noted that:

> the basic skill in vocabulary expansion is the habit of guessing from the context, using both grammatical and pragmatic clues. This habit appears to be normal in listening to and reading the native language for those who really listen and read. It is not automatic in dealing with a foreign language. (Haynes, 1993: 47).

Haynes also expresses the problem the L2 learner reader faces in guessing as follows:

> word-form identification can be difficult for L2 readers, who are apt to misrecognise new forms as familiar ones or feel unsure about whether a word-form is really new or not; word concept can be difficult to delineate if a number of words in the context are unknown or if the context, as is frequently the case, proves too meagre to support accurate inferencing. (Haynes, 1993:46).

The guessing failure or for that matter the reading failure of the L2 learner reader (Haastrup, 1991; Hosenfeld, 1984), that Twaddell and Haynes and others, particularly Twaddell, bring to focus, may arise from three different but interrelated sources: the question of *L2 proficiency*, the question of the *ability to use guessing strategies*, and the question of *background knowledge* or what is often called "schema" (Rumelhart and Ortorny, 1977). Each of these factors will be examined below.

4.5.2.3 Constraints on Guessing in L2 Reading

(a) L2 Proficiency

First, it is claimed that L2 learner readers do not have enough vocabulary to make use of contextual clues (Yorio, 1971; Cziko, 1978). For example, Brown (1974:2) observes that an ESL student about to enter the university often has a smaller vocabulary than a five year old native speaker. The more extended and elaborated form of Brown's statement comes from Alderson (1984; citing Yorio, 1971), who writes:

> the reader's knowledge of the foreign language is not like that of the native speaker; the guessing or predicting ability necessary to pick up the correct cues is hindered by the imperfect knowledge of the language; the wrong choice of cues or the uncertainty of the choice makes associations more difficult; due to unfamiliarity with the material and the lack of training, the memory span in a foreign language in the early stages of its acquisition is usually shorter than in our native language: recollection of previous cues then is more difficult in a foreign language than in the mother tongue; and at all levels, and at all times, there is interference of the native language. (p.108).

Implying that the process of inferencing (reading) in FL/SL involves the following four factors (For the reason that will be discussed below, we will assume that processes involved in both guessing and reading are parallel and closely linked and, thus, what has been said about the problem of L2 reading is equally applicable to the problem of L2 guessing):

1) knowledge of the language,
2) ability to predict or guess in order to make the correct choices,
3) ability to remember the previous cues, and
4) ability to make the necessary associations between the different cues that have been selected. It also means that knowledge of the language (1) influences the use of the other factors (2-4). This view predicts that the low of the foreign language proficiency, the low of achievement in guessing task; the higher the proficiency in FL, the higher is the performance in guessing. The pedagogic proposal is therefore that we need to reconsider improving the poor guessers' linguistic competence (Alderson 1984).

Theoretically speaking, this pedagogic proposal appears to imply that if learner readers are given opportunities to broaden access to the language or to reading, guessing abilities follow naturally. (For the rationale, see Krashen, 1982; Herman, Anderson, Pearson, and Nagy, 1987). However, not all L2 reading researchers accept this proposal. Now, let us see the alternative proposal.

(b) Guessing Problem

In contrast to the first claim that reading in L2 is influenced by L2 proficiency, the second view holds that L2 learners readers' ability to learning from context suffers from lack of efficient guessing strategies (Coady, 1979; Huckin, Haynes and Coady, 1993). Coady (1979) argues that reading in FL is a reading problem not a language problem:

> alarming number of students have a great deal of proficiency in English and yet read very slowly and with poor comprehension. Looking at this situation...students are using a poor combination of process strategies in their reading. In other words, we have a reading problem and not a language problem. (p.9).

Applying this proposal to guessing strategies, FL learner readers may be proficient in the target language but perform poorly on guessing due to poor ability in processing (Haynes, 1983, 1993; Bensoussan and Laufer (1984). For example, Bensoussan and Laufer investigated three factors: a) the extent to which context helped lexical guessing, b) word guessability, and c) the extent to which more proficient students (good L2 learners) use context more effectively in guessing the meaning of unknown words than less proficient (poor L2 learners) students. The last factor- concerning variability between the more successful and less successful students- is of importance for the present study and thus considered in some detail below.

Concerning this factor, Bensoussan and Laufer noted that proficiency in L2 did not help the good students to use context effectively. This may imply that, at least with subjects who participated in this study, L2 proficiency was not the problem (for similar report, see Haynes 1993). If this is true, the pedagogic suggestion therefore would be to help learners to cope with processing words in reading, namely, developing the ability to guess. Agreeing with this pedagogical proposal, Nation and Coady (1988) and Nation (1990) argue that the primary strategy for dealing with the low-frequency vocabulary should be to teach students how to guess words in context, *among other things.*

According to Twaddell (1973), this is an aspect of viewing vocabulary learning as a language skill, of shifting the responsibility to the learner. The literature has recorded three strategies of word processing in reading. These will be reviewed in the next section. Before that, however, the third and the last constraint on guessing - the role of background knowledge - will be discussed, which will also serve as a precursor to the discussion in the next section.

4.5.2.4 Background Knowledge in Guessing in L2 Reading

It is now widely accepted that students' background knowledge is crucial in determining success in learning from context, more specifically, in reading. Much has

been written on what the successful learner reader does in order to understand the text during reading. It is suggested that in processing a text the skilled learner reader is constantly organising his or her experience of the text structure, uses background and/or linguistic knowledge (lexical and structural) to facilitate comprehension.

Applied to the process of guessing, implication of background knowledge is that learner readers who have prior knowledge of the content can guess and learn more easily the meaning of words that embody the author's intention than those who do not. However, the presence of schema alone is not a guarantee for effective guessing to take place. Learner readers may have background knowledge of the content but may fail to generate the right meaning of a word. Overall, guessing requires the learner to activate the appropriate schema, since, as Rumelhart and Ortorny (1977) have suggested schemata are not static; they vary in place and time, so do words (eg. the case of polysemy).

We have seen in the course of our discussion that both words and content schemata represent concepts; learning new words means learning either new forms for already existing concepts (concepts learned in L1) or learning new concepts in L2. That is, as Coady (1993) notes:

> knowledge of vocabulary therefore entails knowledge of the schemata in which the concept participates, and knowledge of the networks in which that word participates, as well as any associated words and concepts. (p.11).

It follows then that learning new words means expanding schematic knowledge. In other words, the better one's vocabulary knowledge is the better his or her schematic knowledge and the higher his or her performance in the guessing task. In contrast, the lesser one's vocabulary knowledge, the lesser his or schematic knowledge and the lower his or her performance in the guessing task, *provided* that linguistic proficiency is proportionate to performance on a linguistic task. In the final analysis the problem of content schema becomes the problem of proficiency in the second language which largely depends on the learner reader's lexical knowledge which in turn determines use of strategies, as the literature reviewed in chapter two shows.

The pedagogic implication that derives from this conclusion is, of course, efforts must be made to help students develop their linguistic and strategy knowledge.

4.5.3 Empirical Research into Strategies for Inferencing

This section will look at empirical research that has attempted to identify and describe strategies for guessing from the point of view of what successful and unsuccessful guessers (readers) appear to do. Three groups of studies of this type of research are recognized in the literature. First come those studies whose primary objective is investigating the various aspects of inference (eg., Haastrup, 1991; Haynes and Baker, 1993). Second come those studies which take strategies of reading comprehension as their primary objective, but inevitably include aspects of inference (Hosenfeld, 1984, 1977; Sherin Mohammed, 1992; Cavalcanti, 1983; for example). Third come studies on learning strategies that attempt to combine both word recognition and vocabulary development strategies (e.g., Medani, 1989) will be looked at.

Though these studies differ in their focus of research objectives, among other things, the difference between strategies used by successful and unsuccessful guessers runs through them. One study from each of the three groups will be reviewed below.

(a) Inferencing Ability vs Proficiency (Haastrup, 1991)

The identification of strategies learners use while guessing (if they guess at all) becomes imperative before any decision is made as to what strategies students need to be aware of in addition to the strategies they are already using. This is the procedure that Haastrup (Ibid.) has applied in her study.

Haastrup's work represents attempts made to delineate the interaction between successful and unsuccessful ESL guessers abilities to infer word meanings in context and their proficiency in the target language. In this work lexical inferencing process is defined as involving making informed guesses as to the meaning of a word in the light of all available linguistic cues in combination with the learners'

general knowledge of the world, their awareness of the co-text and their relevant linguistic knowledge. (Haastrup, 1991:121).

In order to give an account of what cues to meaning successful and unsuccessful learners ascribe or use, Haastrup identifies two hierarchically ordered levels of cues for inferencing: 'top level' and 'bottom level'. 'Top level', that is, the level which is constituted by the knowledge system or conceptual knowledge or schematic knowledge, ie, what the student or informant brings with him/her from L1, together with the new or revised schemata he/she has developed through his/her contacts with the L2, whereas 'bottom level', that is, the level which is constituted by the language system, that is, the informant's knowledge of the L2 at the various linguistic levels.

More importantly, Haastrup compared the abilities (or inabilities) of Danish ESL students to find cues from top and bottom levels and to integrate these in order to arrive at unfamiliar word meaning. Haastrup noted that even though learners can make lexical inferencing via making use of potential lexical knowledge, they sometimes demonstrate lack of procedural knowledge in that they draw on irrelevant knowledge sources or combine cues from various linguistic levels.

According to Haastrup, the result is that guess is either a vague approximation, or is simply wrong or that learners give up. Haastrup reports that the low-proficiency group used bottom level, while the high-proficiency learners make little use this level while concentrating on use of top level.

The low-proficiency group consisted of students who had received 4 to 5 years of English instruction, and the high-proficiency group six to seven years. Each group consisted of 31 subjects. Based on the findings of the study, Haastrup has concluded that 'L2 proficiency is a decisive factor in lexical inferencing procedure' (Haastrup, 1991:130), where L2 proficiency is used to refer to declarative knowledge, as has been defined in chapter two of the present study. Haastrup also raised the question of a threshold level of L2 proficiency that learners have to reach before they are able

to use inferencing procedures effectively (For definition and review of the literature on this subject, see (Alderson, 1984; Laufer, 1989, 1992; Nation 1990).

Haastrup's study shows the relationship between inferencing ability and proficiency in the target language, which has already been explored in chapter two. It also provides a classification scheme for inferencing based on a top-down and bottom-up information processing perspective.

(b) Inferencing from Problem-solving Perspective (Hosenfeld, 1979, 1984)

In her very often quoted series of reading or vocabulary acquisition case studies, Hosenfeld's (1977, 1984) approaches the problem of inferencing from a problem-solving perspective. Hosenfeld's research represents an effort made 'to uncover the kinds of strategies students use in performing foreign language tasks' Hosenfeld 1984:231). Hosenfeld identifies four major purposes for identifying strategies students use in reading or guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words.

First, according to Hosenfeld (1979), students develop metacognitive awareness as they describe their thinking process and discover those of their own classmates. Second, as students discuss their guessing strategies with their peers (in group activities, for example), they discover new strategies and new applications of familiar ones. Third, teachers can assess the strengths and weaknesses in students' current strategy use and utilize this information to plan strategy instruction. Finally, knowledge of an individual student's strategies with a task provides a double exposure consisting of the task and what the student does with it. By pooling together the strategies of a group of successful learners, a teacher can provide a basis for remediation of the unsuccessful learners. *Among other things,* one such task that Hosenfeld investigated was to try to understand how students cope with the problem of guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words while reading.

The specific technique that Hosenfeld used for that purpose was the thinking-aloud and introspective/retrospective research technique which she developed in 1977. From her elicitation, she has drawn up a profile of the successful and unsuccessful

second language learner's reading strategy. Hosenfeld (1977a) characterizes high scorers (called 'successful readers') on a test of reading proficiency as those who tended to (a) keep the meaning of the passage in mind, (b) read in broad phrases, and (c) skip unessential words and have a good self-concept as a reader.

By contrast, Hosenfeld characterizes low scorers (called unsuccessful readers') as those who tended to (a) lose the meaning of sentences as soon as they decoded them, (b) read word-by-word or in short phrases, (c) rarely skip words, (d) turn to the glossary for the meaning of new words, and (e) have a poor self-concept as a reader.

As in her first phase of analysis (1977a), Hosenfeld characterises successful readers as follows:

Successful learners tend to

1) identify the grammatical category of words;
2) demonstrate sensitivity to a different word order in the foreign language;
3) examine illustrations;
4) read the title and make inferences from it;
5) use orthographic information (eg. capitalization);
6) refer to the side gloss;
7) use the glossary as a last resort;
8) look up words correctly;
9) continue if unsuccessful at decoding a word or phrase;
10) recognize cognates;
11) use their knowledge of the world;
12) follow through with a proposed solution to a problem;
13) evaluate their guesses (Hosenfeld, 1984:233-234).

In addition to describing what the reader does when faced with unfamiliar words, Hosenfeld put into pedagogic practice in teaching some of these strategies to less successful readers or more precisely to less successful guessers. At the end of the remedial lesson/class, Hosenfeld (1984:242) reported that one of her subjects, Ricky, was able to guess the meaning of new words by using: (1) known words in sentences, (2) his knowledge of cognates, (3) his knowledge of the world, (4) context (either to predict meaning or as an information source to which he can circle back for pertinent information), and (5) his knowledge of grammar. Hosenfeld also reported

that Ricky also came to appreciate that guessing the meaning of words was preferable to obtaining their meaning in a glossary.

Hosenfeld's work bears at least three implications for the present study. It carries the implication that it is essential to identify and categorize the strategies learners are using before remedial work is called for. The categorization of strategies might help researchers to give some kind of order of importance to the strategies that emerge from the elicited data, preferably through some statistical procedures, such as factor analysis, and then pursue their research work in a somewhat focused manner.

More importantly, however, Hosenfeld's work serves as a theoretical impetus for the present study in that it reflects that vocabulary learning strategies involve the acquisition of a range of skills and these skills must be known by the students. For example, in learning vocabulary from context, students must be able to keep the meaning (the context) of the passage in his/her mind as s/he reads; to skip unknown words in the expectation that subsequent words (in the sentence) will provide clues to their meaning. Generally speaking, we learn from Hosenfeld's work that the L2 learner should develop his or her metacognitive knowledge in order to remedy his or her language skills and strategic deficiencies.

The implication that can be drawn from both studies under review is that it is essential to identify the strategies learners use before remedial work is called for.

4.5.4 Review of Research on both Vocabulary Development and Recognition Strategies

Studies reviewed in the previous two sections have treated the two sets of vocabulary acquisition strategies separately. One study that has sought to combine the two set of strategies is Medani (1989), which has also been reviewed by McCarthy (1990: 124-125). Medani studied both sets of strategies among Arabic speaking good and poor (high- and low-achievers, respectively) learners of English, and found considerable variation in what successful learners did and what the under-achievers did. He studied a wide range of strategies, including what students did to

memorize words, how they used dictionaries, how they used the teacher as a source, how they practised new words, how they guessed new words from context.

Here are some of Medani's results for sources used by his subjects to get information about difficult words on first encounter. The figures show the frequency of occurrence of each strategy in his data.

	occurrences
1) Ask classmates	229
2) Guessing	215
3) Ask teacher	170
4) Overlook	103
5) Ask about meaning by demanding English paraphrase or synonym	81
6) Ask for Arabic equivalent	79
7) Ask for a sentence showing word usage	59
8) Group work	100
9) Dictionary	192

Medani's study is of great value because he not only considered 'good' learners; he also separated his statistics to show the relative differences for the given strategies between the good and the poor learners. More importantly he considered both sets of strategies, unlike most of the researchers in this area of enquiry. However, Medani's effort was based on a single track of data collection produce- a questionnaire- which asks learners to report what they feel they do, rather than using multiple approaches to make his findings more reliable.

Girma's work, which is similar to the present study in at least two ways. One is, as it is the case with the present study, the target population was a sample of AAU First Year students; and second is, the nature of data collection procedures used in both studies. Girma collected data through a questionnaire and a guided interview. Items in the questionnaire were mainly drawn from Oxford (1986, 1990). As has been described in the next chapter, data for the present study was collected using a

multiple approach, and a strategy questionnaire (Oxford 1990) wad adopted for the quantitative data. Thus, it is felt that Girma's study will shed some light on strategy use profile of freshmen of AAU.

4.6 Summary

Although the studies reviewed in this chapter vary in a number of ways (e.g., in their objective, in the type of target population, in the kind of data analysis they employed, and so on), most of the studies are similar regarding the nature of data collection procedure they employed. What runs through most of the studies is that, with the exclusion of O'Malley, et al. (1985a & b) and Girma (1994), most of the studies reviewed relied heavily on data collected through a single method. However, not all researchers recommend the use a single method of data collection especially for learning strategy research. For example, Chamot (1987), O'Malley, et al. (1990) and Cohen (1987) preferred a multimethod approach and reported that this method has been more productive than a single technique. Issues related to this topic is the main objective of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

Survey of the literature in the previous chapter indicates that studies of L2 learning strategies in general and studies of L2-vocabulary learning strategies in particular vary in a number of ways, viz, according to their primary or secondary objectives or the language task on which the learner is asked to perform. Some of the studies aim at identifying and describing L2 learning strategies, attempt to measure the effectiveness of learning strategies, or examine factors affecting strategy use. And yet, some of these studies concentrate on a wide range of L2 learning tasks, whereas others focus on specific tasks, and so on. It is, therefore, evident that the studies also vary in the research design and methodology they employ, considering these variations in their objectives and language tasks.

In this chapter, we will describe the research design and methodology used for data collection for the present study.

This will be discussed into two parts, based on the two phases of the study: (1) the baseline study, and (2) the mainline study. In the first phase, the baseline study is intended to test out the applicability of the various data collection methodologies (those mentioned above), with three groups of advanced learners. The methodologies that have proved to be successful in the pilot study will be applied for the actual study. Each phase, in turn, will be classified into two stages, according to the type of data to be collected: (1) quantitative data (Stages *one* and *two*), and (2) qualitative data (Stages *one* and *two*). Thus, the present study is based on a two-phase four-stage process of data collection.

Before we look at in detail the research design and methodology adopted for the present study, it is appropriate to consider two points. One is, examination of a sample of representative methods of investigating ESL/EFL vocabulary learning

strategies learners use. It is hoped that this will help us to understand the strength and weakness that each method has in relation to the findings obtained from data collected through these methods. Second is, consideration of the information needed for the present study, since the type of methodology adopted for research is determined by the research questions themselves.

Now, let us start with a brief examination of a sample of elicitation techniques. The methods to be considered here have been applied to two sets of studies whose objectives are parallel with the present study: identification and description of strategies and/or factors affecting use of learning strategies.

5.2 Methodologies Used for the Identification and Description of L2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

This section will survey the procedures that require learners to describe their strategies for L2 vocabulary learning. As we have noted in chapter four, L2 vocabulary learning strategies can be categorized into two groups: strategies of vocabulary development and strategies of vocabulary recognition. The former group of strategies are used to help memorize vocabulary items outside of context (written or spoken), while the latter group help to learn from context. Some selected studies of each aspect of vocabulary learning have been reviewed in Chapter Three. The present survey focuses on methods employed in these studies. The techniques used in five of the studies, three related to vocabulary recognition strategies and two related to vocabulary development, are broadly summarized in Table 1, below (All of these studies have been reviewed in chapter four for a different purpose, but not for reasons concerned with the methodologies that they employed).

Three general observations can be made from this summary. First, two sets of studies emerge, on the basis of whether a certain study employed (a) only a single data collection method (methods such as 'observation' or 'diary studies' or self-reports; some of these will be discussed below), and (b) no-data collection method.

One of the principal concerns of studies in the first set has been the identification and description of L2 vocabulary learning strategies used by more successful versus less successful L2 learners. In order to identify and, thus, compare the strategies used by the two groups of learners, there is a need for the researchers to elicit data with L2 vocabulary tasks, (for example, Hosenfeld 1984/1979; Haastrup 1991; Huckin and Bloch 1993; Cohen and Aphek 1981).

Table 5.1

A description of methods of investigating L2 vocabulary learning strategies used in previous studies

Study	Subjects	Measures of Proficiency/ Achievement	**Data collection Methodology**
Hosenfeld (1984)	23 primary school children	Test of reading proficiency	Thinking-aloud Introspection
Haastrup (1991)	62 Danish learners of English	Two groups: 31 low proficiency students with 4 to 5 years experience and 31 with high proficiency students with 6 to 7 years of experience	Thinking-aloud (Pair- thinking)
Huckin and Bloch (1993)	3 graduate natives of Chinese in International Business programme	Michigan Test of Language Ability intermediate proficiency (scores ranging from 69 to 82)	Thinking-aloud Introspection
Cohen and Aphek (1981)	17 English- speaking students learning Hebrew in Israel	Year of exposure to the TL: beginning intermediate or advanced levels	Thinking-aloud Introspection- Retrospection
Brown and Perry (1991)	94 Arabic-speaking learners of English	Cairo American University Entrance Examination	No methodology

Studies in the second set (only one is cited in the Table), are controlled experiments or strategy training and have not involved data collection methods. Instead, they used instruction on how to use associations to assist in vocabulary retention or recall with the expectation that ceratin types of associations would be more productive than others, (for example, Brown and Perry 1991). We will concentrate on the former set of studies, those that employed data collection procedures, since our own study is part of this research enterprise.

The place of Cohen and Aphek's (1981) study in these two sets of studies is not a clear-cut case. The study is basically instructional or experimental, in classifying it in the second set. On the other hand, it has employed thinking-aloud data collection techniques, which brings it together with the first set of studies that used methods of data collection. We have included it in the first set in as much as the study has sought to identify the type of associations learners' used.

The second observation, evident from the descriptions of the parameters of methodology of vocabulary learning strategies in Table 1 above, is that the great majority of the studies reviewed have used the thinking-aloud technique with two of its versions (individual and pair thinking) in oral or written response mode. These studies have concentrated on the identification of strategies learners use in learning L2 vocabulary from context (for example, Hosenfeld 1984/1979, Haastrup 1991; Huckin and Bloch 1993).

It appears, therefore, that the thinking-aloud technique is the most favoured method of data collection on vocabulary recognition strategies, as it 'usually provides researchers enough information to trace the thinking process and build a rough model of it' (Huckin and Bloch, 1993: 159).

One study (Medani 1989) has used a questionnaire in an effort to identify, in general terms, use of both L2 vocabulary development and recognition strategies by Arabic-speaking learners of English. There is a general agreement that the practical advantage of using this instrument is that it can easily be administered to large groups, scoring and data compilation are relatively simple, and precise quantitative data can be derived.

However, the use of both thinking-aloud and a questionnaire entails some drawbacks. Regarding the use of the thinking-aloud technique, the literature shows that learners may vary in their ability to think-aloud as they perform the task, with the result that strategies uncovered by such research may reflect the learning behaviour of a rather special group of learners (see studies reviewed in Ellis, 1994). Supporting

evidence for this view comes from Reiss (1981) who found that students awarded "A" grades by their teachers were able to give very specific accounts of how they would approach different learning task, while learners with low grades (those who were awarded "C/D" grades by their teachers) were often vague and imprecise. For example, asked to comment on how they would set about learning a list of thirty vocabulary items taken from a reading section which they have recently completed, the "A" and the "C/D" students gave answers such as the following:

Answers of "A" students	**Answers of "C/D" students**
- Make up a sentence with each word	- Memorize
- Put cue next to each word on list	- Write out and memorize
- Write word on one side of paper definition or synonym on the other	- Write and memorize

Reiss (1981: 126)

Perhaps suggesting that it is not easy for researchers to make definitive claims about the unsuccessful learners' learning behaviour obtained with the thinking-aloud technique *per se*.

It is reported that thinking-aloud techniques provide only a limited view of the complexity of the vocabulary acquisition processes and of the situation in which it takes place (Huckin and Bloch 1993). In reporting the findings in their own research, Huckin and Bloch have noted:

> It should be emphasized that, although think-aloud protocols provide more information about cognitive processes than any other single techniques, they are able to capture only traces of the cognition that actually takes place (emphasis mine). (Huckin and Bloch 1993: 159).

Regarding the use of a questionnaire (oral or written), it has been argued that reported strategy use may not provide an accurate account of what learners actually do (O'Malley et al. 1990). The problem has also been discussed in studies reviewed in Ellis (1994)in relation to the findings in two very often cited strategy studies: Bialystok 1981b and Politzer and McGroarty 1985.

In an attempt to relate strategy use to language learning, Politzer and McGroarty developed a 51-item questionnaire based on the prior works of Rubin (1981) and Naiman et al. (1978). The questionnaire was divided into three scales corresponding to the setting in which the strategy occurred: in a classroom, during individual study, or in social interaction outside the classroom. Proficiency measures used in the study assessed pre-and post-test performance, related to graduate professional study, on oral comprehension, English grammar (multiple choice), and an individually administered oral communicative competence tests.

A notable absence of inferencing as an effective strategy in the Politzer and McGroarty's (1985) study has been understood by Ellis (1994: 551) as a failure, which stems out from the use of a questionnaire. Ellis has forwarded the same criticism against Bialystok's (1981b) work, (who also used a questionnaire), in which it was reported that there was no significant relationship between inferencing and proficiency.

In contrast, O'Malley et al. (1990: 109) have attributed the lack of relationship between inferencing and proficiency in Politzer and McGroarty's study to the 'fact that virtually all of the respondents indicated that they used the strategy on each item intended to assess it'. That is, they saw the problem as arising from formulating a questionnaire, but not in using a questionnaire, *per se*. This difference in point of view regarding the interpretation of the same finding may reflect that different L2 researchers have different orientation for using a questionnaire as a data collection procedure. The lesson that one can learn from these two studies is that results obtained from data collected though a single procedure may be controversial and they lend themselves to different interpretations. We feel that a carefully devised questionnaire is as useful as any other learning strategies data collection technique. On the other hand, it is our conviction that a questionnaire should be combined with other procedures to obtain more reliable results.

It has been stressed (Cohen and Manion, 1980, 1989) that as research methods act as a filter through which the environment is selectively experienced, they are never

atheoretical or neutral in representing the world of experience. Exclusive reliance on one method, therefore, may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular *slice of reality he is investing.* (Cohen and Manion, 1980:208). The researcher needs to be confident that the data generated are not simply artifacts of one specific method of collection. And this confidence can only be achieved when different methods of data collection are used.

A third observation is, not surprisingly, perhaps, that the studies are diverse in their research design (such as in their research methodology, the number of subjects, proficiency or performance measures they used). For example, the number of learners who participated in each study ranges from a case study with 3 learners (Huckin and Bloch 1993) to 94 learners (Brown and Perry 1991). In order to group learners according to their level of proficiency or performance and, then, to relate this level of achievement to use of strategies the researchers have employed various criteria such as number of years of exposure to the TL, scores on standardized tests and so on). As mentioned in Chapter four, this diversity makes it difficult to compare the results obtained by different studies and, therefore, to reach firm conclusions.

Despite the differences, however, a common feature runs through all the studies, namely, they all employed a single track approach to research in this area of enquiry-L2 vocabulary learning strategies.

5.3 Information Needed for the Present Study

At this juncture it is perhaps useful to state what information is needed for the present study. Of course, this information derives from the objectives of the study:

a) What kind of vocabulary learning strategies do AAU freshmen use in learning English as a second/foreign language?

b) What strategies do learners at this level of learning English find to be effective?

c) Do learners at this level of learning vary in the use of English vocabulary acquisition strategies? and

d) Do background factors that learners brought to the University influence strategy use?

The first question concerns what it is that learners actually use when they encounter new vocabulary items in these two learning conditions. This question is motivated by the recognition that there is a large register of learning strategies and that L2 learners under utilize them. It is also true that learners vary in using specific learning strategies, which is influenced by various factors (see chapter four).

In order to answer this question, we need to collect a sample of strategies from individual learners on their perceived strategy use and while performing vocabulary learning tasks. For example, the strategy sample that will be obtained can be inspected for the direction of processing learners tend to follow (bottom-up, top-down, or interactive) in the case of vocabulary recognition and the type of mnemonic devices they favour for vocabulary development.

The last three questions are interrelated and concerned with the assumption that learners are predisposed to certain sets of strategies and that some strategies are more effective than others. However, they differ in some important ways. For example, the assumption that there are social, cognitive and emotional factors that influence the use of effective or ineffective strategies is more directly related to question number 4 than it is to either number 3 or 2. and thus the information needed for the number 4 is different. This information involves factors such as: (1) learners' beliefs about language and learning, which may be derived from the answer to questions number 2 and 3; (2) the extent to which learners are aware of the use of learning strategies (3) learners' levels of performance in English vocabulary tasks, and (4) different conditions under which learners are exposed to the target language. ('Learning conditions' such as type of high school attended: government vs. private high schools, types of coursebooks used, and so on). We therefore wish to collect learners' biodata or data on their general background.

The framework for methodology used in the majority of the studies reviewed may not provide a satisfactory explanation for these questions, since it is narrow in scope.

5.4 The Need for an Alternative or a Complementary Methodology for Research

The earlier discussion concerning the existing framework and its weaknesses as well the complex processes that underlie learning an L2 vocabulary in a foreign language context (see chapter two), the nature of learning strategies (conscious vs. subconscious, see chapter three) and the complexity of the interaction between learning strategy use and both learner 'internal' and 'external' factors(see chapter four)certainly calls for a need for an alternative approach for the identification and analysis or for a complementary paradigm which will account for existing research in strategies for an L2 vocabulary. But which one might be appropriate and on what criteria ought it to be based? Here we suggest the following two criteria for determining the components for the construction of a new model for the study of vocabulary acquisition strategies.

1) The model should overcome the narrow nature of the existing approach. That is, this paradigm should be operative within the holistic paradigm in that it should incorporate not only the various components of vocabulary learning processes (e.g., storage and retrieval)and strategies involved in manipulate and facilitate these processes; and
2) The model should look at the problem under investigation in the light of different situations. That is, the model should be able to account for subjects' personal background.

The proposed model in this study is based on what is commonly known in research as triangulation (Cohen and Manion 1980).

5.4.1 Triangulation

In this sub-section, first, the cursory survey of the notion of triangulation will be examined. Second, the relevance of the multi-method approach to the present study

is outlined. Finally, descriptions of the instruments used in the present study are presented.

In an attempt to avoid some of the problems arising from using a single method of data collection, this study has expanded on the multi-method data collection procedure used in other experiment aimed at discovering strategies involved in learning language skills such as reading, speaking, listening, or writing (O'Malley, et al 1985a; Naiman et al 1978; Chamot et al. 1988a; Shirin Mohammed 1992).

The term "method" in the multi-method approach is defined as the processes of data collection and the form in which the data are recorded and analysed (Brannen 1992:3). Multi-method is, therefore, the combination of different methods for data collection, recording and analysing within a single piece of research (Cohen and Manion 1980; Johnson 1992; Brannen 1992). The approach connects with a construct widely known as *triangulation.* Brannen defines 'triangulation' as a context within which the integration of qualitative and quantitative paradigms takes place to form a multi-method approach (Brannen 1992: 63).

Cohen and Manion (1980), attribute the origin of the term 'triangulation' to psychology (Campbell and Fiske 1959) and the development of the concept to Denzin (1970). For Denzin, 'triangulation' does not merely involve methods and data, but, among other things, level of analysis and alternative or complementary theories as well.

In his typology, Denzin (1970) identifies two categories for the methodological triangulation: within methods and between methods. Triangulation within methods concerns the replication of a study as a check on reliability and theory confirmation, and triangulation between methods involves the use of more than one method in the pursuit of a given objective. It also embraces the notion of convergence between independent measures, as a check on validity (see Allwright and Bailey, 1991:73, for the different forms of triangulation).

Triangulation, as applied to strategy study, thus, views what appears to be competing paradigms (quantitative vs. qualitative) in educational research, as ones that are necessary and inseparable aspects of a fuller understanding of learners' thought patterns and behaviours. Instead of viewing each approach as separate and self-enclosed, it views both perspectives very profitable and as mediated by others.

5.4.2 Rationale for Adopting the Multi-method Approach

Four advantages of the multi-method approach to data collection for the present study are anticipated and described below, these advantages are organized around three assumptions.

These are:

a) cross checks the findings derived from both quantitative and qualitative data analyses;
b) provides a general picture;
c) maintaining a balance; and
d) facilitates the interpretation of the findings.

Findings from studies such as the present one can be validated either by re-inspection or by demonstrating the same findings by cross-checking the findings derived from both quantitative and qualitative data.

As has been mentioned earlier, vocabulary learning involves both explicit and implicit (or conscious and subconscious) strategies. It has also been mentioned that learning L2 vocabulary concerns both vocabulary development and recognition strategies. Furthermore, it has been stressed that use of strategies is influenced by multiple factors. It may be that not all issues of vocabulary learning strategies are accessible solely to a quantitative investigation nor only to a qualitative one. It is believed that the combined form of the two paradigms will provide a more general picture than otherwise. A single method, if employed, yields limited and sometimes conflicting results.

The overall aim is to enhance the validity of the findings of the present study. Next, we shall see the application of the method proposed for the present study.

5.5 Description of Data and Data Collection Instruments

The literature review covered in chapter four has provided the theoretical basis on which the methodological considerations of the research are based. It has been mentioned that although there is a fair amount of literature on strategies for L2 acquisition, to date works that attempt to tackle the different aspects of L2-vocabulary learning from different perspectives, employing multiple methods are either absent or rare. It has also been pointed out earlier that all of the studies focused on either the 'development' aspect (how much vocabulary subjects could store and for how long, using a certain strategy), or to a lesser degree how the learner goes about performing these activities- the 'recognition'. We argue that a study on strategies of L2 vocabulary is not a question of *either/or* but is worth studying in its entirety (both the 'development' and the 'recognition' aspects of it).

Thus, a two-phase process is followed in order to achieve these aims: phase-one (piloting) and phase-two (mainline study). Phase-one is intended to test out the practicality of the various data collection instruments and to decide on the procedure for their administrations, while phase-two involves the actual use of the instruments that prove to be useful and productive during the try out stage. Figure 5.1 is a tentative framework of the pilot study for investigating vocabulary acquisition strategies, postponing the presentation of the model for the mainline study (phase two)- a refined form of the model of the pilot study (phase one)- until the last section of this chapter.

In speaking of the framework, we are, in effect, referring not to the two stages (1 and 2 as shown in Figure 5.1), but a series of stages of information resourcing by employing various instruments and processing, roughly characterised as:

1) the initial stage of identifying and characterizing learners in terms of different areas (such as types of high school attended, level of learning English

started, and so on), on the basis of the information contained in the "Biodata" module;

2) a stage of obtaining facts on the current level or state of learner's linguistic knowledge of the TL- the "Achievement/Proficiency" module;

3) the subsequent stage of opinion survey with respect to learner's awareness of strategy use, which is contained in the "Learner's perceived use of strategy" module.

The two sets of information contained in both "Biodata" and "Learners' perceived use of strategy" modules is collected with two sets of questionnaires: Students' Background Questionnaire (BGQ) (Appendix 1) and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford 1990) (Appendix 3). The raw data derived from the three modules ("Biodata", "Learners'perceived use of strategy" and "Achievement/Proficiency" (Appendices 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D) are, then, synthesized into the "Quantitative Data" module.

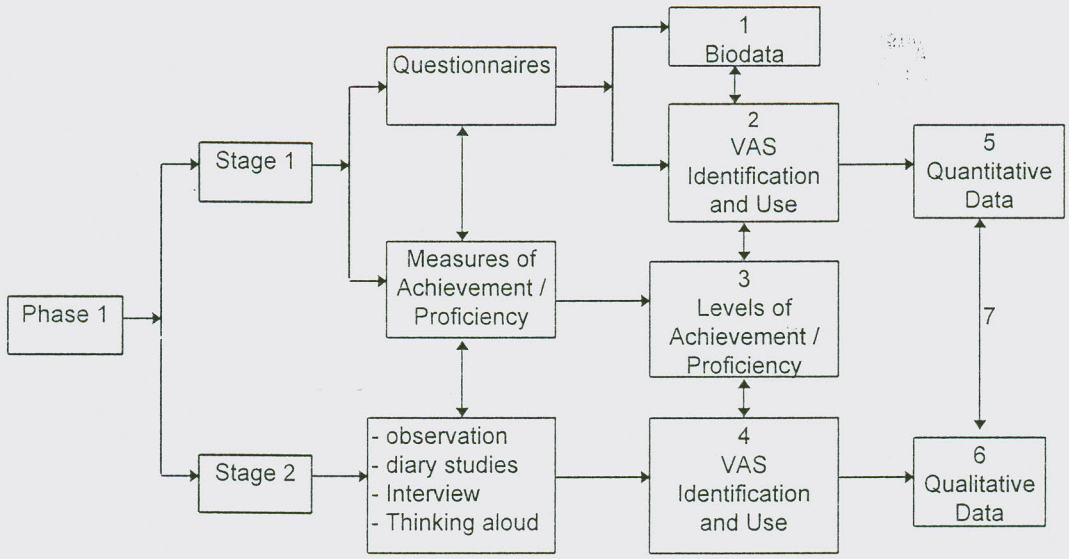

Figure 5.1 A framework of data collection and processing for the Pilot Study - Phase One

It is likely as Wenden puts it that, 'What language learners know about their language process is not always correct. Some of it may represent the 'folk wisdom' about learning acquired from family, friends and teachers or the outcome of a learner's experience' (1991:35). It is also likely, as Allwright (1996) strongly argues that learners' awareness of strategy use may not necessarily lead to effective application. We have, hence, included (4), a stage of obtaining more information on the learner's perceived and actual use of strategies with vocabulary learning tasks. The "Vocabulary Learning Strategies" module contains strategies that either the learners report during the interview, the think-aloud and the diary preparation or are those the researcher observes in the classroom setting, and all these are synthesised into the "Qualitative Data" module.

The information in one module hypothesized to be related to the information in others. For example, the information labelled "Biodata", which includes such aspects as the type of learner's previous exposure to the TL, is related to his/her perceived strategy use- the "Strategy Identification" modules. This in turn influences his/her achievement or proficiency in the TL- the "Achievement/Proficiency" module. Conversely, learner's level of achievement/proficiency affects strategy use.

The final stage, (5), the researcher attempts to integrate the information contained in both the "Qualitative Data" and the "Quantitative Data" modules (The procedures for data analysis are not indicated in Figure 5.1, but are implicit in the framework).

In this way, the researcher can uncover the strategies learners' claim to employ in learning L2 vocabulary and thus precede to hypothesise, to evaluate and monitor his hypotheses (regarding the type and the nature of strategies learners use in learning L2 vocabulary).

5.6 Phase One: The Pilot Study

5.6.1 Rationale and Aims

A pilot study was carried out for a period of three months (November, December, and January) in 1992/93 in the College of Social Science at AAU, Ethiopia. The aim was to: (1) test out the practicality of the various data collection instruments and decide on the procedure for their administration; (2)proceed with the instruments that had proved to be effective for data collection in specific situation and sample population of the present study; and (3) obtain insights into the mainline study (Phase 2). Detailed information on the pilot study is found in Abebe (1992). Here, we just list major points.

5.6.2 Subjects and Procedures

Stage one:

(a) Subjects

The research sample consisted of 38 students, 25 from the first year, 7 from the second year and 6 from the third year. Of the 25 first year students, 6 were studied in depth.

(b) Instruments:

- two sets of questionnaires were used: Background and Language learning questionnaires (SILL). (Appendix 1 and 2, respectively).

SILL is a 51-item questionnaire where each item is to be measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5 points. For the sake of convenience and generalisation in analysis and interpretation, the highest scores (i.e., 4 and 5) are pooled together to form the 'AGREED pole and the two lowest scores (i.e., 1 and 2) are calculated together to make up the 'DISAGREED' poles.;

- Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency and scores on class achievement tests were used to measure the current level of the subjects (Appendix 2A,2B, 2C and 2D); and
- Interviews, observation, diary study and think-aloud.

(c) Results:

The various data were analysed in relation to subjects' use of three category types: Memory, Cognitive and Metacognitive strategies.

Below are some major results from *Stage one-phase one* of the pilot study:

I) first year students consistently acknowledged (AGREED) using the three categories at higher rate than second year and third year students. The second group in turn showed a higher rate of preference than third year students.

ii) the desire to learn vocabulary proportionately declined, as did the rate of strategy use;

iii) Metacognitve strategies emerged as the first 'popular' class of strategy for learning English vocabulary, followed by Memory and Cognitive strategies.

iv) there was an indication that those who achieved high scores on the various measures of achievement used more number and types of strategies very frequently than low achievers did.

Overall, the study shows that course demands seemed to influence students' response to statements in the SILL.

Stage two:

Results from the Qualitative Data

(a) Instruments

i) Classroom observation

Two separate attempts were made to collect data on what learners would do to learner English vocabulary in the classroom through a classroom observation- 'procedure for keeping a record of classroom events in such a way that it can later be studied, typically either for teacher training or for research purposes' (Allwright, 1988:xvi).

a) In the first attempt, this researcher observed over one month 6 freshmen sections learning English FLEn 101A.

b) In the second attempt, 12 freshmen, 2 from each of the six target sections, were trained in what to observe and how to record the information on a guided *check-list* (Allwright, 1988; Morrow and Smith, 1990; Flanders, 1970).

The attempts were not successful for some reasons. Regarding the first, what was observed was that, though the approach to vocabulary teaching varied from one

teacher to another, the procedures all teachers followed were the similar. Either the teacher read the passage aloud or the students read it silently. After the passage was read, the teacher discussed words that were encountered in the passage in the Glossary section of each UNIT. Following this, the class discussed a series of 'comprehension exercises' ranging on the average from 3 to 5. This, in turn, is followed by 'vocabulary exercises' in the form of the format described in chapter one and summarized as follows:

a) find the words or phrases which have the meanings given below;
b) fill in the blanks;
c) construct grammatical and meaningful sentences;
d) match words in A with words in B; and the like.

Interestingly, the students had no problem with working out the exercises, since the majority of them had books bought second hand where all the exercises were done for them by previous freshmen.

In other words, it was not possible to observe vocabulary learning strategies students employed in the classrooms observed due to (1) the absence of interaction between the teacher and the students, or among the students themselves, and (2) the exercises asked the students what they had already encountered in the reading passage and therefore the type of exercises used in the textbooks did not help us to use the instrument.

As regards the second attempt, what the analysis of the check-list brought out was the obvious information about the teacher rather than about the learners.

An objective observation of the learners in action in a typical, formal classroom situation, no doubt, can throw light on the stand the learners take regarding their vocabulary learning. Observation schedules have been used in studies conducted by Naiman et al (1978) and O'Malley, et al (1983, 1985a). However, it was not easy to implement in this particular learning-teaching situation.

ii) Diary preparation

10 of the 18 students who participated in the baseline study were given a two hour training in how to prepare a student diary. In spite of the training and practical exercises that the participants were given, except one learner, all produced activities that they habitually did and thus the use of this instrument with these particular students was not encouraging.

(b) Strategies Identified

Six of the categories used by Oxford (1990) or three categories identified by O'Malley, et al (1985, 1990) have been elicited through all the instruments employed in the pilot study (*Phase one*)and these are described in Abebe (ibid.). Because of space constraints, descriptions of the strategies is not included herein.

Instead, we felt that it was necessary to summarise the overall results from the pilot study and then to make some generalisations relevant for the mainline study.

5.7 Overall Findings from the Pilot Study (Phase One)

The findings from the pilot study can be generalised into three areas. One is regarding the sample population:

a) Students from years 2 and 3 were complaining about the study load and assignments and showed less motivation and enthusiasm than the freshmen. As mentioned in the previous section, English courses are not as important to these groups of students as they are to freshmen.

b) The second area concerns the effectiveness of the research instruments- the SILL questionnaire, the interviews and the thinking-aloud protocols proved to be more effective, given the setting of the research in point, than either classroom observation or diary preparation.

c) The third area involves the results of the data analysis. At this early stage of the study with such a small sample size, reliable and valid results cannot be expected from the data analysed. However, there was an indication that students' at different levels of learning tend to select a different category of

strategies and it also seemed possible to ascribe different learning strategies to learners who experienced varied learning situations.

Accordingly, the lesson that we have drawn from the pilot study (*Phase One*) relevant for the mainline study can be summarised under three areas for decision. First, based on what was observed about students in the 2nd and 3rd years, we decided to continue with freshmen hoping that the findings from the mainline study with students at their level of study will reflect or portray the actual teaching-learning situation in the FLEn Freshman classroom.

The second decision is on the applicability of the research instruments. Regarding this, it was decided to use for the mainline study the three instruments that proved to be productive to data collection. These were:

1) SILL questionnaire and interviews- to measure participants' perceived use of strategies; and
2) Think-aloud protocols - to elicit data on application of strategies involved in inferring word-meaning in context.

In accordance with these findings and the objectives of the present study put forward in chapter one, a description of the research methods and instruments and the type of data to be collected for the mainline study (*Phase Two*) is described in the next section.

5.8 Phase Two: Mainline Study

In the main, the research method used and the line of investigation followed in the mainline study (*Phase Two*) is a continuation of the one employed in the pilot study (Phase One), of course, with some revisions introduced. The modification, as reflected below in Figure 5.2, was introduced according to differences in the objectives of the two Phases. Whereas Phase One was intended to test out the practicality of the various data collection instruments and, thus, to decide on the instruments that prove to be effective, Phase Two involves the actual utilization of these instruments. Thus, the main objective underlying the discussion in the previous section was to describe the kind of data elicitation techniques to be used in the

study. There, we established the foundation for the kind of data elicitation techniques, viz, questionnaires (biographical and SILL), interviews and think-aloud protocols, which appeared to be appropriate for this study, which is both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

This section presents data collected for the mainline study (Phase Two) using the multi-method approach consisting of these three instruments in accordance with the objectives of the present study, as stated in chapter one.

5.9 Discussion of the Research Design and Instruments

It is apparent from Figure 5.2 that, the research design and the instruments selected for the mainline study (*Phase Two*) are organised into a two-stage model, whereby each of these approaches provides data of a different nature which can be **cross-checked against each other.**

Stages of the Model

As has been mentioned in the previous section and shown in Figure 5.2 below, the sequencing of the use of the research instruments simply means, the order in which they have been administered. This is maintained in Figure 5.2. The model hypothesises that, though not explicitly shown in the model, a student encounters new vocabulary items both inside the classrrom and outside the classroom through reading and listening and applies vocabulary acquisition strategies in order to internalise the information or features about the item.

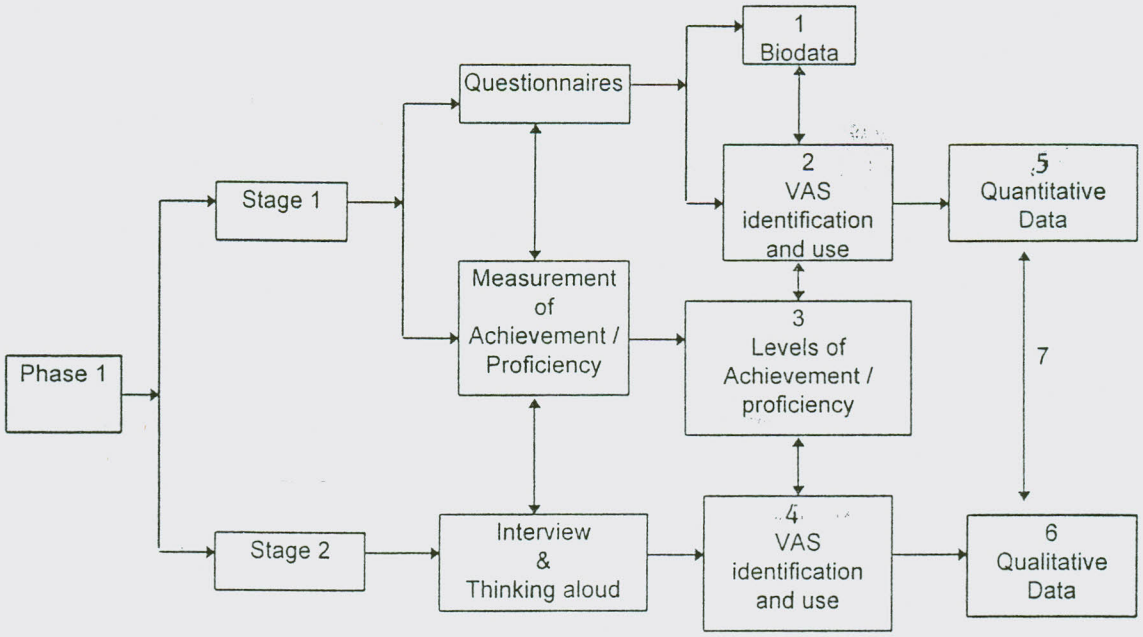

Figure 5.2 The revised version of the Flow Diagram for Investigating Strategies of L2 Vocabulary Learning

I) Stage One

At this stage information on learners' background and perceived use of strategy was collected by employing two sets of questionnaires which produced the quantitative data.

Subjects

As an empirical enquiry, this study employs sample subjects from whom information concerned with the VAS of learners in the Freshman Programme learning English in the College of Social Science (CSS), at AAU, Ethiopia was collected.

A distinction is very often made between "target population" and "survey population" (Taddele, 1990:150; Moser and Kalton, 1971:53; Woods, Fletcher and Hughes, 1986:49). The former refers to the population for which the results are required, while the latter to the population that is actually covered. As the study focuses on the VAS of freshmen, the target population (TP), therefore, constitutes the entire student population in the Freshman Programme within AAU (such as Natural Science, the various colleges located in different regional sates and in Addis Ababa- the capital of the Federal Government.

An account of vocabulary learning strategies used by the total number of freshmen enrolled in all these colleges (TP) may be appropriate for a large scale study that can be carried out at a national level, but is rather inappropriate and inaccessible to a study like the present one, which is limited in scope and constrained by time. For this and other practical reasons, which are stated below, we have decided to delimit the participants to freshmen students in the CSS at AAU.

(a) But why AAU?

1) AAU, as the highest educational institution in the country, is where students with diverse background (educational and cultural) come together. Some have completed, on the average, 10 years of primary and secondary school English, some about 12 years. Some come from schools where English is taught through language-based syllabi per se, others come from schools where English is approached from functional perspectives. Some are from the remotest parts of the country where exposure to the TL through films, newspapers, and so on, is rare or completely lacking, while, others are from urban and/or suburban centres where these social factors which facilitate L2 acquisition come into play.

Thus, AAU students are such a heterogeneous group, with diversified backgrounds that a richer and a more comprehensive body of information is likely to be obtained from them than from students in any one or more schools.

2) The University, being the highest institution of learning and research, we anticipated in the outset of the field work that we would secure better cooperation and material support from the University administration, which could have been difficult otherwise.

3) Having passed a highly competitive Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) which enabled them to enter into the highest educational institution, University students are believed to be better motivated towards research than students in lower grades and would easily realize the benefits an academic institution can make use of such studies like the present.

(b) Why CSS?

1) A practical advantage is that, the researcher, being an academic staff member of the CSS, it was hoped that he would secure assistance from colleagues, especially from those who teach the Freshman English courses, in conducting the various experiments in their respective classes. In addition, it was hoped that they could facilitate information exchange between the subjects selected and the researcher.

2) A theoretical consideration for choosing the College is that, the target population is better represented through the CSS students, since, as we have seen in chapter one, the highest number of new entrants joined this College when we set out for the field work in 1992/93. The proportion is the same for the last few years (see Hailemicheal 1993, for the distribution of freshmen in various colleges and faculties for the years 1987/1988 - 1989/1990; Taddele 1990, for 1985/86 - 1984/85). Thus, *everything being equal*, results from data analysis that is collected from a sample population representing the larger target population, it is maintained, would be more valid and reliable than otherwise.

(c) Why Freshman Students?

First, a rationale has been drawn out of the findings of the pilot study (Pase One), viz, that, overall, intentional learning of English vocabulary seems no longer as

important for senior students as it is for freshmen. We have also noted that this conclusion is supported by the groups' differences in the mean score of *their desire to learn vocabulary*. This is interpreted as suggesting that freshmen are more motivated towards English courses than senior students. Accordingly, we decided to carry out the study with freshmen hoping that they would provide richer information than those who appeared to be less motivated to the object of the research- learning vocabulary of the English language.

The second reason concerns the pedagogical relevance of the findings of the study. Before and since the inception of the present study, ie., in 1991/92, we have been aiming at research, from which students in the Freshman Programme would be of the immediate beneficiaries due to the following reasons: One is that, of the entire student population at AAU, freshmen stay at the University for a long period of time (normally from 4 to 5 years) and, thus, can benefit most from the findings of the research to meet the academic demands imposed upon them. The second is that, as has been defined in Chapter One, a 'freshman' is one who is in the preparatory stage for higher level scholarly work. It also means one who is at a transition stage from secondary to tertiary level education and who finds her/himself in a new academic and social environment. Thus, this group of students who find themselves in a unique learning situation, we maintain, need more academic councelling, of which helping them to cope with their vocabulary learning is one area, than those who have already familiarised themselves with the unique life of the University campus.

On the basis of the above considerations, it was decided that the study be carried out (1) at AAU, (2) with the CSS students specifically, (3) with first year students. With this in mind, we now pass on to the of number of subjects.

Selection and Number of Subjects

As the freshmen were assigned to each Freshman English class (FLEn 101A,B) following the principle of alphabetization, whereby a list of the total population is arranged based on the initial letter of each name regardless of individual differences (such as educational or cultural background, academic abilities, and so on), it was

found appropriate to choose certain sections rather than individuals out of the entire sections. There were 21 sections for the 1992/93 academic year.

We benefited a great deal from this system of student allocation in two ways. One is, it gave us easy access to the subjects collectively in their respective classes, which could have been too difficult to bring together individuals who were supposed to go to different main subject classes according to their class schedule.

The second derivative advantage of selecting subjects in terms of sections rather than individuals is that this procedure saved the researcher's time by limiting him to consulting only with four instructors who had taught the sections selected rather than about 15 instructors of the 21 sections.

However, it is not to claim that this procedure is the only or the 'best' one. In fact, it has one disadvantage in that it can be influenced by a different kind of bias arising from an uneven distribution of sections to students with certain initials. For example, the number of students whose names begin, say, with "a" is far greater than that of those whose names begin with "y" or "z", not to mention names with initial letters "e, i, j, o, p or x". That is, more number of sections can be allotted to the former group than the latter.

Nevertheless, given the wide range of tasks employed in the present study, the method of selecting sections rather than individual students from each section was believed to suffice to serve our purpose.

Accordingly, six sections (code number: 01, 04, 09, 11, 13, 18) were selected for the present study by applying the principle of random sampling.

The six sections contained about 216 students, an of average of 36 in each, who were about one-third of the total freshman population (750) in CSS for that academic year. Though there seems to be a consensus among researchers that the type of research that one chooses (e.g., experimental, case study, etc.) determines the

number of subjects, there is no standardized norm regarding the optimum or minimum size of subjects in studies learner strategies such as the present one. For example, we have seen in the reviewed literature that the number of subjects varied from one study to another ranging from 3 to 94.

On the other hand, there seems to be a general agreement among L2 learning researchers that 'the greater the size, the smaller the effect of individual variability or any other population-related variable on the out-come' (Seliger and Shohamy 1990:98). Thus, this size of a sample, about 216, was believed to be adequate, considering the scope of the study and time constraint.

Instrument Bias Toward Number of Subjects

As it is evident from the flow diagram (Figure 5.2) above, data for the mainline study (*Phase Two*) was collected using three instruments, viz, questionnaires, interviews and thinking-aloud procedure, which were tested and proved to be effective during the pilot study (*Phase One*).

Each of the instruments was employed with varied number of subjects according to the intensity of the difficulty involved in conducting the experiment. This difficulty involved factors such as (1) space, and (2) mode of elicitation (individual and group).

The term 'space' is used to refer to the availability of suitable place and equipment to carry out the experiment effectively. For example, the questionnaires were easily administered to the entire sample population as the same time at the same place- the University halls. This was not the case with the use of the interviews or thinking-aloud protocols. Firstly, they required us to look for special rooms that were equipped with audio-recording machines and free from any sort of background noise. Secondly, they were conducted with individual students at a time(in the case of the interview), with a group of 24 students at a time (in the case of the think-aloud).

We anticipated these difficulties in the out set of the field work that both the interviews and thinking-aloud procedures, provided that they would be selected for

data collection for the mainline study, would require special attention. We had known that two such rooms or Language Laboratories were available at our Institute, where Spoken English classes were conducted. However, the capacity of these rooms was limited to accommodate 24 students at a time and some of the machines were out of order. Moreover, the rooms were very often occupied with regular classes.

So, we were able to conduct the interviews and the think-aloud only with 183 of the 226 subjects. Although, we finally succeeded, the data collection was found necessary to employ more number of subjects for the questionnaires, since they could be administered to large group of subjects at the same time, and less for the interviews and thinking-aloud procedures, as they required special attention.

Based on these considerations, all selected subjects (216) were able to complete the questionnaires at the same time in the same hall, whereas, this figure was reduced to a manageable size for the interviews and thinking-aloud procedure (183), in each.

Once the subjects were chosen and the number of subjects for each elicitation session was determined, the next stage was to collect data using the various instruments adopted.

A) Stage-One

I) *Biographical Questionnaire*. The biographical questionnaire (Appendix 1) was developed to collect information on the general background of the sample population.

The biographical questionnaire consisted of two parts: the portion that asked the subjects to provide information on their general biodata. The second part required them to give information about their educational background. The questionnaire also required them to rate their perceived proficiency in English.

Information on factors such as these has both theoretical and practical advantages. Regarding the former, it may be the case that there are systematic interactions, on

the one hand, between learning strategies that learners use and these factors, and between the kind of strategies the learners prefer to use and, (for example, their previous language learning background), on the other. There has been an indication of these kinds of interaction from the results of the pilot study. Knowledge of such relationships between these two sets of learner factors may influence teachers to consider the presentation of not only vocabulary but the teaching of other aspects of the language in the classroom. For the researcher, this information has a practical advantage in the sense that it would facilitate the interpretation of the data s/he analyses from wider perspectives.

ii) Measure of L2 Achievement

Before the second set of the questionnaire was administered, a measure of the subjects' performance on overall language-based and, specifically, on vocabulary tasks had been conducted as part of their biographical data.

The tests were intended to group the subjects into three achievement groups and relate these levels of achievement to both the quantitative and the qualitative accounts of the present study (see Figure 5.2 for the type of data each of these accounts consisted of). That is, the group results from these tests were related to their knowledge and use of VAS.

Grouping the learners was necessitated by the fact that the sample population for the present study, as described above, was drawn from students of the same level of university education and the same stream, viz, the Freshman Programme at CSS. However, this does not mean they were a homogeneous group in terms of proficiency in the TL as they had diverse learning backgrounds.

As has rightly been pointed out by L2 acquisition researchers, especially in the area of testing, the problem with measuring proficiency/performance in an L2 involves a number of issues (Hughes and Porter 1984; Oller 1979, 1983; Alderson 1988, 1983; Dejenie 1990, Teshome 1995; Taddele 1990, for a review of the problems). Taddele (1990) cites two of these which run through the majority of the literature. These are:

1) the question of ensuring and improving the validity and reliability of the test instruments, and

2) the ideals of developing measures, which can, with an acceptable degree of objectivity, assess and determine an individual's knowledge of the language.

Without indulging ourselves into the theoretical arguments and controversies (see, Alderson 1983 for the inadequacy of cloze tests; Meara, 1987 for inadequacy of multiple-choice tests; Read 1993, for an overview of various L2 vocabulary tests), two sets of tests (Appendices 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D) were administered with 183 subjects. The tests, it was maintained, would assess the subjects' 'linguistic knowledge' (such as vocabulary, grammar and structure and comprehension), in the sense of the term used by Swain and Canale (1983). Tests with different test-formats (Read 1990) were employed in an attempt to account for the wide range of learners' biases toward different test types. In keeping with the contemporary preference for an integrative and communicative test format (Teshome 1994), especially in language proficiency testing, it is generally recommended that vocabulary items should be presented in the context of a sentence or a larger discourse unit (Read 1993), since it is important for learners to be able to understand words as they occur in connected written (Carter 1988) or spoken (McCarthy 1994) discourse rather than just as independent items. This is what we did in the course of selecting and preparing these tests.

Each set was administered separately at different times by four of the instructors teaching the Freshman English courses in the six sections.

Types of Tests:

Test 1. This test was partly a self-prepared and partly adaptation from literature (Read 1989, 1993), consisting of three components:

a) *Grammaticality judgement*. This test required the students to identify semantically, and formally (morphologically) anomalous sentences (Ellis 1991) and replace them with the appropriate forms. The items included in

this test were adopted from errors made by first year students (Hudson 1969).

b) *Word associate*. This test involves the presentation of the students with a stimulus word together with six words, three were related to the stimulus and the other three were destructors (for more information, see: Read 1989, 1990, 1993; Meara 1983, 1980).

c) *A cloze test*. The cloze test was one in which every 8th content word (Taylor, 1953; Oller, 1979) was deleted and subjects had to replace it with the 'appropriate' word.

Test 2. Michigan Test of the English Language Proficiency (MTELP) (Appendix 2A). For convenience, especially for test security, the 1984 edition was adopted. This examination included comprehension, vocabulary, and structure. Vocabulary knowledge was assessed by a series of multiple choice questions, in which the students had to indicate which of a set of possible choices would best fit a given context. The students had to attempt all the questions.

The choice of this test was made not because it is superior over other standardized tests regarding ecological plausibility, but it was due to

1) its appropriateness for our purpose in that it claims to measure L2 learners' linguistic knowledge vis-a-vis all English language learning skills (such as listening, speaking, reading and writing), as other standardized tests like TOEFL claim to test,

2) the MTELP's format and item types are similar to the ones used in our ESLCE, with which all the subjects were familiar, and

3) the MTELP is one of the most widely used measures of English language proficiency in L2 learning strategy research, like the present study.

Though, the MTELP cannot be claimed to be free from weakness, it was believed that it would reflect the subjects' linguistic knowledge reasonably and the information we obtained would be informative.

Finally, in order to compensate for the possible deficiencies in the tests cited above, additional measures of achievement in the target language were included: class achievement tests of two mid-semester and two final Freshman English examinations, results of inferencing abilities, and recall tasks (Appendix 2D).

iii) *Strategy Questionnaire (SILL).*

As mentioned in chapter three, the language learning strategy questionnaire used in this study was Oxford's (1990) the 'Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)' (Appendix 3). Items in the various forms of the SILL were based on the 'direct' and 'indirect' strategies. The group 'direct' strategies consisted of three categories: strategies for remembering new linguistic items (Memory strategies), strategies involved in mental processes (Cognitive strategies), and strategies for compensating for missing knowledge (Compensatory strategies).

Likewise, the group 'indirect' strategies comprised three categories: strategies for organizing and evaluating language learning (Metacognitive strategies), strategies for managing emotions (Affective strategies), and strategies for learning with others (Social strategies).

Each of these categories consisted of sets of subcategories varying from two to four. Each of these sets of subcategories, in turn, comprised tokens ranging from one to eight.

Oxford reports that the original version of the SILL, a 121-item questionnaire, has been field-tested with groups of foreign language learners and has internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's alpha .96 for a 483-person military sample. She also reports that content validity, based on classificatory agreement between two independent raters who " blindly " matched each of the SILL items, was .95. The SILL, according to Oxford, was also field-tested for 'social desirability response bias' and 'no evidence has appeared for three samples' (Oxford 1990:256).

A rotated (promax) factor analysis of responses to the SILL, based on 483 respondents, produced 8 factors. The 8 factors are cited in O'Malley, et a.l (1990:104).

The SILL underwent successive revisions producing 76 items for assessing uses of learning strategies in a second language, and 51 in a foreign language learning context. For the purpose of assessing vocabulary learning strategies in this study, the latter of these two versions was adopted with the aim of making it fit to the ELT situation in Ethiopia.

Though useful and widely used for producing data on L2 learning strategies, the use of SILL in the present study called for at least three adaptations. First, since the SILL has been primarily designed to elicit data on specific language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), only twelve of the 51 items on the questionnaire matched the objectives of the present study. These were:

When learning a new word...

1) I create associations between new material and what I already know.
2) I put the new word in a sentence so I can remember it.
3) I place the new word in a group with other words that are similar in some way (for example, words related to clothing, or feminine nouns).
4) I associate the sound of the new word with the sound of a familiar word.
5) I use rhyming to remember it.
6) I remember the word by making a clear mental image of it or by drawing a picture.
7) I visualize the spelling of the new word in my mind.
8) I use a combination of sounds and images to remember the new word.
9) I list all the other words I know that are related to the new word and draw lines to show relations.
10) I remember where the new word is and draw lines to show relations.
11) I use flashcards with the new word on one side and the definition or other information on the other.

12) I physically act out the new word.

The first modification introduced into the SILL was, therefore, changing the wordings of the items so that they met the objective of the present study. For example, a statement such as "I very often read materials in English in order to improve my reading skills" was modified into "I often read materials in English in order to develop my knowledge of vocabulary".

The second modification was allowing the subjects to use Amharic, in responding to the questionnaire. This was made possible by carefully translating the questionnaire from English into Amharic based on three considerations:

a) following studies that permitted respondents to use their native language in describing their language learning strategies (eg. O'Malley et al 1985a),

b) as has been suggested by some investigators (eg. Dansereau 1985), and

c) as has been evidenced in the pilot study.

The final adaptation was to change the original wordings and the meanings of the 5-options that the respondents were required to indicate (see section 5.5- for the modification made). That is, the original "Never or almost never true of me", for example, was changed into simply "Strongly Disagree" or "Always or almost always true of me" into "Strongly Agree", and so on. This change was made based on respondents' complaints during the pilot study.

It should also be noted that the *order* of the options (e.g., the appearance of "Strongly disagree" first rather than "Strongly agree") in the present study was also decided by the students who participated in Phase-one of the study.

B) Stage-two

Two of the instruments that produced the qualitative data (the interview and think-aloud procedure) were applied at this stage.

i) Interviews

An unstructured interview was conducted with 183 (out of the total number of 217) subjects. In order to control the influence that the items in the SILL might have on responses to the interview, the interview was conducted one month after the SILL was administered. The purpose of the interview was to explore retrospectively the type of strategies learners used (or perceived used) when they encountered a new word. Both the interview and the SILL were conducted in Amharic, since it was felt that respondents would better communicate in Amharic than otherwise.

One day before the interview session began, the purpose of the interview was explained to the interviewees in the presence of their instructors. They understood that they would be asked to describe orally the technique they used when they encountered a new word which they wanted to learn or to 'know'. The subjects were also aware that the information they yielded would be tape-recorded.

The interview session with every subject began with prompt questions, "How many words do you know in you mother tongue?, and then, "How do you compare the number of words you know in your first language to that in the English language?". These questions helped me to clarify the concept of the term *vocabulary/word* and familiarize the respondent with the task.

The questions then asked were : "What was the last new word that you learned?", and "What did you do to learn the word?", "What do you do that helps to understand unknown words encountering a reading passage"?, "What do you do that helps you remember new words?", "Are these the only techniques you use whenever you waned to learn a new word?" and so on. Most of these questions have been tried out by other L2 acquisition researchers and reported to be effective in tapping learner strategies (Chamot 1987). The interview progressed as one question led to another in the form of 'conversation'. The interview data was tape-recorded.

ii) The Think-Aloud Task

Since the ultimate objective of the present study is pedagogic, we need to measure not only the product of learning (learners' perceived use of strategies), but also the processes involved in the actual learning events: the perceived use of the strategies.

The purpose of this section is therefore to provide a detailed description of the methods and the procedures employed in collecting think-aloud protocols on the strategies the subjects used for inferring meanings of unfamiliar word while reading a passage.

(a) Text

MY TOWN (Appendix 4), Eric Newby (n.d), a prose passage which was about 242 words long, was adapted for the task of inferring word-meanings in a reading context. This same passage was adapted for the comprehension section of the 1984/85 Mid-semester Freshman English 101B examination.

"My Town", begins by describing the inevitable resourcefulness of children of the poor, both boys and girls. It goes on to describe and illustrate the manner in which children find means and ways to entertain themselves when they are deprived of expensive recreational materials, such as toys. Since children of the poor have nobody to look after them, they 'invent' all sorts of street and pedestrian games.

Interestingly, almost all the games cited in the passage are not uncommon in Ethiopia, even in small villages. As a rule, every Ethiopian who is from a low or middle class family, has to experience at least two or more of these games in his/her childhood. It is, therefore, believed that the content of the passage stimulates the majority of Ethiopian readers or the subjects by reckoning the past to the present. This was evidenced when four out of the five Freshman English instructors rated it as the 'best' interesting piece out of eight possible options. It might have been for the same reason that it was adapted for the Freshman English examination (1984).

(b) Learning Word-meaning in Context: Inferencing

Since this study is remedial or pedagogic, we tried as much as possible to gear the activities to what is normally practised in the classroom. However, there were some activities in this experiment which inevitably differed from those of the normal classroom:

1) the students were asked to think-aloud while learning the new vocabulary items;
2) the students were to learn potential words vs real words. Both (1) and (2) are not normally practised in the classroom; and
3) the subjects were not to read the passage from the textbook as they regularly do, but rather they were to read from a booklet.

As the results from the pilot study (*Phase one*) have shown, these activities have potential incentives for learners to successfully attempt the task designed. About 50% of the words could not help us achieve the intended objective, since a substantial number of subjects responded "I know this word", which means that no information on those words was expected.

In order to cope with this difficulty, we used carefully prepared neologisms for the present study, as suggested by Meara and Jones (1990), Anderson and Freebody (1983), Nation (1990). It is true that the use of real words in natural texts increases ecological validity, but 'it makes it difficult to assure that subjects did not already know the meaning' (Nagy, Herman, and Anderson 1985 :238).

The use of non-words in vocabulary acquisition research is not new and uncommon. For example, in his experimental research of the acquisition of word meaning from context, McKeown (1985) used the 'artificial' word *hudray* which was given the meaning of "to grow, increase, or expand".

The study by van Daalen-Kapteijns and Elshout-Mohr (1981) sought characteristics of an efficient process of word-meaning acquisition by studying the responses of high-and low-ability college students using non-words such as *kolper* for the English

"window, a window which transmits little light", and so on. The 11 non-words used in the present study are shown below.

1) sneardly	"hardly"	7) sedled	"felt envy for"
2) quelson	"indoors"	8) culber	"wood"
3) scrade	"string"	9) fert	"noise"
4) prolated	"played"	10) roupted	"fitted"
5) cridle	"to make a picture"	11) loomp	"pull"
6) aleanded	"complained"		

These 'vocabulary items' were constructed along the line of the phonotactic rules of the target language either by transposing the sounds of already existing words and addition/subtraction of an extra sound and/or an affix (eg. *loomp* from 'pull'), creating a new word (eg. *aleanded*, *zector)*. The real words in the passage: MY TOWN (Erick,nd), in this case the glosses, were represented by these non-words.

The use of the non-words provided us the basis for controlling items that could have been known before the task. Because it would give the subjects no information about the meanings of the words outside of the contexts in which they occurred. It was also found to be useful to narrow down the variation in vocabulary knowledge between the high and the low achievers. Believing that the students vary in their approaches to learning L2 vocabulary, and the variation in approach correlates with variation in achievement of learning, the think-aloud procedure was carried out.

(c) Procedure

A 20-minute training session was conducted by their respective instructors with the subjects of the present study during the normal service Freshman English class hours. The advantages in training is to ensure that all the participants of the study would use the same response procedure.

In order to collect thinking-aloud protocols, each instructor supplied the students with the booklets. What the students were asked to do was perhaps best explained by citing the instruction:

This task is designed to investigate the way you learn a new word and its meaning. In the first part of the booklet you will find a passage in which some unknown words are used. The words are underlined for you. Your task is to find out what each word means. The way we would like you to proceed is as follows:

1) *read the passage silently;*
2) *try to understand the information conveyed by the passage as well as by each sentence that contains the underlined word, then,*
3) *try to infer/guess the meaning of the new word while thinking-aloud.* Write in the box the meaning that you inferred and while 'talking' to the tape HOW you were able to deduce it (On the top of the box, a question was asked : **"What helped you to infer the meaning of this word?**", which served as a frame or reference).

Your instructor will tell you when to move to the next task. Bear in mind that you will be tested on these terms some other time.

The experiment was carried out in the Institute of Language Studies' two Language Laboratories with the capacity of about 18-20 subjects each. One lab technician and one instructor administered the task with, on the average, 19 students per session. That is, the data was elicited from the 183 students in about five sessions. Though they were allowed to complete the tasks in 20-30 minutes, which was found ideal time from the pilot study, in their rate of completion the contrast was dramatic. Some of them spent an enormous amount of time completing the task, while others spent little time on the tasks. Based on most of the literature, specially on users of 'best' learning strategies (or successful language learners), one can predict that the best learners would use more and a greater variety of strategies than poorer users of strategies (or unsuccessful learners), and thus, those who spent more time on the task were users of the best strategies (Rubin 1981; O'Malley 1985a). We shall find out what results could be from the present study.

The technique involving double tasks was designed to serve two purposes. The primary aim, of course, was to gather data in sufficient detail on the actual application of strategies for learning English vocabulary. The other was to measure

the subjects' inferencing abilities and thereby meet what the research design demanded of us regarding the subjects' word recognition strategy use. The results of this measure will be used to account for the subjects' differences in strategy use. That is, combining the two tasks in this way is useful to relate the *product* (the meaning of the item in question) and the *process* (how the individual arrived at the product or the responses).

5.10 Summary

This Chapter presented an outline of the research design and methodology for the present study. The Chapter started with a summary of the methods utilised in studies reviewed in Chapter Four. The Chapter argued that all the previous studies were inadequate since they followed a narrow approach to VAS employing a single data elicitation method and suggested the use of triangulation, a paradigm that allows researchers to combine not only various methods of data collection, but also combination of alternative/complementary theories and methods of data analysis. The model that emerged out of this perspective is a four-stage and a two-phase model (Phase One: pilot study; Phase Two: mainline study).

The chapter also presented the results of the examination of the practicality of research instruments associated with the two paradigms employed in this study (quantitative and qualitative). Based on the results of the pilot study (Phase one) it was possible to foresee the effectiveness of three research instruments: questionnaires, interviews, and think-aloud protocols. Using these instruments, it was possible to gather data in varied forms aimed at informing us about vocabulary acquisition strategies. Once the data is gathered the next step is analysis, which is treated next in chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX
ANALYSING THE DATA

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the procedures used to analyse the various data collected, as summarized in Table 6.1 below. As has been pointed out in the proceeding chapter, the design of the present study is based on a multi-method approach involving two sets of questionnaires (Biodata and strategy use), an unstructured interview and a thinking-aloud technique. In addition, measures of achievement in vocabulary tasks and overall performance in the English language is included in the design. As has also been indicated in Figure 5.2 above (Section 5.5), the questionnaires and measures of achievement produced the quantitative data while the open interview and thinking-aloud protocols produced the qualitative data.

It is evident that the analysis of data depends on the type of data or the elicitation methods used. We adopted statistical techniques for analysing the former and a combination of qualitative and statistical methods are used for the latter. This choice was initiated by differences between the two set of data. Because the quantitative data were in numerical form or statements that can be converted into figures, it was found to be useful to use quantitative or statistical techniques, particularly frequencies, which is one component of descriptive statistics. Conversely, the qualitative data, as was collected through an open interview and think-aloud techniques, were in the form of verbal descriptions and explanations. Thus, there was the need, first, to transcribe, systematise and organize the data in the form of categories employing techniques for qualitative data analysis and then to apply statistical techniques to the output of the qualitative analysis.

Accordingly, the analysis is presented in two sections. Maintaining the order of the type of data collected, the first section focuses on the analysis of the quantitative data and the subcomponents. These included analysing subjects' responses to the

biographical questionnaire (Appendix 1) and to the statements describing strategies in the SILL questionnaire (Appendix 3). In each case the same procedure was followed. The first step was to tally and count the number of occurrences of a variable (biographical or type of strategy use) against the corresponding category. The second is to convert the number of observations or frequencies into percentages which is followed by rank-ordering of variables based on the magnitude of the percentages that each variable obtained. At the final stage, both figures and the corresponding are displayed in frequency tables.

This section also presents the analysis of the subjects' raw scores on various achievement measures and statistical tests attempted using a statistical overview of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), as described below, to establish whether the observed difference among the subjects in the achievement measures is statistically significant. The results from these statistical tests are important to the subsequent data analysis such as the analysis of subjects' variabilities in the type and range of strategy use.

Generally, the main purpose in each case, ie., in the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, is to lead us to the ***interpretation*** of the results and to suggest ***implications*** of these results (Chapter Eight) where the results from the analysis of the two sets of data are combined.

The second section presents the analysis of the qualitative data, first, qualitatively, and then quantitatively or statistically, as mentioned above.

At the initial stage, the strategies drawn from the transcript were categorised based on the taxonomies provided in the literature (e.g., Oxford, 1990) and following the procedures used for the Pilot study (Chapter Five). As in the first section, the number of occurrences of individual strategies corresponding to each of the categories were tallied and counted and, finally, displayed in frequency tables in terms of figures and percentages.

In this regard both sections are thus concerned with analysing the two sets of data in terms of *frequencies of typical use* and *variabilities* in the use pattern of strategies and category types, first, with reference to the entire sample population (=143 students as described below), second, to each achievement group, as described below. Some more specific computational techniques are also described successively in the next sections where the frequencies for the use of each strategy-type and strategy-category as well as the groups are computed and compared.

Table 6.1

Summary of the Design of Experiment and analyses with 143 Subjects

Data type	Subject	Procedure	Analysis
Quantitative	143	Biographical Questionnaire	Descriptive
	143	Measure of Achievement	Descriptive and statistical tests
	143	Strategy Questionnaire (SILL)	Descriptive
Qualitative	143	Interviews	Qualitative & Descriptive
	143	Think-aloud protocols	Qualitative& Descriptive

As can be seen from the Table 6.1 above, the type of data analysis procedure used for the present study is predominantly descriptive in nature. However, one-way analysis of variance was also employed, particularly in the analysis of the scores of achievement on the measures of ability (see Section 6.2.2).

As mentioned in section 5.9 above, the 750 freshmen of the Social Science Faculty of the Addis Ababa University were originally represented in this study by a sample population of 216 students. The size of the sample population accounted for about one-third of the entire population of the 1992/3 entrants, and was selected randomly. Of these, only 183 students participated in the interview and think-aloud for the reason that has been stated in Chapter Five.

For various reasons, mainly because of the political events of the time and first semester academic dismissals or suspension, the number of the sample population was reduced to 170. Of these, 143 students completed the entire tasks devised for the study and thus the findings from the various data (Chapter 7) are presented with reference to the 143 freshmen.

6.2 Analysing the Quantitative Data: The Questionnaires

6.2.1 Analysing Student Background Questionnaire

The first set of information to consider was the biographical data as this was collected at the outset of the present study and it is directly related to the learner who is the primary target of the study. The background questionnaire contains 7 items (Appendix A1). The first 6 of these are concerned with the students' background information of which the type of high school (government/non-government) completed, location of the school (Addis Ababa/outside Addis Ababa), the level where they started learning English and studying main subjects in this language (kindergarten, Grade 3 or 7) are some of the main factors of interest of the present study. The last (7th) item focuses on their perceived English proficiency.

The two sets of questions on this questionnaire (the first six and item seven) were analysed separately involving different techniques, though they are combined in Chapter eight where the results from the analyses are interpreted and discussed. The reason why the two sets of questions were analysed separately was that the answer to the latter statement had a scale value ranging from 1-4 while the former had not. The former thus called for the need to name and categorise the responses in the form of identifying the respondents into groups. That is, there was the need to convert the response scales from four to two, which is described below in some detail.

On the other hand, because the analysis of the answers to the first six items had not involved scale values, there was no need to convert one scale to another and the analysis was carried out simply, first, by counting the number of times each

alternative was selected by each student. This is reflected in the statistical overview in the form of percentages in the frequency Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2

Summary of the analysis of the Biodata Questionnaire

FACTORS		Number	%
Sex	M	114	79.4
	F	29	20.6
Age	16-20	120	84.1
	21-25	19	12.9
	26-30	3	2.4
	31 +	2	0.6
Type of high school attended	GS	132	92.4
	NGS	11	7.6
Level at which learning English started	KG	7	4.7
	GR1	14	10.0
	GR3	119	83.5
	Others	3	1.8
Level at which learning main subjects in English started	GR7	140	98.2
	Below GR7	3	1.8

In a very general form, thus, the questions asked the learners to reflect on two sets of their factors: (a) the presence or absence of the social factors which can facilitate L2 acquisition (Ellis 1986, 1994) such as easy access to the language outside the classroom through films, books in English for leisure reading and so on, leading to proficiency in the vocabulary of that language, and (b) previous English language learning situations. The assumption, as stated in Chapter One, is that L2 learners vary in both the overall frequency with which they employ strategies and also the particular types of strategies they use (Chamot et al. 1987, 1988; Ehrman 1990), based on their experiences pertaining to these factors. In an attempt to asses the interaction of these variations in previous L2 learning experiences with type of

strategy use and L2 performance or proficiency among our freshmen, it was necessary to analyse their biographical data.

In returning to item 7, table 6.3 summarises a somewhat detailed description of the procedures employed in the analysis of responses to this statement and interpretation of the mechanics of the presentation of the information contained in the table.

The table contains 3 rows and 5 columns, considering only the outer columns. The first row, from top-to-bottom, represents the 4 scales according to the key: 'very good'= 4, 'good'= 3, 'average'= 2, and 'poor'= 1 and the label "TOTAL" indicating the SUM of the number of observations (n) or students who selected each alternative. The second and third rows contain information on the frequencies in figures (n) and percentages (%) of observations with regard to the selection of each scale. Thus, the scale 'very good' carrying 4 points was selected by 18 of the whole of the sample population and accounted for about 12.58%, 'good' carrying 3 points was selected by 29 students and accounted for about 20.02%, 'average' carrying 3 points by 84 (58.74%) and, finally, 'poor' carrying 1 point by 12(08%). The number of students who selected each alternative in each column adds up 143(100%). The last row contains the resultant percentages which are pooled together in a pairwise mode in such a way that they are read as 32.6% ('v. good' = 12.58 % + 'good' = 20.02 %) and 66.74 % ('average' = 58.74+'poor' 08.39 %) for the whole sample of this study (due to rounding the total percentages do not equal 100).

Table 6.3

Summary of Computation Procedures Employed

V.good (4)		Good (3)		Average (2)		Poor (1)		Total	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18	13	29	20	84	59	12	08	143	100
32.60%				59%		8%		99.73%	

For the purpose of the present study, the 33% of the students who rated themselves "very good" or "good" are referred to as the "high proficiency group while the 67% of the students who rated themselves "average" or "poor" as the "low proficiency group.

Overall, the table provides three sets of information: (1) which of the scales was selected at the highest rate or the opposite; related to the first is (2) the students' proficiency profile, and more importantly (3)the scales were transformed from ordinal to nominal scales whereby the ranking of the answers (or the students) from 'very good' to 'poor' (with 1 representing poor, 2 average, 3 good, or 4 very good) was reduced to two broad categories.

As mentioned in the previous section, in the main, this same procedure of analysis was used across the research design in order to make comparison of the results from the analysis of the various data (see Chapter Seven) easier by using similar techniques of data analysis consistently. Now we move to description and analysis of data on the students' actual as opposed to perceived level of performance.

6.2.2 Analysing Subjects' Achievement on the English Language Performance

Following the analysis of the biodata, the next issue to be considered was computing scores on various tests, the purpose of the analysis being: (a)information obtained from the analysis of the scores on these tests served as part of the learners' biographical data and thus it was a continuation of the analysis of the biographical data, (b)classification of the subjects into performance groups on the basis of their level of achievement in these measures, and (c)following from (b), it will serve as the basis for the subsequent data analyses as it is evident from the analysis of their variability in measures of achievement vs the analysis of their variability in strategy use, as discussed at length in Chapter Seven.

In analysing the learners' scores on the various tasks, we employed a two-layered method, results from the first leading to the analysis of the next. The analysis at the

first level involved three stages. At the first stage, the top and the bottom scores were determined and the scores that fall between these two extreme poles were listed. At the second stage, the scores were tallied and the number of students was counted against their respective scores. Finally, the number of students was transformed to percentages and the scores were averaged in order to determine the proportion of students who scored relatively high, mid or low. The analysis performed upto this point regarding the achievement scores resulted in a preliminary overview of three achievement groups, of which only students in the 'high' and in the 'low' groups are of our main interest for the sake of generalisation of the results of the analysis.

The analysis at the second level involved the use of analysis of variance (ANOVA), as mentioned earlier. One-way analysis of variance is employed to determine whether the observed learners' differences at the first-level of analysis is statistically significant.

Following is description of the content and scoring of the five tasks and their subsets starting with the inferencing and recall tests. Next is descriptions and scoring of the other tests such as MTELP (Appendix 2A), self-made test including grammatical judgement cloze-type (Appendix 2B, 2C and 2D), and class achievement tests of two semesters. Before that, however, it is necessary to present a summary of the mean scores for each of the five ability measures and the overall mean score (OAMS) of each group, as shown in table 6.3 below.

The presentation of the summary at this point was initiated by the fact that, as mentioned in previous section, the same procedure of analysis was followed for computing the frequencies of observations in each case and, thus, helps the researcher to avoid repetition of the description of the procedure employed to compute frequencies for each task. It could have been cumbersome to the researcher and daunting to the reader of the thesis, if the overall had not been presented here.

In the table, IA represents 'inferencing ability', RA stands for 'recall ability', MTELP (Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency), CT represents 'class test', and SMT stands for 'self-made' test. Because of rounding up, a minor variation in the overall mean scores (OAMS) of the two cells can be detected.

Table 6.4

Summary of mean scores for Five measures of ability of three levels of performance

GROUP	N	%	IA	RT	MTELP	CT	SMT	*OAMS*
G1	25	17	53	86	58	55	59	60
G2	105	73	62	87	65	64	63	68
G3	13	9	77	86	78	75	81	79
OAMS	143	99	64	87	67	65	67	69

Table 6.4 presents summary of the distribution of the mean scores for the three groups established tentatively (remains to be proved or disproved in the latter part of the analysis) and the distribution of the number (n) and percentages (%) of the 143 sample population.

As evident from the table, Group One (G1) consisted of 25 (17%) of the entire sample population, which was considered "low" achievers due to the low average points the group had obtained in all, but one, tasks. For the same reason, Group Two (G2) containing 105 (68%) may be referred to as "moderate achievers" and Group Three (G3) 13 (16%) "high achievers".

The results from the analysis of the students' perceived ratings of their overall English proficiency (Section 6.2.1) revealed that, to reiterate, (13%) considered themselves 'v.good', (20%), 'good', (59%) 'average' and (8%) 'poor'. This student self-rating approximates the subjects differences in the mean scores of the five, except one, tasks.

If a comparison is made between the mean scores of the tests from the top, RA constituted the highest followed by SMT as the second highest. From the bottom, the mean score of IA was the least, followed by CT, as the second least. The mean scores of two of the tests (CT AND SMT) clustered around the mean of the MTELP, which was 67.

A) Description and Scoring of the Inferencing Task (IA)

In line with the research design of the present study (Chapter Four), the distinction between 'recognition strategies' and 'development strategies' of vocabulary acquisition, was retained by engaging the subjects in inferencing and recall tasks.

For the inferencing task, as mentioned in the preceding Chapter, the students were asked to produce the meaning of 11 non-words in a reading passage, MY TOWN, while thinking-aloud HOW they discovered and WHAT clues they used to sort out the meaning of each of those non-words.

The inferencing task was corrected out of the maximum score 33 %. The answer to each item was given 3 points if the learner reproduced the original real item, 2 points for the answer that belongs to the same semantic field or lexical set (Cruse, 1986) with the target item(TI) or 1 if the answer does not destroy the sense of the sentence in which the TI was occurring or if it was simply a paraphrase of the whole sentence. However, if the response was none of the above, i.e., not related to use of the TI or the overall meaning of the sentence in which the TI was occurring, then zero was awarded.

For example, in the original TEXT (Appendix 4) the word *hardly* was replaced by the non-word *sneardly* in the sentence: "Apart from marbles and balls, they [children of the poor] had *sneardly* (hardly) any bought toys..."

We find responses that fall under one of the four categories cited above, and a few of these tokens out of an extensive list of examples are provided below:

respective scores. Finally, the number of students was transformed to percentages and the scores were averaged in order to determine the proportion of students who scored relatively high, mid or low. The resultant averages of each achievement group on the inferencing task are presented in Table 6.5 (Similar approach is applied in calculating strategy use behaviour of the sample population of the present study and the two achievement groups which is discussed in some detail in chapter seven).

Table 6.5

Summary of mean score of the Inferencing Task (IA) of the three levels of performance

GROUP	n	%	Mean score
G1	25	17	53
G2	105	73	62
G3	13	9	77
Total	143	100	OAMS 64

B) Description and Scoring of the Other Tests

i) The Recall Task

The checking of this task (Appendix 2D) was partially the same as the checking of the inferencing task in the previous section, since, of the 10 items of the test, 5 were cloze- type (Taylor, 1953; Oller, 1979) where the students had to choose the appropriate word for the correct blank. The scoring of the other 5 items was straight forward, since those were in multiple-choice format and the students had to match associate pairs. So, in each case the student gets 1 point if s/he chooses the appropriate word or loses the point if s/he fails to retrieve the right word. Table 6.6 summarises the average scores of each group.

Table 6.6

Summary of average scores for the Recall Task(RA) of the three levels of performance

GROUPS	n	%	Mean score
G1	25	17	86
G2	105	73	87
G3	13	9	86
Total	143	100	OAMS 87

ii) Description and analysis of the MTELP

The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency, MTELP, (Form B), produced by the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan, constituted Test 2. The edition of the MTELP used in the present study contained 100 items, carrying one point each. These were divided into three parts:

Part I) Grammar Test (score= 40)

Part II) Vocabulary Test (score= 40)

Part III)Reading Comprehension(score= 20).

There were two types of vocabulary items in this test. In the first type the learners were given a sentence followed by four words or phrases. The subjects were required to find the word or phrase that was closest in meaning to the underlined word (or words) in the sentence and that could be used in the sentence without changing its meaning greatly.

Example: It is too windy to go for a <u>stroll</u>.

a)swim b)sail

c)drive d)walk

In the other type of item they were given a sentence with one word omitted and a list of four words. The subjects were to find the word that would best complete the sentence.

Example: Because of the storm and rough waves, it would be foolish to go out sailing today in a small _____.

a) automobile b) house

c) boat d) beast

Both types of the formats are common in classroom and national examinations in the Ethiopian ELT examination situations.

Table 6.7

Summary of average scores for the MTELP of the three levels of performance

GROUPS	n	%	Mean score
G1	25	17	58
G2	105	73	65
G3	13	9	78
Total	143	100	OAMS 67

iii) Description and Analysis of Classroom Task(CT)

In addition to the three sets of Tests described above, the Freshman English results were considered. The results were composed of mid-semester 30 %, homework and quizzes 20 % and final 50 %. The subjects' average scores are shown in Table 6.8 with respect to each group.

Table 6.8

Summary of average scores for the Classroom Task(CT) of the three levels of performance

GROUPS	n	%	Mean score
G1	25	17	55
G2	105	73	64
G3	13	9	75
Total	143	100	OAMS 65

iv) Description and Analysis of Self-Made tasks(SMT)

The first component of the SMT was grammatical judgement containing 20 items

each carrying one point (= 20 maximum score). Each item involved the learners deciding whether a sentence is well-formed or deviant (syntactically or semantically) and correcting the errors.

Example: "Everyone likes my husband because of his kindness"._____

The second component was the 'word associate' format (Read 1993) which presented the participants with a stimulus word together with six other words, three of which were related to the stimulus and three destructors. The task was to identify the related words or associates. There were 10 stimulus words to be associated with 3 related words, each having one point (=30 maximum score). Here is one example:

attend

meeting keep up morals

frequent society permissive

The learner had to circle the ones that were closely related to the stimulus word, in this case, attend.

The last but not the least component of the SMT was a cloze-type test where about every 8th content word was deleted and replaced by non-words. The task required the subjects to sort out the meanings of 5 'words' using contextual clues. The learner who produced correct answer or the original item secured 2 points, otherwise 1 mark for producing a synonym of the original word or expression and zero for incorrect answer. Thus, the maximum score of this subset text counted 10 %. The overall maximum score for the three subcomponents of the SMT was 60%. The subjects' average scores of this set of the task is summarized in Table 6.9 in terms of each group's average score.

Table 6.9

Summary of average scores for the Self-made tasks of the three levels of performance

GROUPS	n	%	Mean score
G1	25	17	59
G2	105	73	63
G3	13	9	81
Total	143	100	OAMS 69

The subjects were, thus, tested on a reasonable number of words with varied test-formats as well as on their knowledge of the target language grammar and reading abilities. The analysis of the data at this stage (or the first level) aimed at producing the same information concerning the subjects' level of achievement on each set of the tasks by each achievement group which would be related to each group's VAS strategy use. We now move to the analysis of the same data at the second level.

The analysis at the second level is of two types. The first type involved an attempt made to explore the association among the subjects' averaged scores on each of the five tests using the Pearson product-movement correlation coefficient (see Table 6.10). The second type of analysis involved the comparison of the mean scores of each achievement group on each task by employing one-way analysis of variance.

The reason for employing correlation was to ascertain that the learners' scores on the two tests devised to meet the two sets of strategies, the recognition and development strategies, actually match with their scores on other tests which are standardized (MTELP) and nonstandardized (all others). It was also intended to select and use any one or two of these tests, rather than dealing with every one of them, which proved to be general or inclusive enough for the analyses to be performed in succession once the relationship of these tests is determined.

As the Table shows the five tests showed substantially high and positive correlation coefficients, associating in general more significantly at the p<.001 level.

Table 6.10

Correlation coefficients of the five measures of achievement in the English language

Tests	IA	RT	MTELP	CT	SMT
IA	1.00	.57	.52	.46	.40
RT	.57	1.00	.44	.61	.52
MTELP	.52	.44	1.00	.46	.34
CT	.46	.61	.46	1.00	.38
SMT	.40	.38	.34	.49	1.00

The two tests especially designed for the purposes of the present study, viz, inferencing and recall tasks associated positively fairly with each other (r=.57, p< .01), and with other tests, respectively, .52 and .44 with MTELP, .46 and .61 with CT, and .40 and .52 with SMT.

Overall, all of the tests for this group of subjects (n=143) showed somewhat strong associations with each other at the significance level (p<.01). In other words, the tests seemed to measure similar skills and language abilities and, thus, it may follow that the use of the mean score of one test or another for subsequent data analysis may not make much difference.

Accordingly, the two groups' differences (G1 and G3) in the mean scores of each task, we employed the mean scores of the IA, RT and MTELP. The selection of the mean scores of the first two tests (IA and RT) is an obvious one, as it was made on the basis of the research design. The selection of the mean score of the MTELP, rather than the mean scores of the other two tasks (CT and SMT), was purely arbitrary.

Comparison of the mean scores of each of the three achievement groups on each of these three sets of mean scores (Tables 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7) shows that, except on the mean score of RT, G1 students consistently scored significantly lower than G2 and G3. G2 in turn scored lower than G3. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine if there were any overall significant differences among these three mean scores of each group. The results from the analysis confirmed that the variability among the groups regarding their performance on two of the three tasks (IA and MTELP) was significant while their variability in mean scores of RT was not. For example, variability of the three groups on the inferencing task was ($F= 20.31$; df 2, 125; $p< .01$). The lack of significant difference in the mean scores of the RT may not be an unexpected one as all the groups scored relatively high and had similar mean scores.

6.2.3 Analysing and Describing the Quantitative Data

The focus of the previous section was to describe the data and techniques employed to analyse the data pertaining to the subjects' background information and difference in their performance on overall vocabulary learning tasks. The endeavour was initiated by the need to relate the results of the analysis to the learners' vocabulary acquisition strategy use. In this and in the subsequent sections we will attempt to describe the data on the vocabulary acquisition strategies use and the techniques used to analyse the data.

As described in chapter five, this set of data was grouped into two categories according to the nature or type of the data collected. The first was a quantitative data pertaining to strategy use gathered through a strategy use questionnaire (SILL). The second set was a qualitative data collected through an unstructured interview and a thinking-aloud. The description and analysis of the two sets of data is presented respectively in this and in the following subsequent sections.

Student responses to the SILL

The Strategy Inventory For Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1989, 1990), through which the data on the learners' perceived use of vocabulary acquisition was

collected. The entire coverage of the questionnaire is not provided in this study, because it was administered in Amharic and we felt that it would not help my readers except those who read and write in this language. Secondly, it was not adopted the way it was in the source book (Oxford, 1990). The items in the questionnaire were modified in such a way that they serve our present purpose.

As described in chapter three, SILL explicitly divides language learning strategies into six categories and subcategories or subsets corresponding to six scales focusing on:

a) strategies for remembering linguistic units (memory strategies) with 11 subcategories,
b) processing language items and rules (cognitive strategies) with 14 subcategories,
c) compensating for missing knowledge (compensation strategies) containing 6 subcategories,
d) organizing and evaluating learning (metacognitive strategies) containing 11 subcategories,
e) affective variables (affective strategies) with 5, and finally,
f) the social side of language learning (social strategies) with 4 subcategories.

The six categories, in turn, are grouped into two larger classes of strategies, viz, direct and indirect strategies. The former class consists of the first three categories while the latter contains the last three categories.

As pointed out in Chapter Five, this 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaire asks the learners to respond to the statements by indicating whether the statement is (5) "Strongly agree", (4) "Agree", (3) "Neutral", (2) "Disagree", or (1) "Strongly Disagree".

Since all the statements are positively worded, i.e., they are suggested in the literature as positive contributors of language learning, while the answer 5 ("Strongly agree") or 4 ("Agree") indicates the perceived use of the strategy, the answer 3 (Neutral), 2 ("Disagree") or 1 ("Strongly disagree") indicates the perceived non-use

of it. For example, while the answers to item A1: "When learning a new word or vocabulary item, I create associations between new material and what I already know", 4 and 5 ("Agree" and "Strongly agree"), respectively, are considered as positive and the item will obtain 4 or 5 point depending on the choice of the respondent. However, if the respondent chooses either 1 ("Strongly disagree") or 2 ("Disagree") or 3 (Neutral), then the item is not perceived as being used and then obtains 1 or 2 or 3 points respectively, again, depending on the choice of the respondent, leading to distinguish strategies that reported as being used by the students from those that were not (also see Section 7.3.1 for the details).

In line with the technique for data analysis we opted for (see Chapter five for the details) and for the sake of generalisation the first two scales (5 and 4) and the last two (2 and 1) are poolled together into one scale each. The combined form of the former scales is labelled "AGREE" (AGD) while the latter "DISAGREE" (DAG). The entire analysis is made with reference to frequencies (n) of the selection of AGD response (or selection of scales 4&5) for each item within each category by each learner within each of the three achievement groups (see Table 6.3 for illustrate example).

Taking only the analysis of the memory strategies for illustration, the table shows that AGD was selected for item 2 representing the strategy "using the new vocabulary item in context in order to remember it" by 85 (-%) of the 143 learners, of which 13 of the 25 learners were in G1, 65 of the 105 in G2, and 2 of the 13 learners in G3 (We will reconsider the second part of this observation in the latter part of this section). The magnitude of the frequency that each item carries is relative to the maximum and the minimum frequencies for the selection of AGD. The maximum frequencies of the selection of AGD for a specific type of strategy is equalled to the number of the sample population or subset of the sample population in the case of each group, provided that each and every learner selected scales 4 or 5. The minimum frequency of AGD is zero for a specific type of strategy provided that none of the learners selected AGD response. Therefore, 85 (59%) in the example above is the weight of frequency attributed to item 2 is relative to 143, or 13 is relative to 25, 65 to 105 and 2 to 13. In each case the frequencies are provided in figures and percentages.

Meanwhile, this particular strategy is one of the 11 types of the memory group, which, in turn, is one of the three categories within the direct strategies. Thus, summation of the sum of the frequencies of the selection of AGD responses for each type of specific strategies provides information about the extent to which a given category (in this case, the memory strategies) was selected (or not selected) by the entire sample population and by each achievement group. For example, AGD was selected by "x" of the 143 for item 1, by "y" for 2, "z" for 3, and so on, which accounted for about F%. Similarly, considering only G1, AGD was selected "x" times for item 1, "y" times for item 2, "z" times for item 3 of the 25 learners. The results of the analysis of frequencies for each type of strategy within a category thus will lead to how often AGD was selected for that category, which, in turn, will lead to how often AGD was selected for the direct or indirect class of strategies. In other words, the analysis was performed on the three structural levels, viz, use of individual or specific strategies, category types and larger classes by the entire sample and by the two achievement groups.

The use of this procedure is found useful to compare and contrast not only strategy use pattern of the three groups, i.e., the sample and the two achievement groups, but also to determine the extent to which each strategy-type was accounted for relative to other strategies within a certain category and across categories, and thereby distinguish the type of strategies which were favoured or appeared to be most "popular" among our freshmen from those strategies that were least "popular".

6.3 Analysis and Description of the Qualitative Data Identifying and Labelling of the Strategies from the Qualitative Data: The Problem

There is little or no problem with identifying, categorizing and, ultimately, analysing quantitative data (e.g., responses to the structured questionnaire), since the categories are already predetermined and the data is in numerical form. Furthermore, the analysis almost always utilizes descriptive or inferential statistics. But this is not the case with unstructured self-report data such as open interviews or think-aloud protocols, since the categories are not predetermined and the responses are almost always in non-numerical verbal form.

The difficulty has been recognized long ago, on learning strategies (e.g. O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Rubin, 1978, 1981; Stern, 1983), and communication strategies (Faerch and Kasper, 1983b; Kellerman, 1991; Cook, 1989), although there are very few on learning strategies of vocabulary acquisition. Even those studies reviewed in Chapter Three of this study are of little help. The studies merely provide lists of strategies without explicitly articulating the procedures or principles for identifying and classifying the strategies. The criterion for labelling one group of strategies, say, "X", and the other "Y", is not clearly stated.

Moreover, in some of these studies the labels seemed to have been assigned to the product rather than the process. For example, Cohen and Aphek (1981) who identified eleven categories of mnemonic associations students used in the learning of ESL vocabulary, it is not clear how the categories were identified and categorized. Second, the scheme is not comprehensive enough to account for a wide range of strategies used by ESL learners in learning vocabulary, such as metacognitive strategies (Hosenfeld, 1977; Wenden, 1983), social strategies (Wong-Fillmore, 1976), and affective strategies (Gardner, 1985; Schumann, 1984).

One problem in the classification and labelling of language learning strategies facing researchers is the ambiguity of terms (Bialystok, 1984; Faerch and Kasper, 1984; Ellis, 1986b; Stern, 1983 for a comprehensive review). Researchers with different objectives and point of view have independently come up with different labels for what may be basically similar strategies. On the other hand, different types of behaviour have occasionally shared the same label depending on the orientation of the researcher. For example, while Oxford (1990) recognises 6 categories of learning strategies (memory, cognitive, compensating, metacognitive, affective, and social), reducing this number by half, O'Malley, et al (1990) have identified three (metacognitive, cognitive, and what they termed 'socioaffective'). Working within the cognitive framework, O'Malley, et al (1985a) explicitly expressed that social and affective strategies were of little interest for their analysis.

The problem with identifying and labelling strategies students use in learning L2, particularly in learning vocabulary, appears to be partly due to the fact that research in this area is in its infancy and, therefore, there is a mismatch between research interest and theory to guide researchers in this area of enquiry. What L2 acquisition researchers apparently do when confronted with problems such as the issue in point is to adopt existing classification schemes. For example, in attempt to investigate strategies associated with a range of tasks found in ESL classrooms, O'Malley, et al. (1985a) classified the strategies identified into the schemes developed by Brown and Palincsar (1982), which differentiates among metacognitive, cognitive, and social mediation.

The problem with this approach, as far as identifying and labelling strategies is concerned, is that strategies reported by one group of students do not easily fit into a classification scheme generated for strategies produced by another groups of students Chamot (1988). The main reason, according to some researchers (eg. O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Wenden and Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1990), is learning strategies are sensitive to a number of factors, in addition to the difficulties cited above. These factors are proficiency level, data elicitation techniques, the materials used, the nature of the task, individual difference, and so on. For example, O'Malley, et al (1985a) reported that some of the strategies reported by their subjects did not easily fit into descriptions and categories found in the literature, and they developed new category names. On the other hand, some strategies identified in the literature, according to these researchers, were not reported by their subjects or mentioned infrequently.

The point is that the difficulty of the identification and labelling of vocabulary acquisition strategies is consistent with the problem of the identification and labelling of L2 acquisition strategies in general and, therefore, it is not an easy task for the analyst.

Given the lack of explicit information on procedures used for identifying and labelling the open interview data, we opted for adopting schemes provided in the literature, particularly, Oxford (1990). One of the considerations in our choice of this approach was not because it was more successful and systematic (see section- in Chapter Two for the criticisms we put forward against this taxonomy and we will add some more below) than other approaches that exist in the literature (for example, O'Malley, et al 1990; Politzer and McGroarthy 1985), but rather for consistency's sake. It might be recalled that we employed the SILL questionnaire, which categorizes the various strategies into six groups, for collecting the subjects' strategy knowledge. It was felt that if we adopted the same scheme of classification and labelling, the comparison of the results of the analysis from the questionnaire data with the interview data (Section-7.3) would be easier and more convenient than otherwise. Another consideration was that the pilot study (Section 5.5) has shown us the identification and classification of learning strategies on the basis of the SILL questionnaire was reasonably reliable and workable. The same principle of adopting existing systems of labelling and classifications in the literature will be followed for the identification and labelling of the data from the thinking-aloud protocols.

In any case the identification and labelling of the strategies reported by the subjects was desirable for the subsequent data analyses (such as, analysis of frequencies and proportions of the strategies, group's disposition toward certain strategies rather than others, relationships between the groups' achievement on the tests and strategy choice).

6.3.1 Analysis and Description of Data from the Interview

As we mentioned in section 6.1 of the present Chapter, the data from the interview is analysed at two stages depending on the type of analysis employed. At the first stage the data is analysed through the procedure of qualitative data analysis (Cohen and Manion 1984, 1989; Miles and Huberman 1994; Wilcott 1994; also ask Abiy; Long and Shohamy 1989 for a brief review of sources on qualitative and

quantitative/descriptive data analysis). At the second stage, the data is analysed quantitatively. Below is summary of the 5 steps we followed:

1) Transcribing the tape data focusing directly on the learners' descriptions of the type of strategies they used;
2) Listing of the different types of strategies derived from the transcript (some examples from the list are provided below);
3) The items on the list were categorized following the classification scheme and ordering in the SILL questionnaire;
4) The list was checked and double-checked by three service English language instructors to secure reliability of the classification and description of the strategies, and finally
5) Frequencies and percentages were computed for each of strategy types and categories and for the sample population and for the two performance groups.

Below are some examples (translated from Amharic, since the interview was conducted in this language) which were readily recognized by the subjects during the interview. The examples are excerpts from the transcript of the interview data and represent a small part of the extensive descriptions and explanation of individual strategies by each of the 143 interviewees. About two-to-three examples are provided for each strategy type. No attempt has been made to edit respondents' replies and all the responses were given in the context of learning vocabulary of the English language. Some comments are also provided whenever the classification raised some doubts.

I. Memory strategies

a) Remembering events. Student number (SN) 11: "I try to recall the book or the passage where I first encountered the new word".

   SN 93: "I learned the word 'jury' from my brother who was a university student."

b) Association/elaboration. SN 6: "I don't forget the word 'subservient' because I often hear my friend using it".

SN 98: I relate the meaning of a new word to things around me and try to remember the word wherever I come across that thing or object."

c) Repetition. SN 10: "If a word is difficult to understand, I will simply repeat it while trying to 'write' it in my mind."

SN 118: "I write a word on anything... like piece of paper and desks..., several times so that I will not forget it".

II. Cognitive strategies

a) Resourcing. SN 100: "I think it is a good thing to read books, newspapers and journals to improve one's vocabulary knowledge".

SN 141: "I ask friends if I cannot understand the meaning of a word that I find in dictionary."(this can be an example of Social strategy).

SN 74: I look up words in dictionary if I cannot understand them from class discussion."

b) Translation. SN 51: "I very often try to make sense of a new word in Amharic if I cannot find an equivalent one in English."

SN 7: "I think translation is a good technique for 'understanding' some difficult words...specifically if they are long and their meanings are difficult to grasp."

c) Contextualization. SN 140: "I construct sentences with new words."

SN 131: "I try to use the new word in different sentences."

Resourcing can involve locating and making use of information available to the learner (e.g., the use of dictionaries, textbooks). Inferencing can be grouped with these strategies as long as it is defined as a means of filling up the missing information or knowledge. Almost all the participants reported using inferencing or, as it is commonly called, 'guessing'.

d) Analysing words or expressions. SN4: "I sometimes divide words into their parts and try to understand their meanings from their affixes. I use this technique if the words are long and difficult ones."

Translation, which was one of the most cited strategies, can be grouped with 'contrastive analysis' as it is defined as looking at the meaning of the TI in L1.

e) Note-taking. SN 15: "I think it is a good idea to list down new items that we want to 'know' in our notebooks, if possible with examples...I usually write down such words and their meanings in anything I found including textbooks, excercisebooks."

III. Compensation strategies

a) Sentence based clues. SN 1: "If you do not read word-by-word, you can easily 'find' the meaning of new words from the meanings of sentences that follow from the one in which the target word was found."

b) Sense relations. SN 123: "I rely on other words if I have to understand a word that I encounter when two people talk or I read books."

c) Rephrasing of the sentence in which the new word occurred. SN 30: "In order to 'understand' a new word I read or hear, I first try to shorten the sentence and try to understand it's meaning and then draw the meaning of the new word from the meaning of the 'new' sentence." The rephrasing of the sentence could be in L2 or L1.

d) L2-based. SN 46: "I use words that I already know to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words." (Both 'paraphrasing' and 'L2-based' guessing can be grouped under one category, the difference being the level of unit of the clue utilized).

IV. Metacognitive Strategies

The interview with every respondent ended with the question something like "Why do you do 'this' and 'that'?". The following descriptions were typical of the responses:

(a) Try to be a Better Learner.

SN 21: "I always get worried about my 'ability' or knowledge of vocabulary. I want to improve my knowledge."

Another student, SN 106: "Even if my grammar is bad, it is not as bad as my vocabulary. So, I always try to improve it."Still another student, SN 53: "I feel ashamed when my teacher cannot understand me easily when I ask him some questions in class. I therefore do whatever I can do to improve my knowledge of vocabulary."

(b) Directed attention.

SN 4: "I pick up words that my instructor puts emphasis on in class to share with dorm-mates who themselves do the same thing in their respective sections or classes for the same purpose."

SN 49: "I try to concentrate on the story of the passage. I think every difficult word becomes simple if you follow the story--you can 'understand' (the word many of the learners used for "infer/guess") the most difficult word if you do this".

SN 37: "The story itself 'tells' me the meaning of unfamiliar words if I engage myself fully in the story."

(c) Selective attention.

SN 2: "I look for words in the immediate surrounding of the new word...if I fortunately find one, I can guess it, or else I will skip it".

(d) Skipping.

SN 76: I don't try to 'understand' every new word, because I cannot have enough time to finish reading the passage on time, so I skip those words that are too difficult to understand".

(e) Planning for study.

SN 117: "I planned to study about 15 words from a dictionary every night. I can remember at least half of them in the morning. Do you know how many words I can study per week?"

SN 28: I planned to write down every new word and their meanings before I start reading a novel or fiction.

(f) Seeking practice opportunities.

SN 1: "I borrow tapes and video cassettes from the British Council Library and listen to and watch them. This helped me a lot to improve my English and my vocabulary knowledge."

SN 10: I try to use new words when I talk to friends".

V. Social

(a) Asking questions.

SN 79: "Some students seem to be afraid of using English in the classroom and outside the classroom, if they try, I think, they can improve their level of 'ability' (proficiency) in English and develop their vocabulary knowledge. I like to ask questions in English and my English, I think, is improving".

SN 33: "I always tend to know the 'exact' meaning of new words and I ask teachers to explain it to me."

6.3.2 Analysis and Description of Inferencing Data from Think-aloud

Data on the subjects' actual use of VAS, as opposed to perceived use, was considered in Chapter 5, where procedures for data collection for the present study were described. This section is concerned with the analysis and description of the introspective dat gathered through a think-aloud procedure. The type of procedures/steps used to analyse and describe this data are similar to the those used in the interview and thus only some important procedures and constructs utilised for analysing this data are considered. Some examples from the protocol analysis are also provided.

The conceptual organisation for the categories of inferencing strategies in this thesis is influenced by labelling and categorising the concept of "prediction" as expounded by Smith (1989: 168-179), where *prediction* is categorized into "global" and "focal".

The global aspect of predicting the meaning of a reading task is perceived by Smith as the tendency to integrate information from large parts of the text, whereas the focal predictions are defined as specific and detailed predictions which likely arise out of particular sets of local circumstances.

Likewise, global inferencing in this study is used to refer to the use of background knowledge and/or of the larger part of the reading passage in order to arrive at the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary items; reserving 'local' for the use of low level clues surrounding the target item which are related in some way to the item such as the use of synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, syntactic structure, morphological structure of the item, the meaning of the sentence in which the target word occurs, and so on). This is closely related to the scheme used by Haastrup (1991) who used global-focal distinction in top-down and bottom-up form of classifying and analysing protocol data, as reviewed in Chapter four of the present study. Block (1986) also used the same principle who classifies comprehension strategies into global and local strategies.

Accordingly, we categorize strategies of inferencing into global and local if the strategies fit into these categories and we found in the existing literature. For strategies that are not found in the literature but found in the protocol, we developed new categories "composite" to represent the use of both types of clues above and "others" for some residues. In every case the strategies are assigned to the categories regardless of whether the clues described in the protocols are appropriate or not.

To explore the distinctions, we will now present the categories along with samples of the protocols. Few of the extensive list of the examples recorded are cited (italics indicate words that the participant spoke in English or Amharic but that we have translated (if it was in Amharic) here for the reader's convenience; Romans and parentheses indicate items the participant spoke in Amharic):

1) Local

When the student hints in his or her response that he or she used clues in the immediate environment of the target item (e.g. part of the TI, other vocabulary items, or phrases, illustrations, collocation, the sum of the information in a sentence within which the TI was occurring, and so on) in order to infer the meaning of the target item.

(a) Word-level Morphology

Inferring the meaning of the TI based on component parts of the TI, such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Many of the participants attempted to determine first, the word class, and then the meaning of the item based on the affixes attached to the item. For example, student number (SN)31 attempted to infer the meaning of the word *sneardly* on the basis of the suffix /-ly/ adding negative meaning to an adjective. Here is a protocol segment:

"li...li is the same as li in *completely*, *rarely*, *hardly* indicating negative", s/he then checked whether these words would fit into the construction and reread the sentence "Apart from marbles and balls, they had sneardly completely...hardly...scarcely any bought toys...So sneardly means...*ummm* hardly or scarcely and finally both mean the something sneardly means hardly...scarcely.

(b) Illustrations.

Another (SN 127) participant's protocol shows the use of illustrative example "...such as hopscotch..." to infer the meaning of prolated in "They also prolated various street and pavement games, such as hopscotch, according to the season of the year...". Protocol: "hopscotch is I think 'sano-maksano' ('Monday-Tuesday', the kind of a game which children play in Ethiopia marking courts with whatever they have when the earth is wet or with chalk when it is not). It is a kind of a game...games are played, football is a game and it is played...prolated is perhaps played".

Examples or definitions. The participants sometimes reported using examples or the definition of the TI to infer its meaning: ...traffic *infringement* (such as *crossing the white lines*...).

(c) Words in the Surrounding Immediate Context.

This refers to the use of other vocabulary items as clues for inferring the meaning of another item. These vocabulary items which are related in some way to the TI may occur before or after or in both environments the TI or in the same sentence in which the TI occurs or across sentence boundaries. SN 4 in inferring quelson (2) in the statement, "...they must have kept them quelson (2) as I never saw any" seemed to use the item *kept* and *I never saw any*. Here is a relevant protocol: S/he read aloud "kept them quelson...secret here is also the word I never saw any...something hidden, so quelson is a 'box' where children kept their toys not to be seen by other people...why did they keep the toys in the box...keep them secret... quelson is secret or hidden" and finally the student resorted to the word secret, perhaps influenced more by 'kept' than by the phrase following the target word.

SN 10 inferred sound for fert in the sentence "These scooters made what to me was a wonderfully deafening fert (9) as their owners scooted along the pavement...". The thinking-aloud protocols provide evidence that the students inferred the meaning of the TI, based on the meaning of the item *deafening*, which occurs before the TI in the same sentence. The learner said, "deafening is high and unpleasant sound (for 'noise')...so, ferts should be sound".

An example of the use of clues following the TI came from SN 79, who used "we got shouted at by the guards" to produce 'complained' for the non-word *aleanded* (6) in the sentence "If I and my friends used to play out...residents aleanded and we got shouted by the guards". The example from the protocol segments reads as follows: "I think it means 'forbidden' to play on pavements...but they were seen by the residents who reported to the guards who shouted at them. The residents were not pleased with the game...playing on the pavement because it is dangerous so they

aleanded, reported...complained...the residents aleanded is complained" will be presented below to illustrate this.
Examples:

SN 116 provided the word 'missed' for sedled (7) in the sentence "What I sedled (7) them were the scooters and little carts..." based on the information s/he obtained from the entire context of the passage. When the student encountered the item, s/he appeared to be a little bit puzzled and made a pause which was followed by the sound Ummm...and said "This is a very difficult word!" Returning to the beginning of the passage the student read-aloud "my town" (the title) and started reading the very first line, the second and the third, successively, before finishing reading each of the previous sentences. The student then continued reading to the end of the passage. Returning to the target sentence, s/he produced the protocol: "What I lacked them, what I missed them...liked, saw..their scooters are superior to his, so he wanted them because he missed them, he lacked them...sedled them is missed them".

St 141: brought/related the descriptions of the tools for playing games from the last part of the previous paragraph that 'these scooters made...deafening 'sound' (for noise) and contrasted it to the descriptions of the tools in the first part of the second paragraph by saying "the previous scooters make deafening sound his scooters (the author's scooters) was depressingly noiseless because it was attached to...no...no...tied, sticked to, fitted" and then reread the whole sentence "...being rouped, fitted, sticked". Finally, the student settled to the word fitted.

SN 1: They tied length of ragged scrade (3) to the crossbars of the street lamps and swung on them...". Protocol: "This play (for 'game') is similar to what children in our country play. They tie ball-like thing made of 'kalsi' ('stickings') and hung it to electric poles with a piece of clothe or rope...ragged rope...clothe, thread" and resorted to clothe.

St 78: "It is possible to 'understand' the meaning of the word from the sentence 'apart means 'except', 'only'...they have only marbles and balls...not toys *any* is negative, sneardly is perhaps hardly...apart from marble and balls, they had hardly or rarely, barely, never, I think hardly and rarely are correct, because they have /li/ as the word (sneardly). The learner made a long pause and started reading from the from the beginning of the sentence analysing the meaning of the word 'apart' interpreting it as 'except' and perhaps comparing and contrasting the meaning of phrases before and after the comma-found evidence or confirmed with any and -ly.

Prolated: played was accessed through the following clues:

- it is a verb
- morphological structure of the word pro-ed
- information/clues drawn from other words or phrases related to the item in some way and occur before or after the word or the sentence containing the word
- linking the meaning of previous sentences to the sentence in which 'prolated' occurs through the linking word 'also'
- Illustrations, specific word, 'game'
- relying on the meaning of the whole passage-how the writer described resourcefulness of children born from poor families whose parents cannot afford expensive toys
- relating these sets of information to personal experience

These sets of information or clues the learners utilized in an attempt to infer the 11 nonwords, successfully or unsuccessfully, were organized into (reduced to) a total of 8, of which one- *paraphrasing* was merged with *Using sentence-meanings* in order inferencing successful. knowledge".

In addition to linguistic units within the text, such as the morphological structure of the TI, synonyms, antonyms, and so on; and phrases, sentences, paragraphs, Protocol segments also contained information about the use of those that are believed to be high level clues such as one's personal experience and content of the

text. Below is an example of learners' attempt to infer the meaning the word-sneardly.

Table 6.11

Examples of some of the strategies

TEXT	PROTOCOL	STRATEGY
The children of the poor, boys and girls alike, were *resourceful.* They had to be. Apart from marble and balls, they had **sneardly** any bought toys; or if they did, they must have kept them quelson as I never saw any.	"...there is marble..there is ball. Children play ball in the field...**they had stunly... stunly any bought toys**. Children of the poor can- not buy toys...only marble and balls. I think toys are more expensive...then sneardly any...any is 'negative', stunly any is 'not expected'.	Combined strategy (CS)

6.4 Summary

For the various data collected for the present study, varied procedures are employed. Data from the questionnaires are analysed using statistical techniques such as frequencies, One-Way Anova and correlation. The qualitative data are analysed with the aid of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The purpose of the analyses of the data from both the interview and the think-aloud is to supplement the results from the analyses of the data from the questionnaire.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was concerned with a description of procedures followed in the analysis of the two sets of data, viz., the quantitative and qualitative sets. As described in chapter five, while the former set of data was collected through questionnaires, (such as Learner Background and Strategy questionnaires) the latter was drawn from an unstructured interview and think aloud protocols.

This chapter presents major results from the analysis of the two sets of data pertaining to the three research questions set out earlier (Section 1.14). These are:

1) What vocabulary acquisition strategies (VAS) do AAU freshmen use in learning English as a second or a foreign language?
2) What VAS can be associated (if at all) with the sample population as a whole?
3) Do VAS vary depending on learners' level of performance on formal English tests in general and on English vocabulary tests in particular?

The Chapter concludes with a general summary of the findings (Section 7.4) from the three sets of data leading to a more detailed discussion and interpretation and on to subsequent pedagogic recommendations and conclusions (Chapter 8). Before that, below is the information obtained from the background questionnaire and achievement tests.

7.2 Information Drawn from the Background Questionnaire and Achievement Tests

7.2.1 The Background Questionnaire (BGQ)

The BGQ (see Appendix IA) sought to gather information relating to the learners' general and educational background (Table 7.1). As summarized in the table, freshmen aged between 16 and 20 years dominated (almost 82%) the sample population. As expected, the number of male students (nearly 80%) exceeded the number of female students (20%). As regards their educational background and English language learning experiences, which are more relevant to the study than age or the sex factor, about 90% of the learners reported coming from government-run high schools (GS) against the 10% who claimed to have come from non-government-run high schools (NGS). 11 of the 14 students who came from NGS started learning English below Grade 3, of which 7 from kindergarten on (KG) and 4 from Grade 1 on. 3 of them, presumably from francophone high schools, reported starting English at level two (equivalent to Grade 7 in the GS system). Grade 3 used to be the level at which every Ethiopian child in GS was introduced to the English language. This level for starting learning English has been changed following the 1994 Educational Policy which allows the introduction of this language into the classroom starting from Grade 1 and serving as a medium of instruction from Grade 9 on. Those students who reported starting learning English below the standard level, Grade 7, also reported learning main subjects in English earlier than those who constituted the majority of the sample population, i.e., those who came form GN schools. This latter type reported using English as a medium of instruction starting from Grade 7.

Table 7.1

Summary of learners' general and English language vocabulary learning profiles

			Figure	%
General	Gender	M F	114 29	79.7 20.2
	Age	16-20 21-25 26-30 31+	117 21 3 2	81.8 14.6 2.0 1.3
Educational	Type of High School Attended	GS NGS	129 14	90.3 9.7
	Learning English as a subject	KG Grade 1 Other	7 4 3	50.0 28.5 21.4
	Using English as a medium of instruction	Grade 7	129	90.3
		Below Grade 7	11	7.6

When we consider the type of instruction with which English vocabulary is approached (such as communicative vs language based-approach), length of the instruction (such as number of years and of contact hours), place of instruction (urban vs rural), instructional materials and sources of exposure (both classroom and outside classroom vs classroom only),(see chapter five for the details), those learners who came to the University from NGS high schools can be assumed to have had better L2 learning opportunities than those who came from GS.

Thus, the sample population in this study contained learners with tangible variations with respect to their general background and particularly their experiences with L2 vocabulary learning in their pre-university years.

7.2.2 Measures of Achievement

It has been pointed out in Section 6.2 of the previous Chapter that about 47(33%) of the 143 learners expressed their perceived proficiency in English as "very good"(from 18(13%) "very good" *plus* 29(20%) "good"); 84 (59%) "average" and 12 (8%) as "poor". Likewise, results from the analysis of the measure of performance on English in general and English vocabulary in particular produced three performance groups among the 143 sample population.

Table 7.2

Summary of mean scores for achievement on EFL vocabulary and overall proficiency for the three groups

Group	N	%	MTELD	Inferencing Task	Recall Task	Cloze Test	Overall Average
G1	25	17.4	51.40	53.81	55.77	57.10	54.8
G2	105	73.4	62.91	56.75	61.87	65.80	61.8
G3	13	9.0	78.69	77.37	81.42	81.18	79.6

As summarized in Table 7.2 above, 25 (about 17%-G1) of the entire learners scored across the measures and overall scores significantly lower than the other two groups: G2=105(73%) and G3=13(9%). G1 students were those who scored an overall mean score of about 55 points, G2 were those who scored about 62; and G3 about 80.

Interestingly, a cross-checking of students' experiences with learning English in pre-university years against their levels of performance showed that 11 of the 13 more advanced (G3) students came from NGS, and only 2 from GS. That is, all of the sample population, with the exception of the 13 students, fell under the two less advanced groups, viz, G1 and G2 and came from GS.

7.3 Findings from the Quantitative and Qualitative Data

7.3.1 Findings from the Quantitative Study: The SILL

Research on learner strategy use is based on the assumption that strategies begin as declarative knowledge that can become proceduralised with practice. If the strategy application has become proceduralised and strategy use is performed automatically, the student may not become aware of using the strategy, and the data collection requires specialised techniques that can interrupt the on-going mental processes. Thus, the researcher's use of the questionnaire is limited to bringing out respondents' reported perceived use of a particular strategy.

For the purpose of the present study, the students' perceived use of the strategies (both individual and group of strategies) is brought out through responses to five-point scales per item on the questionnaire, as described in Chapter 6. Below is an example: "I (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly disagree) that *I look for words in my own language that are similar to the target item*".

The responses in the present study to items on the questionnaire may not provide a complete picture of the subjects' strategy use. One possible reason could be that some students might have underreported while others overreported their use of the strategies. But it is through these forms of techniques that some studies on L2 acquisition (e.g., Bialystok, 1981b; Taddele, 1990) obtained some useful insights into what learners know about their use of language learning strategies. This may be referred to as 'strategy knowledge'. When it comes to the learners' actual use of particular strategies in given situations and at prescribed tasks, we may use the term 'strategy use'. For example, a learner who understands the meaning of unfamiliar words while reading a text in English may or may not know how he/she does it or may or may not in fact resort to a strategy he/she states using. That is, learners' strategy knowledge may differ from their actual use of strategies in a vocabulary learning situation. The following are the 4 possible expected outcomes of their knowledge or use factor:

1) A learner may reflect on his or her explicit knowledge and use of a certain strategy.

2) A learner may not reflect either explicit knowledge or use of strategy.

3) A learner may reflect on explicit knowledge of a strategy; however may not use it in a given situation. This is either because research fails to capture the phenomenon even if introspective techniques are used, or because of a gap between the strategy definitions as set by the researcher and those perceived by the users.

4) The learner may use a strategy without showing explicit knowledge of it. In other words, the strategy may be proceduralised and be operating at a subconscious level.

Table 7.3

Summary of the possible outcomes

Knowledge Type	Strategy use	Not identified
Declarative or explicit knowledge of a strategy	A. To be expected	C. Missed by the researcher (eg. inferencing, translation, etc.)
Procedural or implicit knowledge of a strategy	B. Functions at the subconscious level	D. To be expected

It may be the case that a wider range of strategy use can be obtained through a written questionnaire or unstructured interviews because either of these is likely to help the respondent to activate the stock of his/her strategy knowledge.

Conversely, a limited range of strategies is likely to occur with think-aloud techniques because, first, the data collector is constrained from using prompts for additional strategies by the nature of the approach (O'Malley, et al. 1990:87), and he/she is also likely to delete important elements suggesting that the processing is more complex than individuals are able to recall. Second, it is likely that the procedure used to collect data from one group of students at one time on different

tasks may not generate as many strategies as the data collected from different groups of students through different procedures and perhaps over time.

It should be emphesised that the term 'knowledge' in the present study refers to the learners' ability to be able to say what strategy or strategies they employ when they want to 'know' a vocabulary item.

It is, therefore, the case that strategies elicited through written and/or oral questionnaires may not manifest in actual tasks or the researcher may be unaware of the range of the strategies available to the learners. For these and other reasons, the range of strategies elicited for the present study using questionnaire, unstructured interviews and think-aloud techniques may turn out to be different in each case.

Bearing in mind these difficulties associated with research on strategy **identification** and **use**, the type of research in which we are interested in, the results of the analysis of the Strategy Questionnaire (SILL) are presented below. The results are presented in two subsections.

First is a description of frequencies for the selection of the scale value- 5 or 4 (AGD) found in the sample population as a whole. This description of frequencies (i.e., choice of AGD responses of the sample population) serves as the basis for distinguishing a) the types of AGD upon strategies from non-AGD ones (or Neutral and DAG strategies) leading to the possible answer to the first research question: What vocabulary acquisition strategies do our freshmen use? and b) the strategies that were reported as being used by the greatest number of students in the whole of the sample population from those reported by a minority leading to, again, the possible answer to the second research question: What strategies (if at all) can be associated with the sample population?. These sets of results pertaining to the two

research questions are presented in the same subsection, as the results in (b) follow from those in (a). Second is a description of range and types of the strategies reported by learners in each of the two performance groups (see Section 7.2.2 for description of the groups). This subsection also presents a description of frequencies for the choice of AGD responses of the two groups of students.

The information on each of these issues, viz, range and types of the strategies as well as frequencies for the choice of AGD responses serves as the basis for meeting the third objective of the present study: determining whether the strategies varied according to the groups' levels of performance on the tests., which is related to the strategies (both individual and categories of strategies) that received relatively the highest rate of perceived use leading to the identification of the strategies that can be associated with, first, the whole of the sample of the population, second, each of the achievement groups. Finally, the overall results from the quantitative data analysis are summarised (7.4).

Before we move on to the presentation of the results in the next section, perhaps it is important to make some points clear here. One relates to the use of the term 'range', the other to the two performance groups of students and the third relates to the three levels of strategy use established for the purpose of the present study.

To begin with the first, the term 'range' here is used to refer to the number of individual strategies reported to be used or for which AGD responses were selected and that can be associated with a specific strategy category relative to the number of strategies that can be associated with others. As regards the second, of the three achievement groups established on the basis of their academic performance (Section 7.2.2), our primary concern are G1 ('low achievers') and G3 ('high achievers').

For the sake of description and generalisation of the results, three levels of perceived strategy use have been established, namely, "high", "medium", and "low". The levels are set according to the relative weight of frequencies each strategy received. Thus, strategies with frequencies of 70% to 100% are designated 'high', 50 to 69% are considered 'medium', and 49% are regarded as 'low'. These levels are intended to tell us the kinds of strategies learners reported to use in learning English vocabulary and they run throughout the study.

The labelling is set in a manner parallel to the description used for expressing the profiles of the results on the SILL in terms of mean scores in the literature on language learning strategy (Oxford 1990:291 and Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995:12), where averages of 3.5-5.0 were interpreted as high strategy use, 2.5-3.4 as medium; and 1.0-2.4 were designated as low strategy use.

It is also important to note that for ease of generalisation and interpretation of the results (Chapter Eight), strategies that received low rate of reported use (5 % and below) are not considered throughout the study, except where these are required for comparing frequencies of one group strategies with others.

Learners' Responses to the SILL

A) Frequencies of AGREED Responses of the Sample Population to Individual and Category Strategy Use

Tables 7.4 to 7.9 below present frequencies of AGD responses of the sample population to individual strategies within each of the six strategy categories (Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social), respectively. As we mentioned in Chapter Six, the first three of the six categories fall under a larger class- Direct strategies, while the last three are grouped under Indirect strategies. Following are frequencies of AGD responses to Direct strategies.

1) Frequencies of AGD responses of the Sample Population to Direct Strategy Use

(a) Memory Strategies

As evident from Table 7.4 below, *Contextualisation* is reported to be used by 94(66%) of the sample population; *Meaning Association* by 86(60%); and *Sound Association* by 72(50%). The Table also shows that the rest of the Memory strategies were reported as being used or as AGD upon strategies by the minority in the sample population. These included the strategies such as *Visualising the spelling* of the target item (=41%); *Remembering events* (=39%); *Listing and relating* words (=26%); and so on. As is also evident from the Table, none of the 11 Memory strategies emerged as a high frequency strategy, which means that all of these were reported by few students in the sample population. Furthermore, the table shows that on the average, frequencies of AGD responses in the sample population to the Memory strategies were 33%.

Table 7.4

Summary of frequencies of AGD responses in the sample population to Memory strategies

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)			Low (0-49%)		
	n	%	Strategies	n	%	Strategies	n	%
	-	-	Contextualisation	94	66	Visualize spelling	60	41
	-	-	Meaning association	86	60	Remembering events	56	39
	-	-	Sound association	72	50	Listing & relating	37	26
						Rhyming	27	19
						Grouping	26	18
						Imagery	25	17
						Semantic mapping	19	13
						Physical act	16	11
Average								33%

(b) Cognitive Strategies

As is evident from Table 7.5 below, all of the 13 Cognitive strategies were reported to be used by a few students in the sample population ranging from 12% for *Mimicry* to 48% for *Contractive analysis*. Frequencies for the mentioning of the rest of the 12 strategies fell between these two extreme ranges, of which *Resourcing* and *Repetition* were mentioned by 38% each. The Table also shows that on the average 27% of the students in the sample population assigned AGD responses to the Cognitive strategies.

Table 7. 5

Frequencies of Cognitive Strategy Use by the Sample Population

High (70-100%)	Medium (50-69%)	Low (0-49%)		
		Strategy type		
			n	%
		Contractive Analysis	69	48
		Not translating word-by-word	57	40
		Resourcing	55	38
		Repetition	55	38
		Practising sounds	49	34
		Using TI for writing	38	27
		Morphological Analysis	36	25
		Summarising information using TI	32	22
		Reading for pleasure	29	20
		Skimming	27	19
		Conversation	25	17
		Looking patterns	19	13
		Mimicry	17	12
Average				27%

(c) Compensation Strategies

By far the highest frequencies of AGD responses observed in this study were for one of the 6 Compensation strategies (Table 7.6 below), viz., *Guessing*, which accounted for 75% of the students in the sample population as a whole. AGD responses were chosen for the rest of the Compensation strategies by a minority of the sample population ranging from 22(15%) for *Creating new words* when actual words cannot be retrieved to 61(43%) for *Looking for synonyms* and *Paraphrasing* sentences. On the average, 40% of the sample population reported AGD responses to the Compensation strategies.

The average for the Compensation strategies seemed to have been boosted by the percentages of AGD responses that the Guessing strategy received.

Table 7.6

Summary of frequencies of AGD responses of the sample population to Compensation strategy use

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)	Low (0-49%)		
	N	%			N	%
Guessing	105	75		Synonyms and paraphrasing	61	43
				Not reading word by word	58	41
				L2-based guessing	53	37
				Dictionary use	40	28
				Creating new words	22	15
Average						40%

A detailed account of the various types of the *Guessing*/inferencing strategies is found at the end of the present Chapter. We now move on to look at the frequencies of 'Agreed' responses in the sample population of the three Indirect strategies consisting of 20 specific strategies: 11 Metacognitive, 5 Affective and 4 Social.

2) Frequencies of AGD Responses of the Sample Population to Indirect Strategies

(d) Metacognitive Strategies

Parallel with the frequencies of 'Agreed' responses to the Memory group, 3 of the Metacognitive strategies (Table 7.7) were reported to be used by a substantial number of students in the sample population. Of these, *Be a better Learner* was reported by 57% of the students, *Thinking about progress* in learning vocabulary by 55%; and *Planning for study* by 50%. The rest of the Metacognitive strategies, 8(73%), were reported by a minority of the sample population. It is also clear from the table that, on the average, 35% of the sample population assigned AGD responses to the Metacognitive strategies.

Table 7.7

Frequencies of AGD responses in the Sample Population to Metacogintive strategies

High (70-100%)		Medium (50-69%)			between 0 and 49%		
n	%		n	%		n	%
		Be a better Learner	81	57	Doing more reading	43	30
		Thinking about one's Progress	79	55	Looking for people to talk to	42	29
		Planning for Study	71	50	Creating situations for practice	37	26
					Preparation for on coming task	34	23
					Noticing one's mistakes	33	22
					Skipping difficult words	30	19
Average							35%

(e) Affective Strategies

None of the 5 Affective strategies (Table 7.8 below) was reported as being used by a greater number of students in the sample population. That is, all of this group of strategies were reported as being used by a minority of the sample population. As the table also shows the overall average of AGD responses assigned by the sample population to the Affective strategies was also low, accounting only for about 22% of the students in the sample population as a whole.

Table 7.8

Summary of Frequencies of AGD response of the Sample Population to Affective Strategies

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)			Low (0-49%)		
	n	%		n	%	Sharing feeling	39	27
						Noticing Feeling	34	24
						Rewarding Oneself	21	15
Average								22%

(f) Social Strategies

Similar to the above frequencies of 'Agreed' responses in the sample population as a whole to Affective strategies, none of the 4 Social strategies (Table 7.9) was mentioned by a substantial number of students in the sample population as a whole. As the table also shows, the frequency of AGD responses assigned to *Practising with other students* was relatively higher (49%). On the average, the AGD responses for Social strategies were 39% of the sample population.

Table 7.9

Summary of Frequencies of AGD responses of the sample population to Social strategy use

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)			Low (0-49)		
	n	%		n	%		n	%
						Practising with other students	70	49
						English for asking questions	62	43
						Asking Teachers for clarification	48	34
						Cultures of TL speakers	45	31
Average								39%

Overall, the results show that nearly all of the individual strategies- 48(94%)- falling under six of the strategy categories in the SILL, were reported as being used by the sample population as a whole. The results also show that some of these 48 strategies as well as the six categories were reported to be used by a greater number of the students in the sample population as a whole, and thus emerged as 'high' or 'medium' frequency strategies for the whole of the sample population. Generally speaking, these strategies therefore can be associated with the sample population on the basis of the weight of frequencies each of these strategies received. Conversely, some of the specific strategies and strategy categories were reported by a minority of the sample population and can be regarded as 'low' frequency strategies for the respondents.

We hope that these results above reflect the general picture emerging from student responses to the strategies in the SILL pertaining to the first two research questions stated earlier, namely:

1) What vocabulary acquisition strategies (VAS) do AAU freshmen use in learning English as a second or a foreign language?

2) What VAS can be associated (if at all) with the sample population as a whole?

We now move on to the subsection where AGD responses of the two performance groups of students to the strategies (both individual and group of strategies) are considered. That is, the next subsection is concerned with issues related to the third research question:

3) Do VAS vary depending on learners' level of performance on formal English tests in general, on English vocabulary tests in particular?.

B) Frequencies of AGREED responses of Two Groups of Learners to the SILL

As mentioned in Section 3.4.1 above, another assumption underlying vocabulary acquisition strategies (VAS) in this thesis, (in addition to the one outlined above, that strategies begin as a declarative knowledge that can become proceduralised through practice), is that some learners are more successful than others in learning FL vocabulary. And it is assumed that some of this success, all other things being equal, can be attributed to some sets of VAS which successful learners engage in.

One of the positions which is implicit in this assumption is that successful learners are predisposed to some sets of strategies while less successful learners are predisposed to another set of strategies. If this assumption holds true, it is likely that strategies reported as being used by the three groups of learners (Section 7.2.2), which we established on account of their achievement on vocabulary learning tasks will vary. That is, different sets of strategies may be associated with each performance group.

As mentioned earlier, our primary focus is only on two of the three groups: low achievers (G1) and high achievers(G3). G1 learners were those who obtained an overall average score of 55 on formal tests, and G3 were those who scored an

overall average score of 80 on the same tests. G1 contained 25 students (N= 25), whereas G3 consisted of 13 students (N= 13). As shown in Section 7.2.2 above, the results from the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed that these differences among the two groups (in fact among the three groups) were statistically significant.

These two groups were selected as the target groups for the sake of clarity and ease of generalization. It is also hoped that it would make the comparisons between the results from the quantitative and qualitative studies easier (see Section 7.3).

This subsection therefore presents types of specific strategies and strategy category in the SILL reported as being used by the students in each achievement group. This subsection also presents summary of the results from the SILL related to the three research questions mentioned above.

3) Frequency of AGD Response of the two Groups of Students to Direct Strategies

(a) Memory Strategies

Table 7.10 summarises frequencies of AGD responses of students in the two performance groups reported to use the Memory strategies. The Table shows that 8 Cognitive strategies were reported to be used by G1 students, of which 2 (Visualising spelling= 60% and Sound association=52%) were reported as being used by a substantial number of the students. 9 Memory strategies were mentioned by students in G3, of which, *Contextualisation* was mentioned by the greatest number of students (=77%) of students in this group. *Meaning association* and *Sound association* were reported by a substantial number of students= 62% and 54% respectively. A substantial number of students in both groups reported using *Sound association*. On the average, 21% of the sample population selected AGD responses for the Memory strategies, while 37% of G3 did so.

Table 7.10

Frequencies of AGD response of the two groups to Memory Strategies

	G1 (N=25)		G3 (N=13)	
	n	%	n	%
Visualizing spelling	15	60	6	46
Sound Association	13	52	7	54
Contextualisation	9	36	10	77
Meaning association	7	28	8	62
Rhyming	6	24	-	-
Imagery	3	12	4	31
Remembering events	2	8	3	23
Physical act	2	8	-	-
Listing and relating	-	-	4	38
Semantic mapping	-	-	4	31
Grouping	-	-	6	46
Average	21%		37%	

The overall observation is that there is an indication of differences, in both types of the Memory strategies reported to be used and the extent of assigning AGD responses to these strategies by the students in both groups. A greater number of this group of strategies seemed to be chosen and received more AGD responses from G3 than they did from G1 students.

(b) Frequencies of AGD Responses of the Two Groups to Cognitive Strategies Use

Generally speaking, a greater number and types of the Cognitive strategies (Table 7.11) were chosen by G3 than by G1 students. 13 of the strategies were reported to be used by the former group, while 8, were selected by students in the latter group. About half of the Cognitive strategies were also reported as being used by

the greatest number of students in G3, of which *Reading for pleasure* emerged as a 'high' frequency strategy and *Contrasting* the meaning of the target item to known meaning in L1, *Resourcing*, *Not translating word-by-word* while reading, *Using the target item in conversation* and *Skimming* as 'medium' frequency strategies.

By contrast, only 3, viz, *Repeating* part or the whole of the new vocabulary item several times, *Contrastive analysing* and *Using the target item in conversation*, were chosen by the majority of the students in G1. It was also the case that, on the average, the Cognitive strategies were selected by a greater number of the students in G3 than they were by students in G1.

Contrastive analysis and *Using the target item in conversation* were the only Cognitive strategies reported as being used commonly by a substantial number of students in both groups.

Overall, it thus appears that a greater number and more types of the Cognitive strategies were reported as being used bymore students in G3 than they were by students in G1.

Table 7.11

Frequencies of AGD responses of the two groups to Cognitive Strategy use

	G1 (N=25)		G3(N=13)	
	n	%	n	%
Repetition	15	60	3	23
Contrastive Analysis	14	56	7	54
Resourcing	6	24	8	62
Using the target item in different situations	6	24	6	46
Practising sounds	3	12	5	38
Reading for Pleasure	3	12	10	78
Not translating word-by-word reading	2	8	7	54
Using the target word in conversation	14	56	8	62
Looking for patterns	-	-	3	23
Mimicry	-	-	4	31
Skimming	-	-	8	62
Morphological analysis	-	-	4	31
Using target item in writing	-	-	6	46
Average	19%		47%	

(c) frequencies of AGD Responses of the Two Groups to Compensation Strategy Use

Types and frequencies of the Compensation strategies reported to be used by the two groups of students is summarised in Table 7.12 below. As the Table shows, though almost a similar number of the strategies were reported to be used by both groups, the extent of use appeared to be different from one strategy to another depending on the level of proficiency of the groups.

As regards the former, 5 of the strategies, accounting for about 83% of the Compensation strategies as whole, were AGD to be used by students in G1 and all of them by students in G3.

As regards the latter, only *Guessing* was reported as being used by the greatest number of the students in G1, and emerged as 'medium' frequency strategy, accounting for about 64% of the students in the group as a whole. By contrast, 4 of the Compensation strategies were reported as being used by the greatest number of the students in G3. Of these, *Guessing*, accounting for about 77% of the students in the group, emerged as a 'high' frequency strategy and the rest 3, viz, the *Search for synonyms* and *Paraphrasing* and *Reading not word-by-word* as 'medium' frequency strategies accounting for about 62% each, and *L2-based guessing* 54%. Surprisingly, *Use of the dictionary* was chosen by the minority of the students in both groups, though students in G1 favour it. One of the reasons for this may be that, relative to G3, G1 students were less confident in the use of the other Compensation strategies. The average reported use of the Compensation strategies also varied according to the level of proficiency of the groups: G1= 27%; G3= 52%.

Thus, the Compensation strategies reported to be used by the students in each proficiency group seemed to vary not only in type, but also in the extent of the AGD responses assigned to each of the strategies and the Compensation strategies as a whole.

Table 7.12

Frequency of AGD responses of the two groups to Compensation strategies

	G1		G3	
	N	%	N	%
1. Guessing	16	64	10	77
2. Synonym and paraphrasing	10	40	8	62
3. Dictionary	8	32	3	23
4. Reading not word-by-word	4	16	8	62
5. L2-based guessing	3	12	7	54
6. Creating new words	-	-	4	31
Average	27%		52%	

The general observation made above regarding the reported use of the Direct strategies (Memory, Cognitive and Compensation strategies), shows that the strategies tended to vary in favour of the higher group (G3).

4) Frequencies of AGD responses of the Two Groups to Indirect Strategies

(d) Frequencies of AGD Responses of the Two Groups to Metacognitive Strategy Use

Table 7.13 below shows frequencies of AGD responses to the use of the Metacognitive strategies by the two groups of students. The table shows that the extent of AGD responses selected for each of the strategies and the Metacognitive strategies as a whole by each group of students tended to vary. The AGD responses were selected by G1 for 9 Metacognitive strategies. 2 of these, *Thinking about progress* (= 76%) and *Planning for study* (= 72%) were reported by a greater number of the students. *To be a better learner* of English vocabulary was also reported by a substantial number of students= 55% of G1.

On the other hand, the AGD responses were chosen by G3 for 11 of the Metacognitive strategies, 6 of these were chosen by a substantial members of G3. On the average, the Metacognitive strategies were chosen by more students (= 48%) in G3 than in G1 (=28%).

This means that, overall, the Metacognitive strategies tended to vary not only in type (in two instances), but also in the extent of AGD responses chosen for the use of individual strategies and for Metacognitive strategies as a whole by the two groups of students in favour of the proficient group (G3).

Table 7.13

Frequencies of AGD responses of two groups to Metacognitive strategies use

	G1		G3	
	N	%	N	%
1. Thinking about progress	19	76	6	46
2. Planning for study	18	72	2	15
3. Be a better learner	14	55	9	69
4. Prepractice	12	48	1	8
5. Paying attention	6	24	8	62
6. Creating situation for practice	3	12	9	69
7. Looking for people to talk to	2	8	6	46
8. Doing more reading	2	8	7	54
9. Having a clear goal	2	8	8	62
10. Skipping	-	-	7	54
11. Noticing mistake	-	-	6	46
Average	28%		48%	

(e) Frequencies of AGD Responses of the Two Groups to Affective Strategy Use

Three Affective strategies (Table 7.14) were reported to be used by G1 and all of them were reported as being used by a minority of students in this group. On the other hand, AGD responses were chosen by G3 for 5 of the this group of strategies and all of these were reported to be used relatively by a greater number of G3 students.

On the whole, Affective strategies were reported as being used by more than a minority of students (10%) of G1, against 31% of G3.

Table 7.15

Frequencies of AGD response of the two groups to Affective Strategy Use

	G1 (N=25)		G3 (N=13)	
	N	%	N	%
1. Sharing feeling with others	8	32	6	46
2. Noticing ones feeling	2	8	6	46
3. Rewarding oneself	2	8	3	23
4. Self-esteem	-	-	2	15
5. Relaxing	-	-	3	23
Average	10%		31%	

(f) Frequencies of AGD Responses of the Two Groups to Social Strategy Use

All of the Social strategies (Table 7.15) were reported to be used by students in each group. None of the strategies were, however, reported as being used by more than a minority of the G1 students. By contrast, 2 of the strategies were reported by the highest number of number of the G3 students, and *Using English for asking*

questions and *Wanting to know cultures of the target language (TL) speakers* emerged as 'high' frequency strategies, each accounting for about 77% of the students in this group. *Practising with other students*, accounting for about 62% of the students in the same group, emerged as a 'medium' frequency strategy. On the average, the Social strategies were reported to be used by 20% of the G1 students, against 58% of the G3 students.

Overall, the Social strategies were reported as being used by a larger number of students in G3 than they were by students in G1, though students in both groups reported to use similar number of the strategies.

Table 7.15

Frequency of AGD responses of the two groups to Social strategies use

	G1 (N=25)		G3 (N=13)	
	n	%	n	%
Practising with other students	11	44	8	62
Using English for asking questions	5	20	10	77
Wanting to know cultures of TL speakers	2	8	10	77
Asking teachers for clarification	2	8	2	15
Average	20%		58%	

Summary

To sum up, this subsection sought to answer the three research questions set out at the beginning of the present chapter. These are:

1) What vocabulary acquisition strategies (VAS) do AAU freshmen use in learning English as a second or a foreign language?
2) What VAS can be associated (if at all) with the sample population as a whole?

3) Do the strategies vary according to learners level of performance on formal tests?

The section sought to answer each of these questions by way of counting Agreed (AGD) responses chosen for the 51 individual strategies as well as for each of the six strategy categories in the SILL by students a) in the entire sample population, and b) in each of the two performance groups.

As regards the first question, the results from the strategy questionnaire show that nearly all of the individual strategies in the questionnaire (48 out of the 51 strategies) falling under each of the categories were reported as being used by students in the whole of the sample population.

Of these, 13 were strategies for understanding and use of vocabulary items (Cognitive strategies), 11 were for restoring and retrieval of vocabulary items efficiently (Memory strategies), 9 were for organising and evaluating meaning (Memory strategies), 6 were for compensating for missing knowledge (Compensation strategies), 5 were for controlling affective variables (Affective strategies), and 4 were for learning vocabulary by cooperating with others (Social strategies).

At a category level, Compensation and Social strategies were reported by relatively the greatest number of students (on the average about 40% each) in the sample population; Metacognitive and Memory strategies by a substantial number (on the average about 35% and 33% respectively); and Cognitive and Affective strategies by few students (on the average about 27% and 22% respectively).

As regards the second research question, results from the questionnaire show that 7 of the 48 strategies (Table 7.16 below) were reported as being used by a

substantial number of students in the whole of the sample population, of which only *Guessing* emerged as a 'high' frequency strategy for the sample population. This means that it was reported by the greatest number of students in the sample population and thus it can be considered as the first most 'popular' strategy among the sample population (as far as results from the questionnaire are concerned).

As defined earlier, the term 'popular' here does not imply individual cases, but rather intended to reflect the general picture emerging from the reported student responses to the use of the strategies in the SILL.

The other 6, namely, *Contextualisation*, *Meaning association*, *To be a better learner*, *Thinking about one's progress*, *Sound association* and *Planning for study* emerged as 'medium' frequency strategies, as these were reported to be used by a substantial number of students in the sample population and they can be considered as the second most 'popular' strategies.

Table 7.16

Summary of 'Popular' Individual Strategies of the Sample Population

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)		
	n	%		n	%
Guessing (Compensation)	107	75	Contextualisation (Memory)	94	66
			Meaning assoc. (Memory)	86	60
			Sound assoc. (Memory)	72	50
			Be better learner (Metacognitive)	81	57
			Progress (Metacognitive)	79	55
			Planning for study (Metacognitive)	71	50

As regards the third research question, results from the questionnaire reveal that, considering only those that emerged as 'high' and 'medium' strategies for each

performance group, on the whole, the strategies tended to vary in type and in the extent of strategy use reported or the number of AGD responses assigned in favour of the students in the higher performance group (G3).

Table 7.17

Comparison of Frequencies of Reported Strategy Use in SILL and Interviews of the Groups

	G3(N=13)		G1(N=25)	
	n	%	n	%
Construct sentences with items (Memory)	10	77	-	-
Using English for asking questions (Social)	10	77	-	-
Know cultures of native speakers (Social)	10	77	-	-
Read for pleasure (Metacognitive)	7	54	-	-
Associate meaning (Memory)	8	62	-	-
Resourcing (Cognitive)	8	62	-	-
Do not translate word-by-word (Cognitive)	7	54	-	-
Having a clear goal (Metacognitive)	8	62	-	-
Search for synonyms (Compensation)	8	62	-	-
L2-based guessing (Compensation)	7	54	-	-
Pay attention to certain items (Metacognitive)	8	62	-	-
Create situations for practice (Metacognitive)	9	69	-	-
Practise with friends (Social)	8	62	-	-
Think about progress (Metacognitive)	-	-	19	76
Plan for study (Metacognitive)	-	-	18	72
Repetition (Cognitive)	-	-	15	60
Visual spelling (Memory)	-	-	15	60

As regards the use of the strategy categories, the results from the questionnaire reveal that the Cognitive and Metacognitive strategies tended to vary in the reported use to a larger extent according to the groups' performance on language learning tasks. The Cognitive strategies were reported as being used by relatively the greatest number of students in G3 and the Metacognitive strategies by students in G1.

In spite of these variations between one individual strategy or group of strategies and others according to learners' levels of performance discussed above, similar strategies (both at individual and category levels) were reported as being used by relatively a great number of students in both groups.

The crucial question here is whether or not the observed variation is meaningful. Though acknowledging the importance of this question, the present study does not attempt to do justice to this issue.

Keeping these results from the questionnaire in mind and limitation of the present study in scope, we now move to the next section where results from the interview and the think-aloud are reported. The purpose of these results was to follow up those from the questionnaire.

7.3.2 Results from the Analysis of the Qualitative Data

As described at the beginning of the present chapter (Section 7.1), two sets of data were collected for this study, viz, quantitative and qualitative sets. Results from the former set have been presented in the previous subsection of this chapter. This subsection presents results drawn from the analysis of the interview data and thinking-aloud protocols.

Like those from the questionnaire, the results of the interview data are reflections on the learners' perceived use of vocabulary acquisition strategies.

The results from the analysis of the think-aloud data, by contrast, are believed to be the ACTUAL USE of vocabulary learning strategies pertaining to *inferencing* strategies.

As has been the case in the previous subsection, the results in this subsection are reported in line with the three research questions (see above), and in terms of descriptive statistics involving mainly frequencies in percentages and figures. The term 'frequency' here, is it was the case in the previous section, is used to refer to number of mention of strategy use made by a) students in sample population as a whole, and b) students in each of the performance groups. That is, it refers to the number of students (n) who mentioned or named the use of a particular strategy. Having said this we now move to looking at results of the interview data first and then of the think-aloud.

7.3.2.1 Results from the Analysis of the Interview Data

The interview data was collected in a face-to-face situation in the form of a conversation. The purpose of this data, in addition to what has been said in the previous paragraphs, was to elicit a wide-range of language learning strategies that the learners perceived to use in retaining and retrieval of English vocabulary. It was also expected that the interviews would provide wider opportunity for the learners to describe the strategies more meaningfully.

The questions posed by the researcher himself (see below) asked each of the 183 learners individually to describe any technique(s) they used and without much effort in understanding new vocabulary items. The questions were not aimed at specific learning situations- in the classroom or outside of classroom or school. The following were the key questions asked:

"Do you remember the last word (vocabulary item) that you have learned?"

"How many words do you know in your first language? in English?

The purpose of these question was two fold. The first purpose was to stimulate the respondent. The second was to make sure that both the respondents and the researcher share the same notion 'word' or 'vocabulary', because there has not yet been a satisfactory universal definition of the 'word'.

The second questions asked were:

"What do you do to learn new vocabulary items? and finally

"Do you have any other techniques to help you learn new vocabulary items?"

Some specific questions were also posed to elaborate on the responses that the respondents have already mentioned, such as "Why do you do that?" or "What do you mean by that?".

The taped data was transcribed, tallied and sorted out in the manner in which the detailed procedures were described in chapter six. Briefly:

- A list of the different types of instances was complied according to Oxford's (1990) definitions and classification system.
- The statements on the list were regrouped into each of the 6 strategy categories (Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective and Social)on the basis of the information the statements contained.
- Finally, these categories were compared with those identified by three people in order to verify and confirm the researcher's own categorization. The average rate of agreement between the three persons and the researcher was as high as 83%.

After the reliability of the classification of the strategies was established, a two-layer analysis was carried out. These were similar to the ones that we already employed for the questionnaire data: a) frequencies of mentioning of individual strategy use made by students in the sample population as a whole as well as students in the two performance groups, and b) frequencies of mentioning of strategy categories

by students in the sample population as well as students in each performance group. The latter or (b) is expressed in terms of *average* frequency of use or average mentioning of a strategy category, as it derives from the sum of frequencies of individual strategies within that category divided by the total number of individual strategies in that category.

The information on average frequency of individual categories assists us obtain insights into the extent of the reported use of one category compared to others leading to determine those categories that can be associated with students in the sample population as a whole as well as with students in each of the two performance groups.

The results from the analysis of the interview data are presented in two subsections corresponding to the three objectives of the present study. The issues related to the first and the second objectives (i.e., identifying VAS reported to be used by our freshmen and determining the strategies that can be associated (if any) with the students in the sample population, respectively) are presented in the same subsection, because these are closely interrelated to each other. Thus, the first subsection focuses on the type and range of the strategies identified in the data (issues related to the First Objective) as well as frequencies or the number of mentioning of strategy use of the entire sample population (issue related to the Second Objective). The second part is devoted to the presentation of frequencies or mentioning of strategy use of the two performance groups, as the third objective is determining whether the strategies vary according to respondents levels of performance on formal tests.

Range and Types of Strategies Identified

As many as 267 instances of strategies were identified in the interviews. Indeed, the great majority of the instances were repetitions and so these were grouped around larger units (of course, allowing room for the inevitable classification conflicts).

Overall, we were able to identify 34 distinct strategies which, in turn, were regrouped into the six categories and two classes (DS and IDS). These are described based on existing literature (e.g., Oxford, 1990) as follows:

DIRECT STRATEGIES(DS)

MEMORY STRATEGIES		DESCRIPTION
1.	Contextualization	constructing sentences (oral or written) with the target item (TI) individually for clarifying their understanding of the new item.
2.	Meaning association	relating the meaning (s) of the TI to the meanings of previously acquired words (in L1/L2).
3.	Visualizing the spelling of the TI	imagining the initial, medial or final letters of the TI.
4.	Sound association	relating the pronunciation of the TI to the pronunciation of words in L1/L2.
5.	Remembering events	recalling the location of the word in a book or the situation the new word was encountered.
6.	Reviewing	going over items discussed in the class once or twice in order to familiarize oneself with the new words.
7.	Imagery	mentally relating the information or features of the TI to one or more concrete objects or people found in the immediate environment.

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES		
8.	Contractive analysis	comparing and/or converting the TI information with features of words in L1.
9.	Resourcing-	using coursebooks, film, dictionary to understand the meaning of the TI.
10.	Repetition	saying or writing part or whole of the TI several times.
11.	Reading for pleasure	reading materials outside of coursebooks or texts in ones leisure time (reading fiction, magazines, newspapers, novels).
12.	Practising	using the TI in different situations via writing or speaking.
13.	Taking notes	recording new words in order to understand and practice or review.

14.	Practising sounds or letters	rehearsing sounds of letters of the TI in order to memorize the word.
15.	Morphological analysis	breaking down the word to be learned into its component parts.
16.	Not translating word-by-word	using words of the target language as the basis for understanding the TI.

COMPENSATION STRATEGIES

17.	Guessing	using clues-linguistic and nonlinguistic-to find out the meaning of an unknown word-meaning that is read or heard.
18.	Lexical relations	guessing based on the use of previously gained knowledge of words of the target language.
19.	Meaning of the sentence	guessing the meaning of the TI using the meaning of the sentence in which the TI is occurring.
20.	Structure of the word	using component parts of the TI for guessing the meaning of the word.
21.	Syntactic information	using word classes (noun, verb, adjective, and so on) as a clue to find out the meaning of the TI.
22.	Dictionary	consult dictionary for meanings of unknown words.

INDIRECT STRATEGIES(IDS)

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES		DESCRIPTION
23.	To be a better learner	as an outcome of self-assessment of their proficiency in English vocabulary, wanting to progress in this area of learning.
24.	Thinking about ones progress	seeing whether one is learning or developing his or her proficiency efficiently and faster.
25.	Doing more reading	planning to make more efforts to improve ones proficiency in English vocabulary through reading.
26.	Having a clear goal	figuring out the purpose of developing adequate knowledge of English vocabulary.

27.	Creating situations for more practice	organizing learning situations leading to optimal learning.
28.	Planning for study	organizing one's schedule, physical environment and creating opportunities for practising new vocabulary items.
29.	Preparation for the task	reviewing or studying new vocabulary items in advance that will be discussed in the class.
30.	Paying attention	deciding in advance to focus on certain vocabulary items.

AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

31.	Rewarding oneself	encouraging oneself when a good grade is obtained on a test.
32.	Sharing feeling with others	discussing with friends how one feels about learning EFL vocabulary.

SOCIAL STRATEGIES

33.	Practising with other students	working together with friends to verify ones understanding or sharing new vocabulary items.
34.	Asking teachers for clarification	asking teachers for more explanation for clarifying word-meanings.

Figure 7.1 Types and Description as well as Number of Strategies Found in the Interview Data

As is evident from the figure above, the number of specific strategies varied from one category or class to another. The minimum number was 2 for the Affective and Social categories each, while the maximum was 9 for the Cognitive Strategies. Compensation contained 6 specific strategies; Memory= 7; and Metacognitive= 8.

Thus, with the exclusion of the three additional strategies discussed below, the number of reported strategies, from the highest number of individual strategies named to the lowest, was in the following order:

1) Cognitive
2) Metacognitive
3) Memory
4) Compensation and
5) Affective and Social

Of the 34 strategies, 30(88%) matched those listed in the Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire, while 14(12%) of the strategies listed in the Questionnaire were not mentioned in the interview. These strategies were among the least mentioned in the Questionnaire data.

On the other hand, 7 strategies that were not mentioned in the Questionnaire were identified in the interviews, of which only 4 of these were included in the list above. These were: item number (6) *Reviewing*, (No.13) *Taking Notes*, (No.18) *Meaning of a Sentence* and (No.19) *Syntactic Information*. The other 3 of the 7 additional instances are not included in the list above due to their low frequency of occurrences. However, for the sake of clarity, these are listed separately as follows:

> Putting up new vocabulary items to be learned on the bed-side
> Planning to study 20 items every night form dictionary, and
> Focusing on certain items on which the teacher puts more emphasis during class discussion and exchanging those items with friends from other sections who also do the same thing in return.

New labels and definitions were not required for these additional strategies since they fitted into certain categories proposed in the questionnaire. For example, the strategy *'Putting up vocabulary items by the bed-side'* is essentially compatible with the statement *'Facilitating learning environment'*. *'Planning to study 20 items every night'* is likely to fit into *Planning to study*.

The case of the third strategy is more problematic as it appears to subsume two distinct strategies. In one sense, the responses seemed to imply the use of the strategy *'Paying attention'*, because there is a sense of *'Selective attention'* (O'Malley et al 1990) to specific vocabulary items ignoring others, perhaps, thinking that these were less important. According to O'Malley et al, (ibid), both these strategies are components of the Metacognitive group. In the second sense the responses seemed to suggest *'Cooperation with others'* reflecting upon respondents' social behaviour.

Whichever the case may be the driving force for using this strategy is likely to be to solve the learning problem, leading to better performance on tests. The problem is also of interest to us as it is a reflection of the long standing difficulty with the classification of learner strategies, as shown in chapter two.

Given the difficulties such as this, the 34 strategies were classified into 6 categories and frequencies of mentioning of use for each of the specific and general strategy types were computed.

A) Strategy Use by the Sample Population

Frequencies of mentioning of individual strategy use of students in the sample population are presented below. The strategies are differentiated into three groups, viz, 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low' in the manner in which these levels were described above-(i.e.,'High'= 70-100%; 'medium'= 50-69%; and 'Low'= 49% and below).

1) Direct Strategy Use by the Sample Population

(a) Memory Strategy Use

Frequencies of reported individual Memory strategy use by the samle population are displayed in Table 7.18 below. As can be seen from the table, 4 of the 7 Memory strategies were reported as being used by a substantial number of students in the sample population ranging from a minimum of 78(55%) for *Sound association* to a

maximum of 97(68%) for *Contextualisation*. The other 3 of the 7 Memory strategies were reported by few students ranging from 11(8%) for *Imagery* to 61(43%) for *Remembering events*. With reference to the three levels of reported strategy use mentioned above, the former set of strategies can be considered 'medium' frequency strategies, while the latter 'low'. The table also shows that on the average, 48% of students in the sample population reported to use the Memory strategies.

Table 7.18

Summary of Frequencies of Memor y Strategy Use

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)			Low (Below 49%)		
	n	%		n	%		n	%
			Contextualization	97	68	Remembering Events	61	43
			Meaning Association	88	62	Reviewing	56	39
			Visualizing spelling	86	60	Imagery	11	8
			Sound Association	78	55			
Average								48%

(b) Cognitive Strategy Use

Unlike the reported use of the Memory strategies, one of the 9 Cognitive strategies (Table 7.19), the strategy involving *Comparison of features of target items (*form and/or meaning with features of words in L1 *(CA)* was reported as being used by the greatest number of students accounting for about 76% of the total sample population. The rest 4 of the Cognitive strategies were reported to be used by a substantial number of students in the sample population, *Resourcing*= 65%, *Repetition*= 59%, *Reading for Pleasure*=55% and *Using the target item in different ways*= 52%. The other 4 of the Cognitive strategies were reported by a minority of the students ranging from (25%) for *Not translating word-by-word* to (48%) for

Taking note. The average percentages for mentioning the Cognitive strategies was 51.

Table 7.19

Summary of frequencies of Cognitive Strategy Use

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)			Low (Below 49%)		
	n	%		n	%		n	%
CA	108	76	Resourcing	93	65	Taking Note	69	48
			Repetition	84	59	Practising sound/Letters	68	48
			Reading for pleasure	79	55	Morphological Analysis	50	35
			Using the new item in different ways	75	52	Not translating word-by-word	36	25
Average								51%

(c) Compensation Strategy Use

As it was the case with the mentioning of Cognitive strategy use, results from the mentioning of individual Compensation strategy use(Table 7.20) show that one of the 6 Compensation strategies namely, *Guessing* was reported as being used by the highest number of students accounting for 80% of the whole of the sample population. This is consistent with the results from the questionnaire study. *Lexical relations* and using the *Meaning of the sentence in which the target item was occurring* or *paraphrasing* were mentioned respectively by 66% and 57% of students in the entire sample population. The rest 3 of the Compensation strategies were reported by few of the students in the sample population ranging from 26% for guessing the meaning of vocabulary items using *Syntactic information* to 36% for using *Morphological structure* of the word. On the average, 50% of the sample population reported to use the Compensation strategies.

Table 7.20

Summary of frequencies of Compensation Strategy Use

High (70-100%)			Medium(50-69%)			Low (Below 49%)		
	n	%		n	%		n	%
Guessing	114	80	Lexical Relations	94	66	Structure of the word	52	36
			Meaning of a sentence	81	57	Dictionary	52	36
						Syntactic information	37	26
Average							50%	

2) Indirect Strategy (IDS) Use of the Sample Population

(d) Metacognitve Strategy Use

Table 7.21 below presents types of specific Metacognitive strategy use as reported by the sample population. As evident from the table, of the 8 Metacognitive strategies, *To be a better Learner* was mentioned as being used by a considerable number of students accounting for about 105 (73%) of students in the sample population as a whole. 5 of the 8 these strategies were reported to be used by a substantial number of students in the sample population ranging from 59% for *Planning for study* to 66% for *Thinking about progress*. 2 of the 8 (*Preparation for the task*= 47% and *Paying attention* to specific aspect of the lesson= 31%) were mentioned by a minority of the respondents as a whole. Furthermore, the Metacognitive strategies were reported as being used, on the average, by 58% of the total sample population.

Table 7.21

Summary of frequencies of specific Metacognitive Strategies use

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)			Low (Below 49%)		
	n	%		n	%		n	%
Be a better learner	105	73	Thinking about progress	95	66	Prep. for the task	67	47
			Doing more reading	90	63	Paying attention	45	31
			Having a clear goal	89	62			
			Creating situation for practice	85	59			
			Planning for study	84	59			
Average							58%	

(b) Affective Strategy Use

Unlike the reported use of the Metacognitive strategies, none of the 2 Affective strategies (Table 7.22 below) was reported as being used by a substantial number of students in the whole of the sample population. Both strategies were mentioned extremely rarely, of which *Rewarding oneself* was mentioned by about 20% of the students and *Sharing feeling* with others by about 10%. On the average, the Affective strategies were mentioned by 15% of the respondents.

Table 7.22

Summary of Individual Affective Strategies Use

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)			Low (Below 49%)		
	n	%		n	%		n	%
_	_	_	_	_	_	Rewarding oneself	28	20
_	_	_	_	_	_	Sharing feeling with others	15	10
Average							15%	

(c) Social Strategy Use

Likewise, neither of the 2 Social strategies (Table 7.23) was reported as being used by the greatest number of students, thought *Practising with Other Students* was mentioned by a substantial number of students= 53%. *Asking Teachers for Clarification* was close to medium-level, but did not reach it. On the average, 51% of the students mentioned the use of the Social strategies.

Table 7.23

Summary of Frequencies of Social Strategy Use by the sample population

High (70-100%)			Medium (50-69%)			Low (Below 49%)		
	n	%		n	%		n	%
-	-	-	Practising with other students	76	53	Asking teachers for clarification	69	48
Average								51%

So, when we compare the average percentages for mentioning the use of the 6 categories, the following pattern emerges (the categories are rank ordered from the highest reported use to the lowest):

1) Metacognitive= 58 %
2) Cognitive and Social= 51%
3) Compensation= 50%
4) Memory= 48%
5) Affective= 15%

Only 3 of the 34 strategies mentioned in the interviews (considering only those listed in Figure 1 above): *Guessing*, *Contractive analysis*, and *To be a better learner* were reported by the highest number of students in the sample population as a whole and thus they may be considered as the first most frequently reported specific strategies.

B) Frequencies of Strategy Use of the Two Groups of Students

The previous subsection was concerned with the results from the interview data pertaining to two of the objectives of the present study, namely: a) identifying VAS strategies used by AAU freshmen, and b) determining the strategies that can be associated (if any) with the sample population as a whole. This subsection presents results from the interviews pertaining to the third objective, viz, determining whether the strategies varied in type as well as in frequencies of reported use according to levels of performance of two groups of students on formal tests (G1= low achievers, and G3= high achievers). The overall objective is to serve as a follow-up of the results from the SILL.

The key question here is whether the strategies varied in responses to the interviews according to the levels of the two groups of students from the manner in which they tended to be to the statements in the questionnaire.

The results are presented beginning with frequencies of reported use for the Direct strategies (Memory strategies followed by Cognitive, Compensation), and the Indirect strategies (Metacognitive, Affective and Social strategies in that order).

(a) Memory Strategy Use

Frequencies of reported use and types of the Memory strategies in the two performance groups are displayed in Table 7.24 below. The table shows that, of the 6 Memory strategies, 4 were mentioned by a substantial number of G1 students, of which *Contextualisation was mentioned by 84%, Visualising the spelling* of the target item by 72%, Sound association by 64% and Meaning association by 60%.

On the other hand, 3 of the Memory strategies were reported as being used by a fair number of students in G3, of which *Contextualisation* was reported by 62%, *Meaning association* and *Imagery* by 54% each. Furthermore, on the average, 64%

of the students reported to use the Memory strategies, while 45% of students in G3 did so.

Here the reported Memory strategy use by students in the two groups deserves especial attention. The general picture emerging so far has been in favour of students in higher group(G3), as more types of strategies were reported as being used by more number of members of this group than the number of strategies reported and the extent of mentioning them by students in a lower group (G1). However, this general picture has moved in opposite direction in favour of students in lower group (G1) pertaining to the use of the Memory strategies. On the average, the Memory strategies were reported to be used by 64% of students in the lower group, against 45% in the higher group.

In spite of these variations seen above in favour of students in the lower group, 2 similar Memory strategies were reported as being used by students in both groups. These were: *Contextualisation* and *Meaning association*.

Table 7.24

Summary of frequencies of Memory strategies Use of the Two Groups

	G1 (N=25)		G3 (N=13)	
	n	%	n	%
Contexualization	21	84	8	62
Visualizing spelling	18	72	5	38
Sound association	16	64	4	31
Meaning Association	15	60	7	54
Remembering events	11	44	5	38
Imagery	9	36	7	54
Average	64%		45%	

(b) Cognitive Strategy Use

Table 7.25 below summarises frequencies of reported use and types of the Cognitive strategies of students in both performance groups. As evident from the table, 5 of the 9 Cognitive strategies were reported as being used by a substantial number of students in G1, of which *Contrastive analysis* (CA) was reported by 72%, *Taking note* by 68%, *Repetition* and *Practising sounds* by 60% each and *Resourcing* by 52%.

Likewise, 5 of the 9 Cognitive strategies, but partially differing strategies, were reported as being used by a substantial number of students in G3. *Reading for pleasure* was mentioned by the highest number of students in this group(= 85%) and Resourcing by the second highest (=77%). The rest three of the strategies were reported by similar number of students: *Contrastive analysis*, *Practising* the new item in different modes and *Not translating word-by-word* while reading (69%) each.

The table also shows that the average frequencies of reported Cognitive strategy use for students in G1 was 47%, while it was 56% for G3.

Of the 9 Cognitive strategies, 2 (*CA* and *Resourcing*) were reported as being used by students in both groups.

Table 7.25

Summary of Frequencies of Cognitive Strategies Use of the Two groups

	G1 (N=25)		G3(N=13)	
	n	%	n	%
CA	18	72	9	69
Taking notes	17	68	6	46
Repetition	15	60	4	31
Practising sounds	15	60	3	23
Resourcing	13	52	10	77
Morphological A Reading for pleasure	9 8	36 32	4 11	31 85
Practising in different modes	7	28	9	69
Not translating	4	16	9	69
Average	47%		56%	

(c) Compensation Strategies Use

Frequencies of reported use and types of the Compensation strategies of students in G1 and G3 are displayed in Table 7.26. As the table reveals, 4 of the 6 Compensation strategies were named as being used by students in G1, of which use of *Lexical relations* in order to infer the meaning of words was reported by the highest number of the students (=80%). *Guessing* was reported by 60% of the students, *L2-based guessing* and *Dictionary use* by 56% each.

Likewise, 4 of the 6 Compensation strategies, but partly different strategies, were named as being used by students in G3. Three of these were reported by the highest number of students, of which *Reading not word-by-word* was named by 85%, *Guessing* and *L2-based guessing* by 77% each. Using *Lexical relations* was mentioned by 62% of the students.

The table also shows that on the average the Compensation strategies were reported by 50% of G1 students 60% of G3. 3 of the Cognitive strategies: *Guessing*, *L2-based guessing* and *Lexical relations* were reported by students in both groups.

Table 7.26

Summary of Compensation Strategies Use of the Two Groups

	G1 (N=25)		G3 (N=13)	
	n	%	n	%
Lexical relations	20	80	8	62
Guessing	15	60	10	77
L2-based Guessing	14	56	10	77
Reading not word-by-word	5	20	11	85
Dictionary Use	14	56	6	46
Syntactic information	7	28	2	15
Average	50%		60%	

2) IDS Use of theTtwo Groups

(d) Metacognitve Strategy Use of the Two Groups

Table 7.27 summarises types of the Metacognitive strategies and frequencies of the reported use of these strategies. As the table shows, 4 of the 8 individual

strategies were named by a large number of students in G1. Of these, two of the strategies, *viz, To be a better learner* was mentioned by the first highest number of the students (= 84%) and *Thinking about one's progress* by the second highest (= 76%). The rest 2 of the 4 were named by a substantial number learners in the same group (G1): Planning for study by 68% and Prepare for the task by 60%.

The table also shows that 4 of the 8 strategies were reported as being used by a majority of G3 students. *Creating situations for practice* was reported by the highest number of members of this group (= 85%). *To be a better learner* and *Having a clear goal* about learning vocabulary were mentioned by 62% each and *Paying attention* to specific vocabulary items by 69% of the students in G3. Furthermore, the table shows that the Metacognitive strategies were mentioned on the average by 53% of G1, while by 58% of G3. *To be a better learner* was reported as being used by both groups.

Table 7.27

Summary of Frequencies of Metacognitive Strategies Use of the Two Groups

	G1 (N=25)		G3 (N=13)	
	n	%	n	%
Be a better learner	21	84	8	62
Thinking about ones progress	19	76	6	46
Planning for study	17	68	4	31
Prepare for the task	15	60	4	31
Creating situation for practice	11	44	11	85
Having a clear goal	9	36	8	62
Paying attention to some items	8	32	9	69
Doing more reading	6	24	10	77
Average	53%		58%	

(b) Affective Strategy Use

Types of Affective strategies and frequencies of the reported use of these strategies by the two groups are displayed in Table 7.28 below. As the table shows, two affective strategies were reported by G1 and the two were reported as being used by a large minority of the students. On the other hand, only one

Affective strategy was mentioned by students in G3 and it was reported to be used by few of the students.

Overall, Affective strategies were reported as being used by a minority of students in both groups. The variation in the number of the strategies reported by the two groups is statically huge, as more number of the strategies, twice as much as that was reported by G3, was mentioned by G1.

Table 7.28

Summary of Frequencies of Affective Strategies Use of the Two Groups

	G1 (N=25)		G3 (N=13)	
	N	%	N	%
Sharing feeling with others	6	24	3	23
Rewarding oneself	3	12	-	-
Average	18%		23%	

(c) Social Strategies Use of the Two Groups

Two Social strategies (Table 7.29 below) were reported by students in both performance groups. Of these, *Practising with other people* or students was mentioned relatively by a large number (= 56%) of students in G1. This same strategy was reported as being used by 62% of students in G3. *Using English for asking questions* was reported by more number of students in G1 than in G3. Also, on the average, a greater number of G1 students (= 48%) reported using the Social strategies than did students in G3. Thus, as it was the case with the use of the Memory strategies reported, use of the Social strategies showed a shift in opposite direction to the general picture emerging which has the G3 group a head on all such counts.

Table 7.29

Summary of Frequencies of Social Strategies Use of the Two Groups

	G1 (N=25)		G3 (N=13)	
	n	%	n	%
Practising with other students	14	56	8	62
Using English for asking questions	10	40	2	15
Average	48%		39%	

Summary of the Overall Results from the Interview Data

The results from the interviews, like those from the questionnaire data (see Section 7.2), sought to answer the three research questions stated earlier. The questions are as follows:

1) What strategies do our freshmen employ when they encounter new vocabulary items?
2) What strategies can be associated (if at all) with them? and
3) Can differences be found in the strategies with respect to their types and use depending upon the levels of achievement of the students?

As regards the first research question, the interview data produced 34 individual strategies falling under 6 categories (7= Memory, 9= Cognitive, 6= Compensation; 8= Metacognitive, 2= Affective and 2= Social). Of these, 30(88%) matched those in the Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire (SILL) (Appendix 3).

As regards the second research question, a consideration of frequencies of reported use of these strategies in terms of the three-levels of strategy use ('high'= 70-100%, 'medium'= 50-69% or 'low'= below 49%) showed that more than half of the 34 strategies- 19(51%) - were reported as being used by a greater number of students in the sample population as a whole, of which 3 were named by the first highest (70% and above) and 16 by the second highest (50-69%) number of students.

As we have seen the results from the SILL in Section 7.3.1, pertaining to the first research question, 7(14%) of the 51 items were reported by a majority of the sample population as a whole. Comparison of these results with those from the interviews (The results from the think-aloud are considered below) shows that 6 of the strategies from the questionnaire occurred in the interviews. These were (The items are rank ordered from highest frequencies of reported use to lowest in the SILL):

- *Guessing* (Compensation)
- *Meaning association* (Memory)
- *Sound association* (Memory)
- *Be a better learner* (Metacognitive)
- *Thanking about one's progress* (Metacognitive)
- *Planning for study* (Metacognitive)

The results seem to suggest that these strategies may be associated with the majority of students in the sample population, since they occurred in both set of data with highest frequency of reported use.

Concerning the reported use of the 6 category types, the following general pattern emerges from both the questionnaire and the interview data (The categories are rank ordered from highest frequencies of reported use to the lowest):

1) Compensation strategies
2) Social strategies
3) Metacognitive strategies
4) Memory strategies
5) Cognitive strategies,
6) Affective strategies

As regards the third research question, the results from both the questionnaire and the interviews show that the strategies generally tended to vary depending on the groups' levels of performance on the tests. Except in two instance, Memory and Social strategy use of the two groups in the interviews, the variation appears to be in favour of high achievers (G3).

In the next section, we therefore examine the results from the analysis of data collected while the learners were engaged in an actual English vocabulary learning task.

7.3.2.2 Results from the Analysis of Think-Aloud Data

The preceding two subsections presented the results from the strategy questionnaire and unstructured interviews. In each case, the learners were asked to reflect retrospectively on their perceived use of English vocabulary learning strategies.

This subsection reports the results from the analysis of think-aloud data obtained from the 143 freshmen's introspective reports. The data was gathered while the students were in the course of inferring the meaning of 10 non-words.

As mentioned in Section 4.5.2.2, we adapted the definition of inferencing or inferring/guessing suggested by Bialystok (1980) that appears to encapsulate most of the definitions of the term we encountered in the literature. Bialystok defines the term as 'the use of available information to derive explicit linguistic hypotheses' (p.26). According to Bialistok, the information used for this purpose may be linguistic or non-linguistic that may be drawn from the reading material, the reader, or both.

Returning to the issue in hand, unlike the results presented in the previous subsections, the results reported in this subsection are primarily concerned with the learners' actual use of vocabulary acquisition strategies. Once more, the purpose is to supplement the findings from the quantitative study and to uncover as many English vocabulary acquisition strategies as possible.

In presenting the results, we will focus on issues related to the three research questions which we mentioned earlier starting first with those that are related to the first question, type and range of inferencing strategies identified in the data and then with the second question, frequencies of reported inferencing strategy use by the entire sample population and, finally, with those that are related to the third question- strategy variability in the responses of the two performance groups.

Results from the Analysis of Inferencing Data

1) Range and Types of Inferencing Strategies Identified

As described in section 6.3.1 above, each of the 143 students had to 'talk to himself/herself' on a tape-recorder about the type of clues he/she used in order to sort out the meanings of 10 non-words in a reading passage - MY TOWN (Appendix 4). A comprehensive list of all the clues or strategies and processes was compiled from the recorded data. The list was then analysed for occurrences of specific inferencing strategies which produced about 138 tokens. Inevitably, many of these instances overlapped and thus were sorted out and synthesised into seven larger groups as briefly described below.

a) Syntactic information, i.e., whether the target item was a noun, verb, adjective, and so on.

b) Morphological structure of the target item;

c) Lexical sense relations, i.e., using items semantically related to the target item such as, synonym and antonym;

d) Using the meaning of the sentence in which the target item was occurring as a clue for sorting out the meaning 'new' items;

e) Paraphrasing- chuncking the sentence into manageable size;

f) Content of the entire text such as using the topic of the passage;

g) Personal experience, which involved relating the content of the passage to knowledge gained from experience; and

h) Composite clues which involved combining together different clues.

These seven categories of inferencing strategies or strategies which employ inferencing were in turn synthesized into three larger groups according to the constructs defined in Chapter Six: Local, Global and Composite (Indeed, they also could have been classified under Oxford's categories, specifically under the Compensation strategies. However, we preferred to treat them under these three factors because these constructs are tied together with reading processes and thus they assist us obtain insights not only on the inferencing strategies learners reported, but also on their reading behaviour.

The class 'Local' contained the first 4 categories (*Syntactic information*, *Morphological structure*, *Lexical sense relations*, *Meaning of the sentence* and *Paraphrasing*), 'global' consisted of the next two (*Content of the text* and *Personal experience*), and the third class, the 'Composite', stood as a single unit by itself. The 4 components of the class 'Local' more directly correspond to bottom-up or data-driven processing and thus can be considered as text-based inferencing strategies, as all the information is drawn from the text itself. The next two components of the 'Global' class are more closely associated with top-down or knowledge-driven processing at both the extra-textual and textual levels. The Composite clues involve substantial bottom-up and top-down processing and thus represent the interactive aspect of inferencing the meaning of the unfamiliar vocabulary items in the reading passage. The results of the analysis are presented below.

2) Inferencing Strategy Use

In presenting frequencies of reported strategy use obtained from the analysis of the retrospective data (from questionnaire and interview), the labels 'high', 'medium' or 'low' were used on the basis of the weight of frequencies a certain group of strategies received. There, the label 'high' was meant to refer to strategies reported to be used by 70 percent and above; 'medium' between 50% and 69%; and 'low' below 49%.

A) Inferencing Strategy Use of the Sample Population

1) Individual and Category Inferencing Strategy Use

(a) Local Inferencing Strategy Use

With reference to the three labels of strategy use, the use of *Lexical sense relations* was reported as the first most frequently used Local inferencing strategy (Table 7.30), as it was reported by the highest number of students accounting for about 88% of the entire sample population; using *Meaning of the sentence* (*Paraphrasing* included) in which the target item occurred was also reported by a substantial number of students= 64%. Use of *Syntactic information* and *Morphological structure* of the target item was mentioned by few students,

45% and 17%, respectively. On the average, Local inferencing strategies were mentioned by 54% of the sample population as a whole.

Table 7.30

Summary of Frequencies of Inferencing Strategy Use of the Sample Population

Class and Category types of Inferencing strategies		Frequency in figures and %	
LOCAL	Syntactic information	64	4
	Morphological structure	24	17
	Lexical sense relations	126	88
	Meaning of sentences	92	64
	Average	54%	
Global	Context of the text	38	27
	Personal experience	18	13
	Average	20%	
Composite	Composite clues	10	6

(b) Global Inferencing Strategy Use

Unlike the use of Local inferencing strategy use, there was not a single Global inferencing strategy that was reported as being used by more than a minority of the sample population (Table 7.30 above). Likewise, Composite strategy was reported as being used by a great minority of students in the sample population.

Overall, more number of the students reported using Local than either Global or Composite.

The following pattern of use of inferencing strategies thus emerges:

LOCAL> GLOBAL> COMPOSITE

That is, frequency of category use reported decreases from Local to Global and then to Composite.

2) Inferencing Strateg Use of the Two Groups of Students

Results from the retrospective data (i.e., data drawn from the SILL (strategy questionnaire) and (unstructured interviews) have demonstrated that, generally, strategies varied in favour of the high achiever group (G3), except variations in Memory and Social strategies in the interview data. However, results from think-aloud pertaining to the reported use of the Local strategies tended to favour the low achievement group, though the overall reported use of the inferencing strategies did not seem to vary, as shown in Table 7.31 below.

Table 7.31

Summary of Frequencies of Inferencing Strategy use the Two Achievement Groups

		G1 (n=25)		G3 (n=13)		Total (=143)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
LOCAL	Syntactic information	16	64	4	31	64	45
	Morphological structure	6	24	1	8	24	17
	Lexical relations	21	84	9	69	126	88
	Meaning of sentences	14	56	11	85	92	64
	Average	57%		48%			
GLOBAL	Context of the text	4	16	3	23	18	27
	Personal experience	4	16	4	31	18	13
	Average	16%		27%			
COMPOSITE	Composite clues	1	4	2	15	10	6
Overall Average		38%		37%			

(a) Local Inferencing Strategy Use of the Two Group

Of the 4 Local strategies, 3 were reported by a larger number of students of low group (G1), of which *Lexical relations* was mentioned by the highest number of the students = 84%, *Syntactic information* by 62% and using *Meaning of a sentence* by 56%.

On the other hand, 2 of the Local strategies were mentioned by students in G3, of which using *meaning of a sentence* was reported to be used by the highest

number (85%) of students in this group and *Lexical relation* by a substantial number of the students (69%). The average frequencies of reported Local strategies use show that, variation in the Local strategies was in favour of the G1 students (an average of 57% of G1, against 47% of G3). By contrast, Global strategies seemed to be reported by more students in G3 than in G1. Frequencies of the overall inferencing strategies however, did not not vary, as almost equal number of students in each group 38% of G1 and 37% of G3.

The overall summary of what has been said throughout this Chapter is presented and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT
DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on the three research questions asked in Chapter One where the background of the study has been outlined, and reiterated in subsequent chapters. The questions are:

1) What kind of vocabulary learning strategies do AAU freshmen use in learning English as a second/foreign language?
2) What strategies can be associated (if at all) with these particular group of students learning English in a particular situation?; and
3) Do strategies vary according to learners' level of performance on formal tasks?

Towards this end, data in different forms were collected using a two-stage four-phase model (Chapter Five). Phase-one represented the pilot study directed at two goals:

1) to test out the practicability of the various data collection instruments for this particular research environment and specific subjects of the study; and
2) to obtain a preliminary understanding of subjects' strategy use profile.

Phase-two was the period in which data for the mainline study was collected. Each phase comprised two stages corresponding to the two types of data collected, viz, quantitative and qualitative data. The two sets of data were collected through a multi-method data collection procedure involving two types of written questionnaires combined with an unstructured interview and a think-aloud procedure. The quantitative data was collected through two types of written questionnaires. Type one questionnaire dealt with respondents' background information. It aimed at eliciting types of high school attended (government vs. non-government), location of the high school (rural vs. urban), the level at which learning English started (Grade 3 on vs

below this level), perceived English proficiency on a four-scale value and some general questions such as age, and so on.

Type two was a five scale questionnaire (SILL) comprises statements designed to measure students' perceived use of language learning strategies particularly of English vocabulary learning strategies. The 'perceived use of strategy' in the present study is measured by the extent of the number of respondents who reported using a strategy or a group of strategies against who did not, and expressed with reference to the three levels of strategy use which we established earlier: 'high' (= 70-100%), 'medium' (=50-69%) or 'low' (=49% and Below). As part of the quantitative data, learners' academic performance was measured with formal language tests (Section 5.5).

As a follow-up of students' responses to the SILL, additional data were collected through an unstructured interview and a think-aloud technique. In the interview we asked the subjects questions about techniques they used to develop their vocabulary:

a) "What do you do to learn new vocabulary items?"

b) "Do you have any other techniques to help you learn new vocabulary items"?

The think-aloud task was designed to obtain adequate information particularly on inferencing (guessing) strategies while the respondents reading a passage individually in English.

Both the interview and the think-aloud procedures produced the qualitative data (Section 6.2) and they were intended to supplement the results form the quantitative data. Both data types were analysed with the aid of descriptive statistics involving mainly frequencies as well as test of variance (ONE-WAY ANOVA) and correlation coefficients (Chapter Six). This Chapter summarises and discusses some major results reported in Chapter Seven in an attempt to integrate the results from both the quantitative and qualitative data sets.

The Chapter divides up into three parts. Part one compares and contrasts, in the form of a summary, the results. So, part one may be referred to as a 'summary of the summaries', as it attempts to bring together points emphasised in each of the summaries provided at the end of each and every chapter. The summary looks at similarities and differences between results from the various data focusing on two areas of the results described in Section 7.1.

a) Strategy use of the sample population as a whole;

b) Strategy use of the two performance groups of students

Part two of the Chapter presents the interpretation and discussion of the major results. Chapter three provides pedagogic recommendations based upon the interpretation and discussion of the major results.

8.2 Summary of Major Results from Quantitative and Qualitative Data

It may be recalled from Section 3.6 that we defined learning strategies, drawing upon the recurrent features observed in various definitions of the term proposed in the literature, as 'devices learners employ consciously or unconsciously and intentionally to facilitate and monitor their learning through controlling their emotional state', Bearing this definition of learning strategies in mind, we now compare and contrast the results from the two sets of data.

8.2.1 Strategy Use by the Sample Population

a) Range and Types of Strategies Identified

Overall, about 94 instances of vocabulary learning strategies have been identified from all 3 sets of data (the questionnaire, the interview and think-aloud data sets). Of these, 48 strategies were from the questionnaire. These were the strategies that received AGD response, as opposed to those that were found to be non-AGD strategies. 37 were from the interview, of which 3 were not considered due to their low (below 5%) frequency of occurrence. 28 of the 34 strategies from the interview matched those from the questionnaire. 8 were from the think-aloud data, of which 6 of these matched those in the questionnaire and the interviews, specifically the Compensation strategies. Leaving out the duplicates, we identified 54 individual

strategies for English vocabulary acquisition falling under 6 categories provided by Oxford's (1990) strategy classification scheme.

15 of these were Cognitive strategies; 13 Metacognitive, 11 Memory; 6 Compensation, 5 Affective and 4 were Social strategies. (The categories are rank ordered from the reported highest number of strategies to least number of strategies).

b) Individual Strategy Use by the Sample Population

Of the 54, 6 individual strategies were reported as being used by a great number of the sample population as a whole and confirmed by the result from the interview, of which *Guessing* was mentioned by the first highest number of students. The rest 5 were mentioned by the second highest number of respondents, namely:

1) *Meaning association*
2) *Sound association*
3) *To be a better learner*
4) *Thinking about progress, and*
5) *Planning for study*

As mentioned in Chapter Seven (Section 7.1), the label 'high' is meant to refer to strategies reported as being used by 70% and above of students in the whole of the sample population, and 'medium' between 50% and 69%. The labels indicate the weight of frequency or the extent of the number of students that reported using a certain strategy or groups of strategies. The two labels of strategy use may be simply referred to as 'first highest' and 'second highest' respectively, to show the difference between the strategies that were mentioned by the greatest number of students from those that were reported by a substantial number of the sample population.

Within *Guessing/inferencing*, *Using semantically related words* and U*sing the meaning of the sentence* in which the target item occurred appeared as the most frequently cited strategies by the whole of the sample population. So, *Guessing* may be taken as the first most 'popular' strategy among the respondents, i.e., the most

frequently perceived to be used strategy. Likewise, the other 7, the two inferencing strategies included, can be taken as the second most 'popular' strategies.

c) Strategies Categories by the Sample Population

As to the use of the strategy categories by the sample population as a whole, the following general picture emerges. The term 'general' here is used to reflect the fact that the picture emerging from the reported strategy category use was not a clear cut case, but rather a rough approximation, since the result obtained from the questionnaire study data varied enormously, for example, from the interview (With this remark in mind, the categories are rank ordered from a relative 'high' frequencies of the reported use to a relative 'low' frequencies):

1) Compensation strategies- strategies for compensating missing knowledge.
2) Social strategies- strategies involving learning through cooperating with others.
3) Metacognitve strategies - for evaluating and organising learning.
4) Cognitive strategies- for understanding and use of language
5) Memory strategies- for storage and retrial of information efficiently and quickly.and
6) Affective strategies -for monitoring emotional states

8.2.2 Summary of Strategy Use by Two Groups of Students

a) Individual Strategy Use

With regard to individual strategy use by the two achievement groups, the results from the questionnaire (Section 7.3.1), as confirmed by those from the interviews and think-aloud (Section 7.3.2), show that, in purely quantitative terms (frequency count), the strategies tended to vary depending on the groups' levels of performance on English language learning tasks, generally, in favour of the high performance group (G3).

Of the total number of strategies identified from the SILL, the interview and think-aloud, 12 were reported as being used by a large number of the G3 students, against 4 of the G1 (Tables 7.17 and 7.31 above).

A great number of students in G3 said that they---

1) *Construct sentences with new items*
2) *Use English for asking questions*
3) *Want to know cultures of native speakers of English*
4) *Read for pleasure*
5) *Associate meaning*
6) *Use available resources*
7) *Do not translate word-by-word*
8) *Have a clear goal*
9) *Guess based on L2*
10) *Pay attention to certain items*
11) *Create situations for practice*
12) *Practise with friends*

3 of these (Items 1,2 and 3) were being reported to be used by the greatest number of the students.

Likewise, a great number of students in G1 said that they----

1) *Think about progress*
2) *Plan for study*
3) *Repeat the word orally or in writing*
4) *Visualise the spelling*

6 strategies were cited to be used commonly by a majority of students in both groups:

1) *Guessing*
2) *Sound association*
3) *To be a better learner*
4) *Comparing the target item with items in L1*
5) *Lexical relations,* and
6) *Meaning of sentences*

b) Strategy Category Use by the Two Groups of Students

As regards the use of the 6 strategy categories by the two groups of students, no clear pattern emerged in the comparison of the overall frequencies of the reported use of the strategies in both sets of data. In the questionnaire data, there was a consistent variation between the categories in favour of the higher group (G3). However, results from the interviews and think-aloud appeared to move in the opposite direction in favour of the lower achiever group (G1). For example, the use of the Memory strategies in the interviews was mentioned by (64% of G1, against 45% of G3) and types of strategies reported for Social strategies (2 by students in G1, against 1 by G3). The result from the think-aloud also matched the result from the interview, rather than the result from the questionnaire in that two of the inferencing strategies, namely, the *Search for lexically related items* and *Using sentence meanings* in order to sort out the meaning of unfamiliar words were reported to be used relatively by a greater number of students in G1 than in G3.

Having outlined in this section major results from the quantitative (the SILL) data which had some confirmation from the qualitative data pertaining to (a) range and types of strategies identified across the research design, and (b) strategy use by (i) the sample population and (ii) by the two groups students, we now move to the next section where some of these issues and related points are discussed.

8.3 Discussion

Studies reviewed in Chapter Four (O'Malley, et al. 1990; Ellis, 1994; and Oxford, 1995, for example) make 7 claims regarding learning strategy **identification** and **use**:

1) Learners can report on their own learning processes and self-reported strategy is associated with learning;
2) Years of prior exposure to the language learning determine the strength of association between strategy use and learning outcomes;
3) Because of 2, the strategies that learners elect to use reflect their level of proficiency or achievement;

4) High-achieving learners use learning strategies in qualitatively and quantitatively different ways than low achievers;
5) High-achieving learners are better able to report the strategies they use than low-achieving learners;
6) Learning environment influences strategy use; and
7) Specific learning tasks predispose learners to use particular strategies.

The discussion in this section is looked at in the light of these theoretical underpinnings.

8.3.1 Discussion of Strategies Identified Across the Research Design

a) Range and Type

As stated in Section 8.1 above, the present study uncovered a wide range of specific strategies (= 54) that students reported using for learning English vocabulary. We consider this finding as a positive achievement and it is consistent with our primary objective: to identify varieties of vocabulary learning strategies that our freshmen reported to use. There may be various reasons underlying this positive achievement on the part of the study. Firstly, perhaps the students benefited a lot from the language, Amharic, in which the information for the present study was elicited. The Amharic language that all the students spoke was used in order to avoid language interference with understanding of the items in the questionnaire as well as with responding to the interviews and the think-aloud.

Secondly, the type of research methodology employed to collect the data. As stated in Chapter Five and earlier in this section, the study used a multi-method approach involving strategy questionnaire, an unstructured interviews and think-aloud, which has been characterised by Ellis (1994:534) as "more successful", compared with the effectiveness of any other single method.

Thirdly, it also could be due to the complex processes involved in learning vocabulary (in L1 or L2) (Chapter Two). Vocabulary learning involves processes involved in effective storage, recall and retrieval and use of linguistic and non-

linguistic information in a meaningful way. This is not an easy job. First of all, there are so many words in a language. Second, they vary not only in form but also in meaning. Vocabulary is learned in context and out of context. Different strategies are called forth for each situation. Incidentally, this figure (54) is much higher than the number of strategies suggested in the models of vocabulary acquisition reviewed in Chapter Two *(Memorisation*, *Analyses* and *Relation* and/or *Elaboration*) .

A freshman should cope with this state of vocabulary items in order to function efficiently in a highly competitive academic environment such as the AAU. This proposal is supported by Hailemichael's (1993) work. In this study, second year AAU students were asked to rate 24 items in terms of difficulty and vocabulary was rated as the 'first most difficult' area of learning English. It is therefore likely that students use a wide range of strategies to overcome the difficulties they faced in learning it.

Another finding which is related to the one mentioned in the paragraph above is, a wide range of individual strategies were reported for the Cognitive (= 16) and Memory (= 10) strategies, whereas very few were reported for Affective and Social (= 5 each). Similar pattern of responses to the interview was observed: 9 Cognitive, 8 Metacognitive, 7 memory, 6 Compensation, Affective and Social strategies, 2 each. Metacognitve came before Memory in the interview.

This finding also confirms what has been observed in previous studies outside of strategies of English vocabulary (O'Malley, et al. 1985a; Chamot, et al. 1987; O'Malley, et al. 1990). These group of researchers found that students in their study reported using a wider range and types of Cognitive strategies than Metacognitive or Socio-Affective (Their learning strategy typology does not recognise Memory and Compensation strategies as separate categories, in which these are categorised under Cognitive) perhaps suggesting that these are directly related to the task (filling in the blank with appropriate vocabulary items, writing about a picture, role playing activities, and so on).

Wenden (1987a) found that learners who emphasised the importance of learning tended to use Cognitive strategies that helped them to understand and remember specific items of language, while learners who emphasised the importance of using language employed few learning strategies, suggesting that belief about language learning influences strategy choice.

However, this finding can also be explained in terms of the type of English teaching procedures that students are accustomed to. In Chapter One (Section 1.7), we stated that ELT pedagogy in Ethiopia is a 'language-based' approach. What is taught and learned in English classroom seems to be, as Atkins, et al. (1996:3) observe, 'about the language not how to use it'. When we relate this observation to the finding in point, it seems to suggest that learning about language encourages the use of strategies involving understanding and use (Cognitive strategies), restoring and retrieval facts (Memory strategies), while learning 'how to use it' influences strategies predominantly with Socio-Affective functions. In fact, a language-based approach cannot afford the use of strategies involving social interaction (Ellis, 1994).

Thus, the finding seemed to suggest not only the relationship between the task and the reported strategy use (O'Malley, et al. 1990) nor does it suggest only learners' belief (Wenden, i987a), but also strategy use and instructional type adopted to the teaching of the task.

b) 'Popular' Strategies of the Sample Population as a Whole

i) 'Popular' individual strategies

Summary of the results of the present study from the three sets of data (Section 8.2.1) shows that 8 of the 54 strategy emerged as 'popular' strategies among the whole of the sample population. As defined earlier, the term 'popular' indicates two things: (a) the weight of frequencies of the reported use of the strategies, i.e., those strategies that were reported to be used by a larger number of students in the sample population, and (b) mentioning of these strategies by a majority of the students in two or three of the data sets.

When we consider the relationships between these strategies relating to their scope of application, we see that three of the strategies, viz, *Thinking about ones progress* (in vocabulary knowledge), *Wanting to be a better learner* and *Planning for study*, are likely to be a general-purpose strategies applicable not only to **vocabulary acquisition**, but also to all language learning skills as well as other subjects in general, irrespective of learners' goals, perhaps types of learners (Allwright, 1996) and types of tasks to be performed. By contrast, the other 4 of the strategies, namely, *Meaning associations*, *Sound associations*, the *Search for lexically related items* and using *Meanings of sentences* in order to sort out word-meanings, are obviously specific to vocabulary learning; the former two being for 'vocabulary development' and the latter for 'vocabulary recognition' in the sense that these two types of vocabulary acquisition strategies have been defined in Chapter Four. The last but not the least is *Guessing,* which was mentioned to be used by the largest number of students in the questionnaire and the interview data (The think-aloud data is particularly concerned with the sub-components of Guessing (inferencing) as a class on its own but not with *Guessing* as a sub-component of the Compensation strategies).

Although its precise meaning and scope of application are difficult to pin down, our conception of it (tentatively) is that it interferes with either the former type of strategies ('general strategies') or the latter ('specific strategies'). As part of the former, Guessing is applicable to learners' every day activities, for example, to predicting or understanding what the outcome of their learning will be (positive or negative) based on past events, understanding lectures, predicting the content of a novel or fiction from the name of its author or title, and so on. As part of the latter, Guessing, as a process of using specific strategies or clues, is employed by learners to uncover the meanings of words or phrases. In spite the problems associated with classification of learning strategies (Chapter 3), we take it as part of the latter (to be consistent with our understanding and use of the term so far), thus, we recognise 8 'popular' strategies of the sample population, of which 5 are specific to vocabulary learning and 3 general-purpose strategies.

Data such as these with complex relationships need to be interpreted carefully and the interpretation should be always tentative and a rough approximation to what it was that the respondents actually wanted to reflect when the majority of them claimed to use these strategies.

There may be various reasons for this, and one may argue, for example, that these strategies are easy things to refer to, relative to others, and that may be the reason why the respondents at large reported them. Indeed, this and other related interpretations cannot be dismissed or ruled out, since interpretation of results, especially in the social science research vs the one in natural science, is by and large subjective. In spite of all other possible understandings that can be associated with this particular data, we, however, opted for another alternative which relates it to issues raised in Chapters Three and Four where studies in language learning strategies have been reviewed, especially to Skehan's (1989) work. After reviewing some of classical studies in learning strategies such as Naiman (1978), Rubin (1981) and Wong-Fillmore (1976), Skehan has come up with a thoughtful conclusion that the strategies reported by the subjects in each of these studies tended to reflect issues such as:

(a) the type of learners understudy (eg. adult vs. children). Thus Rubin (1981) and Naiman et al (1978) who elicited information from adults emphasise the importance of learners reflecting on their own learning and of conscious analysis, while Wong-Fillmore (1976) dealing with children emphasised the social aspect of learning. Thus, for example, Rubin (1981, 1987) places *clarification* and *verification* on the top of her list, while Wong-Fillmore identifies 'join a group' and 'count on your friends' (Ellis 1994).

(b) learners' 'technical predispositions' (Naiman et al. 1987) 'realisation of language as a system', which involves learners' *cross-lingual comparisons*, *analysing the TL*, and making *inferences* about it.

c) learners' 'capacity to evaluate' involving learner's ability to evaluate his/her learning or 'monitoring' (Naiman, et al 1978; Rubin, 1981; O`Malley, et al. 1985 a,b).

If Skehan's observation holds true, and considering the strategies in point and the type of learners **underconsideration** in the present study (see Section 7.3.1 for the biodata of subjects in the present study), that subjects in the present study were generally adults aged between 16 and 19, then Rubin's and Naiman et al's characterisations suit more to this study than Wong-Fillmore`s. Thus, the mentioning of the 8 strategies by more students in at least two of the data sets may be interpreted with reference to Rubin's frame reflecting on their own learning and of conscious analysis and/or Naiman et al's reflecting learners' 'realisation of language as a system' or in terms of learners' capacity to evaluate' (Rubin, 1981; Naiman, et al., 1978; and O'Malley, et al., 1985a,b).

Mentioning of 'General-purpose' Strategies

As regards the mentioning of the use of the 3 'general-purpose' strategies by the sample population at large, we assume, following Skehan's proposal (a&c), that the learners in the present study, since they were generally adults (Proposal (a)), were analysing and reflecting on the prevailing academic environment with which they (at least the majority of them) were experiencing at the time as freshmen of AAU (Proposal (c)). The students seemed to analyse (consciously or subconsciously) their worries about success or failure in class tests and their final fate.

In Chapter One of the present study, it was pointed out, drawing upon Hilemichael (1993), that the teaching methodology adopted by teachers at schools is characterised by a lecture method and this made students 'examination conscious'. It has also been pointed out that students in Freshman Programme take different common courses and competition is quite frightening and the 'newness' of the learning environment aggravates the problem. Of course we can eventually see the legitimacy of their worries when we look at the relatively high attrition rate among freshmen for three consecutive academic years (1991-93) (obtained from the Office of the Freshman Programme):

1991/92	1992/93	1993/94
1st Semester = 22.89%	19.03 %	21.59%
2nd Semester = 18.20%	21.36%	17.89%

(The figures include the two categories of dismissal (a) those who were dismissed for good, and (b) those who were dismissed but eligible for supplemental exams).

Furthermore, it was mentioned that at the end of the Freshman programme, students are allocated to various departments based on their choices *plus* their academic performance during a nine month stay in the Programme. In order to secure their preferred departments, they had to evaluate their progress and consistently think about it. Bringing these causes for student worries together, i.e., in order to *survive*, they should *achieve* through studying adequately and efficiently guided by *plans for study*, and the underlying motive for employing these interrelated strategies seems to be instrumental- success in achieving good grades. For example, Hashim and Sahil (1994:12) found that Malaysian university students learning English as a second or a foreign language did report using similar strategies (Metacognitive strategies) involving *evaluating* how well one has learned at a 'high' level, suggesting that the university students were instrumentally motivated towards good grades. Related to this motive, students also seemed to reflect on the necessity of having adequate vocabulary knowledge to preserve academic success and viewing vocabulary as one of *meaning* and *sound*, which can be learned by employing strategies for 'vocabulary development' and 'vocabulary recognition' (Chapter Three), as discussed below.

Mentioning of 'Vocabulary-specific' Strategies

The reporting of the 5 'vocabulary-specific' strategies (*Guessing*, *Meaning association* and *Sound association*, the *Search for semantically related items* and using *Meanings of sentences*) by a large majority of the sample population seems to reflect learners' theoretical orientations (see Allwright, 1996 for three kinds of learner-teacher or what Allwright prefers to call "participant orientations" (p.1) in the classroom context, which divide up into *scholastic achievement*, *survival* and

social/harmony) towards "What is it that the vocabulary composed?" and "How is vocabulary learnt?" (Skehan's proposal (b) above).

The theoretical concept of a learner is the result of the instruction in learning vocabulary or any aspect of the second or foreign language s/he is exposed to. If learners are instructed right from their years of learning vocabulary that learning vocabulary is learning **meaning** and **sound** and that these components of vocabulary are learnt efficiently through these techniques, then these approaches to vocabulary learning are bound to be the most salient methods for the learners. Such approaches to the teaching of vocabulary 'breed a certain prototypical behaviour' (Shirin,1992:417) in learners, who then become over-concerned with such strategies (i.e., *Guessing* word-meanings in the text based on making use of *Lexically related words* and/or using *Meaning of sentences*, *Meaning association* and *Sound association)*. Even after leaving school and joining college or university, the trend of using these strategies persists. In other words, the approach teachers adapted for the teaching of vocabulary contributes in no small measures towards the beliefs learners hold. In fact, the effect of instruction on the reported choice of the strategies becomes apparent when we consider variation in strategy use according to learners levels of performance on formal tasks, as discussed below. Before that however it is perhaps important to comment upon learners' behaviour of *Guessing* (inferencing) as well as their use of the two forms of *Association*, starting with the former and moving to the latter.

a) Guessing Behaviour of the Sample Population

As seen above the two sub-components of Guessing, viz, using *Lexically related words* and *Meaning of sentences*, were reported by a large majority of the sample population in the interviews and think-aloud. On the other hand, other forms of *guessing* such as *use of larger contexts* and *background knowledge* were among least mentioned Compensation strategies, which may imply that our freshmen perceived using more bottom-up processing than top-down or interactive processing (Chapter Three). This type of processing is believed to lead to three types of inefficiencies and these are noted by O'Malley, et al (1990) as follows:

> First, the meaning of any word often depends on the context in which it is used. An individual attempting to comprehend either written or aural text would need to process any word more than once if it was found later not to bear the meaning originally determined, which seems more likely to occur if each word is analysed in isolation of its context. The second type of inefficiency is that lexical access will be faster if the context can be used to narrow the range of possible meanings that must be explored in long-term memory... And third, bottom-up processing, or processing words without using context to project additional meaning, can be expected to have inefficiencies since individuals who do make predictions about text meaning tend to have greater comprehension. (O'Maley, et al 1990: 36).

b) Meaning and Sound Association

Likewise, using two forms of *Associations*, viz, *Meaning and Sound Associations*, were reported to be used by a large number of the sample population. Association involves linking new item information with familiar concepts already in memory. These strategies are believed to help individuals learn faster and recall better because they did the integration of new material to already existing knowledge base.

However, Thompson (1987) raises questions about whether these strategies (or Memory strategies as a whole) lead the learner away from meaning. The frequency of use of these strategies is also under debate (Oxford, 1990:241). Some researchers (e.g., Nyikos and Oxford, 1987; Reis, 1985) have found that university students reported using this group of strategies infrequently. On the other hand, other studies using different research methods (for example, Cohen and Aphek, 1981) revealed that Memory strategies were widely used, and that these strategies made vocabulary learning easier and more effective over the long time. Thus, the effectiveness of these strategies for vocabulary acquisition is open for debate.

8.3.2 Strategy Use by Two Groups of Students and Related Issues

a) Differences in Academic Achievement

In an attempt to determine strategy use by groups of students in relation to the third objective of the present study (Investigating possible relationships between strategy use and level of performance/proficiency), it was necessary to establish differences within the sample population on the basis of their achievement on overall English

language achievement measures and vocabulary learning tasks (Chapter Five). The results from these measures of performance (Chapter Seven) indicated that there were three distinct groups within the sample population (143). Of these, the group which we called "high achievers", consisted of 13 students, scored proportionately high grades across the tasks. On the other hand, the group that we labelled "low achievers" consisting of 25 students who scored consistently low. Between these two polar groups, the third group, which constituted the majority of the sample population, existed with 105 students. This result is consistent with the one from the biographical data.

Data from the perceived proficiency, one component of the biodata, showed that about 14 (10%) of the sample population expressed that they were "very good" at English, 30 (21%) "good", 94 (66%) "average" and a small group comprised 5 (3%) students reported they were "poor". That is, the freshmen varied in their English proficiency and constituted heterogeneous groups.

Overall then this difference allows us to address the question: "What brought about this variation in achievement and self-ratings?"

There is now a substantial body of research that has investigated factors that account for differences in language learning (reviewed in Chapter Three). This particular finding seemed to suggest that learners' differed in their pre-university experience with learning English, as discussed below..

b) Effects of Learning Environment on Language Learning Outcomes

As stated Section 7.2 above, 129 (90%) of the students reported coming from GS or 'language-centred' schools against the 14(10%) who claimed to have come from NGS or learner-centred schools. 11 of the 14 learners who came from NGS started learning English below Grade 3, of which 7 from KG on and 4 from Grade 1 on.

The data from the background questionnaire also show that those who reported starting learning English below the standard level, i.e., Grade 7, also reported

learning main subjects (sciences and social sciences) in English earlier than those who constituted the majority of the sample population- those who came from GS.

Concerning the second point, the teaching methodology adopted by teachers in the GS schools is characterised by lecture method whereby the teacher does most of the talking and the students listen passively or copy down notes from the blackboard (Hailemichael, 1993; Hailom, 1993). For example, Hailemichael (p.219) says that this encouraged rote learning, too much teacher-dependence and examination conscious.

Thus, the type of pedagogic goals and mode of instruction with which the students from these two types of schools had had in their pre-university language learning seemed to underlie the students' relative success or failure on the tests, on which students from the NGS showed superiority over students from NGS (Appendix D1,D2, D3,D4, and D5 compare and contrast ESLCE (Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination) results of students from the two types of schools; The appendices are listed the way they were found in the original source).

This finding also provides evidence for the claim that L2 learning, especially in the developing world, can be influenced by the socio-economic background of the learner (Taddele (1990) for the Ethiopian situation; Gardner 1985). The basis for this claim was that certain social, economic, geographical and educational conditions could provide opportunities and facilities for increased L2 learning better than others.

One of the educational goals of research on learner strategies is a learner-centred approach. Its philosophy of language in education lies in the apparent recognition of the influence of these factors.

Overall, the findings of this study regarding learners differences in performance on the overall English achievement tests has brought out the fact that student composition in the freshman class seemed to be heterogeneous and the source of these differences can be attributed, among other things, to learners L2 learning

situation. This conclusion has arisen from the observation that, with the exclusion of two, all of the high-achievers came from private secondary schools situated in AAU and started learning English earlier than those who achieved lower and came from state-run secondary schools out side of Addis Ababa.

c) Effects of Level of Performance on Strategy Use

i) Variation in Individual Strategies

As regards variation in individual strategies according to groups' differences in performance on the tests (Section 8.2.2 above), the result shows that the strategies varied, generally, in favour of the higher group (G3). 12 of the total number of strategies (=54) were reported as being used by a great number of students in G3 against 4 of G1. This variation, taken purely in quantitative terms, is huge. One of the sources for the variation in the strategies, considering differences between the two groups with respect to their learning background and level of English proficiency as discussed above, could be groups' differences in performance on the tests, which in turn, can be traced to their differences in pre-University experience with the learning of English in general and English vocabulary in particular.

ii) Variation in Categories of Strategies

We have noted in Section 8.2.2 above that no clear pattern seemed emerging from the reported use of the categories by the sample population. Likewise, variation of the reported use of the strategies categories by the two groups does not seem to be a clear-cut case, as there was a considerable difference between one data type and another.

One of the possible reasons for the inconsistencies observed between the results from the quantitative (questionnaire) data and the qualitative (the think-aloud and interviews) may be that students in the lower group might have been influenced more by their previous experience with the statements in the strategy questionnaire (SILL) than those in G3. This observation seems to be supported by their responses to individual strategies in that a wider range of strategies were reported as being used by a greater number of students in G1 in the interviews and think-aloud (see Section

7.3.2) than in the questionnaire (see Section 7.3.1). If this assumption holds true, it will have an important pedagogic implication. That is, if learners are exposed to a wide range of strategies in some way (e.g., through strategy training), students at lower proficiency level seem to benefit more than those at higher level (O'Malley et al. 1990).

Theoretical Underpinnings and Results of the Study

Mention has been made of the seven claims made by L2 researchers and theorists in Section 8.3 above. Mention has also been made that the discussions of the results of the present study would be looked at in the light of these theoretical underpinnings. Accordingly, when we look at the results in the light of the claims, we see that, though we do not expect one-to-one correspondence between theory and results from an empirical study like the present one, the results of the study supplement (fully or partially) some of the claims which are directly related to the objectives of the study such as items 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7.

8.4 Practical Application

In this section we will briefly outline some of the practical applications which can be extended from some of major results of the present study. We will look primarily at ways of developing strategies for processing vocabulary and the teacher's role in carrying out this task.

Classroom Application

The results in the present study suggest a number of implications for the teaching of vocabulary of English in the classroom settings. One of the main pedagogic proposal which the present study has brought out is that freshmen should be made aware of research results such as those in the present study. The freshmen in this study reported using about 54 individual vocabulary learning strategies. Exposing them to these wide range of strategies in the classroom is useful to persuade the students to use the strategies. We expect teachers to do the job. This calls forth teacher's role in developing vocabulary learning strategies.

The Teacher's Role

The essential component in the learning process is really the learner, not the teacher Hosenfeld (1979). While in the past it was the teacher who took most of the responsibility in the classroom, performed most of the tasks, and made most of the decisions, in recent years this has shifted to a more learner-centred approach which has involved a redefinition of the roles of teacher and learner. No longer considered merely a "transmitter of knowledge", the teacher now has to perform more enjoyable tasks such as teaching the learner how to learn, being a facilitator of learning, providing a favourable learning environment, being a guide, helper, and resource person. This re-evaluation of roles aims to empower learners in order to reduce the imbalance relationship between teachers and learners.

Awareness and use of different learning strategies increases learner autonomy (Holec, 1987); this has the positive effect of decreasing dependency on the teacher while promoting learning beyond the confines of the classroom. Here, it should be emphasised that learner autonomy, as an approach to language teaching and learning, does not deny the learner to learn from the teacher or from other learners (Allwright, 1988; Ellis and Sinclair, 1989, for example). It has been suggested that learners should get the appropriate guidance from the teacher, the materials and other learners. How can the teacher develop learner strategies? What is involved?

The first consideration for the teacher must be, of course, 'knowing' the learners and their background. Who are the learners?, What learning strategies are they most likely to be exposed to?, What is their current level of proficiency in the target language in general and in vocabulary of that language in particular? This information is important for the teacher to establish before planning how to teach (the methodology) and what to teach (content) of the course. Hosenfeld (ibid.) and Chamot (1987) suggest that teacher's first act should be to identify the students' learning strategies so that instruction can be adopted accordingly. Towards this end the teacher has at least two options at his service:

a) Conduct Mini-research

In a way similar to procedures used in the data elicitation design for the present study, the teacher might ask students to fill questionnaires or answer to oral questions and/or think-aloud while performing a vocabulary learning task. Students then tell the teacher what they do in learning vocabulary items and then let the students have access to these strategies, because all students might not be aware of these strategies.

b) Make Use of Available Resources

The teacher can prepare lists of vocabulary acquisition strategies from research findings like those from the present study and ask students to distinguish those strategies they reported using from those they do not and this will assist the teacher to focus on certain strategies of interest, bearing in mind that strategies are differentially effective for different learners.

The need for awareness of learning strategies arises from the fact, although they come more or less automatically to native speakers, they need to be made explicit to second language learners. According to some L2 acquisition researchers and theorists (e.g., McLaughlin 1987, O'Malley et al. 1988), they do not transfer automatically to their new language. Thus, even though learners may use strategies in processing other languages, they need to be shown how specific strategies can be implemented in the target language.

One of the key questions facing teachers is whether learning strategy instruction should be direct or embedded (O'Malley and Chamot 1990:154). According to O'Malley and Chamot (Ibid.), most researchers recommend direct instruction, as this makes learners most conscious of strategy use and provides them direct access over time as well as transferability to new tasks. O'Malley and Chamot found in their teacher training efforts, however, that "teachers need considerable exposure to the concept of learning strategies as opposed to teaching strategies, and repeated practice in designing and providing learning strategy instruction before they feel comfortable with incorporating strategy training in their classrooms' (ibid. P.155).

One study in the Ethiopian context, Alemu (1994), has come up with similar proposal. The study was an attempt to investigate to what extent the teaching and learning of vocabulary by an awareness-raising approach would be considered feasible and acceptable to teachers in high school. The study concludes that though teachers had no much confidence about the value of teaching vocabulary through this approach, they could modify their attitudes in a fairly short period time.

One of the reasons for the lack of confidence in high school teachers about vocabulary teaching through an awareness-raising could be their inadequate knowledge of modern approaches to language teaching. We believe that, generally speaking, teachers in colleges and universities (since the present study has do with tertiary level students) are more informed about modern theories of foreign language teaching and learning than those in high schools and thus we expect them to carry out strategy training more comfortably than those in high schools. Thus, the role of the teacher in developing learner strategies is both a crucial and a complex one.

The other pedagogic proposal which the present study brought to light, though not unfamiliar with the instructors and the students alike, concerns with student composition in the Freshman English classroom. The results from various measures of performance on English formal tests used in this study show that there were three distinct performance/proficiency groups within the sample population.

Given the small size of the sample population in the study and also given the nature of the test used to measure the achievement of the students, the study does not recommend, based on this finding of difference in performance, that the groups should be separated and be taught English according to their performance or proficiency, nor does the study support the idea that, as some teachers and high-achieving students themselves suggest, the high-achievers should be exempted from taking the Freshman Service English courses.

The rationale for taking this position arises from one of the objectives of research into learner strategies like the present one- the notion of a learner-centred approach to L2 learning which purports that less successful learners can benefit from more successful learners (Hosenfeld, 1979; Wenden, 1981, 1987), if teachers provide an environment in which both groups can share ideas and learning experiences.

Another important practical implication of the results from the present study is that it is important for teachers to recognise that strategies claimed to be used by a group of students vary, at least quantitatively (since this study has not attempted to determine whether the quantitative change observed was significant), according to learner variables, such as groups' level of proficiency in the target language, teaching procedures that students within a group accustomed to, duration and extent of exposure to the target language, and so on. Knowledge of these factors assists the teacher to understand and meet not only the needs of individual groups, but also of individual students (although the latter, individual differences, was not considered in the present study).

This study does not claim that all the results are complete and exhaustive as it is often the case with some similar previous studies due to the complexity of the research topic. One example of this is that the study could not bring out clearly the relationship between variability in the reported strategy category use and groups' proficiency level. Another example is that the present study could not adequately account for the reason why some components of a strategy category were mentioned as being used by the sample population at large, while others were mentioned only by few. These and, of course, other related topics which have been mentioned in the body of the thesis as not being considered in the present study, for example, determining whether variation in strategies according to the groups' level of performance was statistically significant, call for detailed studies.

Such endeavour is also worth undertaking regarding AAU students of Natural Sciences and Technology, who also take service English courses, to see whether

students from these faculties report using different sets of vocabulary learning strategies from those in the present study who were from the Social Science Faculty. That is, to examine whether field of specialisation makes a difference in reporting vocabulary acquisition strategies.

8.5 Conclusions

This thesis aims at providing a detailed and comprehensive analysis of strategies of English vocabulary acquisition used by Ethiopian students at first year university level. The specific purpose of the study is:

1) to identify and describe vocabulary learning strategies used by students learning English as a second or a foreign language at tertiary level;
2) to determine what strategies can be associated (if at all) with the whole of the sample population; and
3) to determine whether strategies vary (if at all) according to levels of performance of groups of students on English formal tasks.

The major assumption of this thesis is that vocabulary acquisition in L2 at tertiary level is primarily an act of interaction between the learner and the vocabulary item and there are factors that determine the degree of interaction, and secondly the integration of the information drawn from the interaction with what is already existing in the learner (previous vocabulary knowledge). It is assumed that there are sets of strategies that help learners to integrate what they obtain through interaction with their knowledge base and the role of the strategies is influenced by existing knowledge and by environmental and situational factors.

Towards this end, various data sets were collected and analysed. The analysis of the data brought out the following results:

a) a wide range of English vocabulary acquisition strategies were reported as being used by the 143 students;
b) only few of the strategies were reported to be used by a large number of the students; and

c) taken purely in quantitative terms, individual strategies varied according to groups of students' levels of performance on formal tests. However, no clear pattern of variation in strategies categories appeared to emerge.

Moreover, the study brought out that student composition in the Freshman English classroom was heterogeneous. Sources of these differences seemed to be learners' previous experiences with the English language teaching and learning, which in turn seemed to be influenced by whether the type of high school attended was a government-run school or non-government school.

The results have both theoretical and practical implications. Regarding the former, the results provide some support for theoretical underpinnings proposed in the literature. Although, there is no way for checking whether what students reported corresponds to what they actually experience, the results show, for example, that learners can report on their own learning processes. The results also show that, though it has not come out clearly, the was an indication of variations in strategies depending on learners levels of performance or proficiency in English. Furthermore, there was also an indication that task type and learning environments influence the type of strategies reported to be used.

Based on these results, the study suggests some classroom applications of the results. One is that learners can be made aware of a wide range of strategies that the students can make use of in addition to what they are already accustomed to. This is possible if the classroom teachers are aware and have the readiness to expose them to such strategies like those in the present study.

The study also suggests some topics arising from the results for future research:.

a) relationships between variability in strategies categories and learners level of performance in the target language;
b) to determine whether the observed variability in individual strategies is statistically significant, and

c) to determine whether there is a difference between strategies reported by freshmen from Social Science Faculty like students in the present study and freshmen from other faculties such as Natural Sciences and Technology. That is, it is important for textbook writers and teachers to know whether field of specialisation makes a difference in learning strategy use.

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Appendix 1

Date:

Stage One

Students' Questionnaire I

Dear Student! This questionnaire is designed to gather information about how, you as a university-level student learning English as a foreign language, go about learning that language. Below are two sections. In section A you are kindly asked to give some background information about yourself, such as place of birth and location of the school you completed pre-university education. In section B you are requested to give information regarding your Language - Learning Experience including English. In part (B), you are also required to give information about your overall proficiency in English. Read each statement carefully and answer the questions the way you are instructed to do so. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. If you have any questions, late the teacher know immediately.

Name _____

II. A. Below are 10 correct and incorrect sentences. Put a tick (✓) if you think the sentence is correct, or (X) if it is incorrect in the space provided (5 mins.)

1. Everybody is always moaning about the rising cost of living. ____

2. I complained to the airline about the loss of my luggage but they couldn't help me. _____

3. As he looked lovingly into her eyes, she felt she would always love him. _____

4. The witness rejected to tell us anything. _____

5. They are examining the furniture for damage. _____

6. He started to protest, but was crushed by an acid comment from the Chairman. _____

7. I was very influenced by their new house. _____

8. Motorists are restricted to speeds of less than 70 mph on motorway. _____

9. During their holiday, they had to deal with a leaking tent and hurricane winds. _____

10. Agatha was a strict teacher but for once she showed she could be permissive. _____

B. Choose the words that best fits the context. Modify its form where necessary (8 mins.____)

11. New research is producing theories, which ----------
long held views about language learning, (disagree, provide, challenge).

12. Ever----------energy resources will soon pose serious problems on world - wide scale. (to go down, to diminish, to decrease).

13. The defending armies achieved a great ---------over the aggressors. (conquest, victory, courage)

14. The defending armies achieved a great --------over the aggressors. (conquest, victory, courage)

15. Our visit was rendered more pleasant by the --------care of our friends, (Solicitous, anxious, ready)

APPENDIX 2A

MICHIGAN TEST OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PROFICIENCY FORM B

INSTRUCTIONS: Do not begin the test until the examiner has read these instructions with you.

1. This test contains 100 items. These are divided into three parts: Part I is a grammar test; Part II is a vocabulary test; and Part III is a test of reading comprehension. There are examples at the beginning of each part to show you how to answer the problems.

2. Each problem in the test has only <u>one</u> best answer. Make only one mark on your answer sheet for each problem. If you want to change an answer, erase the old mark or cross it out several times.

3. Do not make any marks on this test booklet. Write only on your answer sheet.

4. The examiner will not explain any test problem; only the examples in each part may be explained if you do not understand the problems.

5. Try to answer all the problems. Each problem counts the same.

6. You will have 75 minutes to finish the entire test. Do not spend too much time on any one problem or you will not have time to finish the test. If you do not know the answer to a problem, you should make a reasonable guess. Unanswered problems will be counted wrong.

7. Continue working until you have finished the test. Do not stop after each part.

8. Begin the test now.

PART I

GRAMMAR

This is a test to show how well you can recognize and use English grammatical structures. Each question in this test is part of a conversation. In each conversation a word (or group of words) is left out. Following the conversation are four choices of words which might be used in the incomplete conversation. You are to select the word (or group of words) which would be used by a speaker of English, and which will best fit into the conversation.

EXAMPLE A:

"What is that thing?"

"That _____ a spider."

a) to call

b) for calling

c) be called

d) is called

The correct English sentence is: "That is called a spider."

Answer all the questions of Part I in this manner.

Mark only one answer for each problem.

CONTINUE

1. "Why didn't Henry, Peter and Jane go to the movies?"

   a) "_____ of them had any money."

   a) None
   b) Some
   c) Any
   d) All

2. "What do you want your son to become?"

   "I hope he becomes _____."

   a) doctor
   b) a doctor
   c) the doctor
   d) one doctor

3. "Why does John drive fast?"

"He tries to make his dull life _____."

a) interest
b) interested
c) interesting
d) interestingly

4. "Where is Tom?"

"He's still sleeping. He _____ to go to class."

a) must
b) should
c) ought
d) may

5. "Why is the professor tired?"

"Because the students _____ so many questions."

a) asked to him
b) to him asked
c) him asked
d) asked him

6. "I would like to have more milk, please." "How _____ more do you want?"

a) many
b) few
c) little
d) much

7. "Are you going to bed already?"

"Yes, I am _____ tired that I could sleep for 2 days."

a) such
b) too
c) so
d) very

8. "Nobody likes her "

"What caused _____ disliked by her classmates?"

a) hers
b) her to be
c) to be
d) her

9. " Who is going to come to the meeting?"

"Either my husband _____ I will try to be there."

a) with
b) but
c) and
d) or

10. "I can't work tonight."

"_____ can I."

a) Neither
b) Either
c) Also
d) Too

11. "Is John sorry that he stole the money?"

"No, he is only sorry ____ caught."

a) to have

b) that he

c) about being

d) being

12. "I like New York very much."

"There is not another city in the United States _____ New York."

a) like

b) as

c) so as

d) than

13. "I was home all night."

"Why _____ to the party?"

a) you not go

b) you didn't you go

c) you didn't go

d) didn't go you

14. "Did he need a car?"

"Yes, he _____ one or he couldn't get to work on time

a) had have

b) had to have

c) had had

d) have to had

6 15. "What can they do?"

"_____ go to the movies."

a) Them let to

b) They let

c) Let they

d) Let them

7 16. "What did Jack do last year?"

"I hear _____ taught German."

a) he

b) his

c) he is

d) him

8 17. "Can Mary go swimming with us when she comes home?"

"No. She will have been _____ for 2 hours."

a) swim

b) swam

c) swimming

d) swum

18. "Do you cook for yourself?"

"Yes, I'm used to _____."

a) being cooked

b) be cooked

c) cook

d) cooking

19. "Jack is a very nice person."
"Yes, _____ Other people comes naturally to him."
a) please
b) pleasant
c) pleasure
d) pleasing

20. "Is Bill in his room?"
"I don't know. I haven't _____ him for 2 hours."
a) saw
b) seen
c) see
d) seeing

21. "Does finding the right coat mean a lot to John?"
"Yes, he'll spend hours_____ the one he wants."
a) being found
b) to find
c) to have found
d) have found

22. "How often do you go to the movies?"
"Once a month, but I wish _____ more often."
a) we went
b) us going
c) us went
d) we are going

23. "Isn't Kate still going to the doctors?"
"No. But she had been _____ him regularly before she moved away."
a) saw
b) seen
c) seeing
d) see

24. "Why is your cat so upset?"
"She doesn't like _____ indoors."
a) to keep
b) being kept
c) to be keeping
d) be keeping

25. "Did Jack sell the pictures?"
"No, he didn't know _____ sell them."
a) where could he
b) he where could
c) could where he
d) where he could

26. "Did the thief fall down the stairs?"
"Yes, not until _____ did we hear him."
a) when
b) then
c) therefore
d) because

14

27. "What happened?"
"The house ____ by the wind."
a) blew down
b) was blown down
c) was to blown down
d) was blown to down

28. "Why didn't you help me last week?"
"I _____ if you had asked me."
a) helped
b) have helped
c) would helped
d) would have helped

15

29. "Whose room is this?"
"It is _____."
a) of our children
b) belong to our children
c) our children's
d) of our children's

30. "May I play here?"
"Yes; as long _____ you are careful."
a) like
b) that
c) while
d) as

16

31. "I am too tired to go shopping today."
"Why don't you _____?"
a) have Matt go
b) have go Matt
c) Matt have gone
d) Matt have gone

32. "What happened to all the candy?"
"Joe ate what candy _____ was in the jar."
a) there
b) that
c) it
d) what

17

33. "Should I put the coat on the chair?"
"No, I want to keep the _____."
a) room neat
b) room neatly
c) neatly room
d) neat room

34. "Why was Joe sent to prison?"
"He was found guilty _____ armed robbery."
a) of
b) for
c) with
d) by

35. "Is this Chicago?"
"No, this is Detroit. Chicago is _____."

a) farther western
b) to the farther west
c) farhter west
d) far to the western

36. "Do you think the restaurant will be crowded by noon?"
"Yes, so I would suggest _____ go early."

a) to
b) for you
c) you to
d) that you

37. "I haven't written home for a month."
"I'm _____; I haven't written for three months."

a) badder
b) worser
c) worst
d) worse

38. "Are mothers pretty?"
"Jimmy and Johnny's mother _____ very pretty."

a) is
b) are
c) has
d) have

39. "Do you like most of your classes?"
"Yes, but I dislike _____ English."

a) study
b) to study
c) studying
d) for studying

40. "I don't think he is going."
"What are we going to do if he _____ come along?"

a) would
b) should
c) might
d) shall

CONTINUE TO PART II

PART II

VOCABULARY

There are two types of vocabulary items in this test. In the first type you are given a sentence followed by four words or phrases. You are to find the word or phrase that is closest in meaning to the underlined word (or words) in the sentence and that could be used in the sentence without changing its meaning greatly.

EXAMPLE B. It's too windy to go for a <u>stroll</u>.

a) swim
b) sail
c) drive
d) walk

The word 'walk means about the same thing as 'stroll' in this sentence, "It's too windy to go for a walk," means the same thing as, "It's too windy to go for a stroll."

In the other type of item you are given a sentence with one word ommitted and a list of four words. You are to find the word that would best complete the sentence.

EXAMPLE C: Because of the storm and rough waves, it would be foolish to go out sailing today in a small _____.

a) automobile
b) House
c) boat
d) beast

The word 'boat' fits best in the sentence so that it reads, "Because of the storm and rough waves, it would be foolish to go out sailing today in a small boat."

Answer all of the questions of Part II in this manner. Mark only one answer for each problem.

CONTINUE

11. If you want to know what the book is about, you should read the_____.
    a) predicate
    b) preface
    c) precept
    d) prelude

12. I moved out of that house because the _____ created by the neighbors was bad.
    a) acceptance
    b) allowance
    c) disturbance
    d) disposal

13. I don't like this room; it's too gloomy.
    a) dark
    b) light
    c) wide
    d) small

14. Nobody lives here, It is a very _____ place.
    a) deliberate
    b) desolate
    c) perpetual
    d) sensitive

15. Hold on for a few more minutes until Mary comes in.
    a) wait
    b) talk
    c) stand
    d) sit

16. This is precisely what I was looking for.
    a) almost
    b) better than
    c) worse than
    d) exactly

17. In this locality many people are ill.
    a) area
    b) city
    c) hospital
    d) season

18 Fred had a nightmare.
    a) bad dream
    b) good trip
    c) strange experience
    d) black horse

29. Mary was out of the hospital quickly because she had only a _____ operation.
a) hearty
b) monstrous
c) minor
d) neutral

30. Jim said that his cat was as large as a tiger. He likes to _____ his stories
a) elevate
b) overwhelm
c) exaggerate
d) surpass

31. Professor Burrows teaches Russian history. He _____ in the Communist period.
a) specifies
b) specializes
c) segments
d) characterizes

32. You must try to _____ your money.
a) accomodate
b) advocate
c) adapt
d) budget

33 Do you think Mary is going to <u>catch on to</u> the system?
a) understand
b) break
c) join
d) use

34. As Mabel walked closer to the fire, the heat became more and more _____.
a) wild
b) intense
c) crude
d) scornful

35. He lives alone because he is a _____.
a) biscuit
b) bachelor
c) buffalo
d) founder

36. The room was <u>filthy</u>.
a) not clean
b) narrow
c) modern
d) not small

37. Stop hitting your sister. You're being a _____ boy.
a) significant
b) polite
c) pious
d) naughty

38. The country here is very <u>rugged</u>.
a) that
b) low
c) rough
d) pretty

39. The speaker did not mention many facts, so Helen asked him to be more_____.
a) certain
b) advisory
c) contrite
d) specific

40. Tommy took all the apples, so Mrs. Jones told him that he was being _____.
a) greedy
b) gullible
c) grateful
d) generous

41. We live in a busy <u>era</u>.
a) nation
b) time
c) city
d) manner

42. John wants to return to his country. He _____ for his family and friends.
a) yearns
b) yawns
c) flares
d) grunts

43. When Tom fell from his bicycle, his arm was _____.
a) fractured
b) frozen
c) frenzied
d) fringed

44. Flo wanted to bake a cake for dinner. She asked Susan for the _____.
a) formula
b) index
c) focus
d) recipe

45. Pierre is French and he speaks two other languages _____ French.
a) Additionally
b) moreover
c) except
d) besides

46. Did he <u>flee</u> his country?
a) forget about
b) respect
c) escape from
d) talk about

57. She was <u>gorgeous</u>, so I took her out to dinner.
a) finished
b) hungry
c) beautiful
d) tired

58. Mrs. Jones <u>hoards</u> butter.
a) wants
b) needs
c) saves
d) sells

59. John is strong but his brother is a _____ boy.
a) foster
b) frantic
c) frail
d) fertile

60. Tom needs a _____ to dig a hole.
a) shelf
b) shore
c) shutter
d) shovel

61. Were these <u>laid out</u> before I came?
a) stored
b) arranged
c) sold
d) sent

62. You should <u>refrain</u>.
a) work
b) stop
c) start
d) hurry

63. No new ideas ever <u>penetrate</u> his narrow mind.
a) change
b) awaken
c) attack
d) enter

64. I think it is <u>warped</u>.
a) strange
b) empty
c) bent
d) straight

65. I could understand most of his speech, but his last words were _____.
a) ungainly
b) unflinching
c) unlimited
d) unintelligible

66. Cloth is made on a _____.
a) loom
b) loam
c) limb
d) limp

87. Jack <u>shuddered</u> when he saw the sea
   a) shock
   b) hurried
   c) cheered
   d) rested

88. Who would <u>imply</u> such a thing?
   a) admit
   b) try
   c) permit
   d) suggest

89. When Ed told a funny story, everyone began to _____.
   a) tickle
   b) chuckle
   c) bustle
   d) crumble

90. She bought a <u>sheer</u> dress for her siste.
   a) beautiful
   b) thin
   c) practical
   d) warm

CONTINUE TO PART III

READING COMPREHENSION

This is a test to show how well you read. There are four reading passages each followed by five questions about the passage. You should read each passage carefully and then try to answer the questions following that passage. If you do not know the answer at first, you may read the passage again, but do not spend too much time on one passage or you will not have enough time to finish.

EXAMPLE

While I was getting ready to go to town one morning last week, my wife handed me a little piece of red cloth and asked if I would have time during the day to buy her two yeards of cloth like that. I told her I would be glad to do it. And putting the piece of cloth into my pocket, I took the train for town.

D. The person telling the story is .....

a) a married lady.
b) an unmarried lady.
c) a married man.
d) an unmarried man.

You know that the person telling this story is a married man because he says, "... my wife handed me ..."

E. The author was given a piece of red cloth ...

a) in the morning.
b) at noon.
c) in the afternoon.
d) in the evening.

The passage says, "... one morning last week, my wife handed me a little piece of red cloth..."

Answer all questions for Part III in this manner.

Mark only one answer for each problem.

CONTINUE

READING COMPREHENSION (I)

Americans do not give cooking, 'considered as one of the fine arts,' an important place in life. Lunch is for them a kind of gratuity paid to the body. They hurriedly toss it a fruit or a fish and go back to work. Certain writers, in rebellion, have founded the club. 'Three Hours for Lunch,' but they are an agreeable exception. Even at dinner, general conversation is rare. Everyone talks to his neighbor. After dinner the men linger at the table, a custom inherited from England. In New York, your host will often propose taking you to the theatre, or else he will provide a pianist, a singer, a lecturer. The idea of leaving the guests to themselves, and expecting them to get pleasure out of meeting one another, astonishes and even appalls him. His excessive modesty does not permit his imagining that his friends can be happy merely in being in his house, with one another. He treats them like children. On Christmas Eve you will see, in some of the pleasantest homes in New York, Chirstmas trees for grown people. In other places, after a dinner at which you exchange ideas, there will be a magician who will do his best to amuse the oldsters. There you must realize that the absence of conversation in America comes, not from absence of ideas or lack of intelligence or understanding, but from an unconquerable shyness and a prodigious self-distrust.

81. The Americans hurry through lunch because ...

a) they are ambitious.

b) they have rebelled against English customs.

c) they don't think it is important

d) talking while eating is impolite.

82. The author believes that ...

a) people are capable of getting pleasure out of meeting one another.

b) people enjoy their food more when it is attractively served.

c) Americans don't want to act like mature adults.

d) Americans don't think deeply enough to be good conversationalists.

83. The author talks about some American writers who ...

a) wrote stories about American eating habits.

b) decided to enjoy leisurely lunches.

c) eat while they work.

d) wrote short plays to be presented at fancy night clubs.

84. The author feels that Americans lack ...

a) understanding.

b) self-confidence.

c) self-control

d) a rebellious spirit.

85. According to the author, in England ...

a) the men are accustomed to money.

b) the men remain at the table to talk

c) the guests except the host to have entertainment for them.

d) people don't consider Christmas dinner important

APPENDIX 2B

Name _____

II. A. Below are 10 correct and incorrect sentences. Put a tick (✓) if you think the sentence is correct, or (X) if it is incorrect in the space provided (5 mins.)

1. Everybody is always moaning about the rising cost of living. ____

2. I complained to the airline about the loss of my luggage but they couldn't help me. _____

3. As he looked lovingly into her eyes, she felt she would always love him. _____

4. The witness rejected to tell us anything. _____

5. They are examining the furniture for damage. _____

6. He started to protest, but was crushed by an acid comment from the Chairman. _____

7. I was very influenced by their new house. _____

8. Motorists are restricted to speeds of less than 70 mph on motorway. _____

9. During their holiday, they had to deal with a leaking tent and hurricane winds. _____

10. Agatha was a strict teacher but for once she showed she could be permissive. _____

B. Choose the words that best fits the context. Modify its form where necessary (8 mins.____)

11. New research is producing theories, which ----------
long held views about language learning, (disagree, provide, challenge).

12. Ever----------energy resources will soon pose serious problems on world - wide scale. (to go down, to diminish, to decrease).

13. The defending armies achieved a great ---------over the aggressors. (conquest, victory, courage)

14. The defending armies achieved a great --------over the aggressors. (conquest, victory, courage)

15. Our visit was rendered more pleasant by the --------care of our friends, (Solicitous, anxious, ready)

16. Using that washing powder, clothes seem to --------quicker. (decline, deteriorate, worsen)

17. Although he was on a diet, he found --------him enormously. (lure, tempt, attract)

18. She had to ----------her dress because she had lost weight. (shift, change, alter).

19. Personality is often -------in terms of sociability. (guage, evaluate, assess)

20. It is not ------victory that counts, its the trials along the way. (gain,m reach, attain)

22. In hot countries, you can still see flowers ----------in winter. (flourish, bloom, prosper)

Appendix 2C

Supply the words that best fit the blanks

The Language of Parrots

The well known Berlin ornithologist (one who studies birds and bird life), von Lukanus, ----------a grey parrot which became ---------- through a feat of memory. Von Lukanus ----------, among other birds, a tame hoopoe named 'Hopfchen'. The parrot, which could ---------- well, soon mastered this ----------. Hoopoes unfortunately do not live long in ----------, though grey parrots do; so after a time, 'Hopfchen' ---------- and the parrot appeared to have ---------- his name, at any rate, he did not say ---------- any more. Nine years later, von Lukanus ----------another hoopoe and, as the parrot saw him for the first time, he said at once, and ----------, 'Hopfchen'---------- 'Hopfchen'----------

APPENDIX 3

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

		Never or almost never	Usually not true of me	Some what true of me	Usually true of me	Always or almost true of me
1.	I thing of relationships between words that I already know and a new word that I'm learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I use a new word in sentences so I can remember it.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I connect the sound of a new word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I place a new word in a group with other words that are similar in some way (for example, words related to classroom, or clothing).	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I remember a new word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I associate the sound of a new word with the sound of a familiar word of a) English b) other language I speak	 1 1	 2 2	 3 3	 4 4	 5 5
7.	I use rhymes to remember a new word.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I visualize the spelling of a new word in my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I use flashcards to remember a new word.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I physically act out a new word (eg., walking in learning the word to walk)	1	2	3	4	5

		Never or almost never	Usually not true of me	Some what true of me	Usually true of me	Always or almost true of me
11.	I use a combination of sounds and images to remember a new word.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I list all the other words I know that are related to a new word and draw lines to show relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I remember a new word by remembering its location on the page, on the board, or where I first saw or heard it, or who spoke it.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I remember a new word by remembering the meaning(s) of the word.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I easily remember a new word when I write its meaning in my notebook in English than in other languages (eg., in Amharic).	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I review the new word which I learned recently in order to remember it.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I make sentences with different meanings out of a new word.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I use familiar words in different combinations to make new sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I use a dictionary when I come across a difficult word.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I translate English words or expression in my mother-tongue as I read.	1	2	3	4	5

		Never or almost never	Usually not true of me	Some what true of me	Usually true of me	Always or almost true of me
21.	I look for words or expressions in my own language that have similar meanings to words or expressions in English when I write (English).	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I try to find patterns in the use of (English) words.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I find the meaning of words by dividing them into parts that I understand.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I make use of the meaning of familiar words to understand the meanings of new words.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I try to understand what I've heard or read in English without translating it word-for-word into my own language.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I transfer words or concepts directly from my language to English when I write or speak (in English).	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I avoid or keep away words or expressions that I've doubt and use other familiar ones during writing or speaking even if I know that the familiar ones are less appropriate to the situation.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I usually tend to use words which are more specific than general, for example, using the words "husband and wife" instead of couple; "father and mother" instead of parents.	1	2	3	4	5

		Never or almost never	Usually not true of me	Some what true of me	Usually true of me	Always or almost true of me
29.	To understand unfamiliar words, I make guesses.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	When I can't think of a word during a conversation, I use gestures (eg. pointing with fingers).	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I make up new words or phrases if I do not know the right ones.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I read English without looking up every new word.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I try to guess what the other person will say next.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	If I can't think of a word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I ask the other person to tell me the right word if I can't think of it in a conversation.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	When I can't think of the correct word or expression to say or write, I find a different way to express the ideas; for example, I describe the idea in phrases or sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I try to find as many ways as I can to use words that I learned in classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I notice my mistakes in the use of words and use that information to help me do better.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	I pay attention to new words or expressions when some one is speaking or reading aloud.	1	2	3	4	5

		Never or almost never	Usually not true of me	Some what true of me	Usually true of me	Always or almost true of me
40.	I look for people I can talk to in English to improve my knowledge of words.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	I look for opportunities to read or write as much as possible in English to do better in the use of words.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	I have clear goals for improving my knowledge of words	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I think about my progress in learning new words.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	I learn from my mistakes in using words.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	I evaluate the general progress I ave made in learning new words.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using new words in writing or speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I encourage myself to use new words even wen I am afraid of making a mistake.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	I give myself a reward when I do well in using new words.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am using new words.	1	2	3	4	5
50.	I ask friends to verify that I have understood or said new words correctly.	1	2	3	4	5
51.	I practice the use of new words with other students.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 2D

RECALL TALK

Instruction One: Complete sentences (1-6) below with the appropriate words

loomp	sneardly
fert	aleard
cridle	culber

1 Father is _____ of pain in his chest

2 Try not to make _____ when you go downstairs

3 Put some more _____ on the fire

4 Help me to _____ this table

5 She spoke _____ a word

6 Our team has _____ up another victory

x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x

Instruction Two: Match the words in Column A with the words in Column B. Write only the number of the correct answer in the space provided

A		B
scrade _____	1	indoors
prolate _____	2	to fit
roup _____	3	rope
sedle _____	4	to play
zector _____	5	envy
quelson _____	6	scooter
	7	help

x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x

Thank you!

APPENDIX 4

INFERENCING TASK

Below is a passage. As you read the passage you are required to do the following two activities:

1 Talk on the taperecorder the TRICK or TECHNIQUE you used to guess the meanings of the underlined words in the passage. That is, HOW you are able to guess the meaning of the words.

2 Write in the Box whatever you can guess about the meaning of each word.

Remember that you can talk on the taperecorder in Amharic or in the English language.

MY TOWN

1	The children of the poor, boys and girls alike, were resourceful. They had to be. Apart from marbles and balls, they had sneardly (1) any bought toys; or if they did, they must have kept them quelson (2) as I never saw any. They tied lengths of ragged scrade (3) to the crossbars of the street lamps and swung on them, or else used them for skipping. They also prolated (4) various street and pavement games, such as hopscotch, according to the season of the year, marking out the courts with chalk. If I and my friends used to cridle (5) out the same games on the pavements where we lived, residents aleanded (6) and we got shouted at by the guards, who were numberous.
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	What I sedled (7) them were the scooters and little carts, made for them by their fathers and elder brothers, using culber (8) from old packing cases and wheels from discarded roller skates. These scooters made what to me was a wonderfully deafening fert (9) as their owners scooted along the pavements, or, more daringly, along the road.
7	
8	I thought them far superior to my own bought scooter which, although possibly a little faster, was depressingly noiseless, being rouped (10) with rubber wheels. In the little carts, which were almost equally noisy, they used to loomp (11) their younger brothers and sisters all the way from Hammersmith to Barnes and back, a couple of miles each way. How these infants survived such jolting journeys is a mystery.
9	
10	
11	Writer: Eric Newby

Appendix D1

Summary of E.S.L.C.E Sandford Students Results of the Past Seven Years (1978-1985)

	G R A D E S								
	A		B		C		D		
Years	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	No. of Students
1978-79	20	50	10	25	7	18	3	8	40
1979-80	22	48	11	24	12	26	1	2	46
1980-81	23	49	16	34	7	15	1	2	47
1981-82	36	90	1	3	2	5	1	3	40
1982-83	32	73	11	25	1	2	-	-	44
1983-84	15	39	16	41	8	21	-	-	39
1984-85	21	62	11	32	2	6	-	-	34

*Percentages are rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Admasu Kebede (1988: 57)

** By Ethiopian standard, Sandford students appeared to have been doing very well in the E.S.L.C.E.

Appendix D2

Summary of Nazareth (Non-Government School(NGS)) and Menilik (Government School(GS))Students' Responses to the Opportunities They Get to Watch Filsms, Plays or Listen to Recordings in English*

	School Type			
	Nazareth		Menilik	
	No. of Students		No. of Students	
Choices	No.	%	No.	%
A- Very often	11	7.3	5	3.3
B- Often	36	24	32	21.3
C- Not often	70	46.7	31	20.7
D- Never	32	21.3	79	52.7
No Response	1	0.7	3	2
Total	150	100	150	100

Admasu Kebede (1988: 71)

* Students from NGS reported to have more access to English through Watching Films, Plays or Listening to Records in English than did students from GS, although the two schools are locatted in Addis Ababa.

Appendix D3

How Students From NGS vs GS Grade the Opportunities They Get to Practise Speech in the Class-Room at School

	School Type			
	Nazareth (NGS)		Menilik (GS)	
	No. of Students		No. of Students	
Choices	No.	%	No.	%
A- Many	67	44.7	38	25.3
B- Some	51	34	57	38
C- Few	21	14	43	28.7
D- None	9	6	10	6.7
No-response	2	1.3	2	1.3
Total	150	100	150	100

Admasu Kebede (1988: 71)

* Students from NGS also reported to have more opportunities for rehearsing English in the classroom than did students from GS.

Appendix D4

Comparison of Students' Response to How Much Amharic Their Teacher Uses in English Lessons*

	School Type			
	Nazareth (NGS)		Menilik (GS)	
	No. of Students		No. of Students	
Choices	no	%	no	%
A- All the time	0	0	4	2.7
B- Half the time	0	0	23	15.2
C- About a quarter of the time	4	2.7	43	28.7
D- Almost never	146	97.3	79	52.7
No- response	0	0	1	0.7
Total	150	100	150	100

Admasu Kebede (1988: 73)

* English seemed to have been taught through English at NGS, while both English and Amharic appeared to have been used for teaching English at GS.

Appendix D5

Comparison of E.S.L.C.E. Results of Students from Nazareth School (NGS) and Menilik School (GS) of the Past Six Years*

Year	S	GRADES										
		A		B		C		D		F		Tot
		no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	No
1986-87	N	37	45	43	52	3	4	-	-	-	-	83
	M	12	1	140	13	387	35	225	20	343	31	1111
1985-86	N	36	37	35	36	26	27	1	1	-	-	98
	M	9	0.1	30	3	190	21	566	62	116	13	911
1984-85	N	49	61	17	21	14	18	-	-	-	-	80
	M	15	1	27	2	231	20	501	43	389	33	1163
1983-84	N	64	96	1	2	2	3	-	-	-	-	67
	M	69	6	32	3	678	56	384	32	39	3	1202
1982-83	N	28	48	28	48	3	5	-	-	-	-	59
	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1981-82	N	25	41	20	33	15	25	1	2	-	-	61
	M	13	2	43	8	117	22	113	21	254	47	540

"S"= School type
"-"= Results not obtained
"N"= Nazareth Secondary School (NGS)
"M"= Menilik Secondary School (GS)

Admasu Kebede (1988: 75)

* Students at Nazareth school (NGS) seemed to have been doing very well in the E.S.L.C.E. whereas Menilik (GS) students did rather poorly.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all souces of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Abebe Gebre-Tsadik

Signature: 

Place: Institute of Language Studies, Addis Ababa University

Aug. 1997