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The Learning Strategies of Beginning ESL Learners at the Primary Level

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ABSTRACT

The Learning Strategies of Beginning

ESL Learners at the Primary Level

Pamela Gunning

This study investigates the language learning strategies used by beginning level ESL learners at the primary level. Scholars in the field have suggested that successful language learners employ certain strategies to aid their learning of a second language and that unsuccessful language learners could be taught these language learning strategies. Much research has been done to identify these strategies among adolescent and adult learners but very little research has been conducted in this area with children. In this study, 120 Francophone learners at four primary schools in Quebec were asked to report on their language learning strategies through two studies: Study 1 (N=100) and Study 2 (N=20). In Study 1 students were surveyed about their language learning strategies, using Oxford's (1990) *Strategy Inventory of Language Learning*

(SILL) adapted for use with children. In Study 2 children from the same general population as those surveyed in Study 1 were questioned about their use of specific strategies in an in-depth interview. It was hypothesized that the strategies children use would be similar to or different from those of adults depending on the category of strategies. Similarities were expected at the level of the more concrete cognitive strategies such as practice and repetition, and differences were expected at the level of the more abstract learning strategies for developing cognitive processes, such as those related to grammar. Successful learners were expected to demonstrate different patterns of strategy use from unsuccessful learners, and they were expected to be more adroit at selecting strategies which were more effective and appropriate for them than unsuccessful language learners. This study presents evidence confirming these hypotheses.

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friend, Heather Mizener, who edited this thesis on very short notice.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband, Glen, my children, Claudine and Roxane, my mother, Edna, and to my friend, Rachel Lalonde, whose constant support and encouragement helped me to complete this thesis. I also dedicate this work to my late father, Ivan; also to my students and their parents.

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CHAPTER ONE

Presentation of the Problem

1.1 The need for the study

Francophone learners in the province of Quebec usually have one to two hours of English as a second language instruction per week, over a period of three years, from Grade 4 to Grade 6. The global objective of the Ministry of Education of Quebec's programme d'études, anglais, langue seconde (1997) states that: *"Au terme de leurs études primaires, les élèves seront capables de comprendre et de produire des messages simples en anglais dans un nombre restreint de situations de la vie courante correspondant à leur âge et à leurs champs d'intérêt"* (p.5). That is to say students are expected, at the end of their primary school English programme, to be able to understand and produce simple messages in English in a limited number of everyday situations appropriate to their age and interests. Some learners achieve this objective but many do not. Why is this so? What are the factors that influence success? Do successful language learners exhibit certain language learning behaviours that unsuccessful language learners do not? How might these behaviours

influence our approach to language teaching? This thesis will attempt to answer some of these questions by looking at the language learning strategies employed by children who are ESL learners at the primary level in the Quebec public school system.

1.2 Definition of the terms

Learning strategies are defined as "...steps taken by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage and retrieval of information" (Oxford & Crookall, 1989, p. 404). Oxford's Strategy System (Oxford 1990), one of many existing frameworks for defining and classifying strategies, was the framework used in this study. According to this framework, the two major groups of strategies are Direct strategies, which involve direct learning and use of the subject matter, and Indirect strategies, which contribute indirectly to learning. The three Direct strategy categories are the Memory category, the Cognitive category and the Compensation category. An example of each category would be: *using imagery* (Memory strategy), *recognizing and using formulas and patterns* (Cognitive strategy) and *using a circumlocution or synonym* (Compensation strategy). The Indirect strategy categories

include the Metacognitive category, the Affective category and the Social category. An example of each category would be: *setting goals and objectives* (Metacognitive strategy), *using relaxation* (Affective strategy), *cooperating with peers* (Social strategy) (Oxford, 1990).

1.3 Purpose of this thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to explore what language learning strategies primary ESL learners from Quebec use, in order to understand the relationship between their language learning strategies use, or lack thereof, and their success in learning ESL. The specific aims of the thesis are twofold:

a) to identify the strategies used by young learners and to find out in what ways these strategies were similar to or different from those already identified in studies with adult and adolescent learners.

b) to identify and compare strategy use among successful and unsuccessful learners in terms of the above-

mentioned categories in order to understand the influence of the use of strategies on language learning.

Language learning strategies use among adolescent and adult second and foreign language learners has been the topic of extensive research (Naiman, Frohlich, Todesco & Stern, 1978; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Robbins, 1993; Rubin, 1975, Stern, 1975; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). However, the literature on language learning strategies use among children learning a second language is scant. Exceptions are Padron and Waxman (1988), who described the learning strategies of bilingual Hispanic ESL learners in the United States, and Chamot (1995), who described the learning strategies used by children enrolled in an elementary foreign-language-immersion programme. A thorough search of the existing literature did not uncover any studies describing the language learning strategies of children enrolled in a regular ESL primary programme in a public school system anywhere in the world. In particular, no such study has ever been done involving francophone learners in the regular ESL programme in Quebec public schools, even though English is taught as a second language in all primary schools in

Quebec. This is the group which has been targeted in the present study. The specific questions asked in this thesis are: What language learning strategies do children use? Do children use language learning strategies which are similar to those used by adults and adolescents? Do children who are good second language learners exhibit similar language learning behaviours to adults and adolescents who are good language learners?

Curriculum consultants from school boards in the province of Quebec have been given in-service training by the Ministry of Education of Quebec on the incorporation of language learning strategies training in the teaching of ESL at the primary and secondary levels. The aim of this training was to equip them with the necessary skills to give workshops to the teachers in their school boards on this topic. In order to try and ascertain what research preceded the decision to incorporate language learning strategies in the ESL curriculum in Quebec public schools, an official of the Ministry of Education of Quebec was interviewed by this researcher. The information derived from this interview indicated that the decision to incorporate language learning strategies training in the

ESL curriculum was influenced by the research done with adults in the United States (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Wenden, 1993). The official also mentioned that the natural evolution of the communicative methodology to include considerations influenced by whole language learning meant that the general trend of educational theory seemed to be "moving away from dependence towards independent learning." (Munro Jones, J., August 1996, personal communication). Implicit in this statement is the suggestion that learning strategies would equip students to become autonomous learners. This research could complement the strategies training programme already implemented by the Ministry of Education and be of use to syllabus planners, curriculum consultants and school boards in the province of Québec.

1.4 Research questions

The specific questions addressed by this thesis were the following:

a) What are the language learning strategies used by young children who are beginner learners of English as a second

language in the regular primary school programme in the province of Quebec, and what are the differences between their strategies and those of adult and adolescent learners?

b) What are the differences in strategies use among successful and unsuccessful learners of this category?

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the literature

The purpose of this review is to examine the literature dealing with language learning strategies research. The focus will be on the learner/participants who have been targeted, and the main issues that have been investigated in the studies thus far. The review will begin with the research done on good language learners and the strategies they use to learn their second languages. Then the strategies of unsuccessful language learners will be reviewed. Particular attention will first be focused on studies conducted with adult and adolescent learners, and then with children in both bilingual and immersion settings.

2.1 The good language learner

Early research in the field of language learning strategies focused first on good language learners. Rubin (1975) noted that some students managed to learn a second language "in spite of the

teacher, the textbook, or the classroom situation." (p.42). She conducted a study to find out how the good language learner achieved success. Rubin video-taped many classes in order to observe learners' strategies and teachers' attitudes. She also interviewed subjects about their language learning behaviour. Rubin examined the behaviour of successful language learners and posited that successful language learners had special strategies which, if identified, could be taught to less successful learners in order to enhance their language learning. She suggested that, "Rather than letting him just admire the good student and feel inferior, we need to isolate what the good learner does - what his strategies are - and impart this knowledge to the less successful learners" (p.43).

The definition of "strategies" used by Rubin is "...the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (p.43). She suggested that the good language learner may be 1) a good guesser, 2) willing to appear foolish in order to communicate the message, and 3) willing to "try out" knowledge.

According to Rubin, good language learning depends on at least

three variables: aptitude, motivation and opportunity (p.42). She suggested that training could have more influence on motivation and opportunity than on aptitude. The aspects of motivation considered by Rubin to be essential to language learning are the two kinds of motivation isolated by Gardner and Lambert (1959): instrumental and integrative. She noted that good language learners take advantage of all opportunities to practise and even create their own opportunities to hear and practise the language, whereas poorer learners just do what is assigned to them. Through the classroom observation study and the interview study mentioned above, Rubin (1975) said that good language learners are willing and accurate guessers who are comfortable with uncertainty. In addition, they have a strong drive to communicate, so they will do many things, such as circumlocution and paraphrasing, to get their message across. Good language learners are often not inhibited and are willing to make mistakes and appear foolish in order to learn and to communicate. They are prepared to attend to form by constantly analyzing, categorizing and synthesizing. They practise and look for occasions to practise; they repeat, practise pronunciation and sentence construction. They monitor their own speech and that of

others. They participate actively in the learning process and are always processing information whether or not they are called upon to perform. Good language learners learn from their own mistakes (Rubin 1975, pp.45-48).

Rubin concluded that we need to attend, not just to input to the student, but also to the process of what the student does with this input. She noted that most teachers tended to be preoccupied with delivering their subject matter without attending to the learning process. Rubin asserted that no course could ever teach learners everything they need to know and that teachers must find ways to help learners help themselves.

The findings of Rubin (1975) were later reported by Rubin and Thompson (1982) and were further elaborated in Brown (1994) to produce the *"Ten Commandments" for Good Language Learning*, as the following table demonstrates:

Table 12.1. "Ten Commandments" for Good Language Learning (p.199)

	TEACHER'S VERSION	LEARNER'S VERSION
1.	Lower inhibitions	Fear not!
2.	Encourage risk-taking	Dive in
3.	Build self-confidence	Believe in yourself
4.	Develop intrinsic motivation	Seize the day
5.	Engage in co-operative learning	Love thy neighbor
6.	Use right-brain processes	Get the BIG picture
7.	Promote ambiguity tolerance	Cope with the chaos
8.	Practice intuition	Go with your hunches
9.	Process error feedback	Make mistakes work FOR you
10.	Set personal goals	Set your own goals

Following the Rubin (1975) study, Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) conducted an exhaustive study examining the question of whether good learners undertake the task of learning a language learning differently from poor learners, and whether learners have certain characteristics which predispose them to good or poor learning. The first part of this research project involved an

exploratory interview study with thirty-four highly proficient adult learners and the second part involved a questionnaire with adolescent learners in high school. Subjects for this study were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of a semi-directed part, reflecting on their past language learning experiences, and then a directed part requiring them to imagine themselves in a hypothetical learning situation, in order to gain insight into their approaches to learning a second language.

This study yielded a list of certain basic strategies that good language learners use to enhance their language learning. These strategies involved adopting an active task approach. An active task approach signifies that the language learners involved themselves in the language learning task by: taking advantage of learning opportunities, adding related language learning activities to the regular programme; engaging in various practice activities; and by recognizing their difficulties and taking steps to deal with them. Other strategies they used were those related to recognizing language as a system. This means that the learners made comparisons with their native language and other languages they knew. They also

looked for regularities in the target language and made inferences about it. From the results of their study, Naiman et *al.* claimed that good language learners recognize language as a means of communication and interaction, and in the early stages, good language learners tended to emphasize fluency over accuracy, and seek out opportunities to interact with members of the target language community and to improve their communication skills. In addition, these researchers noted that good language learners are able to manage the affective demands of learning a new language by striving to overcome their inhibitions and to laugh at their own mistakes. Good language learners also monitor their second language performance by testing their guesses, looking for positive and negative evidence as they compare their speech to that of target language speakers, and by trying to emulate the speech of native speakers (pp.13-15).

These pioneer studies conducted by Rubin (1975) and by Naiman et *al.*, to identify and examine strategies use by successful learners, lay the foundation for future studies in the field of language learning strategies.

2.2. The unsuccessful language learner

The studies mentioned above focused on the strategies of the good language learner. These studies have established that students generally use strategies to learn their second languages but for some the end result of their strategies use is success in language learning, whereas for others the strategies they utilize do not produce the desired effects. To better understand the link between effective strategies use and success in language learning, it is important to look at the strategies of the unsuccessful learner.

In an effort to compare the strategies of unsuccessful language learners with those of successful language learners, Vann and Abraham (1987) set up a case study of 15 learners involved in an intensive English as a second language programme. From this study, they reported the results of two learners, both males. These two learners represented the two extremes, one very successful and one extremely unsuccessful. The successful learner used many more strategies than did the unsuccessful one in almost every category of strategy, and more importantly, he used a variety of strategies. The

successful learner asked for clarification when he did not understand a question in the task he was given. He was persistent, and he used more social management techniques to get the interviewer to talk more. In addition, he used his time more efficiently and used many metacognitive strategies, one example being planning before writing. The unsuccessful learner, nevertheless, did use learning strategies. However, there were differences between these two learners. The unsuccessful learner did not make a great deal of effort to achieve grammatical correctness. He saw English as a second language as a tool of communication and did not consider form as an important area on which to focus his attention, demonstrating his belief that if one learned enough words and strung them together, one could communicate. Another important difference was the fact that the unsuccessful learner seemed to take the same approach to accomplishing all tasks, whereas the successful learner demonstrated flexibility in this regard. The unsuccessful learner had adopted certain strategies which helped him in oral communication but could not help him on a written task. He did not adjust his strategies to fit the task. The most striking characteristic of his approach was the excessive speed with which he executed all tasks, not attending to

form or checking his answers.

Vann and Abraham (1990) conducted another study with fifteen adult students to determine how successful and unsuccessful learners differed in the quantity, quality, and/or variety of strategies they used in several settings. In addition they looked at how other variables such as educational background and personality might affect the learner's choice of strategies. Vann and Abraham hypothesized, based on the evidence of their previous study cited above, that the successful learners would use more strategies, and a greater variety of strategies than the less successful learners. However, they concluded that the two learners previously studied were atypical because they were such polar extremes. One was among the most successful language learners they had ever encountered and the other, one of the least successful. In the latter study, they noted that many of the strategies were used about equally by the successful and the unsuccessful learner, and more importantly that the unsuccessful learner used many of the same strategies as the successful learner. Vann and Abraham concluded that, contrary to earlier claims by research in the field, unsuccessful

learners were active learners who had an appropriate repertoire of strategies (p.183). Consequently, they examined the case of two other learners, both females, with a similar ethnic background. These two women had low TOEFL scores, in spite of having high strategy counts on the strategy assessment.

Vann and Abraham then decided to look at the data in terms of the tasks and the demands these tasks made on the learners. Using a think-aloud procedure, Vann and Abraham then assessed the learners' strategies in terms of their effectiveness in meeting those task demands. These demands were classified within four categories: *engagement, risk taking, knowledge and control* (p.183). On the first task which was an interview, both learners were engaged and cooperative in that they verified what was expected, and monitored their pronunciation and grammar. On the second task, a routine verb exercise, one learner had a high score and the other a very low score. The second learner was erratic in her application of the grammatical rules and chose not to check her answers when she had finished the exercise, "thus confirming the view that she lacked a systematic approach to monitoring her work" (p.185). The third activity, a cloze

test, was too difficult for both learners. However, their reaction to the task demands in terms of the strategies they used proved to be interesting. One learner made use of many strategies but "relied heavily on the localized approach ...With respect to obtaining the overall meaning of the passage, her think-aloud data indicate that she did not consider this an important element of the task" (p.187). Besides, she became frustrated and asked that the rules be changed. The other learner monitored her work but failed to check her answers after she had finished, thereby causing the researchers to remark that "the flaw in her approach was not attending sufficiently to form after she had established the meaning" (p.188).

Vann and Abraham concluded that these two learners, in spite of using many of the strategies that successful learners use, did not match their strategies appropriately to the task at hand. The researchers felt that these learners lacked the metacognitive strategies which would enable them to assess the task and select the strategies necessary to complete them successfully.

2.3 The link between strategies use and successful language learning

In discussing the relationship between strategies use and success in language learning Oxford (1992/93) claims that "Skilled L2 learners select strategies that work well together and that are tailored to the requirements of the language task. For high-performing L2 learners, cognitive and metacognitive strategies often go together...". She goes on to say that "...recent research indicates that many of the less effective L2 learners are indeed aware of the strategies they use, can describe them clearly and actually use just as many strategies as effective L2 learners. However, less effective learners apply these strategies in a random, even desperate manner, without careful orchestration and without targeting the strategies to the task" (Vann & Abraham, 1989, summarized in Oxford 1992/93, p.19).

2.4 Factors that influence strategy choice: the affective variables

Another area that researchers interested in language learning strategies have looked at is the effect of certain affective variables

on strategy choice. The most important affective variables examined were language attitudes and motivation, and language anxiety and self-confidence (MacIntyre 1994). These variables are believed to affect strategy choice. The affective variables focused upon here are motivation and anxiety.

2.4.1 Motivation and anxiety

By motivation we are not referring simply to the broad distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation created by Gardner and Lambert (1972). The angle to be looked at is the one cited by Gardner (Gardner 1985, in Gardner and MacIntyre 1993), describing the motivated individual as:

> "... one who wants to achieve a particular goal, devotes considerable effort to achieve this goal, and experiences satisfaction in the activities associated with achieving this goal. That is, motivation is defined by three components, desire to achieve a goal, effort extended in this direction, and satisfaction with the task" (p.2).

Learners who are motivated, in the sense of the triple-faceted definition of motivation described above (the desire to achieve a goal, effort extended in this direction and satisfaction with the task), sometimes tend to choose self-directed strategies. That is to say, learners choose strategies that they believe will help them accomplish the task and they make the effort to achieve their goal. One such learner is the renowned 19th century German archaeologist and excavator of the Troy, Heinrich Schliemann. Jahn (1979), in his account of this learner's language learning strategies, said that Schliemann, after having read Homer's *Iliad* as a child, had a dream to learn Ancient Greek and to search for the city of Troy. He went on to learn eighteen languages as an adult.

Schliemann employed a number of language learning strategies in the study of the languages he learnt, the first of which was English. Jahn reports that Schliemann studied English with a native informant for one hour per day. He selected an informant, rather than a specialist, as he wanted to select the methods he thought were best for him, rather than have the teacher impose a method on him.

He read aloud for extended periods of time and wrote a composition every night about a topic of interest to him. He had the compositions corrected by the native informant, then he memorized them. During his working hours, he had time to himself as he worked as an office boy, so he would memorize passages in English. In addition, before falling asleep at night he reviewed what he had learnt that day. He took advantage of every opportunity to hear English in authentic settings. For example, on Sundays, he would attend two English church services, stand by himself in a corner and he *mouthed* every word of the sermons. It is estimated that in six months, the time it took Schliemann to learn English, he had put in approximately 1,350 hours of intensive study (Jahn, p.274). Jahn speculated that, if one combines the time Schliemann put in, plus the highly effective learning strategies he employed, one could perhaps replicate his results.

Motivation has been proven in more modern studies to be an important affective variable in determining strategy choice. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) looked at the variables affecting choice of language learning strategies by university students. The subjects

were 1,200 university undergraduate students, the majority of whom were taking the foreign language as a graduation requirement, while some were taking it as an elective. To find out which variables affected choice of language learning strategies the researchers looked at the influence of self-perceptions of motivation and proficiency and the effects of course status (required vs. elective), years of study, sex, and major. According to the report of their findings:

> "Results indicated that the degree of expressed motivation was the single most powerful influence on the choice of language learning strategies, that sex had a profound effect on strategy choice, and that all the other variables - and some interactions among these variables - had significant effects on the reported use of strategies" (p.294).

In this study the researchers empirically demonstrated that motivation leads to the use of language learning strategies, and learning strategies lead to success in language learning. Oxford and Nyikos posit that the interaction of the three factors just mentioned lead to greater self-esteem, which in turn leads to greater motivation

and greater strategy use.

In a follow-up article to the Oxford and Nyikos (1989) study, Nyikos and Oxford (1993) interpreted the frequency of strategies use from the perspectives of information-processing theory and social psychology and mentioned that these approaches "recognize the centrality of learners' contribution to language learning as a cognitive, social, and affective process" (p.11). They stated that students' perceptions regarding their language learning are important because they "directly affect students' motivation to learn a new language and their subsequent use of learning strategies" (p.11). However, they noted that traditionally greater emphasis has been placed on conditions of learning which are external to the learner; these external conditions the authors referred to as *situational variables*, which include "type, rate, and quality of instruction, the appropriateness of materials to a given learning task, and the opportunity to practice - all crucial variables that influence success in classroom-based learning" (p.12). They continued to say that this concentration of attention on these situational variables has taken attention away from the role of the learner at the centre of the

learning process.

Oxford and Shearin (1994, in Ehrman & Oxford, 1995) expanded the view of motivation described above, as it relates to language learning. The researchers note that for some learners language learning motivation can be influenced by a need to succeed, while others might be motivated by a fear of failure, or even a fear of success in the language classroom. These researchers claim that:

> "Motivation will be high only if expectancy of success is high, along with the value students place on success. If one of these values is low, motivation will be negatively affected. Students must also believe that the outcome is at least equal to the input (effort). ... For optimal motivation, the goals must be clear, challenging, and reachable, and there must be feedback of goal achievement" (in Ehrman & Oxford 1995, p. 68).

On the topic of the role of motivation in strategy use MacIntyre (1994), citing the research in learning strategies, suggests that better students make better use of strategies, which requires effort on the

part of the learner. He concludes that it is not surprising that motivation plays an important role in strategy use, and suggests that it might also be expected that the presence of anxiety could have the opposite effect.

Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) define language anxiety as " ...the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient" (p.5). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that situation-specific anxiety (such as Communicative Anxiety) negatively influences the language-learning process (p.515).

Ehrman and Oxford (1995) conducted a study with 855 adults from various U.S. government agencies. In this study the researchers examined the correlations between strategy use, other factors such as affective variables, and success in language learning. The results indicated that, aside from motivation, "The most important of the other affective factors was anxiety" (p.81). Debilitating anxiety correlated negatively with several tasks. One example was speaking in class.

The sources mentioned above clearly point out to teachers and researchers interested in strategy training the relevance of looking at the affective variables in any design of a strategy training model.

2.5 Identification and classification of language learning strategies

2.5.1 Language learning strategies in adolescents

Following the studies mentioned previously by Rubin (1975) and Naiman et *al.* (1978), subsequent studies have been concerned with identifying the strategies used by language learners and classifying them. There are, therefore, different classification systems. In an effort to establish a standardized system, O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo (1985a) examined the language learning strategies of beginning and intermediate level ESL students at the high school level. The purposes of this study were: "a) to identify the range of learning strategies used by high school students of language learning tasks found typically in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms and in the daily experience of high school students; b) to determine if the strategies identified can

be classified within existing learning strategy frameworks; and c) to determine whether the strategies used interact with the type of language task or activity and the level of English proficiency of the students" (p.28).

For their study, O'Malley *et al.* (1985) conducted interviews with seventy ESL learners and their teachers. The interviews focused on the following oral language activities: pronunciation, oral drills and grammar exercises vocabulary, following directions, listening for main ideas and facts, inferencing while listening, and making oral presentations. Students were also asked to describe language learning strategies which they used in social interactions outside the ESL class and also in functional settings such as work, etc. (p.29). These interviews confirmed that learners used strategies already identified in the existing framework of language learning strategies, and indicated that three broad categories of strategies could cover most of these categories of strategies. These are metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies. However, these researchers felt that a more detailed, expanded classification was needed in order to cover the rich range of strategies reported by

the learners. Learners in this study reported using 638 strategies, which O'Malley *et al.* classified under 25 types of strategies, sub-divided under the headings of metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies. Of all the types of strategies learners in this study used, beginners reported a very high frequency of cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies and then very distantly by the socio-affective strategies.

Chamot and Kupper (1989) later conducted research during a three-year project in which they investigated strategy use by foreign language students and their teachers. This study included the following: a) a descriptive study, which identified learning strategies used in studying foreign languages, b) a longitudinal study, which identified differences in the strategy use of effective and ineffective language learners and analyzed changes in strategy use over time, and c) a course development study, in which foreign language instructors taught students how to apply learning strategies.

The subjects in this study were 67 high school students, drawn from first year, third year, and a combination fifth/sixth year

Spanish classes. The students' proficiency levels were determined by teacher assessment and classified by the researchers as effective, average, and ineffective at each level of study. Subjects were interviewed in small groups according to these classifications (p.14). Subjects were asked about "any special tricks or techniques they applied to foreign language tasks, such as learning vocabulary, completing grammar exercises, listening and reading comprehension, oral and written production, and communicative encounters outside the classroom " (p.14). Strategies identified were classified in the three general categories mentioned above in the O'Malley (1985a) study. The categories which emerged were the Metacognitive, the Cognitive, and the Social/affective categories.

The findings of the descriptive study indicated that the students at higher levels generally reported using more strategies than did beginning level students. In addition, subjects in all levels reported using far more cognitive than metacognitive strategies. At the beginning level the preferred strategies of these learners were the cognitive strategies of repetition, translation, and transfer. Learners' strategy choice changed over time; at the intermediate and

advanced levels, students began to rely increasingly on inferencing, while still continuing to use strategies such as repetition and translation. Social and affective strategies were not frequently used.

For the longitudinal study, which included students identified as effective or ineffective by the researchers, the findings indicated that the three general categories of cognitive, metacognitive, and social and affective strategies remained unchanged. However, the ways in which these strategies were used led to a further refinement of the classification system. Metacognitive strategies were organized into seven sub-categories, cognitive strategies into eleven sub-categories, and social and affective strategies into four sub-categories. In addition, it was found that in general, the successful learners used learning strategies more often, more appropriately, with greater variety, and in ways that were effective in helping them complete the task successfully. Less effective students, they claimed, used fewer strategy types and frequently used strategies that were inappropriate or that did not lead to successful completion of the task. Effective students approached a task more purposefully than ineffective students. They also monitored their comprehension and

production for general meaningfulness rather than for individual elements. Finally, the effective learners used both prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge to accomplish a task.

2.5.2 Language learning strategies in adults

In an effort to further identify and classify language learning strategies, Oxford (1985-90) established an even more detailed, comprehensive strategy system than the ones previously mentioned. This system contained six main strategy groups divided under the two main headings of Direct and Indirect strategies. The three main strategy groups which she lists under Direct strategies include the Memory categories, the Cognitive categories and the Compensation categories, and under Indirect strategies she includes the Metacognitive categories, the Affective categories and the Social categories. These six main groups are subdivided into eighteen smaller strategy groups, which are then subdivided to make a total of sixty-two smaller groups altogether. These strategies were the basis for the questionnaire, *The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL),* which has been used around the world in many

survey studies with adult learners, by Oxford and others (Oxford 1990; Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995).

In their SILL study, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) conducted a factor analysis to find out what kind of strategies university foreign language students used and to identify the variables which influenced the choice of these strategies. The findings regarding their strategy choice indicate that five main factors, each including certain strategies, emerged from the analysis. Factor 1 was formal rule-related practice strategies, including strategies such as using structural knowledge, finding similarities between languages, generating and revising rules, and analyzing words. This was the highest used factor. Factor 2 involved functional practice strategies which included attending foreign language films, seeking native speakers for conversation, imitating native speakers, initiating foreign language conversations, and reading authentic material in the new language. All of these strategies required practice in natural settings outside of the classroom. This was the least used factor. Factor 3 involved resourceful, independent strategies. These included independent manipulation of foreign language material in

order to embed it in memory (Memory strategies), and independent use of certain metacognitive actions (planning, self-testing, self-reward). Usage of these strategies was low to medium. Factor 4 included general study strategies, such as studying hard, ignoring distractions, being prepared, organizing, and using time well, and usage of these strategies was moderately high. Factor 5 included conversational input elicitation strategies such as requesting slower speech, asking for pronunciation correction, and guessing what the speaker will say. These strategies were used moderately frequently (p.293). The learners in this study opted for strategies which could fulfil university testing requirements rather than communicative goals.

In discussing the research mentioned above, Nyikos and Oxford (1993) claimed that, from an information-processing standpoint, strategies the learners used could be cognitive process strategies that are mainly unconscious and automatic. However, they claimed, these were probably once conscious and could be enhanced by explicit strategy training. From the perspective of social psychology, the researchers reiterated the previously mentioned empirical finding

that motivation is a "key determinant of frequency and type of strategy use" (p.12). In addition, Nyikos and Oxford discussed the learners' perceptions about language learning. Those who believed the teacher to be the source of learning did not employ the self-directed learning strategies essential to achieving language proficiency. Besides, those students who believed that they lacked the ability to learn a second language would abandon the study of that language, "whereas a greater awareness of learning strategies could compensate for this perceived deficit" (p.12). The researchers claimed that lack of strategy-related awareness impedes the use of appropriate strategies by students. Nyikos and Oxford suggested that foreign language students need to be made aware, not only of their own strategy use, but more importantly, of the wide range of alternate learning strategies used by highly successful language learners (p.13).

2.5.3 Language learning strategy studies among adults worldwide

As can be seen above, most of the studies in the field of language learning strategies have been done with adult and adolescent learners. About 40-50 major strategy studies, involving approximately 8000 language learners have been conducted among adults around the world using the SILL as the main assessment tool. The countries involved include Japan, People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Korea, Egypt, South Africa, Combined U.S., and Puerto Rico, among others. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) reviewed some of these studies.

The findings were varied in terms of how students from different parts of the world prioritized each category of learning strategies in the SILL. A major conclusion drawn from all these studies is that language researchers must look into the social and affective sides of learning, in addition to the cognitive side. Oxford and Burry Stock claim that "Language learning, more than almost any other discipline, is an adventure of the whole person, not just a cognitive or metacognitive exercise", (p.18). Their statement

reiterates, once again, the importance of the social and affective strategies. Secondly, Oxford and Burry-Stock contend that through strategy assessment teachers can help their learners discover the advantages of using language learning strategies. The researchers also claim that teachers can weave strategy training into the regular curriculum, in a natural but explicit way. Finally, Oxford and Burry-Stock recommend that findings from strategy assessment could be cross-correlated, using different modes of assessment such as an interview, a think-aloud protocol, and a survey, to see how closely the results from each relate to the other. Finally, the researchers recommend that studies be replicated in order to obtain more consistent information across populations, especially about how students from different cultural backgrounds and different countries use language learning strategies. Oxford and Burry-Stock also recommend that "...learning strategies germane to various countries should be among the first considerations of any ESL/EFL teacher or researcher who wants to enhance student learning" (p.19). Of the adult studies mentioned above, the one that will be focused upon is the Green and Oxford 1995 study, because of its special characteristics which are described hereunder.

2.5.4 Language learning strategies in adults from a hybrid foreign/second language environment

In the survey study mentioned above, (N=374) Green and Oxford (1995) conducted research using the SILL among ESL learners enrolled in courses representing three different proficiency levels at the University of Puerto Rico. Unlike most previous SILL studies, the purpose of this research was "to describe the patterns of variation in overall strategy use by SILL categories, and strategy use at the individual item level..." (p.267) by males and females of the target population. The subjects came from a particular type of linguistic environment which Green and Oxford described as "a hybrid foreign/second language environment". This, they explained, means that in Puerto Rico "...a great deal of potential English input is available for learners who wish to take advantage of it. On the other hand, Puerto Rican learners can easily survive without using English for communication, so the island might in this respect appear to have characteristics of an EFL setting." (p.268). Most previous SILL studies have been done either in ESL or EFL settings. This study was the first to link results of a factor analysis of language learning

strategies to the special characteristics of a linguistic setting such as that of Puerto Rico. The aim of this study was to identify how many and which of the strategies mentioned in the SILL correlated favourably with greater success in language learning, and to glean information regarding strategies which are used equally across proficiency levels.

The findings of this study indicated that in overall strategy use, proficiency level "had a significant effect for the cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social categories (all representing positive variation, i.e. more use by successful students)" (p.273) . In an analysis of the reported use of individual strategy items on the SILL, this study indicated that "About a third of the individual strategies on the SILL were used more frequently by more successful students ...It is striking and significant that all or almost all of these strategies involved active use of the target language, with a strong emphasis on practice in natural or naturalistic situations" (pp.287-288). The researchers do not consider this finding as "evidence of causality" but they express the belief that there is a relationship between proficiency and strategy use. This relationship, they claim,

"...is best visualized not as a one-way arrow leading from cause to effect, but rather as an ascending spiral in which active use strategies help students attain higher proficiency, which in turn makes it more likely that students will select these active use strategies" (p.288). Green and Oxford report findings indicating a high incidence of the use of cognitive strategies among second language learners.

Strategy assessment tools: The studies reviewed demonstrate that researchers have succeeded in identifying and classifying the strategies of successful and unsuccessful learners. Various types of strategy assessment tools have been developed by some of these researchers. Each method of assessment has advantages and disadvantages. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) reviewed each type. They claimed that formal and informal observation of learners in classrooms are easy to use but cannot provide information about unobservable mental strategies such as reasoning or analyzing. Interviews, the researchers state, give detailed and personalized information about the students' strategy use. However, interviews are very time consuming. Group interviews take less time but give a

picture of the strategies use by the class as a whole, not by individuals. The authors of this report went on to say that recollective narratives give the researcher insights into the "big picture" of the whole learning process but that when learners are asked to recollect details might be missed. Think-aloud protocols, Oxford and Burry-Stock claimed, offer the most detail of all as the learners describe their strategies while performing the language task. However, these take a great deal of time as they are usually done with individuals. Besides, the authors of the report suggested, think-aloud protocols offer a limited picture of the student's learning strategies as the strategies described are only the ones related to the task in which the learner is currently engaged at the time of the think-aloud session. In addition, this instrument does not give summative results across students for group information. Surveys, they say, provide general information about the learner's strategy choice across a variety of possible tasks, and they are cost-effective and non-threatening. The most widely-used strategy assessment tool is the strategy scale, the SILL (Oxford 1990). The disadvantage Oxford and Burry-Stock cite, however, with the SILL and other strategy scales is that these instruments do not give detailed

information such as might be obtained from more time-consuming methods such as think-aloud protocols. They concluded by recommending to researchers the use of a combination of two instruments for strategy assessment.

Most of the studies outlined in this review have been conducted with adults and adolescents. Very few studies have been conducted with children, and the instances where language learning strategy research has been applied to children have been restricted to bilingual, or immersion settings. Because language learning strategy research has not been frequently applied to children, most of the strategy-assessment tools, such as the SILL, have been developed for use with adults and adolescents and have not been adapted for use with children.

2.5.5 Language learning strategies in children

The studies mentioned thus far have been conducted with adult and adolescent learners but studies done with adults and adolescents need not necessarily apply to children, as the work of

researchers in the field of child-adult differences in second language acquisition (Krashen, Scarcella and Long, 1982) indicates. These researchers claim that adult language acquisition is different from language acquisition in children, in terms of the ability to think abstractly about language, especially with regard to grammar. They suggest that meta-linguistic awareness, Krashen et *al.* say, is generally more developed in adults than in children.

Although some research in language learning strategies has been conducted with children, much of this research has been done with elementary school children in mother tongue settings (Brainerd & Pressley, 1982, McCormick, Miller & Pressley, 1989). In one study with Hispanic bilingual learners enrolled in a public elementary school in the United States, Padron and Waxman (1988) described the cognitive reading strategies used by these subjects in English, and the effect of these strategies on reading achievement. The findings of that study were strictly related to reading comprehension and the subjects were bilingual learners.

In another study with children, Chamot (1995) reported on the

first phase of a three-year project to investigate various aspects of learning strategies use by elementary students in a foreign-language-immersion setting. This study builds on her previous research with adolescent learners (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, Carbonaro, and Robbins, 1993; Chamot, Robbins, and El-Dinary, 1993, in Chamot, 1995). The purpose of the first year of that study was to identify language learning strategies used by children in a foreign-language-immersion programme and to compare the strategies used by effective and less effective students. The subjects in this study came from mainly native English-speaking families and they were enrolled in three language immersion programmes in suburban Washington, D.C. The study included students from Spanish-immersion classrooms, French-immersion classrooms, and Japanese immersion classrooms. A study which involved observation of fourteen language-immersion classrooms from kindergarten to Grade 6 was first undertaken to provide a description of the instructional context, to investigate the feasibility of introducing learning strategy instruction and to identify the learning strategies used by the more and less effective learners (p.303). Proficiency levels were arrived at through discussions between the researcher and the teachers and

a random sample of learners was selected among the most effective and the least effective learners. Teachers provided three tasks (for mathematics, reading and writing) which were used for think-aloud interviews. The types of tasks involved were, for example, a mathematical story problem, a narrative or expository reading text, and a writing prompt. All tasks were done in the target language as this was an immersion setting. The interview with each individual student lasted about twenty minutes. Preliminary results show a variety of strategies used in different ways by these subjects. Chamot states that, based on the data analyzed thus far, emerging conclusions indicate that many immersion students can describe their thinking processes. Some learners have difficulty in thinking aloud, whereas some children demonstrate metacognitive awareness of their own learning. In addition, some can describe and use the strategies they have been taught. Finally, more effective students generally choose more appropriate strategies for a task and demonstrate more flexibility in use of strategies than less effective students (p.304). Chamot concludes that the degree to which the learners in this study could describe their own thought processes and their learning would suggest that metacognitive awareness begins at

an early age.

This thesis will explore the strategy use of children who are ESL learners in a public school setting in the province of Quebec. Comparisons will be made between the children's strategies and those already identified in the studies reviewed here with adult and adolescent second language learners. This thesis will also examine strategy use among the children who are successful and unsuccessful language learners and the relationship between their strategy use or lack thereof and their success in learning ESL. Strategy assessment will be done following the model of the SILL studies described above with adult learners. For the present study the SILL has been adapted for use with children. An interview component will be added to this study to obtain more detailed information than the survey alone can provide. The interview protocols, which have also been adapted for children, were inspired by the Naiman et *al.* model described earlier in this review. The linguistic characteristics of an area like Quebec, the setting of the current study, closely resembles those of Puerto Rico, previously described in the Green and Oxford (1995) study cited above. Whatever similarities might emerge

between that study and the current one will be noted.

This study will fill the need of providing information about children's strategies for learning ESL in a regular public school system, and especially the language learning strategies germane to a setting like Quebec.

CHAPTER 3

Research design

3.1 The hypotheses:

In order to explore language learning strategies use among young children who are beginner ESL learners in Quebec, the following hypotheses were tested:

a) Strategies used by young children may be similar to or different from those identified in studies on adolescent and adult learners. Similarities are expected at the level of the more concrete cognitive strategies such as practice and repetition but it may be expected that there will be differences with regard to the more abstract learning strategies for developing cognitive processes, such as those related to grammar.

b) In general, more successful language learners will demonstrate different patterns of strategy use from

unsuccessful learners. This will depend on the circumstances, the nature of the material, and other factors;

c) More successful learners will select strategies that are more effective and appropriate for them than will unsuccessful language learners.

3.2 Method

This research project was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 involved a questionnaire survey study with a large number of pupils (Study 1) and Phase 2 involved an interview study conducted on a set of pupils representative of the survey group (Study 2).

3.3 Study 1: The survey study

This study, which involved the use of a questionnaire to survey the strategy use of young children, was conducted with learners enrolled in the regular ESL programme at four different primary schools. Subjects were selected on a random basis and parental

consent, as well as school board consent, were obtained prior to the administration of the questionnaire.

3.3.1 Subjects

The subjects were 107 Grade 5 students from four different primary schools located in four different towns on the South Shore of Montreal, Quebec. Five of these students were eliminated from the study because they did not complete the questionnaire. All the participating schools fall under the jurisdiction of the same school board, *la Commission scolaire Mont-Fort*, and the conditions for English instruction are fairly uniform from one school to the next.

The subjects were linguistically homogeneous, i.e. approximately ninety-nine percent Francophones. Ages ranged from 10-11 years old and there was an approximately equal number of males and females. The majority of the subjects had had little or no previous second language learning experience (except for one hour of English per week in Grade 4).

The Grade 5 level is approximately the mid-point in the study of ESL in Quebec primary schools. This grade is particularly well suited to the survey designed here since most of the pupils at this grade level have had one year to develop their skills in English. If they had developed any strategies in learning their second language, these would be manifested at this point.

For purposes of the study proficiency levels were defined as High, Mid or Low according to subjects' results on the criterion-referenced tests, *Going to the Zoo* and *Ziggy the Robot*. These two tests are administered routinely to all Grade 5 students in this school board. The former is given at the mid-point of the school year and the latter, towards the end of the school year, in early June. The English teachers in these schools hold meetings every year in order to discuss the evaluation criteria, grading, and administration procedures for these tests. In addition to the pupils' scores on the criterion-referenced measures above, teacher assessment of each student, in terms of success or lack thereof in accomplishing the tasks assigned in class was also considered in determining proficiency levels.

3.3.2 Instrument

The strategy assessment tool used in Study 1 was an adaptation of the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL) (Oxford, 1990). The SILL is a structured 5-point scale questionnaire based on the following responses to each strategy item: never or almost never true of me, generally not true of me, somewhat true of me, generally true of me and always or almost always true of me (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). This tool is a self-scoring, paper-and-pencil survey. The original version of the SILL (5.1 Version for English Speakers Learning a New Language) was an 80-item questionnaire. This version was adapted by Oxford to produce a 50-item questionnaire, the SILL 7.0 (Version for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English). The SILL contains the following six broad strategy categories: Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, Social. The items contained therein are self-explanatory. The SILL has been the principal instrument in more than forty studies, including twelve dissertations and theses which have involved approximately 8000-8500 language learners.

This instrument has also been tested for construct validity (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

For this study, the 50-item SILL was modified by the researcher for use with children from the target population. In the modification the six broad strategy categories found in the SILL were maintained but the number of strategy items was reduced to thirty because of the age of the learners. The ratio for each type of strategy was worked out and maintained. Efforts were made, as much a possible, to respect the original principles of the SILL. Before the final set of items were selected, each item in the SILL was analyzed by re-reading the description of the strategy to which it referred in Oxford's seminal book on this issue (Oxford, 1990). During the process of adapting the SILL, the researcher contacted Oxford to find out the criteria she used when she adapted the 80-item SILL 5.1, to produce the 50-item SILL 7.0. The advice she gave was taken into consideration for this adaptation.

The criteria used in making the questionnaire originally designed for adults appropriate for use with children were

simplicity, comprehensibility to children, random selection among various strategy items which could be considered redundant, taking into account those items that were perhaps the most clearly expressed. Things that were particularly relevant to the age group were added, and concrete, rather than abstract items were preferred. The following examples will demonstrate how the questionnaire was adapted for children.: Item 12: *I practice the sounds of English* (p.295) was changed to *Je pratique souvent les sons de l'alphabet en anglais* (I often practise the sounds of the letters of the alphabet in English); *I use the English words I know in different ways* and Item 20 *I try to find patterns in English* both referred to attention to form. In the version for children, the concept of attention to form was expressed in the following way: *J'essaie de découvrir des règles de grammaire de la langue anglaise* (I try to discover rules of grammar in English). Item 16 *I read for pleasure in English* was changed to *Je lis des livres en anglais ou je travaille avec des logiciels en anglais à l'ordinateur* (I read English books or I work with English programmes on the computer). Examples were sometimes added to give the children additional information about the item. One such case was Item 29 *If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or*

phrase that means the same thing. This item was changed to *Si je ne trouve pas l'expression que je veux utiliser en anglais, je cherche une autre manière de dire ce que je veux dire (synonyme, description, etc.)* (If I can't think of the expression I want to use in English, I try to find another way of saying what I want to say (synonym, description, etc.). Students were asked to respond using the following five-point scale: 1) Never or almost never, 2) Generally not the case, 3) Sometimes, 4) Often, 5) Always or almost always.

A brief background questionnaire was included on the answer sheet given to the children. This background questionnaire included questions seeking information about *age, sex, grade, native language.* Questions on ability were not included because the researcher felt that any probing into the children's ability and performance might influence their answers. In the interest of maintaining the validity of the instrument, assessment of proficiency was based on the test results and teacher evaluations described above. Information regarding subjects' exposure to English outside of the classroom was obtained from items within the body of the questionnaire itself, such as: *Je regarde la télévision (ou j'écoute la radio) en anglais* (I watch

television {or I listen to the radio} in English).

The resulting 30-item SILL (henceforth the Children's SILL) was translated into French, using the Oxford translated French version of her 50-item SILL (Oxford, personal communication), with the appropriate modification for Quebec speakers of French, and for children. The final translation was then checked by a native Francophone teacher from Quebec for authenticity. It was then translated back into English by an impartial Anglophone teacher to check the validity of the translation and to guarantee that no aspect of the spirit of the SILL (Oxford 1990) had been lost in the translation.

A first draft of the Children's SILL was developed and field-tested with this researcher's Grade 5 pupils in the previous year. As a result of insights arising from the field-testing, appropriate modifications were introduced to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then finalized and field-tested by a colleague at a nearby school from the same school board. The aim was to guarantee validity and facilitate comprehension of the questionnaire

by the target clientele. Reports from the teacher who participated in this field-test indicated that the questionnaire, in general, was self-explanatory, and that administration time was approximately twenty minutes in each of his classes. Further modifications were then made to the questionnaire to provide examples to clarify the few items for which explanations were deemed necessary during this field-test.

For the present study, copies of the questionnaire were administered to the children by the ESL teacher of each participating school. Administration time was approximately twenty minutes. The items were self-explanatory and the teachers were cautioned to refrain from going through the questionnaire item by item, or giving too many explanations. The purpose for this caution was to ensure that a variety of interpretations would be avoided on the part of the different teachers. The large number of subjects involved in the field-test helped the researcher to anticipate many of the questions that could be asked by the subjects regarding various aspects of the questionnaire and there was confidence that a majority of the items were clear. In the case of a few that were anticipated to cause some difficulty in comprehension for some children, examples were

provided to clarify them. An example of a question which arose consistently during the field-testing was regarding the meaning of Item 1, "*J'établis un lien entre les nouvelles notions que j'apprends en anglais et mes connaissances en général*" ("I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English", (Oxford, 1990). An example given to simplify and clarify this item was, "When you learn about space travel in English, do you think of all that you know already about space travel?" All teachers who administered the questionnaire were given the same examples and asked to repeat them to the students.

3.3.3 Data gathering procedure and analysis

With the authorization of school principals and school board officials, the questionnaires were distributed to the pupils by their ESL teachers during a regular English period. Students were advised that they were not being tested and that their responses would not affect their course grades. They were told that the purpose of this research was simply to find out more about the way in which children learn ESL.

Scoring procedure:

1) Proficiency: Subjects were given a mean score for their results on two criterion-referenced tests, *Ziggy the Robot* and *Going to the Zoo.* Scoring of these tests follows a four-level grading system. *R+ (réussi +)*, the highest possible score, implies that a student has surpassed the criteria for the expected standard, *R (réussi)* means that a student has met the criteria for the expected standard, *r (partiellement réussi)* indicates that a student has partially met the criteria for the expected standard and finally, *D* means that a student has not met the criteria for the expected standard. For the purposes of this study, *R+* was given a value of 4, *R* was given a value of 3, *r* was given a value of 2 and *D* was given a value of 1. Students' mean scores from these two measures, in addition to their teachers' evaluations, were taken to constitute their PROFICIENCY scores. The original four-point grading system was further collapsed to make three levels of proficiency: High (2.5 to 4), Mid (1.5 to 2) and Low (1).

2) Answers to the questionnaire: Each student's individual

response (1 to 5 on the 5-point scale) for each item on the Children's SILL was noted. Later, each group of children's mean responses for each type of strategy category was calculated. This was done by taking the sum of each group's responses for all the items in each category, divided by the number of items involved. These scores were then subjected to statistical analyses.

Statistical tests:

A three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the subjects' overall mean scores on each category of strategy used. The factors examined were GENDER (Male, Female), PROFICIENCY (Low, Mid, High), and CATEGORY OF STRATEGIES USED (Memory strategies, Cognitive strategies, Compensation strategies, Metacognitive strategies, Affective strategies, Social strategies). Later, three-way ANOVAs were also performed on the subjects' mean scores on the individual strategies that made up the specific categories. The factors examined in these later ANOVAs were GENDER, PROFICIENCY, and the appropriate INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS.

In the following section, the results of overall ANOVAs on the six broad strategy categories will first be described. Then, the categories which turn out to be the most frequently used by the children will be described. An overview will also be given of the results obtained in the other categories that were not frequently used. The reason for describing the less frequently reported categories is this: Although a given category may not have been used frequently, nevertheless, when it was used, some individual strategy items within the category may have been used more frequently than others. Information such as this could shed useful light on the children's pattern of language learning strategy use.

3.3.4 Results

Analysis of Overall Strategy Use

The six categories of strategies: Table 1 shows the results of the ANOVA performed on the subjects' overall mean scores on the different categories of strategies.

Table 1: ANOVA Summary Table

Sources of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p
Gender (G)	1	.56	.57	.215	
Proficiency (P)	2	.08	.04	.016	
G x P	2	1.13	.57	.219	
Error	98	253.21	2.58		
Strategies (S)	5	209.65	41.93	105.16	***
G x S	5	3.05	.61	1.53	
P x S	10	10.11	1.01	2.53	**
G x P x S	10	4.35	.44	1.09	
Error	490	195.38	.40		

** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

The table shows no significant GENDER effects (F = .215, n.s), and no significant PROFICIENCY effects (F = .016, n.s.). There was a significant STRATEGIES effect (F=105.16, $p < .001$). A significant PROFICIENCY X STRATEGIES interaction effect was also obtained (F = 2.53, $p < .006$).

The post hoc Tukey test of significance conducted on the students' mean responses on the STRATEGIES factor showed that the

students, in general, claimed significantly more frequent use of the Compensation strategy category (4.72) than the Affective (3.77), $p < .01$. The Affective strategy category, in turn, was reported to be significantly more frequently used than the Metacognitive strategy category (3.45), $p < .05$. The Metacognitive strategy category was, in turn, reported to be significantly more frequently used than the Cognitive strategy category (3.13), $p < .05$. The Memory and the Social strategy categories were not reported to be used significantly differently from the Cognitive strategy category. To sum up, among the six categories of strategies used, the following pattern emerged: Compensation > Affective > Metacognitive > Cognitive, Social, Memory.

Further analysis of the PROFICIENCY by STRATEGIES interaction data showed that proficiency affected the subjects' responses on the Affective category, ($F=4.41$, $p < .02$). Figure 1 below graphically shows these results.

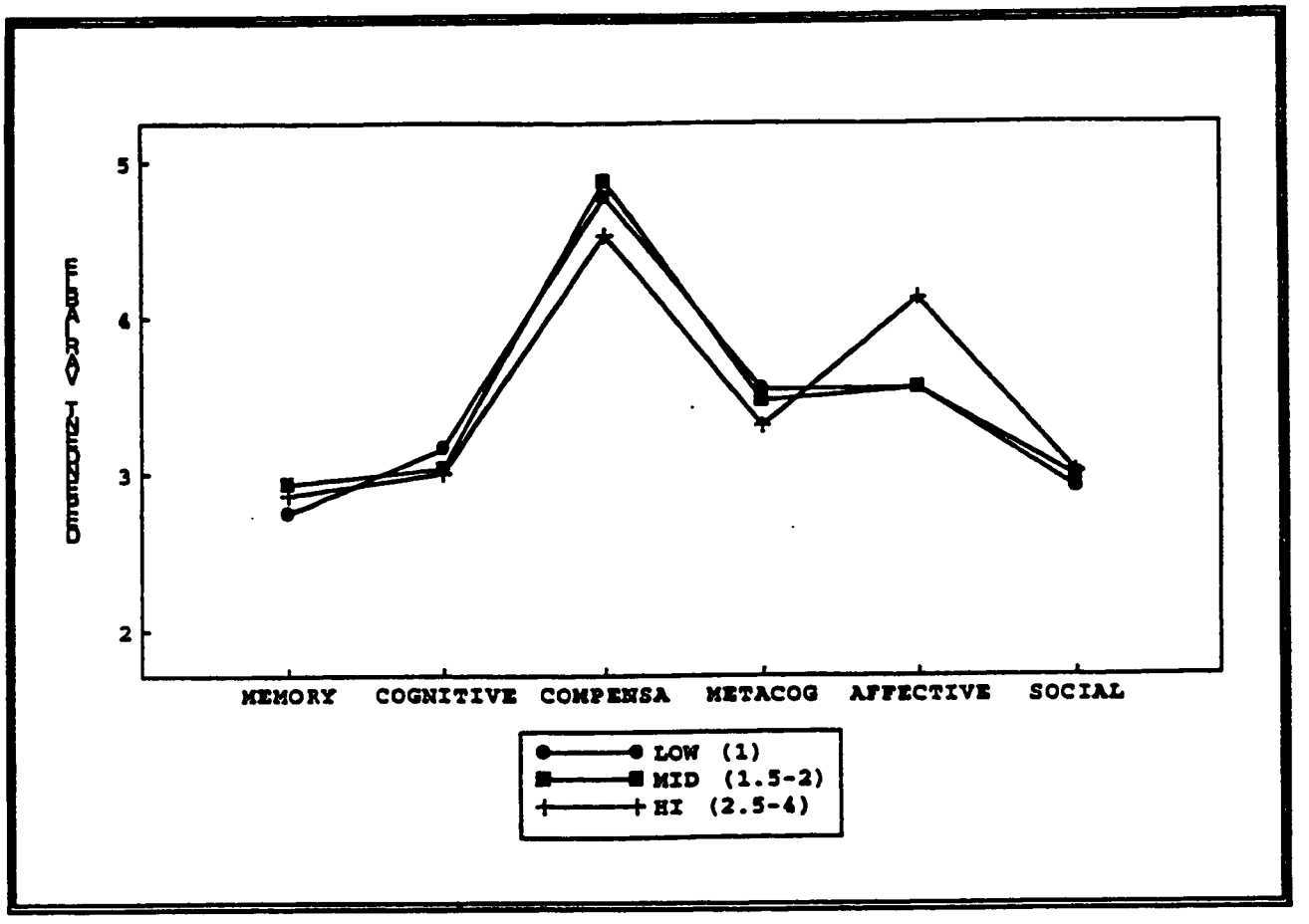


Figure 1: The scores of the three groups of subjects (LOW, MID, HIGH) on the six categories of strategy use.

This figure shows that the three proficiency groups gave similar responses on the Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive and Social Categories, but on the Affective category, the HIGH proficiency group reported significantly more frequent use of this category (4.10) over both the MID proficiency group (3.53) and the LOW proficiency group (3.52), $p < .05$).

Analysis of Use of Individual Strategy Items

The more frequently used strategy categories

Compensation Strategy Category

Because the subjects reported most frequent use of the Compensation strategy category, this category was further analyzed in order to find out which of the individual strategy items (ISIs) comprising this category were favoured by the children. The Compensation strategy category was composed of four individual strategy items. These were:

1. *Lorsque j'entends un nouveau mot en anglais j'essaie d'en deviner la signification en m'aidant du reste de la phrase (GUESS).*
2. *Lorsque j'ai de la difficulté à me faire comprendre en anglais, je fais des gestes pour exprimer ce que je veux dire (GESTURES).*
3. *Lorsque je ne sais pas un mot que je veux dire en anglais, je demande de l'aide (HELP).*
4. *Si je ne trouve pas l'expression que je veux utiliser en anglais, je cherche une autre manière de dire ce que je veux dire (synonyme, description, etc.) (CIRCUMLOCUTION).*

An analysis of variance was conducted on the respondents' scores on the Compensation category only. The factors were GENDER (male and female), PROFICIENCY (High, Mid and Low) and INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (Guess, Gestures, Help, and Circumlocution). Results indicated a significant effect only for INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (F=18.58, $p < .001$. There were no GENDER (F=3.09, n.s.) or PROFICIENCY effects (F= .074, n.s.), signifying that both male and female subjects, regardless of their proficiency, showed a similar pattern of use of the individual items within the compensation category.

Table 2: ANOVA Summary Table: Compensation category

Sources of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p
Gender (g)	1	8.21	8.21	3.09	
Proficiency (p)	2	.39	.19	.07	
G x P	2	8.29	4.149	1.56	
Error	96	255.38	2.69		
Category	3	62.59	20.87	18.58	***
G x C	3	2.16	.74	.65	
P x C	6	6.48	1.08	.97	
G x P x C	6	9.51	1.59	1.41	
Error	288	323.399	1.12	.98	

*** $P < .001$

Tukey post hoc tests on the INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS factor showed that both Guess (4.04) and Help (3.93) were reported to be significantly more frequently used than both Circumlocution (3.16) and Gestures (3.08).

Affective Strategy Category

Since the Affective strategy category of strategies was the second most frequently used in the reports of the three groups (High, Mid, Low), and since proficiency differences also emerged on this category, the subjects' responses on this category were further analyzed in order to find out which of the individual items comprising this category were used more frequently by the children. The Affective category involved the following items:

1. *Lorsque l'idée de m'exprimer en anglais me cause du stress, j'essaie de me détendre (RELAX).*
2. *Je suis prêt à prendre des risques: deviner le sens d'un mot ou d'une phrase, essayer de parler en anglais même si je fais des fautes (RISKS).*

3 . *Lorsque je réussis, je me félicite (SELF-PRAISE).*

A separate ANOVA was conducted on the respondents' scores on the individual items in the Affective category only, in order to determine which individual strategy item was used more frequently by each proficiency group.The factors were GENDER (Male and Female), PROFICIENCY (High, Mid, Low) and INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (Relax, Risk, and Self-praise).

Table 3: ANOVA Summary Table: Part E: Affective category

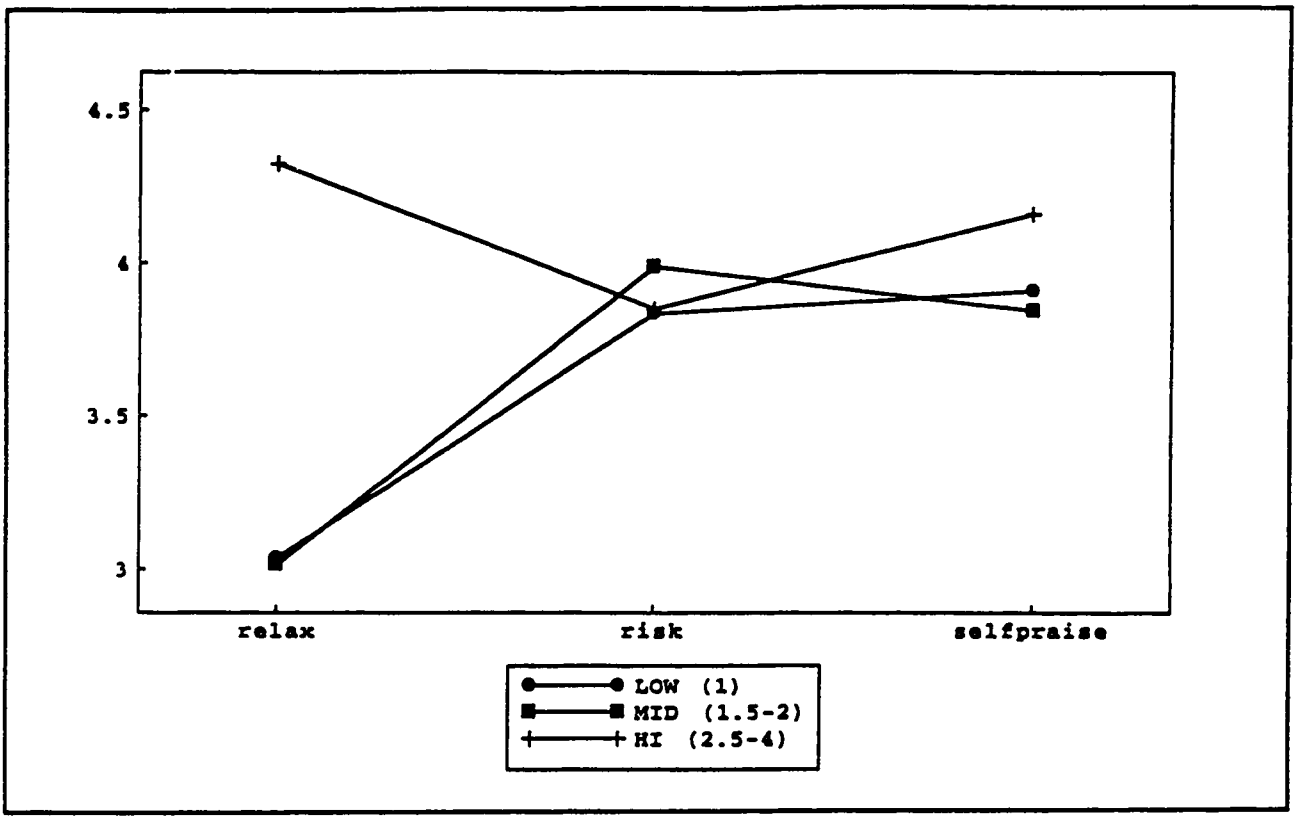
Sources of variation	df Squares	Sum of Squares	Mean	F	p
Gender (G)	1	1.67	1.66	.73	
Proficiency(P)	2	14.76	7.39	3.26	*
G x P	2	4.73	2.36	1.04	
Error	96	217.66	2.27		
Strategies (S)	2	12.87	6.44	4.41	**
G x S	2	3.43	1.72	1.18	
P x S	4	19.33	4.83	3.31	**
G x P x S	4	3.26	.83	.56	
Error	192	280.16	1.50		

* p <. 042 ** p < .02

The results indicate a significant PROFICIENCY effect (F=3.26., $p.< .05$), a significant INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS effect (F=4.41, $p.< .02$) as well as a PROFICIENCY by INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS effect (F=3.31 $p < .02$).

Tukey post hoc test of significance on the PROFICIENCY X INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS interaction data also revealed that the three proficiency groups differed significantly in terms of their reported frequency of use of the Relax item ($p < .01$). Figure 2 below shows the results of this analysis. This figure shows that the High proficiency group reported more frequent use of the Relax item ($p < .01$) than the two other groups (Mid and Low). There was no significant difference among the three groups on the Risk and Self-praise items. These results suggest that the ability to relax when one experiences anxiety in expressing oneself in a second language may be related to success in language learning.

Figure 2: Affective Category: Individual Strategy Items



The Metacognitive Strategy Category:

The Metacognitive category, which was the third choice among the children's preferred strategy categories, was made up of the following individual strategy items: a) Organizing time to study English (not just for exams) (*Plan study time),* b) Looking for occasions to practise English (*Create opportunities*), c) Evaluating

one's progress (*Self-evaluate*), d) Listening attentively when one is spoken to in English (*Listen attentively*), e) Analyzing and learning from one's errors (*Error analysis*). A three-way analysis of variance was conducted on the respondents' scores on the individual items in the Metacognitive category. The factors were GENDER (male and female), PROFICIENCY (High, Mid and Low) and INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (*Plan study time, Create opportunities, Self-evaluate, Listen attentively, Error analysis*). Results indicate only a significant INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS effect ($F=38.50$, $p < .001$). There were no GENDER ($F=.78$, $p > .08$, n.s.) or PROFICIENCY ($F=.92$, $p > .4$, n.s.) effects, signifying that male and female subjects, regardless of their proficiency, did not differ significantly in their use of the individual items within the Metacognitive category.

Tukey post hoc tests on the INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS factor showed that *Listening attentively* (4.41) was used significantly more frequently than *Error analysis* (3.89), ($p <$ .05), which was in turn used more frequently than *Self-evaluate* (3.22), *Create opportunities* (3.04) and *Plan study time* (2.67) $p < .01$. *Self-evaluate* (3.22) was also significantly more frequently used than *Plan study*

time (2.67) ($p <$ .05).

The less frequently used strategy categories

In order to better understand the pattern of strategy use by children and to find out more details about how their strategy use differs from that of adults and adolescents, an analysis of the subjects' use of individual strategy items in the categories reported to be significantly less frequently used, (Cognitive, Memory, and Social Categories) was also carried out. As mentioned above, even if the children reported infrequent use of each of these categories as a whole, it might still prove interesting to see, when they were used at all, which specific individual strategy items were used more frequently than others.

Cognitive Strategy Category:

This category was composed of the following items: a) Finding opportunities outside of school to practise English (*Extra-curricular*), b) Practising English sounds *(Practise sounds)*, c) Paying attention to grammatical rules *(Grammar)*, d) Reading books, playing computer games (*Reading and Use computer*), e) Practising with parents

(*Practise with parents)*, f) Imitating the pronunciation of native speakers *(Imitate)*, g) Repeating new expressions (*Repetition*), h) Practising naturalistically, such as watching television *(Watch television)*, i) Comparing languages, for example, using cognates) *(Using Cognates)*, and j) Trying to understand the sense of what one reads or hears without resorting to word-for-word translation *(Infer meaning)*.

To find out which of these items were reported by the subjects to be used more frequently than others, an analysis of variance was conducted on the respondents' scores on the cognitive category. The factors were GENDER (male and female), PROFICIENCY (High, Mid and Low) and INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (i.e., *Extra-curricular, Practise sounds, Grammar, Reading and computer, Practise with parents, Imitate, Repetition, Watch television, Cognates and Infer meaning).* Results indicate a significant effect only for INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (F=16.52, p <.001). There were no GENDER (F=.500, p > .51) or PROFICIENCY (F=1.60 p >. 2) effects, signifying that both male and female subjects, regardless of their proficiency, showed a similar pattern of use of the individual items within the Cognitive

category.

Tukey post hoc tests on the COGNITIVE strategy category FACTOR showed that individual strategy items such as: *Infer meaning* (3.94) and *Use cognates* (3.72) were each used significantly more frequently than *Practise with parents* (3.00), *Read and use computer* (2.99), *Grammar* (2.54) *Practise sounds of English* (2.51), and *Seek extra-curricular opportunities* (2.42), $p < .01$, in each case. *Infer meaning* and *Use cognates* were, in addition, significantly more frequently used than *Reading* (2.99) and *Practise with parents* (3.00) $p < .05$, in each case. There was no significant difference in the reported usage of *Infer meaning, Using cognates* (3.72) and *Watching TV* (3.49), but all three were significantly more frequently used than *Grammar, Practise sounds* of alphabet, and *Seek extra-curricular opportunities* to practise. The differences between the subjects' scores on *Imitate pronunciation* (3.28) and these last three mentioned individual cognitive strategy items were also significant, $p < .01$, in each case. The position of the other cognitive strategy items is ambiguous as they are neither clearly significantly different from or similar to many of the above-mentioned individual strategy

items.

From the above result, it appears that the most frequently used of these low frequency cognitive strategy items are *Infer meaning, Using cognates, and Watching TV.* The least frequently used are *Grammar, Practising the sounds of the alphabet, Seeking extra-curricular activities* for practice. There was no significant difference among the frequency of the last three strategy items mentioned.

Social Strategy Category:

The social category was also reported to be infrequently used. This category was composed of the following items: a) Becoming informed about the culture of English-speaking people *(Learn culture)*, b) Working with classmates (*Cooperative learning),* c) Asking the speaker to speak more slowly and asking for clarification when one does not understand what is being said *(Asking questions*). An analysis of variance was conducted on the respondents' scores on this category, in order to find out, when the social category was used at all, which items were used more frequently than others. The factors focused upon in the ANOVA were GENDER (male and female),

PROFICIENCY (High, Mid and Low) and INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (e.g. *Culture, Cooperative learning, Asking questions*). Results indicated a significant effect only for INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (F=20,48; p<.001). There were no GENDER (F= 1.55 , $p > .20$, n.s.) or PROFICIENCY (F=.11, $p > .85$) effects, signifying that both male and female subjects, regardless of their proficiency, showed a similar pattern of use of the individual items within the Social category.

Tukey post hoc tests showed the following results: c) *Asking questions* (3.64), was significantly more frequently used than *cooperative learning* (2.71), $p < .01$ and *culture* (2.59) , $p <$. 05.

Memory Strategy Category:

The category of strategies reported to be least used by these children was the Memory category. This category was made up of the following items: a) Miming words to in order to remember them *(Mime)*, b) Using mental images to remember words (*Imagery)*, c) Associating English sounds with sounds familiar sounds *(Associating sounds)*, d) Establishing links between new notions in English and what is already known *(Prior knowledge)*, and e) Reviewing English lessons often *(Review)*. An analysis of variance was conducted on

the respondents' scores on this category, in order to find out, when the Memory category was used at all, which items were used more frequently than others. The factors focused upon in the ANOVA were GENDER (male and female), PROFICIENCY (High, Mid and Low) and INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS (e.g. Mime, Imagery, Associating sounds, Prior knowledge and Review.) Results indicate only a significant INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY ITEMS effect ($F= 28,96$, $p < .001$). There were no GENDER ($F= .75$, $p > .38$) or PROFICIENCY ($F= .27$, $p> .75$) effects, signifying that both male and female subjects, regardless of their proficiency, showed a similar pattern of use of the individual items within the memory category.

Tukey post hoc tests showed that *Review* (3.42), *Prior knowledge* (3.37), and *Sounds* (3.17) were significantly more frequently used than *Imagery* (2.27) and *Mime* (2.02) ($p < .05$).

The results reported here indicate that, according to the pattern of strategy use developed by these young learners thus far, the only Direct strategy group favoured by the children was the Compensation strategy category, which was reported to be

frequently used by learners at all proficiency levels (High, Mid, Low). The Cognitive and Memory categories, also of the Direct strategy group, were not frequently used. Among the Indirect strategy groups, the Affective strategy category was reported to be the most frequently used, followed by the Metacognitive strategy category. The Social strategy category was not frequently used. There were no GENDER differences on any of the categories of strategies. To sum up, the results of the study indicate that differences in strategies used by children and those already identified in studies with adult and adolescent learners, were found in the order of preference of strategy categories. Differences between successful learners and unsuccessful learners were found on the Affective category only.

3.4 Study 2: The interview study

Introduction

In order to reach a better understanding of language learning strategies use among young children who are beginner ESL learners in Quebec, interviews were conducted with a small sample of these

children. These interviews were recorded. The protocols were transcribed and subjected to qualitative analysis. The primary aim of this analysis was similar to that of Study 1, the survey study, namely, to determine whether Francophone children from Quebec use language learning strategies in their study of ESL; to see what differences might exist between the strategies of children and those of adults and adolescents; and finally, to determine whether there is any identifiable relationship between strategies use and success in learning ESL at this level. However, attempts were also made to find out more about the children whose strategies were being probed, in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of their strategy use. It was hoped that the results of this study would provide further insight into the findings of Study 1.

Written parental permission was a condition for participating in the interviews, and School Board authorization was obtained prior to beginning the study. Subjects were advised that the interview was not a test and that the ideas expressed would not in any way influence their grades. They were told that the purpose of this research was simply to find out more about the way in which

children learn ESL and that they would assist the teacher if they simply spoke frankly about their language learning experience and behaviours. They were assured that their names would not be disclosed. Interviews were recorded and subjects were advised that they could stop at any time.

3.4.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study were 20 pupils taken from the same general population of learners who participated in Study 1, the survey study. These subjects came from this researcher's Grade 5 classes. A decision was made to use these pupils for the following reasons:

a) having these pupils made it easier to arrange parental permission and to adjust to the children's schedules; and

b) it was expected that the students' familiarity and comfortable relationship with the teacher would help alleviate the stress factor associated with interviews. That is, it was felt that the children would speak openly and frankly if they were interviewed by someone they knew and trusted.

These pupils were similar to the general population of learners who participated in Study 1 in terms of linguistic background, age, previous language learning experience, and proficiency levels. For this study, the subjects selected were nine of the most successful and six of the least successful candidates among these students. A group of five average learners also participated.

Proficiency: Subjects were again selected and classified as High, Mid or Low, on the basis of their results on the criterion-referenced test, *Ziggy the Robot.* Subjects were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

a) Students with the highest score (R+, which indicates that a student achieved the *seuil de réussite* (the criteria for success) on each of the eleven question categories on the exam) were considered as successful learners. One subject (Subject #2) achieved the *seuil de réussite* on ten out of the eleven categories. She was considered successful because she arrived at the beginning of the fifth grade from another town, where she had had no exposure to English and

was far behind the other students at the beginning of the year. Within two terms she had surpassed most of the students in her class in English comprehension.

b) Students with the lowest score (D, which indicates that a student achieved the *seuil de réussite* on fewer than six of the eleven question categories measured) were considered unsuccessful. One subject with a score of *r*, which indicates that he/she had just barely achieved the *seuil de réussite* on six question categories, was also considered unsuccessful. This subject volunteered to participate in the study and was accepted as a replacement for another subject who declined the invitation.

c) Students with an average score (R, which indicates that a student achieved the *seuil de réussite* on seven to ten of the eleven objectives measured) were considered average. This group was not part of the originally planned sample, as the objective of this study was to find out the differences between the two extreme groups (the successful group and the unsuccessful group). Pupils who fell into this group, however, volunteered to be interviewed and so could not

be refused. Initially, it was planned that their results would not be used but they were later included because their comments were interesting and provided insights for the comparison between the High and Low proficiency groups.

Teacher observation of student performance in the classroom also confirmed the results obtained from the measure described above.

3.4.2 Instrument

The strategy assessment tool used for the pupil interviews consisted of questionnaires inspired by the Naiman, Frohlich, Stern and Todesco (1978) model. These included:

a) a background questionnaire to obtain information about students' age, gender, native language, and previous language study.

b) an oral open-ended questionnaire regarding strategies use pertaining to their language learning, and in addition,

their goals and motivation concerning the learning of their second language.

The questions for the interview were adapted for children following similar criteria to those used in the adaptation of the SILL (Oxford, 1990) for children, as described above. The background questionnaire in this case, was however, more detailed. The relationship of trust which existed between the researcher and the 20 subjects in this study made it possible for the teacher to ask more questions and to probe each deeper than would normally be expected in an interview situation with children.

As in the Naiman et *al.* (1978) questionnaire, there was a semi-directed part and a directed part of the interview questions used here. In Naiman et *al.* (1978) the semi-directed part consisted of questions asking the interviewees to describe their second language learning experiences (including the kind or number of languages learned or attempted), the age at which the learning took place, the educational and socio-cultural context in which the language was acquired, and the strategies or techniques used or

developed. In the directed part of the interview subjects were asked to put themselves in a hypothetical language learning situation and to answer specific questions concerning language learning. It was anticipated that the subjects would shed some light on their ideas about language learning, taking into account their past experiences and their present views on the subject.

For the present study, both the directed and the semi-directed portions of the questionnaire were modified in the following way: In the semi-directed part, interviewees were asked to describe their second language experience, including the age at which they started learning English, the socio-cultural context in which they were learning it (i.e. family and neighbourhood experiences affecting their learning of ESL), their attitude towards their second language, and the strategies they had developed and were using to assist their learning. In the directed part, interviewees were reminded that they were in the process of preparing for the end-of-year test, *Going to the Zoo.* They were shown the appropriate revision sheets (copies of which they already had in their possession), and asked to describe how they were currently using those sheets to prepare for their test.

In the Naiman et *al.* (1978) study, the subjects all (except one) had university degrees and were interviewed by two researchers for one to two hours. In the present study, subjects were interviewed by this researcher alone and the interview time was reduced to fifteen to twenty minutes because of the age of these children. This was approximately the same amount of time that Chamot (1996) devoted to interviews with children about the learning strategies they used in the immersion classes she examined.

3.4.3 Analysis: The interview questions were designed to gather different categories of information from the pupils. These categories were: *Biographical data, attitude and motivation, preferred learning style and strategies use.* The responses of the students to each question in each category were transcribed and subjected to both a qualitative (e.g. content analysis) and a quantitative analysis.

Qualitative analysis: The students' responses to each question were examined for their content. Then, the responses were put into different categories on the basis of their shared meanings. For

example, if to a question such as: *Do you watch television?* the students responded "Yes", "Every day", "Sure. I love television", these responses being all positive were recorded under a category representing the shared positive aspect of their answers. Student responses such as "No", "Not very often", "Not really. I just watch French programmes" being all negative, were recorded under a category representing a shared negative response.

Categories of answers were generally determined on the basis of the information the students gave. For example, responses to the question, "Do you try to find occasions to speak English?" were originally categorized in the following way: 1 *Yes*, *2 No, 3 Occasionally.* However, they were later re-categorized as: 1 *Yes (personal choice), 2 No, 3 Occasionally (no choice involved), 4 Regularly (no choice involved).* These answer categories were established when it was found that some students who responded *Yes* to this question revealed, when asked to elaborate, that their parents or grandparents created these occasions for them, whereas others clearly looked for these occasions themselves. The response Subject 7 gave to this question typifies the self-directed quality

which was evident in the responses of some students. His response to this question was:

> (Translation) *Yes, when I'm with my friend, A----* (a bilingual child at the school), *I ask him, "Can we speak English?" ... you see.*

Quantitative analysis: For each question, the number of times a certain category of response was given by the pupils in each of the targeted proficiency groups (Mid, High, Low) was noted. Later, the percentages of pupils in each group giving each category of responses per question were calculated. Based on these percentages, trends regarding preferred strategies use of the High, Mid and Low groups were identified and described. Percentages of each group's results were then calculated.

3.4.4 Results:

The results of the qualitative study are described in the following order: *Biographical data, attitude and motivation, the affective factor, preferred learning style and strategies use.*

Students' responses will be printed in translated form (English), instead of in French, the original language of the interview.

Biographical data

In the biographical section of the questionnaire, students were asked questions about their birthplace (Question 1), the length of time they had resided in the city (Question 2) the languages spoken at home (Question 3), whether either parent spoke English (Question 4), the languages spoken in their neighbourhood (Question 5), and the age at which they started learning English, formally or informally (Question 6). Of these questions, Question 1 and Question 6 will be focused upon. Question 1 will be focused upon because it provides information about the homogeneity of the students, and Question 6, because it demonstrates the self-initiated strategies used by some of the successful learners.

Birthplace: (Question 1)

A majority of the interviewees (55%) were born in the area

where their school was located, and had always lived there, whereas 45% were born elsewhere in the province of Quebec but had moved into the area at some point during their primary school years. These learners were homogeneous in terms of language as they were all Francophones from Quebec who grew up in towns where the population was mainly French Quebecers. Most of the subjects at this point had had very little exposure to English.

Start of English Study (Question 6)

Question 6 asked when the students started learning English. Scoring of this question was originally expected to be: Grade 4 - 1; previous to Grade 4 - 2; later than Grade 4 - 3 (as it was anticipated that most learners at this school began their study of English at the Grade 4 level). However, careful analysis of the transcripts revealed that the students could be classified according to a definite trend of being self-directed; that is to say, of taking some initiative in their own learning. In answer to this question, Subject 1 clearly demonstrated self-directed learning by saying:

Well, I started a bit before the others because I have always

learnt things before the others. So, I started around the middle of Grade 3.

(Interviewer: How?) Well, I asked my mother and then we started learning words a little bit, you see.

Other pupils showed signs of being other-directed in terms of English learning: the steps they took to improve their language learning were initiated by others such as parents or grandparents. These learners had not at this point, of their own volition, become actively involved in their own learning. One subject (Subject 4) had an Anglophone father but she could not speak English. In fact, she received a score of *r* on her test, which signifies that she only partially achieved the objectives set on this measure for Francophone students learning English at the Grade 5 level. Her answer to Question 6 was that she started learning English at home around the age of seven or eight, but this was not of her own volition. It is interesting to note that to all the questions this subject was asked about learning English outside of school, she always prefaced her answer with *My father ..., My grandfather....*She often repeated, "*My father (or my grandfather) wants me to learn it.*" To capture more

fully the information yielded by this interview question, the originally planned three-point category answers were replaced by those in Table 3.

Table 3: Start of English study (Question 6)

	Grade 4	Prior to grade 4 (no choice)	Later than grade 4	Prior to grade 4 (personal choice)
High (n=9)	44%	22%	0%	33%
Average (n=5)	60%	20%	0%	20%
Low (n=6)	66%	16%	16%	0%

Table 3 indicates that one student started English later than Grade 4. This student recently moved into the area from another city where students start studying English in Grade 5. This subject experienced difficulty with the language. The table shows that 55% of the successful learners started English prior to Grade 4. A more interesting observation, however, is that of the five subjects who started English prior to Grade 4, three were self-initiated (Subjects 1, 5 and 20), in the sense that they took steps such as asking their

parents to start teaching them English prior to Grade 4. A fourth successful learner (Subject 7) reported being other-initiated at first but later, self-directed. He hinted at this developing self-directed quality in his response to Question 6, and he confirmed it later in the interview, with his answers to other questions:

(Question 6) *Well, I started to speak English - it's my parents ...okay ... because before Grade 4, they knew that I was going to learn English and that's it .. my parents said to me, 'Try to make an effort to learn English' . And since then, I started watching English television programmes, so that's it. I started speaking English more and more."*

Amount of time studying English (Question 7)

Students were then asked about the amount of time they spent on the studying English (Question 7). Table 4 presents a breakdown of what the students replied to this question.

Table 4 - Amount of time studying English (Question 7)

	2 hours in school	More than the two hours in school	Sometimes more than the two hours in school
High (n=9)	0%	89%	11%
Average (n=5)	20%	80%	-
Low (n=6)	83%	17%	-

Table 4 indicates that the successful learners in this study devoted more time to the study of their second language than the unsuccessful learners. 89% of the successful learners claimed to have devoted more time than the two hours in school studying English, and 11% said they sometimes did. On the other hand, only 17% of the unsuccessful learners reported doing so. The successful learners reported doing home study regularly and, in general, they also said that they engaged in a variety of activities which promote language acquisition, such as watching television, taking advantage of every opportunity to speak English, playing in English with their peers and practising with their parents. We shall now examine the question of their media exposure in their responses to Question 8.

Media exposure (Question 8)

In Question 8 the same trend was observed as in Question 7. The students were asked whether they engaged in activities that gave them exposure to English outside of school (through the media, such as radio or television). For example, they were asked whether they listened to the radio or watched television in English. Table 5 shows the pupils' answers to this question.

Table 5 - Media exposure in English (Question 8)

	Yes	No	Occasionally
High (n=9)	100%	-	-
Average (n=5)	80%	-	20%
Low (n=6)	50%	33%	16%

As the results in Table 5 show, 80-100% of the more successful learners took advantage of these available media, whereas only 50% of the unsuccessful learners did. This suggests that the successful

learners were more likely than the unsuccessful learners to employ strategies involving naturalistic practice, which, as suggested in the literature (Green and Oxford, 1995), are important strategies for second language learning. This observation supports the first part of hypothesis c, which suggested that successful learners would select strategies which were more effective than unsuccessful learners.

Perceived ability in French and Mathematics (Question 12)

The final question to gain insight into these subjects' background dealt with their perceived success or lack thereof in French and Mathematics (Question 12). It was felt that their perceived success in school could have some effect on their self-esteem, which, in turn, could influence their attitude towards learning English in school. The results indicate that 100% of the High and Average proficiency learners reported that they got good grades in French and Mathematics, whereas none of the Low proficiency learners perceived themselves as being successful in these subjects. Of the Low proficiency group, 67% said they did not receive good grades, whereas 33% said they received average grades in these

subjects.

Perceptions of self-efficacy and attitude towards learning an L2

It was felt that the subjects' own perception of their abilities and success or lack thereof in their study of English could also have some effect on the degree of self-confidence they would bring to the task of learning their second language. They were therefore asked whether they found English difficult or easy (Question 14) and whether they considered themselves as being strong or weak in English (Question 15).

Results of the analysis of the children's responses to Question 14 indicate a trend showing that the High proficiency group generally found English easy (67%), whereas the Average and Low proficiency groups generally found it either difficult or sometimes difficult/sometimes easy (80% and 83%) respectively. These results suggest that the successful learners probably felt more confident about their ability in English, perhaps because they perceived themselves as being better in English, and they generally had better results than the other two proficiency groups.

Students were then asked (Question 15) to rate themselves in English. As Table 6 indicates, the trend observed was similar to that observed in Question 12 (perceived ability in French and Mathematics). The High proficiency group perceived themselves as being generally strong to average in English (100%), the Average proficiency group perceived themselves as being average to strong (100%), whereas the Low proficiency group perceived themselves as being generally average to weak (100%).

Table 6 - Perceived ability in English (Question 15)

	Strong	Average	Weak
High (n=9)	67%	33%	-
Average (n=5)	40%	60%	-
Low (n=6)	0%	67%	33%

Motivation (Question 18)

Because of the widely reported influence of motivation on

language acquisition (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), it was felt that questions regarding motivation were pertinent to this study. Students were therefore asked whether or not they thought it was important to learn English (Question 18). The majority of the learners in this group (95%) reported that they thought it was important to learn English. One respondent (Subject 5, a successful learner) expressed the view that English was important for travel to the United States but that it did not really serve any useful purpose to those who planned to remain in Quebec. For most learners, (85%) motivation was instrumental. They thought English was important for career opportunities and for travel. Subject 14 had an interesting response to this question. He responded: *"Yes. (Interviewer: Why?) Because let's say that you go to work in the United States and you can't speak English. How would you manage?"* Subject 1 reiterated this point of view. Her answer was that English is important "*...to find a job when you are big. You need English all the time.*" For others, however, (15%) motivation was integrative. Subject 12's response was typical of this group "*...to understand when people speak to you.*" Subject 10 also thought English was important for travel and to make friends.

Goal in studying English

To gain further insight into the goals and aspirations of these subjects, students were asked in Question 19 whether their goal in studying English was to learn to speak and understand it or to read and write it. It was expected that learners would choose understanding and speaking over reading and writing, since the core programme of the Ministry of Education with which these students were working (Programme d'études, Ministry of Education of Quebec, 1981) focused largely on understanding and speaking. The attention given by this programme to the four major skills was as follows: Oral comprehension 50%, oral production 30%. Reading comprehension 15%, and written production 5%. The results showed that respondents generally chose understanding and speaking over reading and writing. Sixty-five percent of these students chose speaking and understanding, confirming expectations in this regard. However, as Table 7 indicates, the trend suggests that the High and Average proficiency groups were more likely to say that their goal was to learn all four major skills (understanding, speaking, reading

and writing) (44% and 40% respectively) than the Low proficiency group (16%).

Table 7 - Goal in studying English

	Speaking/ Understanding	Reading/ writing	4 skills
High (n=9)	56%	-	44%
Average (n=5)	60%	-	40%
Low (n=6)	83%	-	16%

The affective factor

The extensive research done on the affective factor underscores its importance. The effect of this factor was explored here. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) define the affective variables as an individual's emotionally relevant characteristics that might influence his/her reaction to a given situation (p.1).

Questions related to these affective variables included whether the students felt comfortable or uncomfortable when the teacher spoke English in class (Question 22), whether they thought the teacher

spoke too much English or too much French in class (Question 23), and whether or not the students liked English (Question 24).

Use of English by Teacher (Question 22)

In view of the above, an effort was made to learn more about the students' affective considerations concerning the learning of ESL, so they were asked whether they felt comfortable or uncomfortable when the teacher spoke English in class (Question 22). The results indicated an interesting trend among the different groups, as Table 8 clearly shows.

Table 8 - Use of English by the teacher (Question 22)

	Comfortable	Uncomfortable	A bit uncomfortable
High (n=9)	89%	11%	-
Average (n=5)	80%	20%	-
Low (n=6)	33%	50%	16%

These results indicate that the Low proficiency group generally felt more uncomfortable (50% uncomfortable and 16% a bit uncomfortable) than the High and Average proficiency groups (only 11% of the former and 20% of the latter claimed to feel uncomfortable or a bit uncomfortable).

To further elaborate on subjects' feelings with regard to the use of English in the ESL class, interviewees were asked whether they thought the teacher used too much English in class, too much French, or just enough of both (Question 23). In spite of how they responded to Question 22, the majority of the subjects in all groups seemed to approve of the proportion of English to French which was used by the teacher in class. Among the High proficiency group, 89% thought there was a good balance, whereas 11% thought there was too much use of English. There was a slight variation among the Low proficiency learners, where 67% thought there was a good balance, 16% thought there was too much English and 16% thought the teacher used too much French. The Average proficiency group was similar to the High proficiency group.It seems fair to conclude that

the majority of these learners accepted that the ESL class be conducted mainly in English because in Question 10 they were asked whether the teacher spoke English or French most of the time. Ninety percent of the interviewees said the teacher spoke English most of the time, whereas 10% reported a fifty/fifty use of English and French.

Feelings towards English (Question 24)

Students were then asked whether or not they liked English. It is interesting to note that, in general, the students seemed to feel positive towards English, as Table 9 below clearly shows. Seventy-five percent of the subjects interviewed reported that they liked English, 10% reported negative feelings towards English, 15% were not sure, and 10% reported having average feelings about English but found it useful. The latter response was classified as negative feelings because of the lukewarm manner in which it was reported.

Table 9 - Feelings towards English (Question 24)

	Likes English	Doesn't like it	Not sure	Average-feelings-useful
High (n=9)	78%	11%	11%	-
Average (n=5)	80%	-	-	20%
Low (n=6)	67%	-	33%	-

Learning Style

Learning environment (Question 20)

In an effort to find out information about the learning style preference of each group of learners, students were asked, in the event that they could choose the way in which they would like to learn English, whether they would wish to have everything translated into French, to have the teacher speak English all the time, or to go to a place where people spoke only English. There was no great variation in the responses of the High and Low proficiency

groups to this question. However, the Low proficiency group's responses indicated a trend favouring translation (67%), whereas the High proficiency group was evenly split between translation and having the teacher speak English all the time.

At the present time, in Québec, there is a great deal of discussion about a special type of programme offered to children of this age, Intensive English. This programme offers children the possibility of studying their core courses (French, Mathematics, Science, etc.) intensively over a five-month period and for the remaining five-month period, the learners study only English. Children are admitted to this programme on a voluntary basis, in consultation with their parents. In an effort to learn more about the preferred learning environment of the subjects in this study, the researcher informed them about this programme and then asked them whether they might like to study English in such a programme, or whether they would prefer to study English for two hours per week, with or without homework. The second option represents the traditional way of teaching English in Quebec. In certain areas the intensive programme is offered only to gifted children. In this school

board, in the one school where it is available, the policy is to make the Intensive English class a heterogeneous class, including High, Average and Low achievers. Results indicate no important differences among these groups in the interest expressed in this type of programme. 70% of all learners in this group reported that, if given the choice, they would choose the traditional type of programme.

Group work vs individual work (Question 25)

In another question related to their preferred learning styles, students were asked whether they liked working in groups or working individually on exercises in their activity book. This activity book was an in-house book created exclusively for these children by the English teachers in the school board where they attended school. The activities contained therein were generally structured, paper-and-pen type exercises. As Table 10 indicates, 70% of these subjects reported a preference for group work.

Table 10 - Group work vs individual work (Question 25)

	Likes group work	Prefers individual work	Likes both	Likes T-directed work
High (n=9)	56%	11%	33%	-
Average (n=5)	60%	-	20%	20%
Low (n=6)	100%	-	-	-

As this table indicates, among the High and Average proficiency groups, learners generally expressed a preference for either group work or both group work and individual work, whereas among the Low proficiency learners the preference for group work was unanimous.

3.4.5 Learning Strategies

The remainder of the interview dealt with the learning strategies that the subjects had developed and were using at the time they were interviewed. In Question 28, the students were asked whether they felt that they had developed any language study

habits (tricks) that they found helpful in studying their second language. The results indicate that 55% percent of these students felt that they had developed "tricks" for learning their second language. Among the High proficiency learners, 66% either felt that they had developed special "tricks", or they were not sure and 33% said they had not. With the Low proficiency learners, the trend was somewhat different; 66% said they had not developed any special "tricks", whereas 33% felt they had. All of the Average proficiency learners felt that they had developed special "tricks" for learning English. It is unclear why the results of the Average proficiency learners were so different for this question.

Table 11 - Learning strategies in general (Question 28)

	Yes	No	Not sure
High (n=9)	44%	33%	22%
Average (n=5)	100%	-	-
Low (n=6)	33%	67%	-

Specific learning strategies (Questions 28a - h)

In an effort to elaborate on Question 28 and to find out more specifically which strategies were being used and which ones were not, subjects were then asked questions about specific learning strategies. They were requested to say whether or not they used them. Table 12 shows the results of these questions.

Table 12 - Specific learning strategies

	High (n=9)	Average (n=5)	Low (n=6)
Mouthing	88%	80%	17%
Imagery	67%	50%	33%
Repetition	89%	67%	50%
Grouping	11%	0%	25%
Note-taking	67%	33%	25%

As Table 12 indicates, the strategy of *Mouthing* was very frequently used by the High and Average proficiency groups, but not by the Low proficiency group.*Imagery* was used by all three groups, with greater use by the High and Average proficiency groups. Results for Question 28b2, *Repetition,* indicate that the High proficiency group greatly favoured this strategy, whereas the Low proficiency group reported a certain degree of strategy use in this category, but less frequent use than the High and Average proficiency groups.

Results for Question 28b3, *Grouping,* indicate that this strategy was generally not used by these children (79% did not use it). These results are understandable as this memory strategy involves the use of the specific techniques of grouping and word mapping, with which these children were not familiar. There is no evidence in the literature to indicate that learners in general would use this strategy naturally (Oxford & Crookall, 1990). As Table 12 indicates, results in the category of *Note-taking* were quite similar to those obtained in *Imagery*, except that the use of *Imagery* was more frequent than *Note-taking* among members of the Average proficiency group.

Strategies to promote listening comprehension (Question 28c)

This question reiterates what was asked in Question 8 in the Background Section of this questionnaire. The aim of Question 8 was to find out, in general, what students did to practice English outside of school. The aim of Question 28c was to learn more about what learners did outside of class time to develop their listening comprehension, in particular. They were, therefore, asked whether they listened to records, to the radio, or watched television. Sometimes, in both Study 1 and Study 2, subjects were asked similar questions posed in a different manner, in different sections of the questionnaire. In order to check the consistency of the answers, results were then compared to see if similar answers were obtained. As results in Table 13 indicate, the High proficiency learners took advantage of all the types of media mentioned above. In the case of the Average proficiency learners, two learners took advantage of all the types of media mentioned above, one took advantage of two types of media, and two selected one type of media each. With the Low proficiency group, learners tended to select one type of media, with the big preference being for television viewing.

Table 13 - Listening Comprehension Practice (Question 28c)

	Records	Radio	TV	Records /TV	All of these	Films	None of these
High (n=9)	11%	-	-	-	89%	-	-
Average (n=5)	20%	_	20%	20%	40%	-	-
Low (n=6)	-	-	67%	-	-	16%	16%

Computer games for comprehension practice (Question 28d)

In the pilot-testing studies with this researcher's pupils, students were asked about the various activities they engaged in which could potentially improve their English. This was an open-ended question which was added to the questionnaire used in Study 1. Later, modifications were made on both the questionnaire for Study 1 and the interview questions for Study 2, to include activities the subjects mentioned doing. Many of them reported playing computer games in English. Consequently, Question 28d, which inquired whether or not subjects played computer games, was

included in this interview. In Study 1, the survey study, the item in the SILL inquiring whether or not subjects read books was also modified for the Children's SILL to include playing computer games in addition to reading books.

The results revealed that 89% of the nine successful learners reported playing computer games in English, whereas 11% did not. Among the unsuccessful learners, the picture was reversed. Of these learners 33% reported playing computer games in English, whereas 67% said they did not. Results obtained from the Average proficiency group were similar to those of the successful learners. These results suggest once again, that the unsuccessful learners did not take advantage of the available opportunities for naturalistic practice in English.

Steps to enhance prescribed time of English study (Question 28e)

The aim of Question 28e was to find out more information about steps the children took to enhance their English course. They were therefore asked whether or not they tried to find occasions to

speak English. As the earlier analysis had revealed that certain learners were self-directed, whereas others demonstrated language learning behaviours which were other initiated, a distinction was made in the scoring of results between students who actively looked for occasions to speak English and those who took advantage of opportunities which their parents found for them. Results obtained were very revealing, as the High proficiency learners, once again, demonstrated that they took charge of their learning.

Table 14 - Steps to Enhance Time of English Study (Question 28e)

	Yes (personal choice)	Yes (no choice)	No
High (n=9)	67%	22%	11%
Average (n=5)	40%	40%	20%
Low (n=6)	17%	16%	67%

Of the High proficiency group 67%, of their own volition, actively sought occasions to speak English, 22% took advantage of the opportunities their parents provided for them and 11% did not seek

occasions to practise English. Once again, the trend was reversed with the Low proficiency group, where only 17% sought occasions to speak English, 16% took advantage of the occasions their parents provided for them and 67% did not use this strategy. The results were particularly interesting for the Average proficiency group, where learners were equally divided between being self-initiated and other-directed. Forty percent, of their own volition, actively sought occasions to practise English, whereas 40% took advantage of the occasions provided for them by their parents and 20% did not seek occasions to practise English.

The Stress Factor (Question 28f)

The next question (28f) was concerned with the affective factor. Learners were asked whether the idea of speaking English caused them stress. As demonstrated in Table 15 below, the High proficiency group reported that generally the idea of speaking English did not cause them stress whereas the Average and Low proficiency groups experienced more stress in this regard.

Table 15: Stress (Question 28f)

	Yes	No	Sometimes
High (n=9)	22%	78%	-
Average (n=5)	20%	40%	40%
Low (n=6)	50%	50%	-

Range of strategies described in the directed part (Question 29)

Question 29 constituted the more directed part of the interview. This question matched the learners' strategies to the task at hand. The students were in the process of reviewing for the end-of-year test, *Going to the Zoo.* They were shown the appropriate revision sheets, which they already had in their possession, and they were asked to explain how they had been using these sheets to prepare for their test. This was an open-ended question. The range of strategies described by these learners was great, both in variety

and intensity. The strategies mentioned by the subjects were: *translation (with dictionary or parents), practice with parents (child's request), studying systematically (including revision, individual study), cognates, guessing, practice and repetition, writing down notes, reading then inferring meaning through context, personal assessment, contextualization, reading once only, spelling, and not studying.* Percentages were calculated to determine the intensity of strategy use. Results indicate that 67% of the nine High proficiency learners reported using three or more strategies, whereas 33% reported using one strategy only. The results for the Average proficiency group were similar. However, in the Low proficiency group, 50% of the learners reported using only one strategy, 17% reported using two strategies and 33% reported using three or more strategies. As Table 16 indicates, in terms of the various types of strategies used, the differences among the three groups of learners were particularly interesting. In the High proficiency group, subjects reported using a combination of strategies, a variety of strategies and strategies which were sometimes self-directed.

Table 16: Strategies used to prepare for oral comprehension test (Question 29)

Reported by learner	High	Average	Low
1. Translation	56%	60%	17%
2. Practice w/parents - child's request	44%	40%	-
3. Does not study - forgets books	11%	40%	-
4. Studying systematically (incl. revision, individual study)	44%	40%	17%
5. Cognates	-	-	17%
6. Guessing	-	-	17%
7. Practice and repetition	22%	40%	17%
8. Writing down notes	22%	20%	-
9. Reading, then inferring meaning through context	11%	-	17%
10. Personal assessment	11%	-	-
11. Contextualization	33%	-	20%
12. Reading once only	-	-	50%
13. Spelling	-	20%	-

Five out of the nine successful learners used translation with dictionary or parents, four used practice with parents + child's request, four used studying systematically, two used practice with repetition, two wrote down notes, one reported using personal assessment, and two reported using contextualization. Only one

student, Subject 5, said he did not study. However, this subject was one of the most outstanding students in the school, in all subjects. In English, he worked consistently throughout the school year, both in class and at home. He always asked many questions in class and he took advantage of every opportunity to speak to the teacher in English, both in class and in the corridors or the school yard. He also reported watching a programme in English every day, playing computer games in English, and he mentioned practising English using some educational English language cards on a regular basis.

The strategies chosen by the High proficiency group were particularly appropriate for the test, *Going to the Zoo*, which is mainly an oral comprehension test. Many of the strategies they mentioned involved oral practice, either with their parents or with an imaginary person. One learner (Subject 15) reported using contextualization. He said, in response to the question about how he was using the revision sheets to prepare for the end-of-year test:

"Let's take, for example, 'Where do you live?' Well, I say that this is a person who is talking to me. If I talk to myself, it's as

if another person is talking to me. So, let's say he says, 'Where do you live?' 'I live in St. Basile.' This is what I am going to answer. (Interviewer: So you talk to yourself in this manner?) Yes.

This particular subject reported using only this one strategy but it was a very effective strategy for the task of preparing for the *Going to the Zoo* test, which consisted, to a great extent, of listening to conversations on a tape, and then choosing answers to indicate comprehension of the conversations. Another learner (Subject 7) showed that he used careful assessment of what he knew and what he needed to study (personal assessment). He said,

"*How do I go about studying? Well, first, I go and see whether I have learnt them* (the structures and vocabulary). *'What can I do?' I know, you understand, it means 'Qu'est-ce que je peux faire?'. I then say, 'O.K. That's good. I understand it'. And after I have done that with all the words, I revise once more.*

In the Low proficiency group, the range of strategy use was as

follows. Fifty percent of the learners mentioned using *reading once only*, one reported using *reading, then guessing through context*, one reported using *studying systematically (including revision, individual study)*, one used *translation (dictionary or parents)*, one reported using *practice and repetition* and one reported using *cognates and guessing through context.* Most of the strategies they used did not involve oral practice, which would have been appropriate for this test which was mainly an oral comprehension measure.

In the Average proficiency group, results revealed the following combinations of strategy use. Three of the five learners reported using *translation (dictionary or parents)*, two reported using *practice with parents (child's request)*, one reported not studying, two reported *studying systematically (including revision, individual study)*, one reported using *practice and repetition*, one reported *writing down notes*, and one reported using *spelling*.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that all the subjects reported using strategies to help them learn. However, the pattern of strategy use reported by the successful learners in this

study seems to suggest that they were more adroit at selecting more appropriate strategies to help them learn than their unsuccessful counterparts. The successful learners reported strategies which were more self-directed, and appropriate for the task than those of the unsuccessful learners. In addition, these learners used affective strategies to control their stress.

Now we shall discuss the implications of this study in the light of the overall picture of learning strategy research and the implications of the findings for teaching ESL at the primary level.

Chapter 4

Summary and Discussion

The aims of this thesis were as follows: to examine whether children use language learning strategies, to identify these strategies if children do so use them, to explore in what ways the strategies children use are similar to or different from those already identified in studies of adult and adolescent learners, and to identify and compare strategy use among successful and unsuccessful learners. In this discussion, a summary of the findings of the study will be presented, and suggestions for future research will be offered. The pedagogical implications of the findings of this study for teachers and students of English as a second language at the primary level will be considered.

4.1 Summary of the findings

Principal findings from this research indicate that children use language learning strategies, many of which are identified in the existing research on adolescent and adult strategy use. However, the

order of preference of the categories the children reported using differed from that reported by many studies of adult and adolescent learners.

4.1.1.: Strategy use: children and adults/adolescents compared

The strategy category most frequently used by these children was the Compensation category, followed by the Affective category and the Metacognitive category. The Cognitive category, the Social category and the Memory category were the least used. These results differed from results derived from many adult and adolescent studies of language learning strategies in the subjects' choice of preferred strategy categories. Many studies of the language learning strategies of adults and adolescents report very frequent use of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper & Russo, 1985a; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). Closer examination of the data also indicates that children did not employ many cognitive strategies. If they did, they did not choose strategies related to grammar, which adults and adolescents were found to use a great deal of in some

previous studies. For example, among the cognitive strategies employed, *trying to find grammatical patterns in English* was third to last in the children's reports of frequency of use.

In many previous studies in which the SILL (Oxford 1990) was used, the results showed significant variation in strategy use by proficiency level and by gender, across most of the six broad strategy categories (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1992; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). In this study, in which an adapted field-tested version of the SILL was used, there was no significant gender variation in any of the six categories but there was significant proficiency variation in only one of the six broad strategy categories. The one category which distinguished the High proficiency learners from the other two categories was the Affective category.

4.1.2: Specific strategies used by children

The findings of the survey study indicate that these Grade 5 children, irrespective their proficiency and gender, reported using three strategy categories significantly more frequently than the

others. The most frequently reported of these three was the Compensation category and among the different items of the Compensation category, *Guessing through context* was the most frequently reported by the children. This was followed by *Asking for help.Using circumlocution and Making gestures* were the least frequently reported.

The next most frequently used category was the Affective category. This was the only category of strategies in which the three proficiency groups showed significant differences from one another was the Affective strategy category. Within this category, High learners seemed to use the *Relax* item significantly more frequently than the other two groups, and the use of the other two items (Risk and Self-praise) was similar across proficiency levels.

The Metacognitive strategy category was the third choice in order of preference by the children. Of the individual items that make up the Metacognitive category, the most frequently used were *Listening carefully when one is spoken to in English*, and *Analyzing and learning from one's errors*. The least used were *Trying to find*

opportunities to practise English and *Organizing time to study English (not just for exams)*.

An unexpected finding of this study is that, in a setting like Quebec where opportunities for rich and varied naturalistic practice abound (for example, *Taking advantage of the English media* and *Participating in extra-curricular activities in English*), these Grade 5 students as a whole, did not generally take advantage of them. The only group of learners who took advantage of all types of naturalistic practice were the successful learners, whose pattern of strategy use was sometimes different from that of the unsuccessful learners. Questions were asked, under different categories, to determine the children's use of naturalistic practice. In each case, except for Watching television, the items involving naturalistic practice were not chosen by a great many of these learners.

These findings that learners do not generally take advantage of the available opportunities for naturalistic practice reiterate the observation of Green and Oxford (1995), who, as mentioned earlier, found that in Puerto Rico, where the availability of opportunities for

naturalistic practice is abundant, some learners do not take advantage of them. In addition, the fact that in the present study the questions asked regarding naturalistic practice were similar in nature, that they were asked in different ways, in different strategy categories, and that they consistently yielded similar results, means that the effect of social desirability (indicating that respondents answered according to what they thought the researcher wanted) did not play a part in these findings. This also attests to the validity of the instrument.

4.1.3: Young learners' ability to talk about their strategies:

Another interesting result of the investigation in this thesis is that, despite their age and very brief exposure to English, these young learners reported using many learning strategies to assist in their second language learning. There is also evidence from this study that children of this age can describe their strategies effectively.

Analysis of the students' responses to the interview questions

shows that the more successful learners generally reported using more strategies and a greater variety of strategies than the unsuccessful learners. In general, most successful learners reported using three or more different strategies, whereas most of the unsuccessful learners used one or two. Furthermore, the successful learners used a combination of strategies (Question 29) and they were also more likely than their unsuccessful counterparts to choose self-directed strategies. For example, some successful learners initiated their start in English study; some initiated practice with others; some took advantage of media-related activities. Furthermore, there is evidence to show that the successful learners selected more appropriate strategies for the task at hand than did their unsuccessful peers (Question 29). For example, to prepare for the mainly oral comprehension end-of-year test, which involved listening to some conversations, the successful learners used mainly strategies related to oral comprehension, whereas the unsuccessful learners used mainly strategies related to reading comprehension. Another interesting point which emerged is that learners whose performance in English fell between the most and the least successful groups tended to fall between the two extreme groups in most areas

of strategy use. For example, students' responses regarding their use of specific learning strategies (Questions 28a and b1-4) indicated that the successful learners used *Mouthing, Imagery*, and *Note-taking* slightly more frequently than the average learners and much more frequently than the unsuccessful learners (Table 11: Chapter 3).

Results also suggest that the successful learners felt more comfortable when the teacher spoke English in class (Chapter 3, Table 8). These results also corroborate the findings of Study 1, regarding the apparent link between the affective factor and language learning. In that study, the affective category was the only category in which there was significant variation by proficiency level.

4. 2 Discussion

4.2.1 Children's use of strategies

The first question addressed by this study was whether young learners use language learning strategies in their study of English as

a second language. The findings of Study 1 answer this question affirmatively. The children use mainly Compensation strategies, but they also use Affective and Metacognitive strategies.

This study was, however, conducted with subjects from the same general region in one small area of Quebec and the sample was homogenous in terms of socio-cultural background and native language. It is possible that the order of strategy choice revealed by these children could prove to be different in another cultural setting. In the Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) reports of SILL studies across the world involving adult learners, cultural differences in order of preference of strategy categories were revealed.

4.2.2 Child/adult differences in strategy use

In this study, it was originally expected that the similarities in strategy use between adults and children would occur at the level of the more concrete strategies such as practice and repetition, and that the differences would occur at the level of the more abstract strategies for developing cognitive processes, such as those related to

grammar. This hypothesis was confirmed. The children in this study reported generally low use of the cognitive strategies. When such strategies were used, there was low use of grammar-related strategies. These children seemed to prefer strategies for global comprehension, as evidenced by their response to the statement regarding trying to understand the sense of what one reads or hears without resorting to word-for-word translations, and from the fact that they were not concerned with looking for patterns of usage. Given the low scores for *Planning study time* which emerged in the Metacognitive category, the relatively low scores for *Practice* in the Cognitive category, and the overall low scores for the Memory category, practice was not as frequently used as was expected. The Social and the Memory categories were not frequently used by these learners. Similar results were found in studies with adolescents (Chamot & Kupper, 1989; O'Malley *et al.* 1985a). The fact that the Affective category was the second choice for these children is different from the studies with adolescent learners mentioned above, in which the Affective category was not frequently used.

The findings showing no significant difference due to

proficiency in five of the overall strategy categories and no gender variation are different from the findings with adult learners in many SILL studies (Oxford, 1989-1995; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995), where proficiency-based differences were obtained on most of the six strategy categories, and females generally reported higher frequency of strategy use than males. More research needs to be done in order to draw conclusions regarding these differences.

4.2.3 The strategies of successful and unsuccessful learners

The results of the investigation above show that there was no variation by proficiency on five of the six strategy categories on the strategy rating scale used for Study 1. This means that the use of these categories was the same for all groups of subjects (High, Mid, and Low). One category of strategy only (the Affective category) showed significant variation by proficiency level. Does this mean that this finding disconfirms hypotheses b and c? This is not necessarily so.

As other studies have shown (Vann & Abraham, 1990),

unsuccessful and successful learners often use many of the same strategies. The Green and Oxford (1995) study, which analyzed individual strategy items (ISI) in the SILL, also showed that many ISIs were used with equal frequency across course levels. They state that:

> "In describing the strategy choices of successful learners, common sense would suggest that we look at the total range of strategies selected by those learners, rather than paying attention only to the strategies such learners use more frequently than their less successful peers. The successful learners in this study reported using a number of strategies more often than other students, and they reported using them in combination with other strategies used frequently or moderately so by students at all levels. The strategies used frequently or moderately frequently by successful and unsuccessful learners alike are not necessarily unproductive. A more likely explanation, in our view, is that these are what we term *bedrock strategies*, which contribute significantly to the learning process of the more successful students, although not

being in themselves sufficient to move the less successful students to higher levels." (p.289).

Conceivably, the five strategy categories which were used equally across proficiency levels, in combination with the category which was significantly more frequently used by the High proficiency learners (the Affective category), made the pattern of strategy use of the High proficiency learners different from that of the Low proficiency learners, at least in this circumstance. Here, the *Relax* item was used more frequently by the High proficiency group.This shows that, along with the strategies used by the other two proficiency levels, the High proficiency group frequently used strategies to control their stress. However, these results are not conclusive and would need to be replicated. Results of studies with adults have consistently shown differences in most strategy categories. In the Green and Oxford (1995) study with adults, the *Relax* item was used by all proficiency levels. As the present study is the first of its kind to be conducted with children, it would have to be replicated before conclusions can be drawn from these findings. However, the differences observed here would tend to support

hypothesis b, in which it was postulated that more successful learners would demonstrate different patterns of strategy use from unsuccessful learners, depending on the circumstances, the nature of the material, and other factors.

With regard to hypothesis c, that more successful learners would select strategies which were more effective and appropriate for them than unsuccessful learners, the results of Study 1 will be examined together with those of Study 2, in order to shed more light on whole picture.

In the directed part of the interview in Study 2, which linked strategies with task demands, the children were asked to describe the ways in which they were preparing for an up-coming end-of-year test. This instrument, as already mentioned above, involved mainly oral comprehension. The pupils' responses indicated that the more successful learners were more likely to use a greater number and a greater variety of strategies than the unsuccessful learners. However, just the pure strategy count alone did not seem to be a distinguishing factor as some successful learners reported using only

one strategy. More importantly, of the strategies the successful learners reported using, almost all involved oral comprehension, demonstrating that the successful learners were more attuned to the nature of the task, so they were able match their strategies to the task.

The unsuccessful learners, on the other hand, reported using a different range of strategies to prepare for this test. These included strategies such as reading the revision sheets once, reading different texts then guessing the meaning of sentences through context, reviewing individually, and translation. Reading once only demonstrates a lack of adequate preparation. Besides, most of the strategies mentioned by this group involve reading strategies which are inappropriate choices when preparing for an oral comprehension test. This is especially true if these strategies are not used in combination with other strategies which would facilitate oral comprehension.

Taken all together, these results show a trend towards successful learners selecting more appropriate strategies for the task

at hand and more appropriate for them as learners them than their unsuccessful peers. However, these findings are inconclusive, so further investigation would be needed. This proposed investigation could involve think-aloud protocols which focus specifically on observing how learners apply their strategies to different tasks, and seeing whether their strategy choice in those circumstances correlates with proficiency. This was done in the Chamot (1995) study with elementary immersion students and it could be done with ESL students in a regular second-language setting.

In addition to making appropriate strategy choices, other trends observed in the interview study, which was inspired by the adult interview study by Naiman, Frohlich, Stern and Todesco (1978), suggested that these successful language learners also showed an active approach to language learning. This was also observed by Naiman and his associates in their study. An active approach to language learning here implies that the successful learners were generally self-directed. The trend which emerged from the reports of these children indicated that the successful learners sought out occasions for additional practice. In spite of the fact that they were

at the beginning stages of their English language study, they used the English they had learnt to engage in conversations with bilingual friends, parents, relatives, and even, in one reported case, with an imaginary friend. In addition, they took advantage of the various types of media available in Quebec. They generally took charge of their own learning and they generally perceived themselves as being stronger in English than their unsuccessful counterparts (Question 15).

These observations suggest that the successful learners in this study had a goal (to succeed in their language learning), they took all the necessary steps to achieve it (effort) and they achieved success (reward). From this standpoint, there appear to be similarities between the language learning behaviours of these children and those of Heinrich Schliemann, the self-directed, self-motivated learner (Jahn, 1979), described in Chapter 2. In other words, all the elements of motivation were present in these children's approach to language learning. This view of motivation, as defined by Gardner and MacIntyre (1993), will now be examined.

4.2.4 The affective variables

4.2.4.1 Motivation

Another question addressed by the interview study was that of motivation. If motivation is considered in the broad terms of integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), then it would appear that the level of motivation reported by all groups was equal. All groups reported in the interview study that they thought English was important, especially for career development later on, and most of them felt positive towards English. However, there were clear differences between the attitudes of the successful learners and those of the unsuccessful learners. The former drew on all types of resources to achieve their goal, whereas the latter were willing but more passive participants in the learning process. The unsuccessful learners generally did only what was asked of them (as revealed by their answer to Question 7 about the amount of time they spent studying English). They also generally depended on others (parents, teachers, etc.) to direct their learning. If we consider the view of motivation previously cited by Gardner & MacIntyre (1993), claiming that "motivation is defined by three

components, desire to achieve a goal, effort extended in this direction and satisfaction with the task" (p.2), then it could be said that the successful learners in this study showed strong motivation, whereas the unsuccessful learners did not. This motivation probably led the successful learners to seek out and use more strategies, to see the results of the different ones, and to develop a greater flexibility in applying them to the different tasks than the unsuccessful ones. This speculation would have to be investigated further. Perhaps modifications to the interview questionnaire to probe deeper into the children's aims and motives for learning English, and the steps needed to reach their goals would shed more light on this.

The relationship between motivation and strategy use is described by Oxford and Nyikos (1989) as being intricately linked. These researchers posit that motivation leads to greater strategy use, which increases perception of proficiency and self-esteem. These, in turn, lead to greater motivation. MacIntyre (1994) reiterates the positive link between motivation and strategy use and highlights the negative influence of another affective variable, anxiety, which he claims, would have a negative effect on strategy use. The question of

language anxiety will now be addressed, in the light of the findings of this study.

4.2.4.2. Anxiety

The importance of the affective factor in language learning was noted by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), who claimed that 'comprehensible input' was an indispensable element of language acquisition but that comprehensible input was not enough. They suggested that the acquirer also needed to have a low Affective Filter which would cause them to be open to receiving this input (See also Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The notion of language anxiety has been investigated through empirical studies by MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991, which revealed "a considerable body of evidence suggesting that such anxiety negatively influences the language-learning process" (p.515).

In Study 2, successful learners reported being more comfortable when the teacher speaks English in class (Question 22) and moderately less stressed (Question 28f) than the unsuccessful

learners. In addition, the results of Study 1 indicated that the ability to relax when the idea of speaking English causes stress was the strategy item which distinguished the High learners from the Average and Low learners.

The observations drawn from this study appear to confirm the link between strategy use, motivation and absence of anxiety in successful language learning. However, the number of items investigating these variables was small. Further studies involving more extensive questioning to probe this relationship would have to be done with children before firm conclusions can be reached. The one done with adults by Ehrman and Oxford (1995) could be adapted to serve this purpose.

4.3 The significance of this research and future studies

4.3.1 The application of strategy research to children

Extensive research has been conducted on adults and adolescents regarding their language learning strategy use but much

more needs to be done to apply this research to children learning English as a second language in the public school system. The present study is significant as it has attempted to address this need.

Previous studies with children in primary schools have dealt with the reading strategies of bilingual students studying English in a language arts setting (Padron & Waxman (1988), and the strategies used by children in language-immersion programmes in areas such as mathematical problem-solving, reading and writing, done through the medium of the target language (Chamot 1995). In the report of her study with language-immersion children Chamot stated, "The degree to which many of these young learners could describe their own thinking and learning processes seems to indicate that metacognitive awareness begins at quite an early age" (p.304). Although there were some similarities in the findings of that study and the present one, the type of metacognitive awareness evidenced by the transcripts of the children in that study was not apparent in the transcripts of the children in this interview study. One possible explanation is that the context of the study was different, as that was an immersion setting and the tasks were more varied. In addition,

the data-collection employed by Chamot involved think-aloud protocols, which probably yielded more detailed information about the children's mental processes than the interview protocols used for the present study. Furthermore, the relatively small number of subjects involved in this interview study (N=20) could have limited the information gathered.

The findings of the Padron and Waxman (1988) study differ considerably from the present one as the aims of the two studies were very different. The former was conducted with Hispanic students at the elementary level, in a bilingual-public-school setting, and the aim was to look at the relationship between students' reported use of cognitive reading strategies and their performance on reading comprehension tests (p.146). No comparison can be made between the findings of that study and those of the present one.

This study would, for conclusions to be drawn, need to be replicated with other children in other settings. In addition, future research should include a longitudinal study to see how these children's strategies would change over time. Green and Oxford

(1995) found that intermediate level students (those considered Basic students in their study) used a large number of compensation strategies, but that "...as their competence grows, (sic) the need to use gestures or make up new words diminishes (sic)" (p.287). Time will tell whether the children's preferred use of the Compensation strategy Category would shift to other, more complex strategy categories as their competence in English grows. A longitudinal study would probably indicate when such a shift might occur.

4.3.2 The methods used for data collection

The instruments used for data collection in this research were very efficient in getting quite a large sample of subjects to report a wide range of strategy use or lack thereof. A modified SILL (The Children's SILL) was used for the survey study. Administration time was short, so strategy assessment could be done with the subjects, without taking too much time away from the regular English programme. This instrument was easy to administer and it was non-threatening. In addition, some of the teachers who administered it reported that the questionnaire prompted a great deal of class

discussion, initiated by the students, about the strategies contained therein, and strategy use in general. This same phenomenon was also experienced with this researcher's previous Grade 5 students involved in the field-test of the first draft of the questionnaire. The fact that the SILL (Oxford, 1990) has been adapted for children by this researcher means that primary teachers can now avail themselves of a widely-used tool for strategy assessment, which was previously available only to adults and adolescents. In future studies, the Children's SILL could be used, applied in different situations.

Analyzing each individual strategy item within the broad strategy categories gave additional, important information that would have been missed if simply the broad categories had been analyzed. For example, had the individual strategy items in the Affective category not been looked at to see which ones made the significant difference between the High proficiency learners and the other two proficiency levels, the indication of the relationship between anxiety and strategy use would have been missed. Analysis of the individual strategy items in the various categories regarding

naturalistic practice also revealed the interesting observation that these children, in general, do not take advantage of the vast opportunities for naturalistic practice that are available to them in Quebec.

The interviews added another dimension to this study as they provided detailed, personalized information which was not revealed by the questionnaire. The combination of these two instruments provided rich, extensive data for Study 1 and Study 2. This demonstrates to researchers the value of using more than one tool for strategy assessment.

The fact that the English teachers involved in this study hold meetings every year in order to discuss administration procedures, evaluation criteria and grading of the *Going to the Zoo* and *Ziggy the Robot* tests contributed to the reliability of the test results, as comparisons from one student to another, or from one school to another, were facilitated, for the purposes of determining proficiency levels.

4.3.3 Teachability

The question of the teachability of language learning strategies is one which is widely debated (Skeehan, 1991; Rost & Ross, 1991). However, this study isolated certain differences between successful and unsuccessful learners, which could be the focus of strategy training. The most successful learners demonstrated using many overt steps to enhance their learning. Research is needed to investigate whether those strategies could be taught to other children who are not currently using them. The strategy use of average learners also deserves investigation in any future study of strategy training for children. In this study the strategies they reported using, although largely quite effective, seemed to be generally slightly less rich and more other-initiated than those of the more successful learners. Future research should look at ways of teaching average language learners, as well as unsuccessful language learners, how to increase their proficiency.

4.5 Pedagogical implications

4.5.1 General pedagogical implications

The findings of this study provide many implications for teachers and particularly primary school second language learners. First of all, if some successful children are using certain strategies to their advantage, teachers could try to help the unsuccessful ones to understand these strategies and to choose to use them. Teachers should start by informing students about the active, self-directed approach adopted by the more successful learners in this study. All learners should be encouraged to become active participants in the language learning process. Students should also be advised that the successful learners took advantage of the wide range of media exposure which is available to them. The unsuccessful learners could be encouraged to do likewise. Teachers could try to devise ways of encouraging this type of naturalistic practice among their students by including authentic materials, such as stories and videos, in their lesson planning. In an area like Quebec, where there is an abundance of opportunities to practise English naturalistically, consideration could be given to including such tasks in homework

assignments.

In this study, some unsuccessful learners reported using reading strategies to prepare for a largely oral comprehension test. With the information gleaned from this study and others mentioned previously which demonstrate that unsuccessful learners often apply strategies inappropriately, teachers could make learners aware of the types of strategies that could be helpful when they assign tasks to students. Teachers should also provide opportunities in which learners can practise using these strategies, so that they might learn to make appropriate choices regarding matching their strategies to the task at hand.

In addition, students must be made aware of the relationship between motivation, strategy use and success in language learning. They must be told that motivation involves more than just the knowledge that English is important for career opportunities, and that it involves the desire to achieve a goal and a great deal of effort.

Teachers should be informed about the findings of this study

regarding the significant differences in the use of the Affective strategy category among the High proficiency group and the other two proficiency groups in this study. The fragile nature of beginning language learners, especially children, must not be overlooked in language teaching. The role the affective factor in language learning is reiterated in Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) who say, "Language teaching, more than almost any other discipline, is an adventure of the whole person, not just a cognitive or metacognitive exercise" (p.18). MacIntyre (1994) states that "...it might be observed that using certain affective strategies will reduce the level of language anxiety, thereby freeing-up cognitive resources (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991) to be applied in the use of direct strategies" (p.186). In addition, Gardner and McIntyre (1993) mention that language anxiety is a learned phenomenon, and that it increases with time if students are faced with continuing anxiety in the language classroom (p.6). Teachers should therefore endeavour to find ways of reducing anxiety in the language classroom. One way to start doing this would be to capitalize on the positive elements reported by the subjects in Study 2. In spite of the fact that the Low proficiency group generally reported feeling uncomfortable when the teacher spoke English in

class (Question 22), they seemed to accept that the class be conducted in English, they generally approved of the teacher's use of English in the classroom (Question 23), and they generally liked English (Question 24). However, the students reported being stressed and did not use strategies to help them cope with their stress, such as relaxing. Seeing that 100% of the unsuccessful learners reported that they preferred group work, these learners obviously appreciate the support of the group, and this could perhaps lessen their anxiety. Teachers could, therefore, favour small group work in their teaching and perhaps introduce cooperative learning techniques. In addition, efforts could be made to find ways of weaving affective strategy training into all strategy training models, in order to help learners cope with their stress. One such model could promote guessing, and encourage the acceptance of errors as part of the learning process. In addition, the discomfort experienced by the unsuccessful learners due to the ambiguous situations which are commonly present in the second language communicative classroom could be addressed in class by demystifying the language learning process. This could probably be accomplished by giving learners tips for following the class. In addition, the teacher could favour the use of routines such

as writing the agenda for the day on the board, so the learners can see where they are going. Most importantly, teachers should conduct language classes which take into account the concept of "the low affective filter" (Krashen *et al.* 1982). These learners are young and impressions about second language learning are being formed at this point. Teachers should be careful to deal with the negative effects of language anxiety at their onset (at the primary level), before these early negative effects cause permanent anxiety later on. Teachers should also be conscious of the stress factor when planning lessons, and help students to feel at ease through a pleasant atmosphere. Teachers could make the English class entertaining, so learners would focus on the message and the content rather than on their difficulties.

4.5.2 Implications for the teaching of ESL in Quebec

The new Programme d'études, anglais, langue seconde (Ministry of Education of Quebec, 1997) instructs teachers to encourage certain attitudes among the children studying English. These attitudes include: (Translation)

- confidence in their ability to express themselves in English;
- determination to overcome their own hesitations to express themselves in English;
- perseverance in their efforts to communicate in English;
- the will to overcome their fear of making errors;
- the motivation to take advantage of available occasions outside of school to continue learning English.

In a working document explaining this programme to teachers and curriculum consultants, it is stated:

"This programme focuses on language as a tool for communication.

It is student-centred.

It requires that students work in cooperative groups.

The programme promotes the integration of the four skills.

It aims at student autonomy through the development of learning strategies" (Working document, Ministry of Education of Quebec, June, 1997).

This paper indicates that teachers should embrace these

fundamental principles. The present study provides a theoretical basis for applying the principles of strategy training outlined in this programme. For a strategy-training model to meet the needs of learners, it should be based on research conducted among these learners. The present study responds to this need. It provides information about student needs, which will serve to make whatever strategy-training model teachers and consultants devise, more student-centred, and hopefully make learners more autonomous through the use of effective language learning strategies.

4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study illustrates that children use many language learning strategies, and all indications suggest that the successful learners apply their strategy use in different, more effective ways than unsuccessful learners. The trends observed in this research point to the intricate link between strategy use and the affective variables, which prompts an observation similar to the one expressed by other researchers (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995), that language teaching involves the whole person and that attention paid to the affective variables is as important as attention to the cognitive and metacognitive ones. The use of strategies related to all of these variables is important to successful language learning.

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APPENDIX 1: STUDY 1 THE SURVEY STUDY

QUESTIONNAIRE SUR LES STRATÉGIES D'APPRENTISSAGE (THE CHILDREN'S SILL)

Consigne: Lis les questions et ensuite choisis une réponse pour chaque question.

1. Jamais ou presque jamais
2. En générale, ce n'est pas le cas
3. Parfois
4. Souvent
5. Toujours ou presque toujours

Exemple. Question: J'essaie de trouver des occasions en dehors de l'école (sports, etc.) pour pratiquer mon anglais. Réponse __4__

N.B. Il n'y a pas de mauvaises réponses. On cherche seulement à connaître de quelle façon tu apprends l'anglais.

Partie A

1. J'établis un lien entre les nouvelles notions que j'apprends en anglais et mes connaissances en général.

2. Je fais un dessin (dans ma tête ou sur papier) pour me rappeler d'un nouveau mot.

3. J'associe le son d'un nouveau mot en anglais à un son ou à un mot que je connais déjà.

4. Je mime les mots pour m'en rappeler.

5. Je révise.

Partie B

6. Je répète les nouvelles expressions que j'apprends.

7. Lorsque je m'exprime en anglais, j'essaie d'imiter les personnes anglophones afin que je puisse bien prononcer les mots.

8. Je pratique souvent les sons de l'alphabet en anglais.

9. Je regarde la télévision (ou j'écoute la radio) en anglais.

10. Je lis des livres en anglais ou je travaille avec des logiciels en anglais à l'ordinateur.

11. J'essaie de trouver des occasions en dehors de l'école (sports, activités, etc.) pour pratiquer l'anglais.

12. Je pratique ce que j'apprends avec mes parents.

13. Je trouve les ressemblances entre le français et l'anglais (ex: table/table).

14. Je fais un effort pour comprendre le sens de ce que je lis ou de ce que j'écoute sans chercher à faire une traduction mot à mot.

15. J'essaie de découvrir des règles de grammaire de la langue anglaise.

Partie C

16. Lorsque j'entends un nouveau mot en anglais j'essaie d'en deviner la signification en m'aidant du reste de la phrase.

17. Lorsque j'ai de la difficulté à me faire comprendre en anglais, je fais des gestes pour exprimer ce que je veux dire.

18. Lorsque je ne connais pas un mot que je veux dire en anglais, je demande de l'aide.

19. Si je ne trouve pas l'expression que je veux utiliser en anglais, je cherche une autre manière de dire ce que je veux dire

(synonyme, description, etc.).

Partie D

20. J'organise mon temps pour que je puisse étudier souvent l'anglais (pas seulement lors d'un examen).

21. Je cherche des occasions pour pratiquer l'anglais.

22. Lorsque quelqu'un me parle en anglais, j'écoute attentivement.

23. J'évalue mes progrès en anglais.

24. J'analyse les fautes que j'ai commises et j'essaie de ne plus les refaire.

Partie E

25. Lorsque l'idée de m'exprimer en anglais me cause du stress, j'essaie de me détendre.

26. Je suis prêt à prendre des risques: deviner le sens d'un mot ou d'une phrase, essayer de parler en anglais même si je fais des fautes.

27. Lorsque je réussis, je me félicite.

Partie F

28. Si je ne comprends pas ce qu'on me dit en anglais, je demande à la personne de parler lentement, de répéter ou de clarifier ce qu'elle a dit.

29. Je travaille avec des ami(e)s de ma classe pour pratiquer l'anglais.

30. Je fais un effort pour me renseigner sur la culture des anglophones.

FEUILLES DE RÉPONSES

Ton nom:_____
Date:_____
Ta langue maternelle_____ Ton âge_____

Mets ta réponse pour chaque "question" (le 1, 2, 3, 4 ou 5) à côté du numéro de la "question".

Fais le total de chaque colonne et inscris le résultat à la fin de chaque colonne.

Partie A	Partie B	Partie C	Partie D	Partie E	Partie F	
1.____ 2.____ 3.____ 4.____ 5.____ Total:_	6.___ 7.___ 8.___ 9.___ 10.__ 11.__ 12__ 13.__ 14.__ 15.__ Total:	16.__ 17.__ 18.__ 19.__ Total:_	20.___ 21.___ 22.___ 23.___ 24.___ Total:_	25.__ 26.__ 27.__ Total:_	28.__ 29.__ 30.__ Total:_	
/ 5 =	/10 =	/4 =	/ 5 =	/ 3 =	. 3 =	/30 =

Adaptation of the **Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)** developed in 1989 by Rebecca Oxford. Adapted for Francophone children in 1996 by Pamela Gunning.

APPENDIX 2: STUDY 2 THE INTERVIEW STUDY

L'entrevue avec les enfants

Contexte socio-familial

Nom:_____

Age:_____

1. Où es-tu né?

2. As-tu toujours demeuré là?

3. Quelles langues parle-t-on chez vous?

4. Tes parents, est-ce que l'un ou l'autre parle anglais?

5. Quelles langues les gens parlent-ils dans ton quartier?

6. Quand as-tu as commencé à apprendre l'anglais?

7. A part les deux heures d'anglais par semaine que tu fais à l'école, étudies-tu l'anglais en dehors de l'école?

8. As-tu l'occasion de temps à autre d'écouter la radio ou de regarder la télévision en anglais?

9. En 4è année, ton professeur parlait-il en anglais la plupart du temps ou parlait-il plus souvent en français?

10. Cette année, ton professeur parle-t-il l'anglais ou le français la plupart du temps?

11. A part ton professeur, entends-tu parler l'anglais par d'autres personnes?

12. As-tu de bonnes notes en français? ...en mathématiques?

13. Quelle est ta matière préférée à l'école?

14. L'anglais, le trouves-tu difficile ou facile?

15. Te considères-tu fort ou faible en anglais?

16. Penses-tu que tu as l'oreille facile pour les langues?

17. Penses-tu avoir une bonne mémoire?

18. Penses-tu qu'il est important d'apprendre l'anglais?

19. Ton but final dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais, est-ce que ce sera d'apprendre à le comprendre et à le parler ou à le lire et à l'écrire?

20. Si tu avais le loisir de pouvoir choisir le genre de cours d'anglais que tu aimerais poursuivre, lequel des trois cas suivants choisirais-tu?

    a) un cours où le professeur traduit et explique tout en français?

    b) un cours où le professeur parle anglais tout le temps?

    c) aller à un endroit où les gens ne parlent que l'anglais?

21. Il éxiste au Québec un programme spécial où les élèves étudient l'anglais de façon intensive pendant cinq mois, et les autres matières pendant le reste de l'année. Aimerais-tu étudier l'anglais dans un tel programme ou préfèrerais-tu étudier l'anglais pendant deux heures par semaine avec ou sans devoirs?

22. Es-tu mal à l'aise quand le professeur parle anglais pendant le cours ou aimes-tu ça?

23. Trouves-tu que ton professeur parle trop souvent en anglais ou trop souvent en français pendant le cours?

24. Aimes-tu l'anglais?

25. En classe, aimes-tu faire des jeux et activités où tu parles anglais en équipe ou préfères-tu travailler dans ton cahier d'activités?

26. Aimes-tu répéter des sons en classe à l'aide des chansons et des comptines?

27. Certains croient que, pour apprendre une langue il faut étudier, pratiquer, demander des explications; d'autres personnes croîent que l'on peut apprendre une langue en regardant la télévision, en écoutant des disques. Qu'est-ce que tu en penses?

28. Penses-tu que tu a développé des trucs qui t'aident dans ton apprentissage de l'anglais?

a) Pour pratiquer les sons de l'anglais, est-ce-que tu répètes les mots silencieusement (à bouche de poisson) après le professeur?

b) Pour te rappeler des mots et de leur signification, est-ce que tu:

b1 - fais un dessin dans ta tête?

b2 - les répètes souvent?

b4 - les écris?

c) Pour développer la compréhension de l'oral, est-ce que tu écoutes des disques, la radio ou est-ce que tu regardes la télévision?

d) Joues-tu à des jeux d'ordinateur en anglais?

e) Cherches-tu des occasions pour parler en anglais?

f) L'idée de parler en anglais, est-ce que ça te cause du stress?

g) Quand tu as des problèmes en anglais, est-ce que tu demandes de l'aide?

h) As-tu peur que les gens rient de toi quand tu fais des fautes en anglais?

g) Est-ce que tu continues a essayer de parler en anglais même si les gens rient de toi?

29. Tu vas bientôt passer ton épreuve synthèse de fin d'année en anglais. Cette épreuve couvre les notions de la 4e et de la 5e année. Voici les feuilles d'étude appropriées dont tu as déjà un exemplaire dans ton cahier. Pourrais-tu m'expliquer comment tu t'y prends pour te préparer à cette épreuve synthèse?

Merci. Bonne chance dans ton examen.