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Language learning strategies of Botswana students : An exploratory study

Joel M. Magogwe
Edith Cowan University

Edith Cowan University

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LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES OF BOTSWANA STUDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

JOEL MOKUEDI SIPHO MAGOGWE

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the learning strategies used by Botswana students acquiring English as a second language. It also examines whether the choice of strategies is affected by the factors of different age/level of education, proficiency and gender. The research also explores whether the students' self-efficacy beliefs correlated with their use of language learning strategies.

Specifically this research examined the types of strategies used by primary, secondary and tertiary students. It also examined the types of strategies used by the students deemed by their teachers to have good, fair or poor levels of English proficiency. The research also compared the strategies used by females and males. Next, this study explored the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, the factors of age/level of education, proficiency and gender, and use of language learning strategies.

The adapted versions of the Oxford (1990) Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES) instruments were used to gather quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with subjects to triangulate the findings of the quantitative surveys with qualitative data. The quantitative results were analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate means and standard deviations, and the ANOVA and Pearson Product Moment tests were used to calculate relationships between the variables. The qualitative data was examined thematically, and also in terms of frequency.

This research sought to confirm the findings of other language learning strategy research that the use of language learning strategies is related to proficiency level, but also to age and gender. By undertaking this research in Botswana this study responded to the call for more replication of strategy research and for research in different cultural contexts. This research also sought to extend current knowledge by exploring a relationship between strategy choice and self-efficacy beliefs.

The importance of this research also rests in the fact that it was the first of its kind in Botswana. The research found out what good Botswana students do in terms of their use of language learning strategies to perform better. The findings indicate that Botswana students use a wide range of language learning strategies (in terms of type) but they used a narrow range within each type. The findings also revealed that there was a positive relationship between use of language learning strategies and proficiency, age, gender and self-efficacy beliefs. These results may be used in the future to inform pedagogy and as such recommendations from this research are important for a country where the learning of English is not only an educational requirement, but one also that influences social power relationships.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signature 

Date 21/4/05

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TERMS USED IN THIS STUDY

1. Botswana	=	The name of the country.
2. Batswana	=	The name of people living in this country. This can mean inhabitants of Botswana or it can have the more specific meaning of referring to people of one particular ethnic group within Botswana (Batswana contrasting with Kalanga etc.) In this thesis the term is used consistently in its broader sense to refer to all inhabitants of Botswana.
3. L1	=	First language or mother tongue.
4. L2	=	Second language or the language a learner acquires subsequent to learning their L1.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

This research took place in Botswana a country located in Southern Africa. In Botswana English is a compulsory subject and the medium of instruction (except for the subject Setswana) from Standard Three onwards. Passing English is a requirement to proceed from one level of education to another. English is also used for official communication and in commerce, not only in Botswana, but also within many parts of Africa. Despite its importance, English is a second language in Botswana because its use is limited, especially for day to day communication. For instance, outside educational contexts most people, both adults and children, do not have much contact with the English language.

Although it has a pivotal role in education, many Botswana students across all levels of education are not proficient in the English language. With a view to that, the overall objective of this study is to explore ways to improve English language learning, and, in particular, because of the apparent contribution to second language acquisition, to examine those language learning strategies used by Botswana students and the factors that contribute to, and detract from, their use.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to investigate the strategies used by Botswana students across all levels of education and identify the factors that influence the use of these, such as proficiency, age/level of education, gender and self-efficacy beliefs about language learning.

The following questions are addressed in this study:

(a) At each level of education, do the Botswana students use ESL/EFL language learning strategies, and if so, of what kind are they?

(b) Which strategies are used by high and low proficiency students respectively?

(c) Do the factors of proficiency, age/level of education, and gender, influence the students' choice of these strategies?

(d) Is there a relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and strategy choice?

1.3 Background to language learning strategy research

It has been found that successful students use more language learning strategies than less successful students. Success has been measured in various ways such as by using grades or by referring to proficiency or level of learning. It has also been found that gender influences strategy choice. For instance, in previous research it has been found that female students use more strategies than male students (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1988). In addition, it has been found that students who have received language learning strategy instruction have been found to perform better than those who have not (Halbach, 2000; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzarenes, Kupper, & Rocco, 1985). Moreover, students with stronger self-efficacy beliefs have been found to perform better than those with weaker self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1984). It has also been found that there is a relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and strategy use (Rossiter, 2003). However, many of the studies related to these areas have been conducted in western contexts, and specifically in university language learning situations. Therefore, despite the importance of both acquiring English as a second language in many parts of Africa, and the potential that language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs may have to this process, very few studies have been conducted in the African context. With a view to that, the current study was conducted in Botswana.

1.4 Significance of the study

This research is important because it investigates language learning strategy research in the context of Botswana. Although this research is not the first to be done in a post-colonial context, it is the first to be done in this country where English is an official language, but also a second language for many of its population. This study is also a response to a recommendation made by Oxford (1993) that more research should be done in this area to provide more consistent information on how students from different cultural backgrounds use language learning strategies.

This study is undertaken with a view to in the future developing appropriate strategy training and encouraging positive self-efficacy beliefs as a way of achieving greater success in English language learning in Botswana. However, before this can happen, first there is a need to determine what language learning strategies are currently used by Botswana students, what factors affect their choice, and what the self-efficacy beliefs of the Botswana students are towards learning English.

CHAPTER TWO

General Background of Botswana

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of Botswana in order to provide a context for this study. First, a brief history of Botswana is presented, followed by its demographic characteristics, and then the language situation in the country. This includes a brief outline of the history of language use in Botswana, followed by an outline of the present language policy, and finally a description of the prevailing language learning difficulties.

2.2 History of Botswana

Within the last 500 years or so, the ancestors of the Batswana (Setswana speaking people of Botswana) moved into the country from the Transvaal in South Africa in a migration process described as "The Great Trek". It also continued to occur during the nineteenth century as a consequence of the Boer war, and this period of migration is called "Difeqane" (Janson & Tsonope, 1991). The Bechuanaland Protectorate was transformed into the present Republic of Botswana when the country became independent from Britain in 1966 (See Campbell, 1979; Schapera, 1976; Tlou & Campbell, 1984).

2.3 Demographic characteristics

Botswana has a population of 1.7 million. Most of the people (Batswana) live in the rural areas along the eastern corridor of the country. The population of Gaborone, the capital city, is approximately 134,000. About three quarters of the western part of the country is a desert and is sparsely populated (Nyathi-Ramahobo, 1991). According to Swilla (1992), Botswana is predominantly a monolingual country. This could be confirmed by the fact that about 85% of the people speak Setswana - the national language of Botswana

(Nyathi-Ramahobo, 1991). However, Arthur, (1994) refers to Botswana as being primarily bilingual because of the use of English in education. There are also several sub-groups: approximately 15% of the population speak their local language in addition to Setswana. These groups include the Bakalanga, Bayei, Bambukushu, Basubiya, Baherero, Bakgalagadi, Basarwa, Balala and the Khoi San (Nyathi-Ramahobo, 1991). Of these sub-groups, the Bakalanga – whose population is approximately 100, 000 - are numerically and politically most important. The rest of the sub-groups number approximately 76, 000 in total (Janson & Tsonope, 1991).

2.4 Language use in Botswana

This next section provides a brief history of language use in Botswana with a particular focus on the English language, which is the main language under investigation in this research.

2.4.1 History of English language in Botswana

Prior to independence, English was the official language of Botswana and all official texts were written in English. Even after the country was granted independence in 1966, English remained the official language. The reason for this is because after independence, Europeans continued to make up a large proportion of workers in the ministries and government departments, mostly because there were extremely few qualified Batswana.

The dominant role of English in Botswana has also been explained in terms of the power related to this linguistic code. As Fishman (1977) explains, for Botswana English was a key to social, political and economic advancement. Even today, the language situation is very similar especially in the private sector. English is still the official language and the language of administration and it is used for contracts, business letters and reports.

2.4.2 Present language policy

The constitution of Botswana stipulates that English is the official language of Botswana, and Setswana is the national language. English is used in formal institutions like the judiciary, parliament, mass media, health services and education. On the other hand, Setswana is largely used informally for oral communication, although it is also used in formal institutions such as in the local court.

The use and delineation of English and Setswana is also apparent in the education setting. In Botswana formal education comprises seven years of primary schooling (Standard 1-7), three years of junior secondary schooling (Forms 1-3), and two years of senior secondary schooling (Forms 4-5). Nationally, Setswana is the medium of instruction in Standards 1 and 2. After this time, lessons and examinations in all subjects, except the subject Setswana, should be conducted in English (although the actual practice in many classrooms around the country may not abide by this directive). It is also a compulsory subject in its own right from Standard Three onwards. Furthermore, English as a subject is directly linked to the achievement of all fifteen aims of the national curriculum (known as the Basic Education Programme). Even though there is some disparity between the curriculum goals and actual teaching practice, there is little doubt that in formal education, English plays a significant role.

2.4.3 Status of English

The importance of English in Botswana cannot be over-emphasized. It is the language of power in terms of official communication and in commerce, not only in Botswana but also regionally, within the continent of Africa and most certainly in the global context. At the same time, however, there are some interesting variations in the language use within the mass media. For example, the majority of the radio programs are transmitted in Setswana, the language of the majority of the population, and the second or third language of most other people. Radio Botswana (RB1 station) is the official national broadcasting station, and it is wholly government owned. Despite the constitutional

policy that English is the official language, most of the broadcasts in RB1 are in Setswana and not English. However, school broadcasts or radio lessons for primary school classes are broadcast in English (although they do contain a noticeable number of grammatical errors). Setswana is also the language used to broadcast a large number of other programs targeted at improving the lives of the people of Botswana (e.g., agricultural programs). However, there are three other commercial radio stations. One of them, RB2, is owned by government and it mainly broadcasts in English. Similarly the two others, which are privately owned and which broadcast only in and around the capital city of Gaborone, also do so in English. Therefore it can be seen that the language used for communication, by way of radio, is rather mixed.

Further, although in official terms English is important in Botswana, it can be read and spoken by only 40% of the population (Janson & Tsonope, 1991). For most Batswana, particularly those outside the capital city, exposure to English is attained primarily through education. Thus if they learn it, they do so through formal instruction, rather than by acquiring it spontaneously through natural use in their daily lives. Outside the classroom, most people, including adults and children will have no more than marginal or passive contact with the English language (Janson & Tsonope, 1991). Therefore, despite its official status and use in public domains throughout the country, it could be suggested that English is a second language in Botswana by virtue of its limited use, particularly in the context of the daily lives of most Batswana, many of who live in rural areas. Even so, according to Janson and Tsonope (1991), the importance of English for Botswana has grown tremendously during the last two decades. It is necessary to have some proficiency in it in order to function in the capital city Gaborone, and in other modern towns. More importantly, proficiency is vital because of its role in education. Further, success is generally measured by way of mastery of English. It is therefore not surprising to find that the official point of view is that English should be encouraged in all possible ways (Janson & Tsonope, 1991).

English is a prerequisite for further education. Candidates who enroll at the tertiary institutions, in all courses, except science courses, must have passed English in their final

examination in senior secondary school. This is a cause for concern, as many intelligent students may not be gaining access to tertiary institutions because of their poor proficiency in English.

English proficiency is measured when students sit final examinations at the end of Standard Seven (PSLE – Primary School Leaving Examination), Form Three (JC - Junior Certificate) and Form Five (GCSE – General Certificate School Examinations) respectively. These examinations determine whether students have successfully passed the respective levels, which enables them to proceed to higher levels or to enrol at tertiary institutions such as The University of Botswana. At The University of Botswana proficiency is measured by continuous assessment and the final semester examinations.

2.4.4 English language problems in Botswana

Despite the important role of English in Botswana, it is evident that many Batswana, particularly school students, have not developed sufficient proficiency in English. They cannot speak fluently and do not perform well in the English examinations, especially at higher levels of education. For example, although the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) results below show that many students performed well at these younger levels, in that they achieved a grade of C or better (above 70%) across the years (see Table 1), the Junior Certificate (JC) results show that few students (26.2% in 2000; 25.6% in 2001; and 26.4% in 2002) obtained grade C or better (see Table 2). Further by the time students reach their senior years in high school, their grades become even lower. This is shown in the General Certificate School Examinations (GCSE) results where only a small number of students scored grade C and above (18.37% in 2000; 21.87%; in 2001; 21.86% in 2002) (see Table 3).

Table 1

Botswana Primary School Leaving Examination Results

Year/Grade		A-C	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total
2000	n	31146	8128	11198	11820	7185	549	2	38882
	%	80.1	20.9	28.8	30.4	18.5	1.4	0.01	
2001	n	30647	5442	10132	15073	9011	593	6	40275
	%	76.1	13.5	25.2	37.4	22.4	1.5	0.02	
2002	n	30478	4910	13759	11809	104343	59	0	40971
	%	74.4	12.0	33.6	28.8	25.5	0.1	0	

Key: U = Ungraded

Source: Ministry of Education Botswana

Table 2

Botswana Junior Certificate Examination Results

Year/Grade		A-C	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total
2000	n	9608	816	2737	6055	17482	9605	0	18946
	%	26.2	2.2	7.5	16.5	47.6	26.2	0	
2001	n	9419	962	2828	5629	17397	9943	0	36759
	%	25.6	2.6	7.7	15.3	47.3	27.0	0	
2002	n	9412	785	2642	5985	16770	9502	0	35684
	%	26.4	2.2	7.4	16.8	47.0	26.6	0	

Key: U = Ungraded

Source: Ministry of Education Botswana

Table 3

Botswana General Certificate School Examinations (GCSE) Results

Year/Grade		A*	A	A-C	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	Total
2000	n	6	74	3482	789	2613	7843	5632	1686	261	42	18946
	%	0.03	0.4	18.4	4.2	13.8	41.4	29.7	8.9	1.4	0.2	
2001	n	17	143	4289	1000	3129	8260	5387	1434	220	25	19615
	%	0.1	0.7	21.9	5.1	16.0	42.1	27.5	7.3	1.1	0.1	
2002	n	33	244	4522	1045	3200	8239	6160	1572	173	17	20683
	%	0.2	1.2	21.9	5.1	15.5	39.8	29.9	7.6	0.8	0.1	

Key: A* = A with merit; U = Ungraded

Source: Ministry of Education Botswana

English language proficiency problems are also found at the University of Botswana. As Chimbganda (2000) indicates the first year students he investigated at the University of Botswana were not able to perform even basic writing skills in English, especially in Science. In fact, he went on to suggest that first year students lack a 'general education' that gives them the necessary preparation to enable them to read and write in English at an acceptable level.

Consequently, in an attempt to tackle these English language problems the Communication and Study Skills Unit (CSSU) was established at UB in 2000 in order to offer and co-ordinate EAP and ESP courses in a more organized manner. In addition, optional Communication and Study Skills courses began to be offered, even to post graduate students, to help them develop their English proficiency. However, despite these efforts, difficulties with the English language still persist for many students.

In view of the aforementioned English language learning difficulties, the overall objective of this study is to explore ways that might improve the English language learning by Botswana students. In particular this study explores the strategies used by Botswana students of different educational levels. It is possible that good Botswana learners may use more appropriate second language (L2) learning strategies more frequently than less proficient ones and that the use of these enhances their English language learning. If this is the case, it is important to explore what factors are associated with their use. Specifically this study explores the impact of such factors as proficiency, age and education level, gender, it and self-efficacy beliefs on the use of language learning strategies by Botswana students.

CHAPTER THREE

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews research on language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs and also presents a theoretical framework upon which this research is based. It also presents a review of studies and the methodology used to carry out research in this area of language learning.

In this thesis the target language is English. In addition, for the purpose of this research strategy is defined as: "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information" Oxford (1990:8). Thirdly, proficiency refers to performance of students based on students' marks/grades or general knowledge of English language as rated by their teachers. It should be noted, however, that this term is used in a variety of ways in other research and that must be considered in relation to all the literature reviewed describing language learning strategies and policy. Finally, gender in this study simply refers to sex or whether one is biologically male or female.

3.2 Language learning strategies

Since the pioneering work carried out in the mid-seventies by Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) many researchers have recognised the importance of language learning strategies. Rubin (1975) broadly defined language learning strategies as: "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". Others have defined language-learning strategies as specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques used by students, often consciously, to improve their progress in acquiring, storing, retaining, recalling, and using information in the second or foreign language. For example see (Chamot, 1987; Cohen, 1998; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990,

1994b). According to Oxford, Lavine and Crookall, (1989), these strategies may be used consciously and with effort, but they can become habitual and automatic with practice.

Other definitions of language learning strategies include those given by O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper and Rocco, (1985) and Oxford (1990). O'Malley et al., (1985:23) define learning strategies as: "operations or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information". Similarly, Oxford (1990:8) defines language learning strategies as: "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information".

Strategies have been classified using different systems by different researchers. For example, Rubin (1981) identified two types of strategies: those contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to learning. She divided direct learning strategies into six categories: clarification/verification; monitoring; memorization; guessing/inductive referencing; deductive reasoning and practice. Indirect learning strategies are divided into two and they are: creating opportunities for practice, and production tricks. Another classification is that of O'Malley et al., (1985) who identified 26 strategies. These they divided into three categories: metacognitive (knowing about learning); cognitive (specific to distinct learning activities); and, social strategies.

Recently, Hsiao and Oxford (2002) reviewed the problem of classifying language learning strategies. They conducted a study to address this issue and to determine whether all the proposed classification models successfully explain variability in learner strategy use, and, wherever possible, to provide directions for future language learning strategy research. Further, they argue that the different classification systems that have been proposed have not been explored systematically. Griffiths (2004) concludes the argument about the lack of consensus on the classification of strategies by pointing out that whatever classification may be used, there will continue to be conflict between the competing classification systems.

This study is based on the classification provided by Oxford (1990) in which she divides strategies into six categories in her Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL):

(1) Memory strategies – such as grouping, imagery, rhyming, and structured reviewing;
(2) Cognitive strategies – such as reasoning analyzing, summarizing (all reflective of deep processing), as well as general practicing;
(3) Compensation strategies (to compensate for limited knowledge), such as guessing meanings from the context in reading and listening and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning when the precise expression is not known;
(4) Metacognitive strategies, such as paying attention consciously searching for practice opportunities, planning for language tasks, self-evaluating one's progress, and monitoring error;
(5) Affective (emotional, motivation-related) strategies, such as anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward; and,
(6) Social strategies, such as asking questions, cooperating with native speakers of the language, and becoming culturally aware.

(Details of Oxford's strategies are given in Appendix A)

Although six distinct categories have been identified, Oxford (1990) cautions that there is some overlap, giving the example of planning which can both be a metacognitive strategy and cognitive strategy because it also requires reasoning. Oxford's classification has been selected because as Vidal (2002) indicates it is the most comprehensive, detailed and systematic because it links individual strategies, as well as strategy groups, with each of the four language skill areas of listening, reading, speaking and writing being represented. Similarly, Griffiths (2004) suggests that Oxford's (1990) classification can provide a useful base for understanding and researching language learning strategies. It should also be noted that the primary purpose of this study is not to explore the issue of classification but rather it is to examine strategies used by Botswana students to learn English language.

3.2.1 Language learning strategy research

Research on language learning strategies are of three types: studies that define and classify strategies; studies that describe strategies in detail and the type of tasks suitable for the use of different strategies; and studies that validate the influence of strategies on learning (Vidal, 2002). In terms of methodology, most of the research on language learning has been cross-sectional and correlational in nature (Ellis, 1994; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

The reason there has been so much research on language learning strategies is that they are deemed to be important for second language acquisition (SLA). For example, Oxford et al., (1989) indicate that the use of appropriate language learning strategies facilitates the development of communicative competence. They suggest that metacognitive strategies help learners to monitor their learning, focus, plan and evaluate their progress, whereas affective strategies assist learners to become confident and persevere during active language learning. Social strategies, they suggest, are used for interaction and empathic understanding; memory strategies enable learners to achieve grammatical accuracy by using imagery and structured review; and, compensation strategies encourage the development of more authentic communication.

Furthermore, Mahlobo (2003) explains that the language learning strategies are useful for the development of the four skills of second language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading and writing. For instance, to develop the speaking and listening skills, social strategies (such as asking questions and cooperating) and compensation strategies (such as using gestures for unknown words) can be used. Competence in the skill of writing requires the use of metacognitive strategies such as planning, self-evaluation and self-monitoring. Furthermore, Mahlobo (2003) shows that the appropriate use of language learning strategies results in improved language proficiency and self-reliance. In summary, language learning strategies are important for helping language learners both to acquire the target language and to communicate in it. It is for this reason that this study

explores the language learning strategies of Botswana students as a potential way to assist their SLA.

3.2.2 Language strategy research on good language learners

Language learning strategies have long been associated with promoting effective language learning (for example, Carson & Longhini, 2002; Ehrman & Oxford, 1988; Green & Oxford, 1995; Halbach, 2000; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Oxford, 1993). Since the commencement of strategy research, many second language acquisition studies have been conducted to specifically find out what good language learners do as a way to help less successful language learners (Fillmore, 1976; Naiman, Frohlic, Stem, & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). However, it should be noted that most good language learner studies have been conducted in classroom settings as opposed to naturalistic language settings (Carson & Longhini, 2002), and therefore the focus for much of the research has been situated in instructional contexts.

One of the first studies in this area was that conducted by Rubin (1975). From her study she found that good language learners "are accurate guessers; have a strong drive to communicate; are uninhibited and willing to communicate; are willing to communicate when unsure, and are not afraid of being wrong or appearing foolish; look for patterns and analyze information; take advantage of all practice opportunities; monitor their own speech and that of others and pay attention to meaning" (p. 20) Similarly, Naiman, Frohlic, Stem, and Todesco, (1978) found in their study that good language learners were able to choose learning styles they preferred; actively learnt language and were aware that language was both a system of rules and a means of communication. In another early study, Fillmore (1976) investigated individual differences between students enrolled at the University of California and found that good language learners were more willing to interact and communicate with other students than their less successful counterparts.

Other prominent researchers to enter this field at this relatively early stage included O'Malley, Chamot and their colleagues. From their studies they suggested that good

language learners manage their own learning process through metacognitive strategies, such as paying attention, self-evaluating, and self-monitoring (O'Malley et al., 1985). According to O'Malley et al., (1985), students using more metacognitive strategies are more focused and can review their progress, achievement, and future learning directions. Although still focusing on good language learners, the emphasis was very much on how learners can develop into more autonomous learners.

Oxford whose long line of research in the area commenced with her first publication in 1988 also focussed on good language learners and in particular how they achieve autonomy (Oxford, 1990, 1993). She claims, for instance, that students who direct their learning are more confident and proficient. They use affective strategies to reduce anxiety and to encourage themselves. They work with others to learn the language, using social strategies like asking questions. They use memory strategies, such as grouping, imagery, and structured review to get information into their memory and to recall it when needed. They employ the new language directly with cognitive strategies, such as practicing naturalistically, analyzing contrastively, and, summarizing. Finally, they make up for their limited knowledge by using compensatory strategies, like guessing meanings intelligently and using synonyms (Oxford, 1990). Also, good language students use such L2 strategies in a more organized or orchestrated manner than weak ones (Oxford, 1993).

Further, it is claimed by a number of researchers that good language learners use strategies more frequently, and in a greater number of situations, than weaker students (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Green & Oxford, 1995; Rubin, 1975). However, this claim has been disputed on the basis of findings from various studies. For instance, Phillips (1991) found in her study of 141 university-level Asian students that mid-proficiency level students used more language learning strategies than students in both high and low proficiency groups. She found no consistent differences between strategies of high proficiency and low proficiency students and thus concluded that the relationship between proficiency and strategy use was curvilinear. Other studies have even found to the contrary, that good learners use fewer strategies than weaker learners (Green & Oxford, 1995). Abraham and Vann (1987) have suggested that unsuccessful students also

use strategies generally considered as useful, and often the same ones as those employed by successful learners (in Vann & Abraham, 1990). Therefore, with regard to the relationship between the quantity of strategies used, no consistent picture has emerged.

Studies have not only concentrated on what good language learners do but have also paid attention to what less successful learners do, and as a consequence have indicated what learners might avoid. Generally, it has been suggested that less successful language learners cannot choose appropriate strategies or link them together into a useful strategy chain (Block, 1986; Galloway & Labarca, 1991; Stern, 1975; Vann & Abraham, 1990).

A useful review of studies concerning strategies of less effective L2 learners is provided by Oxford (1993). Firstly, it seems that less successful learners used fewer strategies than those of more successful learners and that those they do use were highly restricted as to type. Strategies of less effective learners often involved less communication and more unimportant behaviours such as translation with heavy use of dictionaries, rote memorization, folding papers into columns to create vocabulary self-tests, and uncreative forms of repetition. Secondly, less effective learners did not really know what strategies they used and they could not readily describe their strategies. Thirdly, however, this was contradicted by other research (e.g., Nyikos, 1987) that indicated that ineffective L2 learners did know which strategies they used, and further used them as many as good ones did. The major difference was that less skilled learners did not demonstrate the careful orchestration and creativity shown by more effective learners. However, Oxford (1993) cautions that less successful L2 learners are not all alike in their use of language learning strategies. Some of them might use fewer and low quality strategies, others might have forgotten their strategies, and still others might use large numbers of strategies, but do so in an incoherent way.

3.2.3 Studies on strategy training

Because of the apparent link between language learning strategies and acquisition, many studies have been undertaken to investigate how to teach L2 students to use them. For

example, Chamot and Kupper (1989) conducted a project in which they investigated the use of learning strategies by foreign language students and their teachers. There were three different aspects to this project: 1) a descriptive study that identified foreign language studying strategies; 2) a longitudinal study which compared strategy use of effective and ineffective language learners; 3) a course development study, in which foreign language instructors taught students how to apply learning strategies. The results of the research indicated that students of all levels and abilities used strategies when learning a foreign language, but differences existed with regard to how the strategies were used and how they contributed to different degrees of success. Therefore, Chamot and Kupper did suggest that more should be done to find out what type of strategies are used by most effective foreign language students and to identify ways of teaching these strategies to less effective learners.

O'Malley et al., (1985) also conducted a training study to determine which language learning strategy combinations would facilitate language learning. The sample for this study consisted of Hispanic, Asian and students from other ethnic backgrounds. These students were put into three different groups comprising two treatment groups and one control group. The first treatment group received instruction in how to use a combination of metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies. The second treatment group were not instructed on how to use any metacognitive strategies, whereas the control group did not receive any instruction on language learning strategies at all. Each group had two sets of tasks involving listening and speaking. The results showed that the two treatment groups clearly performed much better than the control group in speaking tasks. However, overall, the results of the listening did not distinguish between groups, possibly because listening tasks were too difficult. The study concluded that language learning strategy instruction fitted well into regular language programmes and that language learning strategies were as important to foreign language learning as strategies are for any other learning area.

Other studies have also been undertaken about training, and/or recommended strategy training, especially for students with low EFL/ESL proficiency levels (Carrell, Pharis, &

Liberto, 1989; Carson & Longhini, 2002; Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Halbach, 2000; Kato, 2002; Khaldieh, 2000; McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985; Oxford, 1989, 1993). For example, Halbach (2000) conducted a diary study, the principal aim of which was to get information about students' use of strategies. The students were taking a term long English course which included a component of learner strategy training. To collect data for this study, first a total of 181 undergraduate students were given diaries in which to record their use of strategies. A rating scale developed by Moulden (1990) was also used to analyze the information from the students' diaries and to shed light on the students' use of strategies as reflected in their diaries. In this rating scale students' use of strategies was assessed by analyzing their responses on a worksheet, and in particular how they understood, approached and undertook the tasks involved. Eventually, out of the 181 diaries 12 were selected as the primary data for the study. Although a direct correlation between strategy use and academic performance cannot be claimed, the findings do suggest that more successful students used strategies more frequently, and achieved higher scores according to the rating scale. Halbach concludes by suggesting that weaker students may be helped through strategy training in specific areas where they seemed to have a problem such as critical self-awareness.

In addition to investigating the effectiveness of strategy training, the outcome of other research has included recommendations about the nature of the training that will be more beneficial to students. For example, according to Oxford, (1989), the most effective strategy training explicitly teaches learners why and how to do the following: 1) use new strategies; 2) evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies; and, 3) decide when it is appropriate to transfer a given strategy to a new situation. In 1993 Oxford suggested that strategy training should be explicit, overt, and relevant and it should provide plenty of practice with varied L2 tasks involving authentic materials. However, she does caution that being able to transfer strategies to new contexts is crucial, but difficult to achieve. In order to do this, she suggests it is necessary to raise L2 learners' strategy awareness to motivate them to continue to use them, to encourage them to evaluate the success of the training and to value the use of these strategies for various tasks.

Recommendations about strategy training have been made by a number of researchers. For example, Vogely (1995) suggests that learners should be given training that helps them to become more self-reliant. Khaldie (2000) in contrast, suggests that training should focus on the cognitive and affective domain, and that it should integrate both product- and process-oriented approaches. This adds support to Oxford's claim (1993) that strategy training should take account of effective factors, be grounded on students' attitudes and beliefs, and at the same time, issues like anxiety, motivation and interests should be directly addressed. Further, Oxford suggests that the strategies chosen should mesh with and support each other, whilst fitting the requirements of the language task, the learners' goals, and their styles of learning. Finally, and according to O'Malley, (1987) strategy training should be interwoven into regular L2 activities and be undertaken over a long period of time (a semester or a year) rather than taught as separate, short intervention.

Although strategy training has been reported to produce good results, not all of it has been uniformly successful or conclusive (Oxford, 1993; Oxford et al., 1993). Oxford indicates that this has occurred because of limitations in the research, such as: too short a period of training; a disproportionate ease or difficulty of the training task; an overemphasis on the more purely intellectual aspects of language learning; a lack of attention to affective and social strategies that are potentially important to language learning; a lack integration of the training into normal language class work and the perceived irrelevance of the training; and an inadequate pre-training assessment of learners' current strategy use, learning styles, and needs. She therefore suggests a balanced focus on cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies – because the "whole learner" should be taken into account during learning strategy training. She also calls for more research in the area of L2 strategy training; and on the differing approaches used in research for assessing strategy training.

In summary, the research shows that good language learners use language learning strategies to enhance their language learning and that they use them more frequently and in a more orchestrated manner than their weaker counterparts. Research also shows that

less successful students can be trained to use more strategies including those used by their more successful peers. The importance of language learning strategy training has been recognized by many language learning strategy researchers and some of the studies have even recommended appropriate strategy training for optimal benefits. Based on this rationale, this study has been undertaken to explore the English language learning strategies used by Botswana students across all levels of education with a view to in the future developing appropriate strategy training as a way of achieving greater success in English language learning in Botswana. However, before this can happen, first there is a need to determine what language learning strategies are currently used by Botswana students and what factors affect this choice.

3.2.4 Studies on choice and use of strategies

Different factors, often described as individual differences (Skehan, 1989), have been found to influence learner use of second language learning strategies. These include language proficiency (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989a); motivation (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989a); gender (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, 1990; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989a; Taguchi, 2002), nationality (Oxford & Green, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989b; Taguchi, 2002), age, stage of L2, and learning style (Willing, 1988) and experience with strategy training (Oxford, 1993; Skehan, 1989). This study will particularly focus on the factors of proficiency, age, gender and self-efficacy beliefs because these have not been adequately researched to date (see Oxford, 1994b; Purdie & Oliver, 1999). A review of these specific factors is provided below.

a) Proficiency

Language proficiency has been significantly linked with strategy use. According to Green and Oxford (1995: 265), "students who were better in their language proficiency generally reported higher levels of overall strategy use and frequent use of a greater number of strategy categories". The difficulty, however, is that proficiency has been gauged in many different ways. According to Green and Oxford (1995) this includes: self

ratings of proficiency (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989b); language proficiency and achievement tests (O'Mara & Lett, 1990; Oxford et al., 1993; Phillips, 1991); entrance and placement examinations (Mullins, 1992); language course grades (Mullins, 1992); years of language study (Watanabe, 1990); and career status (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989).

Wharton (2000) used a self-rated proficiency assessment and compared this to the use of language learning strategies by bilingual Singaporean students. He found evidence of a linear relationship between proficiency and the use of many learning strategies. In fact, there was a pattern of increasing strategy use at the progressively higher self-rated proficiency levels. Wharton concluded that more proficient learners used more strategies more frequently than less proficient FL learners, regardless of the setting, culture or previous language learning experience.

Green and Oxford (1995), in contrast, in a large scale survey using 374 university of Puerto Rico students used course level as the indicator of proficiency. In addition, not only did they investigate proficiency, but also gender in their examination of the variation of use of strategies using Oxford's SILL. Like previous researchers, they found greater use of strategies among more successful learners. However, their analysis revealed more complex patterns of use than had appeared in previous studies. They found that only some items showed significant variation thus leading them to conclude that significant variation by proficiency level did not invariably mean more frequent strategy use by more successful students for all strategies. They did, however, report that they believed there to be a group of 23 strategies used equally frequently by students across proficiency levels, and they called these *"bedrock strategies."* They concluded that although these strategies contributed significantly to the learning process they could not alone push less successful students to higher levels of proficiency.

In a more recent study, Khaldie (2000) explored the strategies and processes that 43 graduate learners of Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) used when carrying out writing tasks. This time, essays written by the students were evaluated by two native experts and used to discriminate learners' proficiency levels. The results showed that all students,

proficient and less proficient, actively used different learning strategies to varying degrees. However, the less proficient learners appeared frustrated by the process, had a negative attitude toward writing, and their essays exhibited a low level of proficiency. In contrast, the proficient writers appeared to have controlled their anxiety level, trusted their linguistic ability and performed up to their standards.

In a small scale study Chen (1990) investigated the nature of the relationship between L2 learners' target language proficiency and their strategic competence. The sample consisted of 12 Chinese EFL learners of both high and low proficiency. They were divided into two groups according to their general language proficiency, with six students classified as belonging to the high proficiency group and six belonging to the lower proficiency group. Next the 220 communication strategies used by the Chinese EFL learners of both proficiency groups when communicating with native speakers were identified and analyzed. Chen found that higher proficiency learners used fewer communication strategies when communicating concrete and abstract concepts to a native speaker, although they used these strategies more effectively than lower proficiency learners.

It is important to note that although various relationships between strategy use and proficiency have been suggested, because of the correlational nature of the investigations, causality has never been claimed (Mahlobo, 2003). Further, it has not been established whether language proficiency comes before strategy use or vice versa (Halbach, 2000). In his study involving 12 learners Halbach (2000) found that more successful students did use strategies more frequently, but he also notes that while greater improvement in strategy use could be related to a notable improvement in proficiency, this is difficult to determine.

In summary, various methods have been used to determine proficiency in language learning strategy research. For this investigation, proficiency refers to language performance of students based on students' marks/grades or general knowledge of the English language as rated by their teachers. Previous research indicates a relationship

between proficiency and use of strategies. One of the objectives of this research is to determine if there is a relationship between strategy use and proficiency in the Botswana context.

b) Age studies

Within SLA literature, age studies have shown that younger learners are better at second language acquisition than older acquirers (Collier, 1987). Specifically, it has been observed that although older students learn faster in their initial stages of the L2 morphosyntactic acquisition, the younger learners' eventual attainment is greater (Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979). It has also been found that the older the learner is when learning a language, the less likely are the chances that they can attain a native-like proficiency (Hyltenstem, 1992; Long, 1990; Nicholas, 1991). According to Long (1990), by the age of 6 the ability to acquire a native-like accent is considerably reduced and that by the age of 15 acquiring native-like ability in some aspects of syntax and morphology becomes even more difficult. According to Oliver (2000) the differences between the way the old and the young learners learn language are a result of their different experiences, background and L1 proficiency.

Research also shows that age influences the use of language learning strategies, although it is not clear how this variable determines the types and frequency of strategies used. According to Oxford (1994b), students of different ages and stages in L2 learning use different strategies, with certain strategies used more by older or more advanced learners. In a study involving 348 students in a private language school in New Zealand, Griffiths (2003) discovered a positive correlation between course level and reported frequency of language learning strategy use. In that study high school students reported more frequent use of strategies than elementary students. In addition, in contrast to younger students, older students reported highly frequent use of strategies relating to interaction with others, to vocabulary, to management of feeling and to the utilization of resources.

Further, it is important to conduct research on how age influences language acquisition and strategies in order for educators to develop appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for students of different ages (Twyford, 1988). Students in Botswana generally begin learning English in primary school and continue to be taught it through their entire educational experience. Given the potential facilitative effect of language learning strategies it is appropriate to investigate their use by learners of different ages in that country.

c) Gender studies

The results of a number of studies have consistently shown that gender plays an important role in language learning and strategy choice. For instance, in Taguchi's (2002) investigation of gender and motivation, he also reported choice of language learning strategies. He found that gender, levels of English proficiency and motivation levels of learners were the main factors affecting the reported choice of language learning strategies. He also found that female learners reported the use of a wider range of language learning strategies more often than did their male counterparts in Japan.

Other similar studies have found that the common pattern is for females to use more language learning strategies than males. For example, Green and Oxford (1995) using a sample of 374 university of Puerto Rico students found that there was greater use of learning strategies by women than by men. In another study, Ehrman and Oxford (1988) used the SILL and the MBTI instruments to study the language learner strategies of 79 adults who were associated with a government agency. In this study, sex differences were extremely strong despite the small size of the sample, specifically females reported significantly greater use of language learning strategies than males.

Not only has it been found that females use more strategies in general, but also in terms of specific strategies. For example, it has been found that females more frequently used social and compensation strategies. In a study that investigated the relationship between learner factors and the reported choice of language learning strategies in both EFL

context (Japan) and an ESL context (Australia) Taguchi (2002) found that gender was one of the factors affecting the reported choice of particular language learning strategies. He had administered a revised version of the Oxford (1990) SILL to 46 Japanese learners of English who were or who had been studying at language centres in Melbourne in Australia at varying periods between 1998 and 2000 and found that the females reported greater use of compensation strategies. He suggests that this may occur because females have superior verbal aptitude and social orientation and tend to create more opportunities to use English and therefore have a greater need for compensation strategies.

Politzer (1983) supports this claim that females have a greater need for social strategies than males in his report about a study of the language learning behaviours of 90 undergraduate students enrolled in French, Spanish, and German courses at a university in the USA. He used a questionnaire to investigate the frequency in which they engaged in selected behaviours extracted from the good language learners' studies. He found that sex differences, although minor, favoured women in one of the scales and women generally displayed more social orientation than males (see also Oxford, Nyikos, & Ehraman, 1988).

However, not all studies suggest superiority of females over males in all areas of strategy use. For example, when Nyikos (1987) investigated the strategies by 135 first-semester university students of German, and in particular their use of associative memory strategies for learning German noun clusters, she found that the female students performed better when the treatment conditions were combined. She had assigned eight classes to four conditions: three training conditions received written instructions and examples on how to use three different kinds of memory strategies per condition: 1) the colour-only group associated certain colours with grammatical gender of each noun cluster to be learned; 2) the picture-only group associated each item with a drawing; and 3) the multiple-association or colour-plus-picture group used a combination strategy involving a colour-coded drawing. The fourth group (control) received no instruction regarding use of memory strategies to help them learn the noun clusters. Nyikos found

that men outscored women in a colour-plus condition, whereas women outscored men in both the picture-only and colour-only condition..

Various reasons have been given to explain why females and males use language learning strategies differently. According to Nyikos (1990), the school environment, with its role models, may promote one gender group over another in specific discipline areas. Furthermore, Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala and Meece, (1983) indicate that social forces such as parental attitude and gender-related beliefs influence the subject matter the students choose, and that the beliefs of males and females about their learning is greatly influenced by the classroom climate set by the teaching style. For example, as Eccles et al. (1983) noted, in classrooms with low levels of competition with coral drills and practice, females are more confident and positive about their subject matter than their male counterparts. On the other hand, males were found to do better in teacher-fronted classrooms where raised hands dominated the discussions regardless of the teacher's gender. Classes with more cooperative activities and with hands- on problem solving performed in small groups were identified as beneficial to both males and females. Even so, in Politzer's (1983) study of language learning strategies, females reported a significantly greater propensity than males to engage in second-language social interactions with others outside of class.

In conclusion, most language learning strategy studies have found that females outperform males in the use of general and specific language learning strategies. However, many of the studies have been conducted in western contexts, and specifically in university language learning situations. Whether these findings are also true for those students studying in other contexts requires further investigation. At the same time, anecdotal evidence suggests that female students in Botswana generally outperform males in language learning, and it is therefore appropriate to find out the strategies they use for this purpose. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research in Botswana to compare the use of strategies by females and males in order to assist educators and teachers to develop appropriate teaching and learning strategies or methods that address both genders.

3.3 Self-efficacy beliefs

Bandura and Schunk (1981: 31) define self-efficacy beliefs as: "people's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances". According to Pajares and Schunk (2001: 25), "self-efficacy beliefs judge the confidence that one has in one's abilities, and that these beliefs revolve around questions of can (Can I write well? Can I drive a car? Can I solve a problem?)". Pajares and Schunk indicate that the response to these self-efficacy questions can tell whether the individual possesses high or low confidence to perform or succeed at the activity or task in question. Furthermore, Borich and Tombari (1997) define self-efficacy as people's judgments of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance.

3.3.1 The self-efficacy beliefs theory

The most frequently cited theorist, Bandura, theorises that individuals develop particular beliefs about their ability to cope with situation-specific constructs (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1989a, 1989b; Bandura & Schunk, 1981). According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, students' judgements of their capability to perform academic tasks, or self-efficacy beliefs, predict their capability to accomplish such tasks.

It has been hypothesized that these judgments of self-efficacy mediate the effect of other influences, such as aptitude or previous achievement, on subsequent performance. In academic settings for example, self-efficacy beliefs influence the student's choices, efforts and emotional experience (Bandura, 1984). Self-efficacy beliefs influence what students do with the knowledge and skills they actually possess. Consequently, other influences on academic performances are, at least in part, the result of what students actually believe they can accomplish (Bandura, 1986).

Research into self-efficacy indicates that these beliefs enhance or reduce a student's capability. Further, according to Bandura (1986), some overestimation of capability is

useful because it increases effort and persistence. For example, highly efficacious students survive in difficult times assisted by their optimism; whereas those with low efficacy beliefs withdraw their efforts and surrender their goals. It has been observed that highly efficacious students are confident about what they can achieve, have greater intrinsic interest in activities, set themselves challenges and are committed to achieving them, work harder to avoid failure, are highly resilient and remain confident after failing to accomplish their mission and link failure with insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which they believe they are capable of acquiring (Ching, 2002). According to Rossiter (2003), a student who is confident that she/he can write an essay will most likely develop more interest, perseverance and resilience in essay writing than the one who is not (see Hull & Rose, 1989; Meier, McCarthy, & Schmeck, 1984; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

However, it is important to note that self-efficacy beliefs are task and context-oriented (Pajares & Britner, 2001). For example, in school a student's self-efficacy about writing may vary depending on whether he or she is asked to write an essay, a poem, or a creative short story. Pajares and Britner (2001) further indicate that people can gain or lose confidence depending on the tasks they are asked to perform. For instance, some excellent and confident writers will readily admit that they have no faith in their ability to spell or to correctly use commas or to identify grammatical structures. In addition, Bandura (1997) argues that, to predict academic outcomes from students', "self-efficacy beliefs should be measured in terms of particularized judgments of capability that may vary across realms of activity, different levels of task demands within a given activity domain, and under different situational circumstances" (p. 17).

3.3.2 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, age and gender

Pajares and Schunk (2001) indicate that self-efficacy beliefs are related not only to academic achievement but also to age and/or level of education. They point out that when relating academic achievement to self-efficacy beliefs the effects were stronger for high school and college students than for elementary students. In so far as gender is concerned,

Pajares and Schunk (2001) indicate that whereas recent findings suggest that gender differences in academic achievement are either diminishing or practically non-existent, gender differences in the academic beliefs of students may still be prevalent. For example, it seems that boys and girls report similar confidence in their math ability during the elementary years, but by high school, boys are more confident and girls more likely to underestimate their capability. With a view to the role played by age and gender on self-efficacy beliefs, this study explores the relationship between Botswana's students' self-efficacy beliefs, their age and gender.

3.3.3 Self-efficacy beliefs and strategy instruction

Research has been conducted on the effect of instruction on self-efficacy beliefs (e.g Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996). Particularly relevant for the current research are those studies that have demonstrated the positive effects of strategy instruction on self-efficacy. However, only limited experimental research on task-specific self-efficacy and L2 strategy instruction has been conducted to date (Rossiter, 2003). These include Chamot, Barnhardt, El- Dinary and Robbins (1999) and Chamot, Robins, and El-Dinary (1993). (For a summary see Chamot, 1994). The two intervention studies by Chamot et al., (1993) examined the effects of metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategy instruction received by learners of Japanese, Russian, and Spanish. Among other measures, students completed language strategy questionnaires in which they reported their frequency of strategy use in performing specific L2 tasks, and self-efficacy questionnaires in which they rated their perceptions of their ability to complete those particular tasks. Positive relationships between the frequent use of learning strategies and self-efficacy perceptions were found for most groups; affective strategies, however, were not included in the research design.

Rossiter (2003) undertook a study using Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of affective strategies to determine what effects, if any, affective strategy instruction (in relaxation, music, visualisation, humour, positive self-talk, risk taking, and monitoring emotions) might have on learner performance and self-efficacy in speaking tasks. The participants of the

Rossiter (2003) study were 31 adult intermediate level ESL learners registered in a full-time ESL programme in a post-secondary institution in Canada. The data from the self-report questionnaire and from the transcripts of the audio tapes were used to analyse the students' perceptions of self-efficacy and their second language performance. The results of this study showed that instruction in affective strategies (relaxation techniques, positive self-talk, the use of humour, risk-taking and self-rewards) provided no significant between-group benefit for L2 performance (speech rate, success, message abandonment) as measured in the data from the narrative task and in the description task. However, Rossiter cautions that the relative lack of significant between-group differences could be attributed in large part to the particular nature of the ESL classes in the study.

Generally, research shows that positive self-efficacy beliefs are important in learning because they influence the student's choices, efforts and emotional experience. On the other hand broad language learning strategies have been found to enhance the student's language learning particularly if they are used more frequently and in an orchestrated manner. Some language learning strategy studies (although few) have brought the two concepts together to see whether they can complement each other to facilitate language acquisition. For these reasons, the aim of the current research is to explore the English language learning strategies used by Botswana students across all levels of education and to find out whether the use of these strategies is correlated to the students' self-efficacy beliefs.

3.4 Research methodology used in strategy and self-efficacy research

In the following sections an outline of the various types of research methodology used in previous studies is presented. In addition, the advantages and shortfalls of such approaches are also discussed.

3.4.1 Research methodology in strategy research

Techniques that have been used to assess learners' use of second language learning strategies include observation, formal observation rating scales, informal or formal interviews, group discussion, think-aloud procedures, language learning diaries, dialogue journals between students and teacher, open-ended narrative type surveys, and structured surveys of strategy frequency (Oxford, 1993).

Work on strategies commencing in the 1980s was characterized by the development of questionnaires (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). These early instruments, however, suffered from a number of weaknesses, most particularly a lack of validity and reliability. For example, Bialystock's (1981) 12-item structured, but untitled rating scale was designed to investigate the extent to which strategies were used on both oral and written tasks in communicative settings and in formal classroom settings. However, it did not provide a report on its reliability and validity. Similarly, for Politzer's (1983) strategy scale which included 51 items, the reliability or validity data were not given. Later, Politzer and McGroarty (1985) used a somewhat similar instrument called Behaviour Questionnaire containing 66 items. This time, the reliability of their instrument was given, but the level given (0.51, 0.61, and 0.63) was only marginally acceptable. McGroarty (1987) used a 56-item Language Learning Strategy Student Questionnaire with a 0-6 rating scale but again reliability and validity data were not published. Similarly, the 48-item Learning Strategies used by Chamot et al., (1987) did not provide the reliability and validity measures. This was also the case for Padron and Waxman (1988) who developed a 14-item, three point scale instrument to assess reading strategies of Hispanic ESL students in grades 3-5.

In order to address the weakness of the strategy scales listed above, Oxford (1989) developed two versions of the SILL, one for language learners whose native language is English (80 items), and the other for learners of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL, 50 items). Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) indicate that the 50-item SILL has achieved a high utility rating as indicated by the many people around the world who have

employed it. The most frequent venue has been the classroom, where the goal has been chiefly to reveal the relationship between strategy use and language performance. It must be noted, however, that this instrument is more reliable when administered in English than in the native languages of the respondents (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). Even so, as they indicate, the SILL can be administered in the respondent's native language or a foreign or second language with confidence that the measurement error is minimal. According to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995), the SILL has a high content validity, a strong criterion-related validity and a high construct validity. Interestingly, it has little "fakability". They further point out that, in general, the ESL/EFL reliabilities have been high. With the ESL/EFL SILL, Cronbach alphas have been: 0.94 using the Chinese translation with a sample of 590 Taiwanese university EFL learners. When using the Japanese translation with 255 Japanese university and college EDL students the Cronbach alphas have been 0.92. According to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995), slightly lower but acceptable reliabilities are found for the EFL/ESL SILL when it is not administered in the native language, but is given in English. On this basis, Oxford's (1989) 50 items ESL/EFL version 5.1 SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) has been used by the following researchers: Bruen, 2001; Carson & Longhini, 2002; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Oxford, 1986; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Wakomoto, 2000.

However, there are weaknesses in the SILL that must be acknowledged. For instance, a close inspection of the instrument shows that some strategy items seem to convey different levels of specificity (Cohen, 1998; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). For example, "I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English" differs in levels of specificity from "I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English" (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). Fortunately, the most recent revision of the SILL seems to address this problem.

Further, efforts are currently being made by other researchers elsewhere to optimize strategy specificity, such as constructing strategy inventories that are directly organized around the four major language skill areas of listening, reading, speaking and writing. For example, Cohen, Oxford and others are currently developing a comprehensive, skill-based learning strategy questionnaire that includes many strategy items for learning each

of these skills, as well as for learning grammar, vocabulary, and translation. Also being designed by Oxford and Park is a shorter, simplified, skill-based strategy inventory for lower-level L2 learners (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002).

Although the generic SILL has been found to be useful, Grainger (1997) suggests that country-by-country SILL versions should be developed to account for national and cultural differences. Also suggested is the need to employ a variety of gathering techniques to cross-validate the data. For example, Mahlobo (2003) indicates that when using the SILL with Mpume under South African conditions, there is a clear need for verification measures. Mahlobo (2003) points out that although the SILL remains a valuable instrument for determining a learner's profile of language learning strategy use, further improvement can be achieved by subjecting it to rigorous item analysis in order to eliminate ambiguous items, as well as the items that are not relevant to a specific language group. For example, the item *I look for words in my own language that are similar to the new English word* may be useful for Afrikaans-speaking learners, but may not always be relevant to Zulu-speaking learners, where certain subject-specific terms or technical jargon in the home language may not always be readily available. It is for this reason that the current research has employed not only the SILL, but also a semi-structured interview in an attempt to cross-validate and enrich the data.

Despite the concerns offered above, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) indicate that the reliability of the SILL is high across many cultural groups and its validity rests with its ability to discriminate according to language performance (e.g., course grades, standardized test scores, ratings of proficiency). It is because of this flexibility of the SILL that the current research used it to compare students of different proficiencies (which in this case was measured in terms of ratings by teachers and lecturers).

3.4.2 Methodology in self-efficacy beliefs research

Different instruments have been used to collect data on students' academic self-efficacy beliefs. For example, the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES) is designed to

collect information from children. Other self-efficacy scales that have been developed include those by (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Gorrell & Partridge, 1985). For example, Gibson and Dembo (1984) used a 30-item Teacher Efficacy Scale to measure teacher efficacy, provide construct validation support for the variable, and examine the relationship between teacher efficacy and observable teacher behaviours.

According to Jinks and Morgan (1999) their MJSES scale has undergone extensive development to assure validity and reliability using DeVellis' (1991) *Scale Development: Theory and Application* for primary guidance. Furthermore, to improve its quality, the scale was piloted among children, teachers and teacher educators and ambiguous items were either eliminated or re-written. According to Jinks and Morgan (1999) the MJSES is sub-divided into the following three categories:

- Talent items, e.g., I am a good science student; sometimes I think an assignment is easy when the other kids think it is hard; I am one of the best students in my class.
- Context Items, e.g., Most of my classmates like to do math because it is easy; I would get better grades if my teacher liked me better; I will graduate from high school.
- Effort Items, e.g., I work hard in school; Most of my classmates work harder on their homework than I do; I always get good grades when I try hard.

One study that has used the MJSES instrument is that by Jinks and Morgan (1996). This study compared the academic efficacy beliefs of seventh and eight graders from an inner city K-8 school with those from a suburban junior high school. The MJSES instrument was administered to a total of 570 students from the two schools. The results showed a positive correlation between self-reported science performance and the subscales of talent and effort were positive and significant. The correlation was also positive with the scale as a whole. According to Jinks and Morgan, the study was a general one since it collected information from both science and other subject areas.

A study that has measured self-efficacy and use of strategies is that by Rossiter (2003). Her sample consisted of 31 adult intermediate-level ESL learners in a post-secondary institution in Canada. One class received 12 hours of affective strategy instruction and the

other class did not. After some weeks the learners from both classes did two sets of oral information-gap tasks: picture story narratives and object descriptions. Before each task the students provided scalar judgments of their ability to provide accurate descriptions. Using several scales she measured the effects of affective strategy training in the ESL classroom. Firstly, learners used a self-efficacy scale ranging from 0% to 100% to rate their self-efficacy for examining picture stories and for providing accurate descriptions of the objects (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990); Next, the learners who had received the affective strategy instruction assessed the value of the strategy instruction on a five-point scale she had designed. The data from the self-report questionnaires and from the transcripts of the audio-tapes were used to analyze students' perceptions of self-efficacy and their second language performance. This research found that affective strategy instruction did not provide a significant between-group benefit for L2 performance or perceptions of self-efficacy. Rossiter (2003) concluded that it was possible that learners' judgments of self-efficacy and self-efficacy for learning were stable and these judgments would remain like that until the learners received pertinent informational feedback to change them.

The current research has examined the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of language learning strategies of Botswana students. In this research, the MJSES instrument was used to measure self-efficacy beliefs so as to provide a broad indication of self-reported performance, talent and effort by Botswana students in learning English. This instrument was selected because of its high validity and reliability and because it has previously been used to collect information from school students.

3.5 Summary

Language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs have been defined and explained in this chapter and research on these two areas of learning has been reviewed. Also discussed has been the methodology used to research these two areas. In the light of the importance of language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs, the purpose of this research is to explore factors affecting the use of language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs of Botswana students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. It has

been undertaken using instruments selected as being most suitable, as suggested by the findings of previous research. The next chapter will provide more details of the methodology employed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Method used to collect data

4.1 Approach

This study used two data collection methods, questionnaire and interview techniques, in order to provide a broad view of the issue being investigated. As Johnson (1992) points out, employing a variety of data collection methods and gathering data from a variety of sources allows for triangulation and gives a more holistic picture. According to Vidal (2002) triangulation has been considered to be suitable to account for studies which combine product and process approaches. Triangulation means employing two or more methods of data collection when studying human behaviour (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The questionnaire was used to ascertain, in a quantitative manner, the responses of the participants. The interview supplemented this providing rich and deep qualitative data. Oxford and Green (1995) indicate that using both methods will balance the limitations of each one of them, and in doing so help us to understand how students learn languages.

4.2 Participants

Overall, 480 students participated in this study. These came from primary schools, secondary schools, and a tertiary institution. Although there were age ranges within the three educational levels, they were selected to represent the various ages of Botswana students (see page 42) and to allow for cross level comparisons. In the quantitative part of the study 480 participated and from this group 83 students were selected to contribute to the qualitative component of the study.

The 480 students were made up of 168 primary school students, 175 secondary students and 137 tertiary students. The primary students were selected from four (4) primary schools, two located in the south and the other two in the north of the country. The secondary students were selected from four (4) schools, again two from the south and two

from the north (see Table 4). All the tertiary students were enrolled at the University of Botswana.

Table 4

Number institutions and students

Level of institution	Number of institutions	Number of institutions
Primary	4	168
Secondary	4	175
Tertiary	1	137
Total	9	480

4.3 Research sites

This section provides a description of the schools and institutions where the data for this study was collected. Two of the four primary schools were in rural areas and the other two in urban areas, including one in the capital of Botswana, Gaborone. All these schools comprise seven primary school years i.e. from Standard One to Standard Seven. The qualifications of Botswana primary school teachers included teachers' certificates (which the majority of teachers hold) and teaching diplomas and degrees. However, the latter qualifications are held by only a few staff members.

With respect to the secondary schools, similarly to the primary schools, two of the four schools used in this study were located in rural areas and the other two in urban, once again including one located the capital city. All the four secondary schools are senior schools comprising five forms. In these schools most of the teachers possess a degree and a few even have masters degrees.

The tertiary institution used in this study is The University of Botswana, the only university in the country. This university is located in the capital city.

4.4 The quantitative study

The following section presents the distribution of students who participated in the quantitative part of the study.

4.4.1 Primary school students

At primary school level 47.6% *(n=80)* of the students were females and the other 52.4% *(n=88)* males, from standard seven (i.e. their final year of primary school). The majority of them, 91.1% *(n=153)* were aged between 11 and 15 years; 6.5% *(n=11)* 16-20 years; 0.6% *(n=1)* 21-25 years and 0.6% *(n=1)* 26 years and above. From the background information part of the questionnaire 86.3% *(n=145)* indicated that they spoke Setswana (the national language of Botswana) as their first language, while 0.6% *N=1)* and 13.1% *(n=22)* (respectively) reported that they spoke English or another language as their first. However, 65.5% *(n=110)* spoke Setswana only at home, while 2.4% *(n=4)* reported that they spoke only English at home; 8.3% *(n=14)* said they spoke English and another language; 10.7% *(n=18)* Setswana and another language; and 8.3% *(n=14)* Setswana and English. The students were further categorised in terms of English proficiency, and the following is a breakdown of this information: Proficient or good 34.5% *(n=58);* middle proficiency or fair 33.3% *(n=56)*; and low proficiency or poor 32.1% *(n=54).* (Table 5 provides a summary of this information).

Table 5

Background factors of primary school students

Gender	Female	Male				Total
n	80	88				168
%	47.6	52.4				
Age	5-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26 and above	
n	2	153	11	1	1	168
%	1.2	91.1	6.5	0.6	0.6	
First language	Setswana	English	Other			
n	145	1	22			168
%	86.3	0.6	13.1			
Other languages spoken at home	Setswana	English	English and other	Setswana and other	Setswana and English	
n	110	4	14	18	14	160
%	65.5	2.4	8.3	10.7	8.3	

4.4.2 Secondary school students

At the secondary level 49.7% *(n=87)* of the students were females and 50.3% *(n=88)* males. All of these students were in Form Four (i.e. the penultimate year of secondary school). Their ages were as follows: (11-15) 1.1% *(n=2)*; (16-20) 98.9% *(n=173)*. Their first language consisted of: Setswana, 90.8% *(n=158)*; English, 1.1% *(n=2)*; and 8.0% *(n=14)* another language. However, 59.2% *(n=103)* self reported that they spoke only

Setswana at home, while 2.3% *(n=4)* reported that they spoke only English at home; 2.9% *(n=5)* said they spoke English and another language; 12.1% *(n=21)* Setswana and another language; and 20.7% *(n=36)* Setswana and English. In terms of their English proficiency levels the groups were almost equally represented: Proficient or good 32.6% *(n=57);* middle proficiency or fair 34.9% *(n=61)*; and low proficiency or poor 32.6% *(n=57)* (see Table 6).

Table 6

Background factors of secondary school students

Gender	Female	Male				Total
n	87	88				175
%	49.7	50.3				
Age	5-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26 and above	
n	0	2	173	0	0	175
%	0	1.1	98.9	0	0	
First language	Setswana	English	Other			
n	158	2	14			174
%	90.8	1.1	8.0			
Other languages spoken at home	Setswana	English	English and other	Setswana and other	Setswana and English	
n	103	4	5	21	36	169
%	59.2	2.3	2.9	12.1	20.7	

4.4.3 Tertiary (university) students

The university students comprised 63.5% *(n=87)* females and 36.5% *(n=50)* males. These are all first year faculty of humanities students taking the Communication and Study Skills course which is a compulsory unit for all first year students. 59.9% *(n=82)* of the students were aged between 16 and 20 years; 34.3% *(n=47)* 21-25 years; 2.9% *(n=4)* 26 years and above. Among these students, 86.9% *(n=119)* spoke Setswana (the national language of Botswana) as their first language, while 10.9% *(n=15)* and 1.5% *(n=2)* respectively, reported that they spoke English or another language as their first. Home language speakers consisted of 60.6% *(n=83)* Setswana only at home; 5.8% *(n=8)* English and another language; 26.3% *(n=36)* Setswana and another language; and 6.6% *(n=9)* Setswana and English. None of the students reported that they spoke only English at home. The students were further categorised in terms of proficiency: Proficient or good *(n=39)* (28.5%); middle proficiency or fair *(n=34)* (24.8%); and low proficiency or poor *(n=64)* (46.7%). (Table 7 provides a summary of this information).

Table 7

Background factors of tertiary students

Gender	Female	Male				Total
n	87	50				137
%	63.5	36.5				
Age	5-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26 and above	
n	2	2	82	47	4	137
%	1.5	0	59.9	34.4	2.9	
First language	Setswana	English	Other			
n	119	2	15			136
%	86.9	1.5	10.9			
Other languages spoken at home	Setswana	English	English and other	Setswana and other	Setswana and English	
n	83	0	8	36	9	136
%	60.6	0	5.8	26.3	6.6	

4.5 Qualitative study

Interviews were conducted with 83 of the students who had completed the questionnaire. According to Guilfoyle and Hill (2002), the selection of interview participants has very little to do with numbers because the sampling is not done to get enough people but to collect sufficient data. However, Guilfoyle and Hill also indicate that a rule of thumb developed for any comparative research is to sample at least three people in each sub-

group or type for cross checking purposes. Therefore this procedure was adopted in the current study.

From the four primary schools thirty two students were selected representing *good (n=11), fair (n=10)* and *poor (n=11)* proficiency levels. These proficiency levels were determined by the teachers according to their own judgment of such. Because of this the reliability may be less than an objective test of such, but this was done because of the constraints of collecting data from schools where access was granted for only a limited time. Of these students, sixteen were female and the other sixteen were male. There were twenty seven interviewees from the four secondary schools: *(n=9)* of them with *good English proficiency; with fair (n=9)* and *(n=9)* with *poor* proficiency. There were fourteen females and thirteen males. Twenty four university students were interviewed. Their English proficiency levels consisted of: *good (n=9); fair (n=6); poor (n=9).* Sixteen of these students were female and ten were male. Table 8 provides a summary of the number of students interviewed in all the institutions.

Table 8

Gender and enrolment of the interview participants

Type of institution		Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
Number of institutions		4	4	4	12
Number of students	Female	16	14	14	
	Male	16	13	10	
Total		32	27	24	83

4.6 Participant selection

At each level of education, the students were selected using the stratified random sampling method; according to location, to gender, and level of English language proficiency as determined by the respective teachers and lecturers. For the purpose of consistency only participants from government schools were selected. However, it is important to note that compared to the other institutions that were used for this study, the University of Botswana is not wholly government owned. With respect to the English proficiency level of the students it should be noted that this categorization is not a reflection of the learners' potential. As Oxford and Green (1995: 269) noted in their study, "it is important to emphasize that in characterizing some students as less successful we are implying no judgment of their potential as learners, but are merely referring to the fact that at the time of our study they had not been successful learners of English, for any of a number of possible reasons".

4.7 Procedure

4.7.1 Consent

Before the gathering of data could proceed, permission was sought from the relevant authorities both at executive/ministry and school levels, parents and guardians were also asked for permission to talk to their children about the interviews. Students were given advance notice, perhaps one to three days ahead that they would be taking the SILL and the MJSES on certain days and in different sittings. All the other necessary information was explained to them when they completed the questionnaires. Otherwise, the detailed process of administering the SILL was adhered to closely as possible as described by Oxford (1989). Students were advised that their responses would not affect course grades and that they would be asked to answer honestly. Similarly, all the necessary preparatory communication was given to the students who were involved in the interviews

4.7.2 Interview method

The qualitative survey comprised one-to-one semi-structured interviews conducted with each of the students. They were informed that the interviews were purely for research purposes. The interviews were tape-recorded and lasted for approximately one hour. The semi-structured protocol was chosen for the following reasons: It is the most commonly used protocol; it allows potential comparisons between data; it does not subject students to restrictions usually imposed by adhering to a structured protocol; and, finally, it allows students to say something that is intrinsically motivated. (See Appendix D for a copy of this instrument).

4.7.3 Questionnaire method

This study utilized a questionnaire methodology to collect quantitative data, using the materials presented below. The questionnaires were coded using the numbers 1, 2 and 3 which referred to the proficiency of the learner: 1 = *High proficiency or good*; 2 = *middle proficiency or fair*; 3 = *low proficiency or poor).* The coded questionnaires were given to the students according to their proficiency levels as selected by their teachers or lecturers.

4.8 Materials

4.8.1 SILL questionnaire

The quantitative survey utilized a modified version of the SILL (50-item Version 7.0 for ESL/EFL) (Oxford, 1989), to collect information on strategies. The background questionnaire accompanying the SILL instrument was also adapted and used to collect the students' demographic information. There were two versions of the questionnaire, one for both primary and secondary schools, and the other for university students. All items in the questionnaires, except questions 51 and 52, were designed for a Likert scale response using a four-interval scale of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree." Questions 51 and 52 were open-ended questions meant to elicit further

information to clarify answers to some of the questionnaire items. There was no need to translate the questionnaires because the Botswana students could read and understand the simple English involved in the questionnaire, as indicated in the pilot test (see below).

Before the SILL instrument was used in this research, it was pilot tested. As a result of this some questions (e.g., questions 9, 10 and 13 of the SILL background questionnaire) were simplified to help the primary and secondary students to understand them better. In addition some questions in the SILL questionnaire (e.g., questions 5, 8, 22, 23, 24, 37, 42 and 50) were simplified either by adding an alternative version of the unfamiliar word or by adding an example to the question (e.g., rhymes are words that sound the same e.g.,'see' sounds like 'tree'). It is important to note that the meanings of the original questions were not changed as a result of these modifications. Also, the layout of the questionnaire were improved by putting the scale "Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Agree; Strongly Agree" at the beginning of each page, so that the students did not have to refer back to the first page for the scale. However, it is important to note that a generic version of the SILL was used in this study and that the changes were not of such a magnitude that "a country-by-country SILL version . . . to account for national and cultural differences" (Grainger, 1997:8) was developed.

4.8.2 Self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire

The Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES) was used to collect self-efficacy information. There were three versions of the questionnaire adapted to suit primary, secondary and university students. Again, the instruments were pilot tested before data collection could be done. Although descriptors such as "not sure," "maybe," "pretty sure," and "really sure" have been used by other researchers (Schunk, 1981) in these questionnaires the items were designed for a Likert scale response using a four-interval scale of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree." Again, there was no need to translate the questionnaires. In order to clarify the subject or language referred to by in the questions, the word "English" was added to some (e.g., questions 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 24, 27 and 30 of the MJSES questionnaire).

4.9 Analysis

4.9.1 Quantitative analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze this data. The data obtained from the questionnaires was computed into means and standard deviations. In addition, one sample t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA); repeated measures ANOVA and mixed factorial ANOVA tests were used determine the significance of variation in mean strategy use across the SILL and the mean self-efficacy beliefs across the MJSES by proficiency, age/level of education and gender; as well as across the six SILL categories. To determine where the specific differences lay Least Significance Differences (LSD) and Bonferroni post hoc tests were used. In addition, the Pearson Product Moment test was conducted to calculate correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and ESL learning strategies across proficiency levels, gender and age/level of education.

4.9.2 Qualitative analysis

Transcriptions were made based on recordings of the interviews. After transcribing the interview a summary of the interviewees' responses to each question was made to reflect the content and spirit of the responses. The resultant data was analysed in accordance with the research questions. Finally, common patterns were identified and compared with responses obtained, and were also compared to the data obtained in the quantitative study.

4. 10 Reliability and validity

4.10.1 SILL questionnaire

As indicated earlier on, a modified version of the SILL was used to collect data for this study. However, it is worth mentioning that the SILL, on which the new instrument was closely structured, is a highly valid and reliable instrument. As already mentioned,

Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) indicate that the reliability of the SILL is high across many cultural groups, and its validity rests with language performance (course grades, standardized test scores, ratings of proficiency), as well as its confirmed relationship to sensory preferences. In this study an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89 was found for the primary version; 0.82 for the secondary; and, 0.84 for tertiary versions of the SILL questionnaire.

4.10.2 Self-efficacy questionnaire

According to Jinks and Morgan (1999), the MJSES scale has undergone extensive development to assure validity and reliability using DeVellis' (1991) *Scale Development: Theory and Application* for primary guidance. In this study the alpha reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.75 for the primary; 0.68 for the secondary; and, 0.67 for the tertiary versions of the questionnaire. Although low, these levels are still deemed to be within the acceptable range.

4.11 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology used to collect data for this study. So as to reduce bias and to provide a wide coverage of the country care was taken to select, according to a stratified random sample technique, the students from schools in the southern and northern parts of the country. It has also been pointed out that all the necessary pro cedures were followed to inform and to ask for permission and for consent from all participants of this study and other concerned people. This chapter has also pointed out that the SILL and MJSES are valid and reliable instruments, and that they have been extensively used in previous studies in different parts of the world. The next chapters will present the results of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on the results of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) survey conducted with primary, secondary and tertiary level students. Items from the background questionnaire and their responses to why they are learning English and whether or not they enjoy doing so are presented first. Next, the SILL results of the primary, secondary and tertiary level students are presented in turn, with particular attention to the influence of English language proficiency (poor; fair ; high) and gender on use of language learning strategies.

5.2 SILL Background Questionnaire Results

Questions 1 to 9 of the background questionnaire asked students to provide information about their age, gender, and level of education. It also asked them to provide information about their first language, the language they speak at home and at school, and, the length of time they have been studying English. These responses were provided in chapter four (see pages 43, 45 and 47).

In question 10, students were asked to indicate their response as to why they are learning English by ticking any of the 6 options provided. The options were: 'Interested in learning language'; 'interested in culture'; 'have friends who speak the language'; 'required to take a language course to graduate'; 'need it for my future career'; and, 'need it for travel'.

The findings show that students across all levels learn English mostly for instrumental reasons, but also for personal interest. Specifically, the students at all levels prefer to learn English because they feel they need it for their future career (tertiary, 88%;

secondary, 87%; primary, 47%). However, a large proportion indicated that they are also interested in learning it (secondary, 63%; tertiary, 58%; primary, 43%) (see Table 9).

A close examination of these results show that a high percentage of the students at higher levels of education (i.e., tertiary and secondary) are more interested in learning it for their future career prospects as compared to the primary level. Tertiary and secondary students are closer to completing their studies and joining the world of work and, as English is used for official communication in Botswana, it is logical that these cohorts are more motivated by this reason.

Table 9

Reasons why students learn English in Botswana

Reasons	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
	n	n	n
Interested in the language	72	110	79
Interested in English culture	57	9	4
Have friends who speak English	41	56	26
Required to take a language course to graduate	45	59	36
Need it for my future career	79	153	120
Need it for travel	27	46	27
Total	321	433	292

Question 11 of the background questionnaire required students to tick either "Yes" or "No" to answer the question, "Do you enjoy language learning?" The results show that 95% of the primary, secondary and tertiary students said they enjoy learning the English language. This high percentage suggests that these students have a very positive attitude

towards learning English and, in turn, this may contribute towards their interest in learning it.

5.3 SILL Questionnaire Results

This section presents results of the SILL questionnaire for primary, secondary and tertiary level students. In this questionnaire the students were asked to read each statement and then circle the response in the following way: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; and 4 = Strongly Agree. In all, there were 50 statements representing 50 language learning strategies. These strategies can be grouped into six categories. These categories were determined using the Oxford (1989) classification in which strategies 1 – 9 represented memory strategies; 10 – 23 cognitive; 24 –29 compensation; 30 –38 metacognitive; 39 – 44 affective; and 45 –50 social strategies.

The results were then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the six strategy categories. Analysis of variance and t-tests were used to find out whether there were significant differences between the means of the strategy categories according to the various background factors (i.e., age and gender).

5.3.1 Primary Level

a) Types of strategies used by primary school students

In this section the means of each of the strategy categories for primary students are first presented, and then compared to find out whether any of the observed differences between the types of strategies used are statistically significant. This will help to make informed decisions about strategies that may be useful for teaching and learning English in Botswana.

In Table 10 it can be seen that social strategies scored the highest mean, followed by metacognitive, cognitive, memory, affective and compensation strategies. The results of a one-way repeated measures ANOVA show that there was a significant effect for strategy category ($F(5, 835) = 71.66$, $p < 0.001$). The Bonferroni post hoc test showed that there was a significant difference between all other categories except between the memory strategies and cognitive strategies and between memory strategies and affective strategies (see Figure 1).

Table 10

Strategy use by primary school students

Strategy category	n	M	SD
Metacogonitive	168	3.21^{a}	0.513
Social	168	3.06^{b}	0.500
Cognitive	168	2.91^{d}	0.430
Affective	168	2.79^{e}	0.493
Memory	168	2.76^{de}	0.508
Compensation	168	2.51^{c}	0.551

NB: Means followed by the same superscript do not differ significantly at $p<0.05$ according to Bonferroni tests.

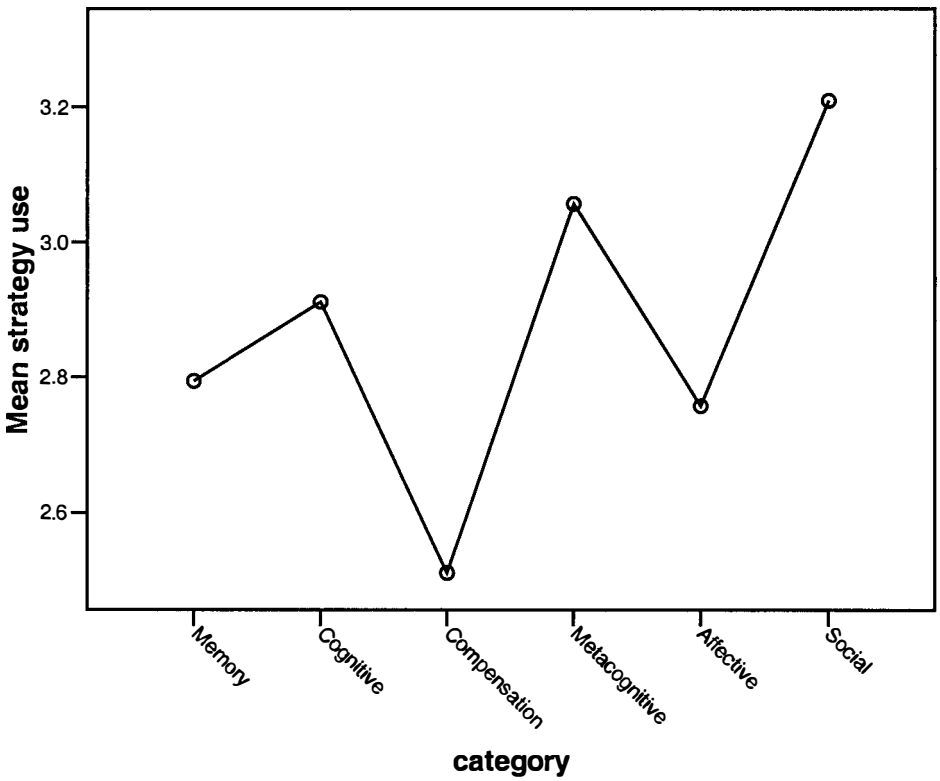

Figure 1: *Means of strategies used by primary school students*

These results suggest that primary school students, as a group, favour some strategies over others. It may be, however, that the strategies preferred by students of different proficiency levels may vary. Therefore, the next section deals with the relationship between language proficiency and strategy use for primary school students.

b) Relationship between language proficiency and strategy use of primary school students

The extent to which each of the 50 language strategies was used by the primary school students was examined in relation to the students' language proficiency. Proficiency here refers to the overall performance of the students in English language, whether it is good, fair or poor. The students were screened by their teachers using their performance up to the time when the research was carried out. The following reports on an analysis comparing the use of strategies by students of different proficiency levels, and in addition the strategies used by good students are identified.

As shown in Table 11 the highest overall mean score strategy use is that of the good students (M = 2.99), followed by fair students (M = 2.84) and poor proficiency students (M = 2.82).

Table 11

Overall strategy use by primary school students of different proficiency levels

Strategy category	n	M	SD
Good	58	2.99	0.276
Fair	56	2.83	0.408
Poor	54	2.82	0.398
Total	168		

Further, the one-way ANOVA results showed that there was a significant effect for proficiency (F (2, 167) = 3.88, p = 0.23). The LSD post hoc test showed that the significant differences were between the good and the fair students (p = 0.02) and good and poor students (p = 0.014). There was no significant difference between fair and poor students. These results support previous findings that students of high proficiency use more strategies than those of low proficiency.

Next the use of strategies from various categories (e.g., social, cognitive) by good, fair and poor proficiency students is presented. Table 12 shows that good students mostly used social strategies, metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies, and they used fewer compensation and affective strategies. In contrast, fair students mostly used just social strategies and metacognitive strategies, but unlike the good students, not cognitive strategies. However, the poor proficiency students were similar to the good students in that they used social strategies, metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies, but to a lesser degree.

Table 12

Strategy use of primary school students by proficiency level

		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Good	n	58	58	58	58	58	58
	M	2.89	3.03	2.45	3.25	2.85	3.35
	SD	0.462	0.357	0.507	0.383	0.483	0.419
Fair	n	56	56	56	56	56	56
	M	2.80	2.83	2.41	3.02	2.69	3.20
	SD	0.508	0.446	0.563	0.499	0.500	0.548
Poor	n	54	54	54	54	54	54
	M	2.69	2.87	2.68	2.88	2.72	3.07
	SD	0.498	0.464	0.555	0.547	0.534	0.540
Total		168	168	168	168	168	168

The emerging picture is that all the students, regardless of proficiency, used more social, metacognitive and cognitive strategies than they did other types of strategies. However, there was a proportional difference in use according to proficiency with good students using more social strategies (M = 3.35) than fair students (M = 3.20) and poor proficiency students (M = 3.07). Similarly, good students also used more metacognitive strategies (M = 3.25) than did fair students (M = 3.02) and poor proficiency students (M = 2.88).

Therefore, it can be seen from these results that, good students are more likely to ask other people for help or ask other people, including English speakers, to correct them when they make mistakes as compared to fair and poor students. It may be that the two less proficient groups of students may be too shy to do so. At the same time, by using more metacognitive strategies, good students explore different avenues to use English language, immerse themselves in situations where English is being used, and, are more focused in planning and regulating their learning of English as compared to fair and poor students.

Another emerging pattern is that all the students regardless of proficiency levels use fewer compensation strategies (Poor, M = 2.68; Good, M = 2.45; Fair, M = 2.41) than other strategies. Although these results are counter intuitive - one would expect good students to use more compensation strategies than poor proficiency students – it is possible that good students are able to guess meanings of unfamiliar words and use gestures (e.g., pointing so that the person can know that I am talking about the word) and are therefore less reliant on this type of strategy.

The other type of strategy that was least used by all primary students belongs to the affective category (Good, M = 2.85; Poor, M = 2.72; Fair, M = 2.69). This finding is consistent with other research showing that affective strategies are generally not used as much as other strategies, and therefore it suggests that strategy use, particularly with respect to affective strategies, is age (as generally indicated by educational level) dependent.

To examine if there are significant differences between the three groups of students (good; fair; poor) in terms of their use of the six types of strategies, a mixed factorial ANOVA test was used. The results of the test show that there was a significant effect for the strategy category ($F(5, 825) = 73.687$, $p < 0.001$). The Bonferrori post hoc test showed that there was a significant difference between the means of all the other categories except between memory and cognitive strategies, and between memory and affective strategies ($F(5, 825) = 73.687$, $f < 1$). However, there was no significant effect for proficiency ($F(2, 165) = 3.216$, $f < 1$). In other words, although there is a significant difference between the categories, this is not determined by proficiency levels.

However, the mixed factorial ANOVA test further shows that there was a significant interaction between proficiency and strategy categories ($F(10, 825) = 4.947$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that proficiency influenced the use of strategies to a great extent (see Figure 2). The pattern is that as proficiency declines, the use of strategies from different categories also declines. However, the pattern varies slightly with respect to fair and poor proficiency students where the cognitive, affective and compensation strategies increase when proficiency declines.

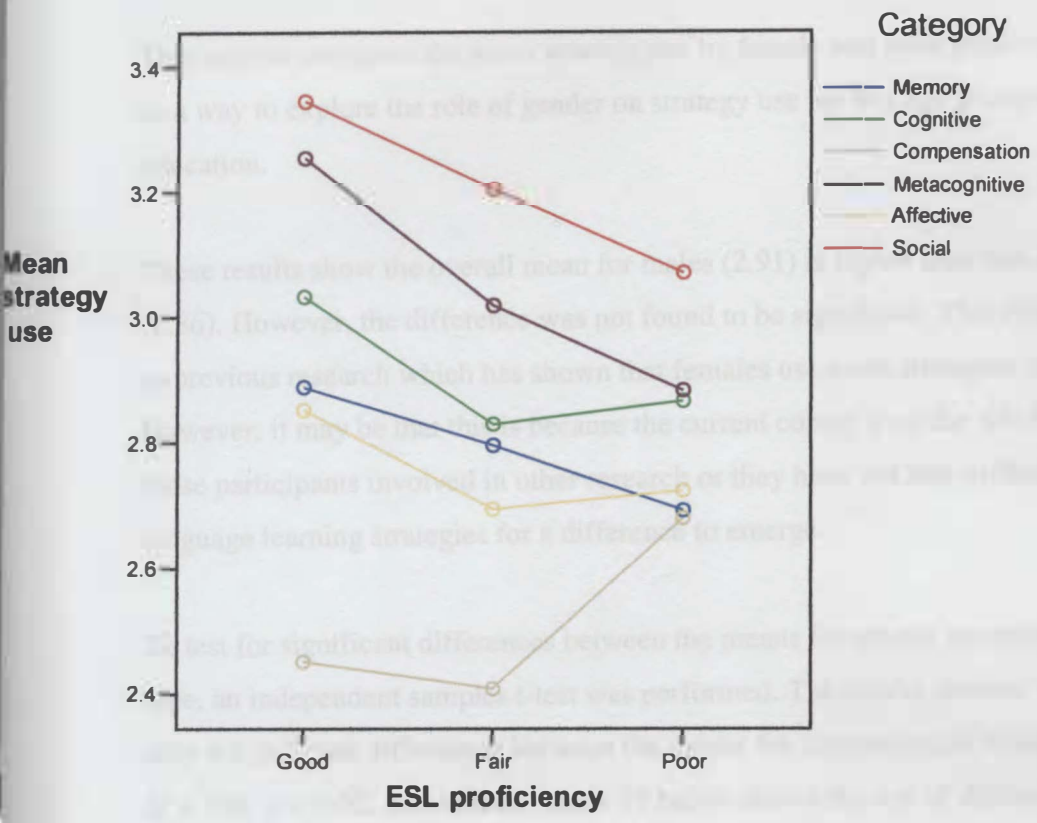

Figure 2: *Means of strategy categories used by primary school students by proficiency level*

In summary, the above results show that proficiency influences the use of strategies by primary school students. The results show that good students used more strategies than either fair or poor proficiency students, although there is some variation in the use of different types of strategies. Even so, the general trend for primary students supports previous findings that proficient students use language learning strategies more frequently than do non-proficient students.

c) Relationship between strategies and gender of primary school students

This section compares the mean strategy use by female and male primary school students as a way to explore the role of gender on strategy use for this age group/level of education.

These results show the overall mean for males (2.91) is higher than that for females (2.86). However, the difference was not found to be significant. This finding is in contrast to previous research which has shown that females use more strategies than males. However, it may be that this is because the current cohort is on the whole younger than those participants involved in other research or they have not had sufficient exposure to language learning strategies for a difference to emerge.

To test for significant differences between the means for gender according to strategy type, an independent samples t-test was performed. The results showed that there was only a significant differences between the means for compensation strategies ($t = -4.091$, $df = 166$, $p < 0.05$, two-tailed). Table 13 below shows the use of different categories of strategies by female and male primary school students.

Table 13

Primary school students' use of language learning strategies by gender

		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Female	n	80	80	80	80	80	80
	M	2.78	2.91	2.34	3.06	2.75	3.20
	SD	0.488	0.465	0.579	0.539	0.518	0.552
Male	n	88	88	88	88	88	88
	M	2.80	2.91	2.67	3.05	2.77	3.22
	SD	0.500	0.399	0.475	0.467	0.501	0.480
Total		168	168	168	168	168	168

Finally, to determine whether males and females performed differently on the SILL, a mixed factorial ANOVA was undertaken and it showed that there was a significant effect for the strategy category ($F(5, 830) = 74.742$, $p < 0.001$). However, the Bonferroni post hoc test showed that, at the 0.001 significance level, there was no significant difference between the strategies, nor was there a main effect for gender ($F(1, 166) = 1.343$, $F < 1$), although, there was a significant interaction between gender and strategy categories ($F(5, 830) = 5.299$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 3). The picture shows that, whereas females and males use other strategies more or less to the same degree, male primary school students use more compensation strategies than do females.

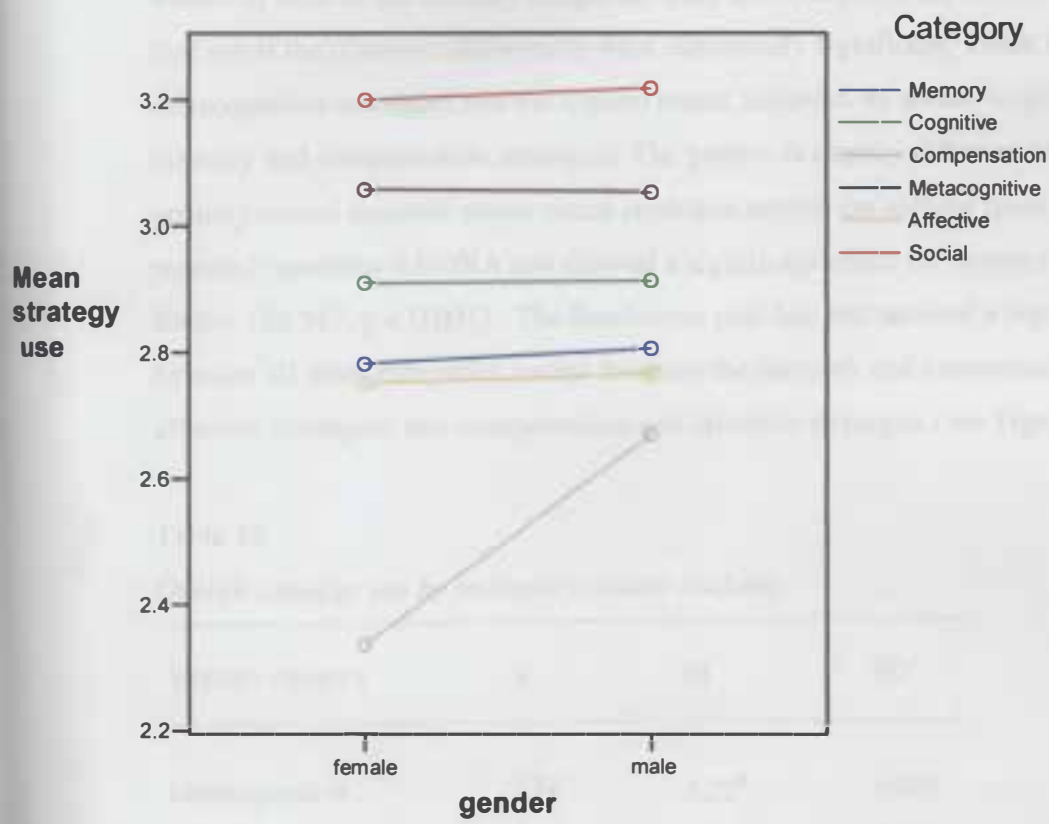

Figure 3: *Means of strategy categories used by male and female primary school students*

It can be seen from the results that in general gender does not play a significant role in the choice of strategies by primary school students because both females and males chose similar strategies. However, there was a significant difference in the use of compensation strategies, with females reporting fewer of those strategies (M = 2.34) than males (M = 2.67).

5.3.2 Secondary Level

a) Types of strategies

Means of each of the strategy categories were also compared for secondary students to find out if the observed differences were statistically significant. Table 14 shows that metacognitive strategies had the highest mean, followed by social, cognitive, affective, memory and compensation strategies. The pattern is slightly different from that of primary school students where social strategies scored the highest mean. The one-way repeated measures ANOVA test showed a significant effect for strategy category ($F(5, 850) = 122.347$, $p < 0.001$). The Bonferroni post hoc test showed a significant difference between all other categories except between the memory and compensation, memory and affective strategies, and compensation and affective strategies (see Figure 4).

Table 14

Overall strategy use by secondary school students

Strategy category	n	M	SD
Metacogonitive	174	3.22^{a}	0.403
Social	173	3.05^{b}	0.449
Cognitive	174	2.91^{c}	0.337
Affective	174	2.63^{d}	4.61
Memory	174	2.57^{d}	0.384
Compensation	172	2.45^{d}	0.498

NB: Means followed by the same superscript do not differ significantly at $p<0.05$ according to Bonferroni tests.

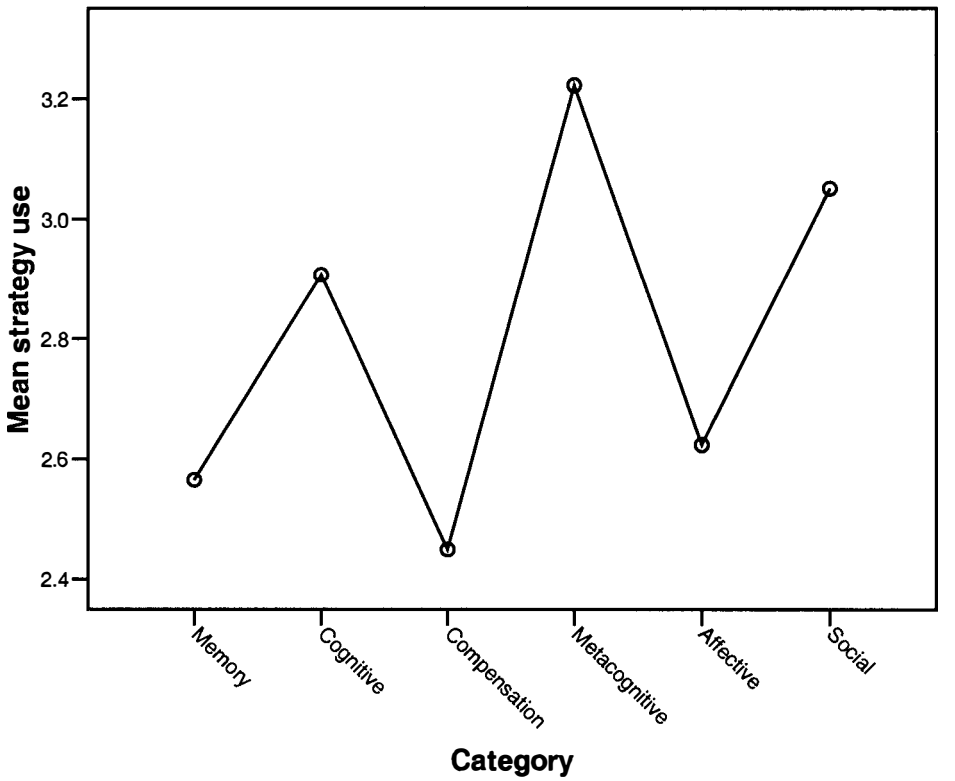

Figure 4: *Means of strategies used by secondary school students*

It can be seen from this figure that like primary school students, secondary school students preferred some strategies to others.

b) Relationship between language proficiency and strategy use by secondary school students

Unlike the pattern for primary students, with secondary school students fair students scored the highest overall mean (M = 2.90) of strategy use, followed by good students

(M = 2.84) and poor proficiency students (M = 2.76) (see Table 15). A one-way ANOVA results showed that there was a significant effect for proficiency ($F(2, 173) = 3.779$, $p < 0.05$) with regard to secondary school students. The LSD post hoc test showed that the significant difference was between the fair and the poor students ($p = 0.025$). The general trend that can be seen from these results is that the use of strategies increases with proficiency, just as it does with primary school students. It is also interesting to observe that these means are not very different from those for primary school students.

Table 15

Overall strategy use by secondary school students of different proficiency levels

Strategy category	n	M	SD
Good	57	2.84	0.247
Fair	60	2.90	0.269
Poor	57	2.76	0.275
Total	174		

Next the differences between good, fair and poor proficiency students' use of the six types of strategies was examined. The mixed factorial ANOVA test results show that there was a significant effect for strategy category ($F(5, 840) = 122.962$, $p < 0.001$). The Bonferroni post hoc test showed a significant difference between all other categories except between the memory and affective strategies. ($F(5, 840) = 122.962$, $F < 1$). However, there was also no significant effect for proficiency (see Figure 5).

One pattern to emerge is that secondary school students across all proficiency levels generally used fewer affective and compensation strategies. However, good and fair students used more compensation strategies than did poor proficiency students. This is shown in Table 16 below.

Table 16

Strategy use of secondary school students by proficiency level

		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Good	n	57	57	57	57	57	57
	M	2.59	2.92	2.50	3.24	2.54	3.08
	SD	0.341	0.319	0.450	0.444	0.431	0.391
Fair	n	60	60	60	60	60	60
	M	2.58	2.99	2.55	3.25	2.75	3.09
	SD	0.423	0.318	0.551	0.401	0.461	0.471
Poor	n	57	57	57	57	57	57
	M	2.53	2.82	2.30	3.17	2.58	2.99
	SD	0.385	0.357	0.456	0.363	0.467	0.481
Total		174	174	174	174	174	174

Further, the results show that there was no significant interaction between proficiency and strategy categories ($F(10, 840) = 1.318$, $F < 1$) (see Figure 5). In other words, proficiency level did not significantly influence the use of strategy categories by the secondary school students even though the more proficient students (fair and good) used more strategies than did poor students. This is different from primary school results where there was a significant interaction between the use of strategies and proficiency. Further, at primary school the use of strategies declined as proficiency decreased.

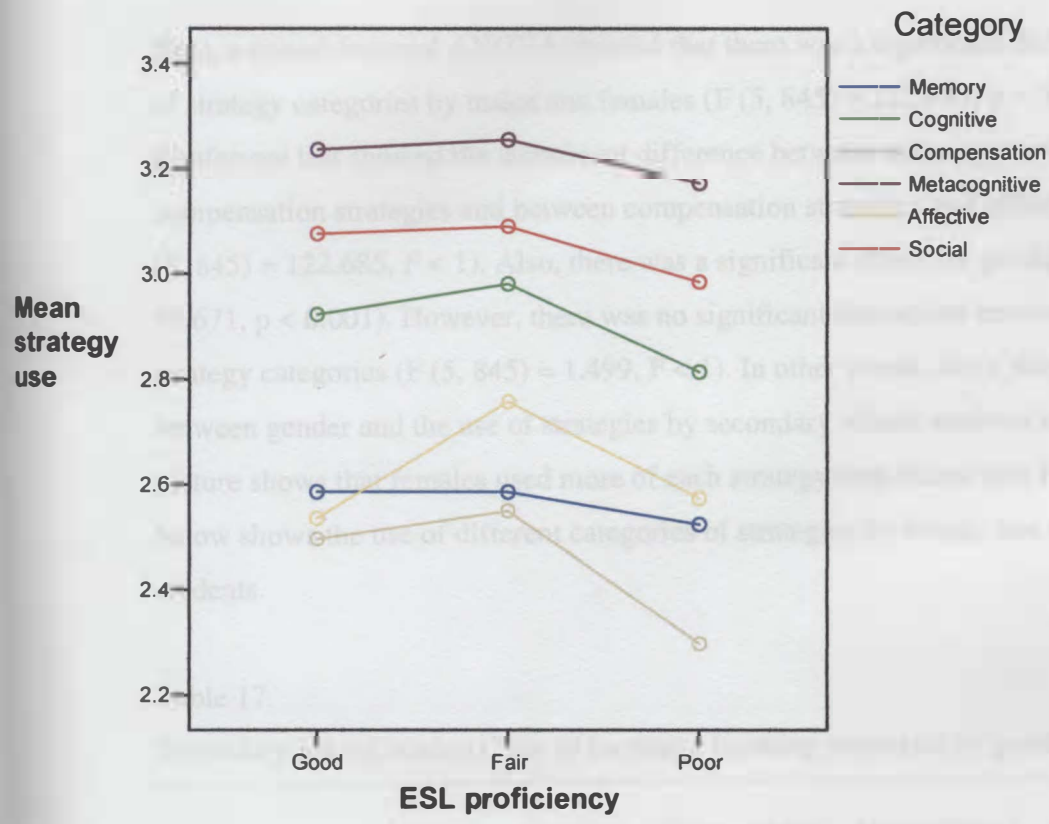

Figure 5: *Means of strategy categories used by secondary school students by proficiency level*

c) Relationship between strategies and gender of secondary school students

This section explores the role of gender on strategy use by secondary school students. The mean for females (2.91) is higher than that for males (2.76). However, this pattern is different from that at primary school where males reported higher strategy use than did

the females. Unlike the primary school results, the secondary school results are consistent with previous findings where females have been found to use more strategies than males.

Next, a mixed factorial ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference on the use of strategy categories by males and females ($F(5, 845) = 122.685$, $p < 0.001$). The Bonferroni test showed the significant difference between memory strategies and compensation strategies and between compensation strategies and affective strategies ($F(5, 845) = 122.685$, $F < 1$). Also, there was a significant effect for gender ($F(1, 169)) = 19.671$, $p < 0.001$). However, there was no significant interaction between gender and strategy categories ($F(5, 845) = 1.499$, $F < 1$). In other words, there was no association between gender and the use of strategies by secondary school students even though the picture shows that females used more of each strategy than males (see Figure 6). Table 17 below shows the use of different categories of strategies by female and male secondary students.

Table 17

Secondary school students' use of language learning strategies by gender

		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Female	n	87	87	86	87	87	87
	M	2.65	2.95	2.54	3.30	2.72	3.20
	SD	0.341	0.292	0.457	0.381	0.448	0.360
Male	n	87	87	86	87	87	86
	M	2.48	2.87	2.36	3.14	2.53	2.91
	SD	0.407	0.375	0.523	0.412	0.458	0.487
Total		174	174	174	174	174	174

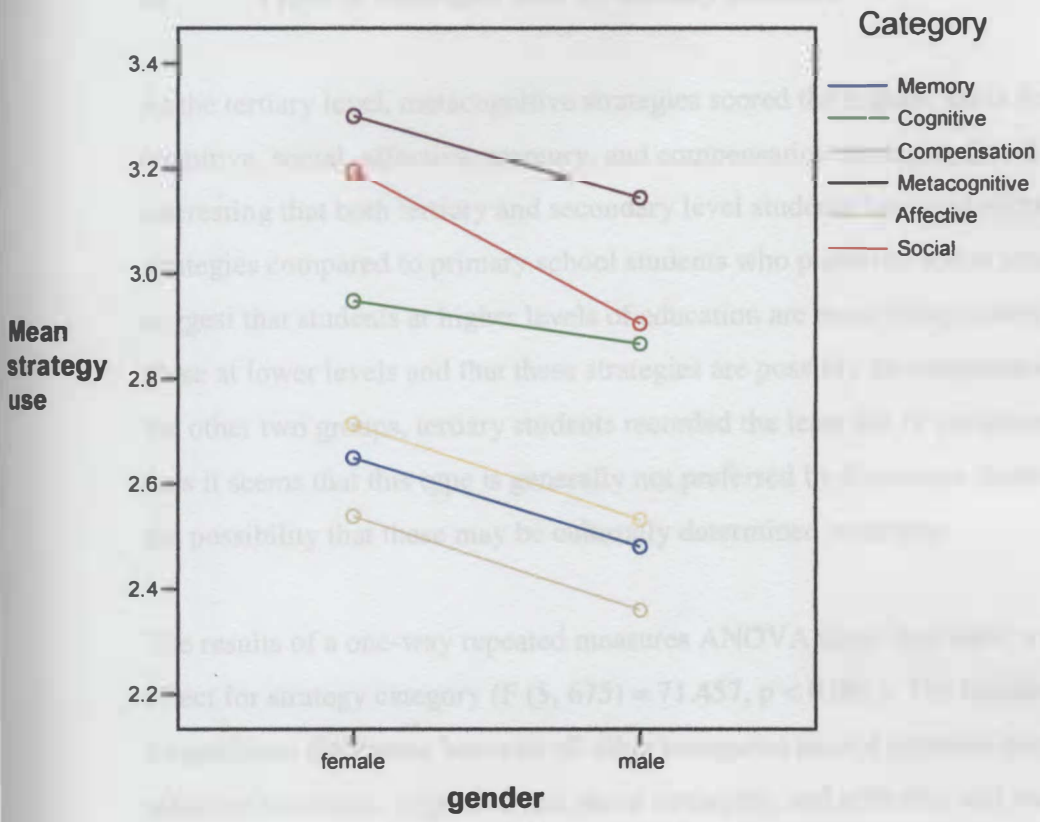

Figure 6: *Means of strategy categories used by male and female secondary school students*

5.3.3 Tertiary Level

a) Types of strategies used by tertiary students

At the tertiary level, metacognitive strategies scored the highest mean followed by cognitive, social, affective, memory, and compensation strategies (see Table 18). It is interesting that both tertiary and secondary level students favoured metacognitive strategies compared to primary school students who preferred social strategies. This may suggest that students at higher levels of education are more independent learners than those at lower levels and that these strategies are possibly developmentally acquired. Like the other two groups, tertiary students recorded the least use of compensation strategies, thus it seems that this type is generally not preferred by Botswana students, suggesting the possibility that these may be culturally determined strategies.

The results of a one-way repeated measures ANOVA show that there was a significant effect for strategy category ($F(5, 675) = 71.457$, $p < 0.001$). The Bonferroni tests showed a significant difference between all other categories except between memory and affective strategies, cognitive and social strategies, and affective and social strategies (see Figure 7).

Table 18

Overall strategy use by tertiary students

Strategy category	n	M	SD
Metacogonitive	137	3.26[a]	0.353
Social	137	2.83[cd]	0.460
Cognitive	137	2.93[c]	0.348
Affective	137	2.73[de]	0.436
Memory	137	2.69[e]	0.365
Compensation	137	2.54[b]	0.433

NB: Means followed by the same superscript do not differ significantly at $p<0.05$ according to Bonferroni tests.

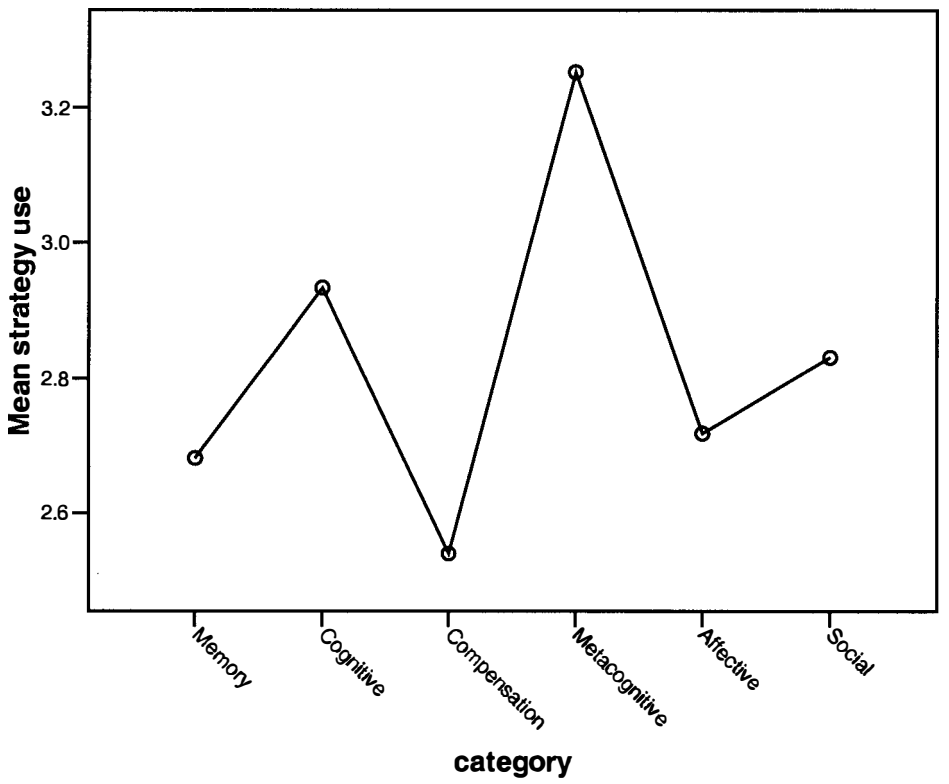

Figure 7: *Means of strategies used by tertiary students*

b) Relationship between language proficiency and strategy use by tertiary students

In so far as proficiency is concerned, the mean score for strategy use for tertiary students shows a declining leveling from good students (M = 2.99), to fair students (M = 2.84) followed by poor proficiency students (M = 2.82). This is shown in Table 19 below. However, the one-way ANOVA results showed that there was no significant effect for proficiency ($F(2, 136) = 1.474$, $p = 0.233$).

Table 19

Overall strategy use by tertiary students by proficiency level

Strategy category	n	M	SD
Good	39	2.85	0.245
Fair	34	2.93	0.292
Poor	64	2.84	0.232
Total	137		

Next in relation to proficiency and types of strategies used, Table 20 shows that tertiary students across the good, fair and poor proficiency levels used more metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies than other strategies. However, good and fair students recorded more of the metacognitive strategies than poor proficiency students. The other emerging pattern is that tertiary students across all proficiency levels used fewer affective and compensation strategies, similar to the results that occurred at the primary and secondary levels.

Table 20

Strategy use of tertiary students by proficiency level

		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Good	n	39	39	39	39	39	38
	M	2.63	2.88	2.50	3.28	2.76	2.86
	SD	0.366	0.330	0.449	0.385	0.451	0.432
Fair	n	34	34	34	34	34	34
	M	2.73	2.98	2.63	3.32	2.77	2.95
	SD	0.410	0.353	0.467	0.349	0.425	0.384
Poor	n	64	64	64	64	64	64
	M	2.70	2.94	2.52	3.21	2.68	2.75
	SD	0.340	0.356	0.404	0.333	0.435	0.503
Total		137	137	137	137	137	136

To find out if there were differences between the three groups of students (good; fair; poor) in terms of their use of the six types of strategies, a mixed factorial ANOVA test was used. The results of the test show that there was a significant effect for strategy category ($F(5, 665) = 67.146$, $p < 0.001$). The Bonferrori test showed the significant difference between other categories except the memory and affective strategies, ($F(5, 665) = 67.146$, $F < 1$) and memory and social strategies ($F(5, 665) = 67.146$, $F < 1$). There was no significant effect for proficiency ($F(1, 133) = 1.858$, $F < 1$). In other words, at this age/level of education, proficiency did not affect the use of strategies from different categories. There was also no significant interaction between proficiency and strategy categories ($F(10, 665) = 0.732$, $F < 1$). This means that as with secondary school

students proficiency did not generally influence the use of strategies from different categories. This is shown diagrammatically in Figure 8 below.

However, it should be noted that, as the results show, the effect of proficiency was marginally different for secondary and tertiary students, especially in relation to affective, memory and compensation strategies. Moreover, at the tertiary level metacognitive strategies were used much more than other strategies compared to the use of strategies at secondary school level where the difference was relatively smaller. It is worth noting that, at primary school level the difference between compensation strategies and other strategies was greater than at other levels of education. Also, at primary school, students of poor proficiency used more compensation strategies than did either good or fair students.

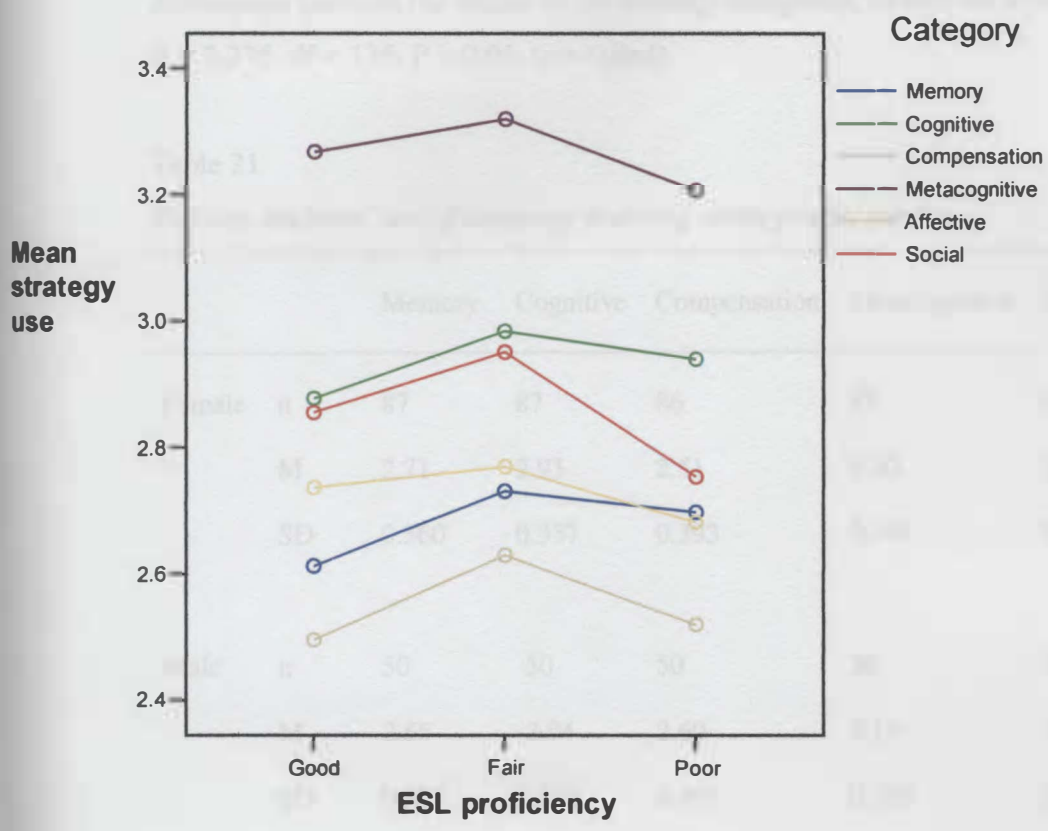

Figure 8: *Means of strategy categories used by tertiary students by proficiency level*

c) Relationship between strategies and gender of tertiary students

The results show that the overall mean for strategy use for female tertiary students (2.88) is higher than that for males (2.83). This pattern is similar to that of primary school students.

Furthermore, both females and males reported more use of metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies than other strategies. On the other hand memory, affective and compensation strategies were the least used for both genders. This is shown in Table 21

below. However, an Independent Samples t-tests showed that there were no significant differences between the means of the strategy categories, except for affective strategies ($t = 2.275$, $df = 135$, $P < 0.05$, two-tailed).

Table 21

Tertiary students' use of language learning strategies by gender

		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Female	n	87	87	86	87	87	86
	M	2.71	2.93	2.51	3.30	2.79	2.88
	SD	0.360	0.337	0.393	0.347	0.393	0.452
Male	n	50	50	50	50	50	50
	M	2.65	2.94	2.60	3.19	2.62	2.75
	SD	0.375	0.370	0.495	0.356	0.486	0.469
Total		137	137	136	137	137	136

This table is represented diagrammatically in Figure 9 below:

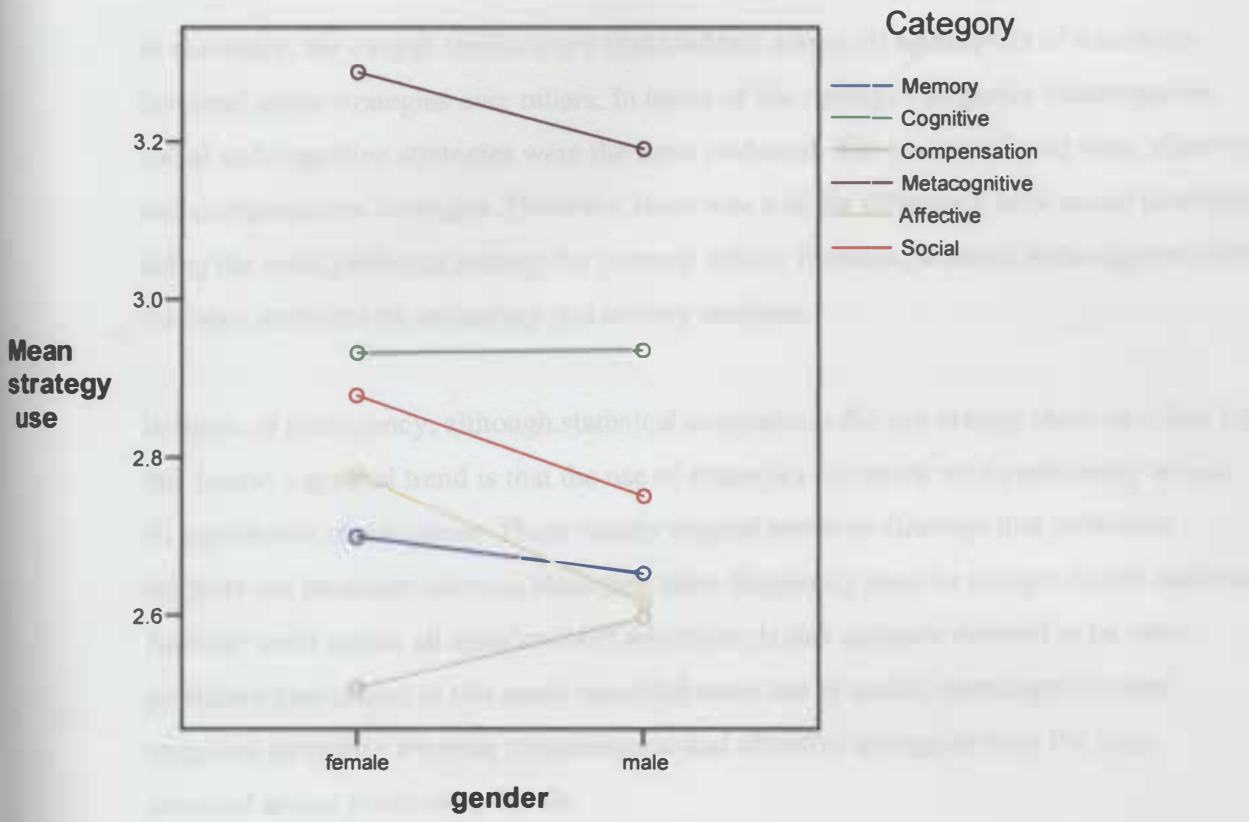

Figure 9: *Means of strategy categories used by male and female tertiary students*

Next, a mixed factorial ANOVA was run and it showed that there was a significant main effect on the use of strategy categories by males and females ($F(5, 670) = 64.790$, $p < 0.001$). The Bonferroni test showed the difference is between use of memory and compensation strategies ($F(5, 670) = 64.790$, $F < 1$), memory and affective strategies ($F(5, 670) = 64.790$, $F < 1$), memory and social strategies ($F(5, 670) = 64.790$, $F < 1$), compensation and affective strategies ($F(5, 670) = 64.790$, $F < 1$), affective and social strategies ($F(5, 670) = 64.790$, $F < 1$) and between social and cognitive strategies ($F(5, 670) = 64.790$, $F < 1$). However, there was no significant effect for gender ($F(1, 134) = 1.628$, $F < 1$), nor was there a significant interaction between gender and strategy categories ($F(5, 670) = 2.337$, $F < 1$).

5.4 Summary

In summary, the overall results show that students across all ages/levels of education favoured some strategies over others. In terms of the strategy categories metacognitve, social and cognitive strategies were the most preferred. The least preferred were affective and compensation strategies. However, there was a slight difference with social strategies being the most preferred strategy by primary school students; whereas metacognitve were the most preferred by secondary and tertiary students.

In terms of proficiency, although statistical comparison did not always show an effect for this factor, a general trend is that the use of strategies increases with proficiency across all ages/levels of education. These results support previous findings that proficient students use language learning strategies more frequently than do non-proficient students. Another trend across all ages/levels of education is that students deemed to be more proficient than others in this study recorded more use of social, metacognitive and cognitive strategies whereas compensation and affective strategies were the least recorded across proficiency levels.

The gender results are mixed: primary school males recorded more use of strategies than females, unlike at secondary and tertiary levels where females recorded more strategy use. These results for older/higher education level students support previous findings where females have been found to use more strategies than males.

In terms of strategy categories, regardless of proficiency or age/level of education both females and males reported more metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies than other strategies. However, it can be seen that females generally used more metacognitive, social and affective strategies than males. Whereas, males used more compensation strategies than females.

CHAPTER SIX

Self Efficacy Scale Results

6.1 Introduction

Self-efficacy beliefs are those beliefs held by students pertaining to their self assessment of ability. They are believed to determine the choice of material; the effort the student expends in learning the materials; and the amount of confidence and persistence the student has in learning. Also, these beliefs are said to be related to achievement with successful students having high self-efficacy beliefs and unsuccessful one is low beliefs. Results of the self-efficacy survey attained using the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES) are presented in this chapter. Comparisons are made between the proficiency, gender and age/level of education of the students. The MJSES questionnaire for this study, adapted from the original MJSES scale, was designed to gain information about student efficacy beliefs that might relate to school success.

Three versions of the questionnaire were designed and used in this study, each with the language and tone designed to suit the level of primary, secondary and tertiary students, while the content was left to be as consistent as possible to the original version of the MJSES scale. Each of the three versions included items or statements designed to obtain information about students' innate capabilities to learn English language. Other items were designed to solicit information about the amount of effort the students invested in completing the English tasks, while contextual items obtained information about what students thought about the outcomes of their learning.

Each questionnaire consisted of 30 items designed for a Likert scale response using an interval scale of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Agree", and "Strongly Agree". The questionnaires were pilot tested and the students were asked to determine if the items were readable, clear in content, and within their frame of school experience. As a result, the students expressed comfort with the choices provided on the Likert and indicated that

they were able to detect differences among the choices. The following results are presented according to level of education.

6.2 Primary Level

6.2.1 Mean, standard deviation and significance of self-efficacy beliefs of primary school students

The overall mean of the MJSES results at the primary level was 2.79 (SD = 0.24, n = 168). Using the self-efficacy scale whereby 1 equals 'strongly disagree', 2 'disagree', 3 'agree' and 4 'strongly agree', it can be seen that the above overall mean of 2.79 indicates that primary school students were generally positive about their self-efficacy beliefs in learning English language. The next section explores whether this is the case for students of different English proficiency levels.

6.2.2 The relationship between self-efficacy and proficiency of primary school students

The results show only small differences between the groups, with the pattern being the higher the proficiency, the higher the self-efficacy beliefs. Thus it can be seen that good students scored the highest mean of self-efficacy beliefs (M = 2.84, SD = 0.208, n = 58) followed by fair students with (M = 2.78, SD = 0.338, n = 56) and finally poor students with (M = 2.74, SD = 0.35, n = 54) (see Table 22). However, the one-way ANOVA results showed that there were no significant differences between the means of the three groups (F (2, 167) = 1.531, p = 0.219).

Table 22

Self-efficacy beliefs of primary school students by proficiency level

Proficiency	n	M	SD
Good	58	2.84	0.208
Fair	56	2.78	0.338
Poor	54	2.74	0.351
Total	168	2.79	0.305

6.2.3 The relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and gender of primary school students

Male students scored higher on self-efficacy beliefs (M = 2.81, SD = 0.311, n = 80) than female students with (M = 2.77, SD = 0.299, n = 88). However, the independent samples t-test results showed that there was no significant difference between the means of the two groups (t = -.790, df = 166, p = 0.430, two-tailed). Therefore, with respect to primary school students, gender is not a factor that impacts on self-efficacy beliefs.

6.3 Secondary Level

6.3.1 Mean, standard deviation and significance of self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school students

The overall mean of the MJSES results was 2.60 (SD = 0.22, n = 173). Although lower than that of the primary school level, this mean still shows that secondary school students generally have positive self-efficacy beliefs.

6.3.2 The relationship between self-efficacy and proficiency of secondary school students

Similar to the primary students results, as far as proficiency is concerned, good secondary students scored the highest mean (M = 2.65, SD = 0.209, n = 57) followed by fair students (M = 2.60, SD = 0.219, n = 60) and finally poor students (M = 2.56, SD = 0.228, n = 56) (see Table 23). Once more, however, the one-way ANOVA test showed that there was no significant difference between the means of the three groups (F (2, 172) = 2.023, p = 0.135).

Table 23

Self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school students by proficiency level

Proficiency	n	M	SD
Good	57	2.65	0.209
Fair	60	2.60	0.219
Poor	56	2.56	0.228
Total	173	2.60	0.220

6.3.3 The relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and gender of secondary school students

Unlike the primary school results, female secondary students scored higher on self-efficacy beliefs (M = 2.62, SD = 0.244, n = 86) than did the male students (M = 2.59, SD = 0.193, n = 87). Even so, both genders show positive beliefs about their learning of English language. However, the Independent samples t-test results showed that there was no significant difference between the means of the two groups (t = -.845, df = 171, p = 2.611, two-tailed).

6.4 Tertiary Level

6.4.1 Mean, standard deviation and significance of self-efficacy beliefs of tertiary students

The overall mean of the MJSES results for the tertiary students was 2.68 (SD = 0.25, n = 136). This indicates that, like primary and secondary students, tertiary Botswana students are generally positive about their learning of English language.

6.4.2 The relationship between self-efficacy and proficiency of tertiary students

The results show that both good (M = 2.69, SD = 0.249, n = 39) and fair students (M = 2.69, SD = 0.259, n = 33) had the same mean for self-efficacy beliefs, which was marginally higher than that of the poor students (M = 2.67, SD = 0.250, n = 64) (see Table 24). Given the small difference, it is not surprising that the one-way ANOVA results showed that there was no significant difference between the means of the three groups (F (2, 133) = 0.117, p = 0.890).

Table 24

Self-efficacy beliefs of tertiary students by proficiency level

Proficiency	n	M	SD
Good	39	2.69	0.249
Fair	33	2.69	0.259
Poor	64	2.67	0.250
Total	136	2.68	0.250

6.4.3 The relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and gender of tertiary students

An examination of gender showed that male tertiary students scored higher on self-efficacy beliefs (M = 2.72, SD = 0.279, n = 50) than did the female students (M = 2.65, SD = 0.229, n = 86). This is a similar pattern as that for primary school students, but different to that of secondary school students where females score higher than males. However, once more the independent samples t-test results showed that there was no significant difference between the means of the two groups (t = -1.671, df = 134, p = 0.97, two-tailed).

6.5 Summary

The above results show that primary, secondary and tertiary students have positive, but not strong self-efficacy beliefs with respect to learning the English language.

Furthermore, the trend in the results are consistent with previous findings that the higher the self-efficacy beliefs the higher the proficiency or performance. At primary, secondary and tertiary levels good students had higher self-efficacy means than did the fair and poor proficiency students, however, caution must be exercised as the results were not statistically significant. Similarly the results for gender did not show any significant differences at any level of education.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and language learning strategies

7.1 Introduction

In previous chapters the language learning strategies and then the self-efficacy beliefs of Botswana students have been examined. In this chapter the potential relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of ESL strategies is explored through the presentation of correlations undertaken between the SILL and the MJSES results.

7.2 Primary Level

7.2.1 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and overall use of strategies of primary school students

Pearson Product Moment correlations were used to test for the relationship between the overall results of SILL and MJSES. As shown in Table 25, there is a moderate, positive ($r = 0.588$) and significant ($p < 0.001$) correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and overall use of strategies. Specifically the results show that an increase in self-efficacy beliefs of primary school students is related to an increase in their use of strategies. Previous research (Pajares & Schunk, 2001) has suggested that high self-efficacy beliefs are associated with high achievement, and similarly high use of strategies has also been related to the qualities of 'good' language learning. This appears to be the case in Botswana, at least with respect to primary school students.

Table 25

Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and overall use of strategies for primary school students

n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
168	0.558	0.001

It seems that for Botswana primary school students there is a relationship between how good students judge themselves to be at learning/speaking English and how many strategies they use. Since this is a correlation result, causality cannot be claimed – therefore it is not clear whether or not self-efficacy contributes to use of strategies or vise versa – but it does highlight the complex relationship of a number of affective factors that contribute to second language acquisition.

7.2.2 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and strategies by proficiency level of primary school students

Next an examination was undertaken comparing self-efficacy beliefs and strategies according to proficiency. The results show that there is a weak, positive (0.367) and significant correlation ($p<0.001$) between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies for good students, whereas there is moderate, positive (0.482) and significant ($p<0.001$) relationship for fair students, and, there is a relatively strong, positive (0.699) and significant ($p<0.001$) correlation for poor proficiency students (see Table 26).

Table 26

Correlation between self-efficacy and strategies for different proficiency groups of primary school students

Proficiency	n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
Good	58	0.367	0.005
Fair	56	0.482	0.001
Poor	54	0.699	0.001
Total	168		

It can be seen that the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies is positive across all proficiency levels thus suggesting that as the self-efficacy beliefs of good, fair and poor proficiency students increases, so too does their use of strategies. However, the strength of this correlation is weak for good students, moderate for fair students and strong for poor proficiency students. The emerging pattern is that, as the level of proficiency increases, the correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies decreases. This result is somewhat surprising because one could expect the strength of correlation between these variables to increase with proficiency. It may be that there is a more direct link with how weaker students rate themselves as language learners and their reported use of strategies, whereas good students may have gained more confidence in their learning through other equally important factors (e.g., test marks and teaching style) than through using language learning strategies.

7.2.3 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and strategies by the gender of primary school students

When a comparison was undertaken between self-efficacy and gender the Pearson Product Moment correlation results show that there is a moderate, positive (0.486) and significant ($p<0.001$) correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies for females. In comparison, there is a stronger and again positive (0.633) and significant ($p<0.001$) correlation for males (see Table 27). The emerging picture is that for both male and female students, as the self-efficacy beliefs increase, so too does the use of strategies, but as noted, the correlation for male students is stronger than that for female students.

Table 27

Correlation between self-efficacy and strategies for different gender groups of primary school students

Gender	n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
Female	80	0.486	0.001
Male	88	0.633	0.001
Total	168		

7.3 Secondary Level

7.3.1 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of overall strategies of secondary school students

At the secondary school level the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and overall use of strategies is moderate (0.435), positive and significant ($p < 0.001$) (see Table 28). These results are similar to those of primary school students. Therefore, like primary school students, for secondary school students their self-efficacy beliefs increase as the use of strategies increases.

Table 28

Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and overall use of strategies by secondary school students

n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
172	0.435	0.001

7.3.2 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and strategies by proficiency level of secondary school students

In terms of proficiency level, the results mirror those found for primary school as they show a weak (0.280), positive but not significant ($p=0.035$) relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies for good students. On the other hand, there is a moderate, positive (0.432) and significant ($p<0.01$) correlation for fair students. Comparatively, there is a strong, positive (0.557) and significant ($p<0.001$) correlation for poor proficiency students. It can be seen that, as for primary school students, the higher their reported use of strategies the higher their self-efficacy beliefs, given the lack

of significance for good students this can be best described as a trend. Further, the correlation weakens as proficiency increases, just as it did for primary school students (see Table 29).

Table 29

Correlation between self-efficacy and strategies for different proficiency groups of secondary school students

Proficiency	n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
Good	57	0.280	0.035
Fair	59	0.432	0.001
Poor	56	0.557	0.001
Total	172		

7.3.3 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and strategies by the gender of secondary school students

With regard to gender for secondary students, there is a moderate, positive (0.401) and significant ($p<0.001$) relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies for female students. Similarly, there is moderate, positive (0.499) and significant ($p<0.001$) correlation for male students (see Table 30). It can be seen that like the results for primary school students, for secondary students the correlation for male students is stronger than that for female students.

Table 30

Correlation between self-efficacy and strategies for different gender groups of secondary school students

Gender	n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
Female	86	0.401	0.001
Male	86	0.499	0.001
Total	172		

7.4 Tertiary Level

7.4.1 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of overall strategies by tertiary students

The Pearson Product Moment shows a weak, positive (0.297) and significant ($p<0.001$) relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and overall use of strategies at tertiary level (see Table 31).

Table 31

Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and overall use of strategies for tertiary students

n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
136	0.297	0.001

7.4.2 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and strategies by proficiency level of tertiary students

As far as proficiency is concerned, there is a weak, positive (0.044) but not significant ($p=0.791$) relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies for good students at the tertiary level. Comparatively, there is a strong, positive (0.504) but again not significant correlation ($p=0.003$) for fair students. Similarly, the correlation for poor proficiency students is weak, positive (0.323) but not significant ($p=0.009$) (see Table 32). Again, like for primary and secondary school students, the higher their reported use of strategies, the higher their self-efficacy beliefs. However, the relationship for this age group was not significant across all proficiency levels. These results may highlight the fact that age or level of education is important in determining the relationship between

self-efficacy beliefs, proficiency and use of language learning strategies. This, therefore, raises the need for more research in this area.

Table 32

Correlation between self-efficacy and strategies for different proficiency groups of tertiary students

Proficiency	n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
Good	39	0.044	0.791
Fair	33	0.504	0.003
Poor	64	0.323	0.009
Total	136		

7.4.3 Relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and strategies by gender of tertiary students

In so far as gender is concerned, there is a moderate, positive (0.414) and significant ($p<0.001$) correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies for female students. In comparison, there is a weak, positive (0.188) but insignificant ($p=0.192$) correlation for males (see Table 33). This pattern is different from that of primary and secondary levels where the correlation for males was stronger than that for females. Again this demonstrates the complex interrelationship between factors such as age, gender, self-efficacy beliefs and use of language learning strategies.

Table 33

Correlation between self-efficacy and strategies for different gender groups of tertiary students

Gender	n	Pearson R	Statistical Significance
Female	86	0.414	0.001
Male	50	0.188	0.192
Total	136		

7.5 Summary

This research has found a positive, significant but weak relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of overall language learning strategies across all proficiency levels in Botswana. The findings also show the importance of proficiency with respect to self-efficacy beliefs and the use of strategies across all ages/levels of education. Comparatively, gender seems to have little impact on the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies. However, both male and female students recorded a positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies across ages/levels of education.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Interview Results

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will present results of the interviews conducted with primary, secondary and tertiary students. Using a semi structured interview schedule, the students were asked to report the type of strategies they used most of the time and to indicate whether they found using them useful. They were also asked to rate their English speaking and learning skills, and to indicate whether they thought boys were better than girls in learning English or vice versa. Finally, they were asked how they judged their ability to learn English and how these self-efficacy beliefs affected their choice of language learning strategies. The following sections present results of interviews with primary, secondary and then tertiary students.

8.2 Primary Level

8.2.1 Types of strategies used by primary school students

From the interviews it was clear that primary school students used a wide range of strategies. For the purpose of this study the strategies reported to be used by the students during the interviews were grouped according to commonly emerging themes (as indicated by the types of words they used to describe what they did) and for primary students this resulted in 16 different broad strategies. For example, strategies such as 'I read for pleasure' and 'I read novels in order to learn new words' were put together or grouped as 'reading strategies'. Using the method it was found that the most frequently reported strategies were 'reading', 'speaking', 'asking for help' and 'using the dictionary'.

Using the Oxford (1989) classification of language learning strategies, these can be further classified as: cognitive strategies (reading, speaking, using the dictionary, watching TV and listening to radio, writing, playing games, practicing English grammar, imitating others, and writing down words); metacognitive strategies (asking for help, using the library, paying attention or listening attentively, participating in class, and helping others); social strategies (asking for help, group work, participating in class, and helping others); and affective strategies (developing interest) (see Table 34 below). However, it should be noted that it was, at times, difficult to assign some strategies to only one category because of their inherent complexities. For this reason some strategies have been assigned to more than one type. The results above show us that the most commonly used strategies were cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies and social strategies.

Table 34

Number of times the strategy was mentioned by primary school students

Strategies	n
Reading	28
Speaking English	13
Asking for help	12
Using the dictionary	8
Using the library	7
Listening (TV, radio etc)	7
Paying attention or listening attentively	7
Writing	3
Group work	2
Playing games	2
Practicing English grammar	1
Participating in class	1
Helping others	2
Imitating others	1
Developing interest	1
Writing down words	2
Total	97

As a follow up question the students were asked to identify the strategies they used most of the time. Arranged in descending order, these are: reading, speaking, asking for help, writing, using the library, watching TV and listening to the radio, using a dictionary, and paying attention or listening to the way other people speak.

In summary, the results show us that primary school students mostly use cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies, and to a lesser extent affective strategies. Within the

category of cognitive strategies 'reading', 'speaking English' and 'asking for help' were the most often used. In the following section a comparison is made of the strategies used by students of different proficiency levels.

8.2.2 Use of strategies by learners of different proficiency levels of primary school level

This section will present the interview results of students on the basis of their different proficiency levels (i.e., according to their performance ranked by their teachers - good, fair or poor).

The results show that primary school students of different proficiency levels all used language learning strategies, but that they differed in the frequency and type of strategies they used. Specifically a closer examination of the interview data shows that good, fair and poor proficiency students generally used more or less the same number of different strategies, although they tended to differ in the frequency of strategies (as shown in Table 35 below). It also shows that the qualitative findings in this research support the quantitative results (reported in chapter five). The results are similar to the finding of previous research showing that both proficient and non-proficient students use strategies of different types and at different frequency levels (Khaldieh, 2000; Purdie & Oliver, 1999).

Table 35

Number of times strategy was mentioned by primary school learners of different proficiency levels

Strategies/Proficiency	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
	n	n	n	N
Reading	10	9	9	28
Speaking English	7	4	2	13
Asking for help	4	5	3	12
Using the dictionary	3	3	2	8
Using the library	4	2	1	7
Listening (TV, radio)	3	2	2	7
Paying attention	2	2	3	7
Writing	1	1	1	3
Group work	1	-	1	2
Playing games	-	2	-	2
Practicing English grammar	-	-	1	1
Participating in class	-	1	-	1
Helping others	1	1	-	2
Imitating others	-	-	1	1
Developing interest	-	-	1	1
Writing down words	2	-	-	2

Differences between the reported strategy use of the various proficiency levels included instances such as the good students reporting that they used 'speaking' and 'using the library' strategies more than did fair and poor proficiency students. This finding particularly supports previous findings that proficient students have a strong drive to communicate, and look for more learning opportunities than non- proficient students

(Oxford, 1990). On the other hand, three students deemed to be at the 'poor' proficiency level were the only ones who reported either 'practicing English grammar', 'imitating others', or 'developing interest' strategies. It is not surprising that 'poor' students should mention such strategies because, as Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) have indicated, poor proficiency students still might be excellent learners. However, it is worth emphasizing that each of these strategies were mentioned by one poor proficiency student at a time, and one can reasonably conclude that generally the poor students do not use them.

In order to gain further insight into the kind of strategies primary school students used they were asked to report the circumstances under which they used the strategies. The students reported a wide range of circumstances, but notably the ones reported most often were related to the school setting. For instance, many of the students reported that they used strategies when they were going to do a test or when they were told to use specific strategies by their teacher.

A trend that was observed in this data was that good students seemed to be motivated mostly by integrative reasons whereas poor proficiency students described their desire to achieve outcomes related to schooling and the ways they study. For instance, good students reported that they used the strategies when communicating with other people either locally or internationally. They also used them to prepare for lessons in advance; and when doing assignments or homework, that is for instrumental reasons. On the other hand, fair and poor students reported that they used the strategies when they were going to write a test or examination; when they did not perform well in English; when reading; when checking for spellings of words; and/or when writing compositions. That is, the poorer proficiency students seemed to only use strategies for instrumental purposes.

Therefore, these results suggest that proficiency does indeed play an important role in the choice and use of language learning strategies, at least in the case of primary school students, and these results support those obtained in the quantitative part of this research. Whether or not this is true for other age groups is examined below.

8.2.3 Relationship between strategy use and age of primary school students

In Botswana some older students might be found at low levels of education for a variety of reasons. However, despite this, in this study 'age' and 'level of education' are used together based on the assumption that generally students at low levels of education are younger than those at higher levels of education. Therefore, by investigating strategy use by students at different educational levels, the relationship between use of strategies and age could be explored.

Firstly, students were asked to indicate the age or level at which they began using the language learning strategies. Most of them reported that they started using them at primary school with only good students reporting that they did so at a pre-primary school level. For example, one of the good students indicated that he started reading English books at church when he was young and well before he started formal schooling. This would seem to suggest relationship between the age and strategy use: that the younger the students start to use strategies the better they seem to do in terms of language learning. However, there also may be an interrelationship between aptitude, metacognitive functioning (indicated by the reflection of use of strategies at a young age) and achievement in language learning.

To further explore this issue of the role of age in language learning, students were asked whether they thought learners at different ages used different language learning strategies. The majority of primary school students agreed with this proposition. To support their opinions they gave reasons such as that "*the higher one goes the many and the more advanced the strategies become*"; and that at primary school students read very simple books and use simple strategies such as 'picking only words' when reading. Therefore, it is apparent that even the primary school students in this study showed agreement with Oxford (1994) that students of different ages and stages in L2 learning use different strategies with certain strategies used by older more advanced students.

8.2.4 Relationship between strategy use and gender of primary school students

The qualitative results, like those found in the quantitative survey, show that both female and male primary school students used language learning strategies, but that they did not differ much in the frequency of strategies they used. Students of both genders reported 'reading', 'asking for help', 'listening (TV, radio etc.), 'practising English grammar', 'researching for words' and 'listening to people' to the same extent. However they differed in the use of some of the strategies. For instance, the male primary students reported more often that they used 'speaking English' and 'writing' than did the females. On the other hand, female students reported 'using the dictionary' and 'using the library' more often than did the male students. Another interesting finding is that only females mentioned 'group work', 'playing games', and 'never give up' strategies. On the other hand, only the male primary students who were interviewed mentioned 'paying attention and listening attentively', 'participating in class', 'imitating others' and 'developing interest' strategies.

In summary, the findings from the primary student interviews lend support to previous findings that females and males use strategies differently, although in the case of Botswana primary school students there is not a great deal of difference in the frequency and types of strategies reported as used by both genders.

8.2.5 Self-efficacy beliefs of primary school students

This section discusses the self-efficacy beliefs of primary school students. Links are also made between these beliefs and proficiency. First of all the students were asked to rate their English speaking abilities. Only two students thought that they were 'very good' at speaking the English language and indeed these students belonged to the high proficiency category. None of the fair and poor proficiency students thought they were 'very good' at speaking English. Furthermore, only one poor proficiency student thought that he or she was 'good' at speaking English. However, the majority of the students, including good, fair and poor proficiency students, thought that their English speaking ability was

'average'. Therefore, one can reasonably conclude that primary school students generally do not have great confidence in their English speaking abilities. However, it is important to emphasise that there seems to be a positive relationship between proficiency and self-efficacy with regard to English speaking ability, at least in the case of primary students because, as the interview results indicate, the higher the proficiency, the higher the self-efficacy. This supports previous research findings that high proficiency students have higher self-efficacy beliefs than low proficiency students (Mckenzie & Schweitzer, 2001).

Next, the students were asked to decide whether they thought they were good at learning English language. They were made aware of the fact that learning meant studying and not just speaking English language. The results show that only one good student reported that she was very good at learning English and none of the fair and poor proficiency students thought the same. However, the majority of the students thought they were good at learning English. Interestingly, among the 17 primary school students who thought they were good at learning there was only one poor proficiency student. In addition, there were more poor proficiency students than good and fair students who thought that their learning English was average (poor = 6 ; good = 2 ; 1 = fair). Again, it seems that there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and beliefs about English language learning with higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs related to higher proficiency and vice versa.

As far as gender is concerned there was no distinct difference between the females and males because all females and all male interviewees indicated that they were average at speaking and good at learning the English language. When asked whether boys or girls were better at learning English the results were mixed. However, some students said it depended on the prevailing circumstances.

In conclusion, the above qualitative results suggest that there may be a positive link between self-efficacy beliefs and speaking and learning the English language. However, it is unclear whether there is a relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and the use of

language learning strategies. In order to address this, the students were asked, "Do you think your belief about how good you are at learning English affects your choice and use of strategies?" The majority of the students agreed with this proposition. Only three disagreed. This supports the trend shown in the quantitative survey.

8.2.6 Summary

The conclusion that one reaches after considering the above interview findings is that for primary school students proficiency levels and gender may have an impact on their use of language learning strategies. Specifically good students reported using more strategies, particularly those of a metacognitive kind than did fair and poor proficiency students. Even so, overall it seems that cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies are the ones used most of the time by all the students. Reading in particular, was more popular than other strategies. The results clearly showed that other important strategies such as memory and compensation strategies were not utilised at all, and affective strategies were rarely used by the students. Further, the results suggest that there is a relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and proficiency, and that in turn the students agreed with the proposition that self-efficacy relates to the use of language learning strategies.

8.3. Secondary Level

8.3.1 Types of strategies used by secondary school students

The secondary school students reported using 25 different types of strategies, and this is a larger number than reported by the primary school students. For this age group the most frequently reported strategies were 'reading', 'watching TV and listening to the radio' 'speaking English', and 'using the dictionary'.

Similar to the primary school students, most of the strategies reported as used by the secondary students were cognitive strategies (e.g., reading, listening to the radio, speaking English, using the dictionary, practicing English grammar, studying a lot, researching for words, using study skills, writing compositions, making notes, deducing words from context, imitating people on TV, singing gospel music, playing games, and reporting what I have read). The next most reported type were metacognitive strategies (asking for help, using the library, correcting my mistakes, asking myself questions, preparing in advance, and checking my progress); then social strategies (asking for help, and associating with non-Setswana speakers); and affective strategies (I have a positive attitude, and I try not to be afraid) (see Table 36). This pattern of responses is quite similar to that of the primary school students, although one difference was that, the secondary students did not report using compensation strategies at all.

Table 36

Number of times strategy was mentioned by secondary school students

Strategies	n
Reading	26
Listening (TV, radio etc.)	17
Speaking English	14
Using the dictionary	11
Asking for help	5
Using the library	3
I have a positive attitude	3
Practicing English grammar	2
Studying a lot	2
Researching for words	2
I correct my mistakes	2
Recalling what I have learnt	1
Using study skills	1
Writing compositions	1
Asking myself questions	1
Making notes	1
Deducing meaning of words from context	1
Preparing in advance	1
Checking my progress	1
Associating with non-Setswana speakers	1
Imitating others	1
Singing gospel music	1
I try not to be afraid	1
Playing games	1
Reporting what I read	1
Total	101

In response to a follow up question, the students reported that they used the following strategies most of the time: Reading, watching TV and listening to the radio, speaking English and imitating others. Thus there was a smaller range of strategies than those reported as most used by primary school students.

In summary, the findings from the interviews indicate that secondary school students used cognitive strategies followed by metacognitive strategies. Social, affective and memory strategies were also used. This pattern of use is quite similar to that of the primary school students, although unlike the primary schools students they did not report using compensation strategies.

8.3. 2 Use of strategies by secondary school students of different proficiency levels

The interview findings show that secondary school students of different proficiency levels used a range of language learning strategies although, as for the primary school students, they differed in the frequency and type of strategies they used. As can be seen in Table 37 good and fair students indicated use of the same number of strategies (16 each) while students deemed to have poor proficiency in English listed using only seven. This shows that, like at primary school, more proficient secondary school students reported a wider range of strategies than less proficient students. Interestingly, good students reported a higher number of the 'speaking' strategies than either fair or poor proficiency students. On the other hand, poor proficiency students reported 'watching TV and listening to the radio' more often than either the good or fair students. While this may be a good strategy, it is possible that it could be a less effective one, and in this case possibly used by poor proficiency students to while away time rather than for learning English.

It is also possible that the strategies good students used, such as 'speaking' strategies, is indicative of their stronger drive to communicate. More proficient students (good and fair students) used a range of strategies not reported at all by less-proficient students. These included strategies such as 'researching for words', 'correcting my mistakes', 'recalling what I have learnt', 'using study skills', 'making notes', 'deducing meaning of words

from context', 'preparing in advance', 'checking my progress', 'imitating others' and 'I try not to be afraid'. Again these findings support those results of the quantitative survey.

It should be noted that the context in which the students reported using the strategies were mostly 'school" oriented. For example, they reported that they used the strategies when they were encouraged by the teacher; when they were going to write a test; when they were reading, and as a way to learn more vocabulary. This suggests that outside the school setting the students may be less inclined to use language learning strategies as a way to assist them to improve their learning of English.

Table 37

Number of times strategy was mentioned by secondary school students of different proficiency levels

Strategies/Proficiency	High	Middle	Low	Total
	n	n	n	N
Reading	8	9	9	26
Listening (TV, radio etc)	4	4	9	17
Speaking English	6	4	4	14
Using the dictionary	4	2	5	11
Asking for help	1	2	2	5
Using the library	1	-	2	3
I have a positive attitude	1	-	2	3
Practicing Eng. grammar	2	-	-	2
Studying a lot	2	-	-	2
Researching for words	1	1	-	2
I correct my mistakes	1	1	-	2
Recalling material learnt	-	1	-	1
Using study skills	-	1	-	1
Writing compositions	-	1	-	1
Asking myself questions	-	1	-	1
Making notes	-	1	-	1
Deducing words from context	1	-	-	1
Preparing in advance	1	-	-	1
Checking my progress	1	-	-	1
Associating with non-Setswana speakers	-	1	-	1
Imitating others	-	1	-	1
Singing gospel music	-	1	-	1
I try not to be afraid	1	-	-	1
Playing games	-	1	-	1
Reporting what I read	1	-	-	1

The above results seem to suggest that, similar to the case for primary school students, proficiency contributes to the choice and use of language learning strategies with proficient secondary school students using more and different strategies than less proficient students.

8.3.3 Relationship between use of strategies and age of secondary school students

Of the secondary school students interviewed, fair and poor proficiency students reported that they started using the strategies at secondary school, whereas the good students reported that they had started using the strategies at pre-primary school level. This finding is consistent with that reported by the primary school students. This provides further support for the previous suggestions that the younger the students are when they start to use the strategies, the better their performance in language learning. Information from the interviews also indicates that the students' background played an important role in encouraging good students to start using strategies at an early age. For example one of them said that *"my family read a lot in English'*, and another: *'my parents bought me fairy tale books"*.

To further explore the role of age in language learning, students were asked whether learners at different ages used different language learning strategies. The majority of them agreed. The reasons the students gave to support this can be summarized as: *"there is a lack of resources at lower levels of school"*, and that *"the younger the age the simpler strategies required"*. Generally, these students agreed that students of different ages and stages in L2 learning use different strategies. For example they said:

Student 1:
"Yes I would say so because it goes with age provided let's say somebody who has tried to learn English at a very old age wouldn't resort to things like watching cartoons or basing much time on TV so they would really go much on the reading part so I would say it differs with how old you are and how you are going to tackle it so I would say it's different yes."

Student 2

"I don't think they learn English the same way as us because we always speak English everyday in each and every lesson except Setswana. At primary maybe not all of them can speak English."

Student 3

"They do different things. Because at university they can work on their own and at primary they are told to do work."

8.3.4 Relationship between use of strategies and gender of secondary school students

Unlike at primary school, secondary female students reported using a wider range of strategies than male students (female = 12; male = 8). Whilst both groups reported using 'reading', and 'listening (TV, radio etc.)' strategies more frequently than others, only female students reported using the following: imitating others, preparing in advance, having a positive attitude towards English, developing confidence, playing games and searching for words. There was also an interesting difference in the pattern of reported use of strategies by primary and secondary students with more apparently used by males at primary school than by females at secondary school. Therefore the results from this study support previous research that females and males use different strategies. Specifically the secondary school results are similar to previous findings in that indication from these qualitative findings suggests females use more strategies than males.

8.3.5 Self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school students

The results show that, just like primary school students, secondary school students generally have moderate self-efficacy beliefs in their English speaking abilities. Only three students, one in each proficiency level, thought that they were good at speaking English. However, none of the good students thought that they were poor at speaking English. Generally, poor students indicated that they did not have the confidence to speak

English and that they were afraid of making mistakes in English. This may suggest that at the secondary level there is a strong relationship between proficiency and self-efficacy beliefs related to speaking English.

Contrary to what they thought about their speaking abilities, the secondary school students of different proficiency levels generally thought they were good at learning English. However, most of those who thought they were good were good and fair students, whilst most of the poor proficiency students thought they were average at learning English compared to the good and fair students.

In short, the students' self-efficacy beliefs about learning were higher than their self-efficacy beliefs related to speaking English. However, it was also evident that poor proficiency students were, to a certain extent, less confident in learning English than good and fair students. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that, as previous research has shown, at the secondary level there is a relationship between self-belief and proficiency in learning English. Again, looking at the reasons the students advanced when rating themselves as English learners, it seems performance influences the students' self-efficacy beliefs and, in particular, the level of their marks closely related to their personal rating and vice versa.

To further explore this relationship the students were asked whether they thought their self-beliefs affected their choice of strategies. Most of them agreed. Further, from what the students said to support their opinions, it seems attitude and feelings played an important role in influencing their self-efficacy beliefs. They gave reasons such as: '*it motivates me to improve*'; '*it makes me feel more confident*', '*I have a high self-esteem*'; and '*I am a science student so I need not be good in English*'. Therefore it seems that there is a dynamic interrelationship between self-efficacy beliefs, confidence and attitude towards English.

8.3.6 Summary

After examining the above results it is clear that secondary school students of all proficiency levels use language learning strategies to learn the English language although poor students use fewer strategies. It seems that cognitive and metacognitive strategies were used most of the time by all the students. In particular, reading was more popular than other strategies because the students did it in most cases to improve their vocabulary. The results clearly showed that other important strategies such as memory and compensation strategies were not utilized at all, and affective strategies were rarely used by the students. The results also showed that females used more strategies than males. Finally, the results showed that there is a relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and the use of language learning strategies.

8.4 Tertiary Level

8.4.1 Types of strategies used by tertiary students

Tertiary students reported that they used a similar number of strategies from a broad category as primary school students (15; 16 respectively). But both reported fewer types of strategies than secondary school students (n = 25). Just like at primary and secondary levels, tertiary students reported more use of 'reading' than other strategies. The other most frequently used strategies were 'speaking English', 'using the dictionary' and 'watching TV, radio etc'. However, whilst the tertiary students used a smaller range of types of strategies, they used more within each type than did the other age/level of education students.

Nine of the types of strategies reported as used by tertiary students were cognitive strategies (e.g., reading, speaking English, using the dictionary, watching TV and listening to radio, using vocabulary picked from reading, listening to other people speak English, deducing the meaning of words from context, writing , and doing grammar exercises). The next most frequently used were metacognitive strategies (e.g., asking for help, revising lecture materials, using a time table, and participating in class and debates). There was a lower level of reported use of social strategies (e.g., asking for help, group work, and participating in class); and only one affective strategy (i.e., developing confidence) was mentioned. Therefore, these results show marked similarities with those reported to be used at primary and secondary levels in that the most commonly used strategies, in descending order, were cognitive strategies, metacognitive and social strategies (see Table 38 below).

Table 38

Number of times strategy was mentioned by tertiary students

Strategies	n
Reading	20
Speaking English	12
Using the dictionary	12
Watching TV, radio etc	12
Asking for help	6
Using vocabulary picked from reading	5
Listening to others speak English	3
Deducing meanings of words from context	2
Developing confidence	1
Revising lecture materials	1
Using a time table	1
Writing	1
Group work	1
Participating in class and in debates	1
Doing grammar exercises	1
Total	79

As a follow up, the students were asked to identify the strategies they used most of the time and 'reading', once more, stood out as the most popular strategy. However, other strategies that were mentioned included interactive ones, such as: 'working with other people', 'communicating in English' and 'planning and revising'.

In summary, the results show that tertiary students used more cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies than affective and memory strategies and like the students at secondary level, they did not use compensation strategies. It is also clear that they used more strategies more often than other age groups.

8.4.2 Use of strategies by tertiary students of different proficiency levels

The interview findings show that at tertiary level good, fair and poor proficiency students used the same number of strategies (10, 10 and 9 respectively) (see Table 39 below). However, there were differences in the types of strategies used by students at different proficiency levels, with good students mentioning 'speaking', and 'using the dictionary' more often than those of lower proficiency levels. The findings show that the poor proficiency students did not report using some of the strategies used by more proficient students at all. In particular, unlike the good and fair students, the poor proficiency students did not mention using such strategies as deducing meaning from context, developing confidence, revising, group work, and participating in class. On the other hand, the poor proficiency students noted that they were inclined to '*ask for help*' and '*use the timetable*', and these were strategies not mentioned by good and fair students. Even so these results seem to suggest that the more proficient tertiary students are, the more they use strategies, and perhaps, the more effective their strategy use. This is a similar pattern to that found for primary and secondary students.

Table 39

Number of times strategy was mentioned by tertiary students of different proficiency levels

Strategies/Proficiency	High n	Middle n	Low n	Total N
Reading	8	4	8	20
Speaking English	5	3	4	12
Using the dictionary	6	2	4	12
Watching TV, radio	5	1	6	12
Asking for help	1	1	4	6
Using vocabulary picked from reading	1	3	1	5
Listening to others speak English	1	-	2	3
Deducing meanings of words from context	1	1	-	2
Developing confidence	1	-	-	1
Revising lecture materials	-	1	-	1
Using a time table	-	-	1	1
Writing	-	-	1	1
Group work	1	-	-	1
Participating in class and in debates	-	1	-	1
Doing grammar exercises	-	1	-	1

8.4.3 Relationship between use of strategies and age of tertiary students

Unlike the responses given by the primary and secondary students, most tertiary students indicated that they did not start using the strategies until they were at secondary school. Interestingly the two students who indicated they started using strategies at pre-primary level were good and fair students. To further explore the role of age in language learning, tertiary students were asked whether they thought learners at different ages used different language learning strategies or not. The majority of them agreed with this proposition. For example, they said:

Student 1:
"I think they use different strategies for example a primary school student may watch TV but a university student may try reading novels and maybe some magazines."

Student 2
"Yes I think so because in my case when I was at primary I just used to read those novels just for pleasure without taking anything in my mind but when I reached junior school I realized that reading novels can help and then I started reading novels so that I can improve my English on how I can write compositions and still now I read my novels and use my dictionary to look up words which means that I have improved from the level of primary."

Student 3
"I think they use different strategies, for instance, my young sister um she doesn't have to read anything like a newspaper to learn English, she just picks words from her friends, teachers or she actually watches cartoons so from that she learns new words and how to use them.."

8.4.4 Relationship between use of strategies and gender of tertiary students

Like primary school students, tertiary students of different genders used more or less the same number of strategies (female = 13 ; male = 12). Students of both genders reported 'reading', and 'listening (TV, radio etc.)', 'speaking' and 'using the dictionary' more frequently than other strategies. However, females reported more use of 'reading' and 'listening to radio, TV etc.' than did the males. However, a closer look shows that both females and males did not differ much in the types of strategies they used.

8.4.5 Self-efficacy beliefs of tertiary students

Most tertiary students thought they were 'average' at speaking English. Only three students thought that they were very good at speaking the English language and each belonged to a different proficiency category. Both good and poor proficiency students thought that they were poor at speaking English. Therefore, unlike students at primary and secondary school, there does not seem to be a strong relationship between proficiency and English speaking confidence at a tertiary level. This may be because tertiary students generally belong to the same academic class in that they have all passed the senior secondary school leaving English examination that qualified them to be admitted to university as Humanities students.

In so far as learning English is concerned the majority of tertiary students thought that they were good at doing this with good, fair and poor students not differing a great deal in the way they rated their English language learning performance. Again, this pattern is slightly different from that at primary and secondary schools where more proficient students tended to be more confident in learning English than less proficient students.

8.4.6 Summary

In conclusion, the results show that tertiary students of all proficiency levels use language learning strategies to learn the English language. There did not appear to be a difference

between the number of strategies used by good, fair and poor proficiency students. In terms of categories the students reported more cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies, a similar pattern as reported by primary and secondary school students. Again, as was the case with other levels, tertiary students reported the use of 'reading' more frequently than other strategies. Similar to the results of the younger students, important strategies such as memory and compensation strategies were not utilised by tertiary students.

The results further showed that like primary school students, tertiary students of different genders used more or less the same number of strategies. However, unlike the younger students, female and male tertiary students did not differ much in the types of strategies they used. Finally, the findings showed that most tertiary students thought they were 'average' at speaking English. However, unlike students at primary and secondary school, there did not seem to be a strong relationship between proficiency and English speaking confidence at a tertiary level. Also, the tertiary students of different proficiency levels almost equally thought that they were good at learning English, which given their level of academic success could certainly be true.

CHAPTER NINE

Discussion

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of this research are discussed with particular reference to the types of language learning strategies used by Botswana primary, secondary and tertiary students, and, to those factors influencing their choice of strategies. The final part of this chapter includes a discussion of the findings relating to self-efficacy beliefs.

9.2 Language learning strategies

In this section the results obtained from the SILL questionnaire and the interviews for primary, secondary and tertiary level students are discussed. First, a summary of the findings is presented, followed by a discussion of the overall use of language learning strategies and then the different categories of strategy use. Next, these strategies are discussed in relation to the factors of proficiency, age/level of education and gender.

As anticipated, the results of this research are consistent with the general findings of previous SILL studies and at the same time provide new evidence for language learning strategy use, in this case in the Botswana context. As with previous research, this study found more overall use of language learning strategies among more successful learners than less successful ones, and this was consistent across all ages/levels of education. In addition, higher overall strategy use by females than by males was found at least in the questionnaire survey, as were differences according to proficiency level and gender in students' use of broad strategy categories on the SILL. However, the findings of this research also suggested more complex patterns of use than have appeared in earlier studies and they also provide an indication that there is a relationship between type of strategy use and successful language learning, but that this is determined by a number of factors, including self-efficacy beliefs.

9.2.1 Overall choice of language learning strategies

This study sought to find out whether Botswana students used language learning strategies to learn English language. The results of the SILL clearly suggest that primary, secondary and tertiary Botswana students do indeed use language learning strategies. Further, the findings from interviews provided support for this. Together these results show that Botswana students across all ages/levels of education use a wide range (in terms of type) of language learning strategies and do so in all the four macro skills area: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The findings of this research are consistent with those of other language learning strategy studies which continue to show that L2 learners from different cultural backgrounds use language learning strategies in an attempt to become effective learners of English language (for example, Carson & Longhini, 2002; Chamot, 1993; Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Cohen, 1990; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Oliver & Purdie, 1999; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1993; Oxford & Crookall, 1989; Rubin, 1975). These findings also add support for the SILL as a reliable language learning strategy instrument. (For examples of the reliability co-efficient of the SILL see page 35).

However, what was apparent from the qualitative data made available through the interviews was that the strategies were not equally used by all students. For example, whilst most of the interviewees used 'reading (e.g., reading novels and magazines)', 'speaking English', listening to the radio (including watching TV) and 'asking for help', the remaining list of strategies were only used by a few students. This suggests that, in terms of type of strategies, although Botswana students seemed to be aware of the wide range available, in their actual use, the majority of the students only used a narrow range of language learning strategies.

Thus it would seem that Botswana students are unable to utilise a number of specific strategies within the various types. This parallels the observation made by Oxford and Crookall (1989) that learners do not capitalise in the full range of available strategies.

Further, it appears that Botswana students are not fully aware of the variety of strategies they can use, and thus the interview results confirm the observation made by Nyikos (1987) that learners using a narrow range of strategies are generally not aware of the strategies they use.

A number of reasons could explain the narrow use of strategies by many Botswana students. Firstly, it seems Botswana students selected strategies strictly for school related reasons. For instance, the most popular strategies were 'reading (e.g., novels and magazines)', and 'asking for help'. Reading was, as the interviews showed, mainly done for improving vocabulary and in particular related to the lexicon required in the classroom. Similarly, asking for help was mainly in relation to English problems encountered in class. This may be related to post colonial context of Botswana and the status of English in this society. However, these results show similarities with the findings of other research and as such may simply be an artefact of L2 learning. Chamot (1993), for instance, observed that a majority of students use learning strategies in class and few use them at home. Secondly, it seems Botswana teachers themselves do not do much to encourage students to diversify their use of language learning strategies because most of the interviewed students indicated that they were only encouraged by their teachers to read books and other materials written in English, not to engage in other overt attempts to learn or even practice English. Very few participants mentioned other strategies apart from 'reading'. In fact, anecdotal evidence gathered in Botswana by the researcher indicates that many teachers in that country are unaware of the range of various strategies that exist that may facilitate second language acquisition.

a) Proficiency

This research also sought to compare strategies used by Botswana students of different proficiency levels. The SILL results generally showed that proficient Botswana students used more strategies than less proficient ones. For instance, good students at primary school level recorded the highest mean for overall use of strategies, followed by fair and poor proficiency students. Similarly, fair and good students (i.e., those of higher

proficiency) recorded more overall strategy use than poor proficiency students at secondary and tertiary levels. The specific strategy findings related to proficiency and the respective educational levels are discussed below.

The findings of this research are consistent with those of other L2 strategy research that have shown that more successful students use more strategies more often than less successful ones (see Bruen, 2001; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Cohen, 1990; Corrales & Call, 1989; Dreyer, 1992; Green & Oxford, 1995; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford et al., 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989a; Rubin, 1975; Taguchi, 2002; Wharton, 2000).

However, an important finding of this study is that, as the interview results suggested, even less successful students in Botswana are also aware of those strategies that they do use. This finding is similar to that of Chamot, O'Malley, Kupper and Impink-Hernandez (1987) who in a descriptive part of a three phase longitudinal study conducted using high school Russian and Spanish students, found that even unsuccessful language learners knew about, used, and were able to discuss strategies. Therefore, the current research does not support Nyikos' (1987) first point of view that less effective learners do not really know what strategies they use, and that they cannot readily describe their strategies.

The major apparent difference between the more proficient and less proficient students in the current study is that, as the interview findings indicated, the latter group used only a narrow range of strategies. Thus, this does support Nyikos' (1987) second claim that less effective learners use fewer strategies than do more successful learners and that these strategies are highly restricted as to type. A specific example of this comes from the primary school findings in this study which show that good students used more (and a wider range of) strategies than either fair or poor proficiency students. These findings generally support the wealth of previous language learning strategy research.

The secondary school findings also show that proficient students (fair and good) used more strategies than poor proficiency students. However, the major apparent difference with the primary school findings is that at the secondary level fair students recorded more use of strategies than good students. Why this might be so is unclear. It might be that fair students at a secondary level are attempting to improve their proficiency and this conscious effort accounts for their greater use of language learning strategies. The fact that this does not occur also with primary students may be because of age differences. This is certainly a result worthy of further investigation. The unusual result also may be explained in terms of the method used to divide students into different proficiency levels. The classification of students based on teachers' judgments and a single term's marks alone might have erroneously classified some of the students. In future research the use of standardized tests may need to be administered to all the students to assess proficiency. It is, therefore, advisable that the findings of this research, with regard to the relationship between proficiency and strategy use, at least for secondary and tertiary students, should be accepted with caution. Another possible explanation is, as Oxford, Cho, Leung and Kim (2004) indicate, good students may be regarding some of the strategies they employ as no longer strategies but "unconscious" processes, which might not be reported on a strategy survey. For the same reason, the number of strategies used by good secondary students in the current study may have been less than the fair students who may be still at a stage of consciously using a wide range and number of strategies. However, if this assumption of conscious use is correct, it is not supported by the findings at the tertiary level.

The findings do suggest that university students in Botswana are aware of language learning strategies, and their importance, and as a consequence they use them. However, at the tertiary level, just like at the secondary level, fair students recorded more strategies than the good and the poor proficiency students did (arranged in descending order). Despite the unusual pattern of use, these results are comparable to those of Hasbun (1988) who, in an investigation of strategies used by university foreign language learners, found that good language learners reported employing more strategies than poor learners. The current findings are also consistent with those of Chang (1991) who, using the SILL

to investigate the learning strategies and English proficiency of 50 main land Chinese and Taiwanese ESL students at a southeastern university in the US, found that students who rated themselves above average in proficiency used more strategies overall than those who rated themselves below average.

Therefore, the findings of this research are generally consistent with those of other L2 strategy research undertaken at similar levels of education in that when collectively considered as successful, good and fair students used more strategies than poor proficiency students. For example, when investigating ESL strategies of high school students of Russian and Spanish origin, Chamot, O'Malley, Kupper and Impink Hernandez (1987) found that successful students used a greater number of language learning strategies more often than did the less successful ones. In another high school study, Chamot and colleagues (1989) found that the major apparent difference between successful and less successful students was that the former used a greater number of language learning strategies than did the latter. Therefore, the findings of this research clearly support the notion that the use of language learning strategies is associated with proficiency.

b) Age/level of education

Next, this research investigated the relationship between use of strategies and the age/level of education of the students. The findings showed that the Botswana students at the different levels of education recorded different overall means of strategy use, with more use recorded by primary students followed by tertiary and finally secondary school students. Further, a majority of those students interviewed added support to the notion that learners at different ages used language learning strategies in proportionally different ways.

These current research findings confirm previous findings which have shown that there is a difference in strategy use between students of different ages/levels of education (Bialystok, 1981; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1994b; Politzer, 1983). However, it

is important to note that, as Oxford (1989) and Oliver and Purdie (1999) indicate, very few studies have explored the effect of age on choice of language learning strategies. The exception to this includes a study by Chamot and Kupper (1989) who have shown that more strategies are often used by older learners. In addition, advanced and/or older students have even been reported to use more sophisticated strategies (Bialystok, 1981; Chamot et al., 1987; Politzer, 1983). For instance, in a study conducted by Bialystock (1981), using six Grade Ten and Twelve classes of students learning French as a second language in Toronto, the extent to which the strategies were used appeared to make a greater difference to achievement in grade Twelve than in Grade Ten. The findings of the current research are similar to Bialystock's in that Botswana students of different educational levels used different strategies. However, the difference between these two studies is that in the current study the greater use of strategies did not always favour older learners.

Even though the findings of the current research do confirm that there is a relationship between use of strategies and age, the pattern of this relationship is complex. It is not a simple equation of younger learners using fewer strategies than older learners or vice versa. Further, the type of strategies and reason for their use according to the students' self-ratings and interview reports appears to vary with age. However, it may be that these reports reflect different levels of cognitive awareness. For instance, primary school students in this research, perhaps because of their level of cognitive development, may have reported the use of strategies because they may be more consciously aware of them than are their secondary and tertiary level peers whose attention may be more focused on the content.

One trend that did emerge in the results is that, as reported in the previous section, there is an interrelationship between age/level of education and proficiency in terms of reported strategy use. It was apparent that the younger the students start to use the strategies, the better their ultimate achievement (in terms of proficiency) in language learning. For example, the following is what two proficient primary students (who started using strategies before they started school) said:

Student 1

"It helps me because I can learn to practice and understand more because it did help if I made mistakes in English. I get help from my parents from my teachers and sometimes from my classmates. I look for help. I think I should say before I even started school. For example the church I go to there are books that are written in English so I read the books in English in order for me to understand when I am in school."

Student 2

"Well before I came to Botswana, I lived in South Africa, and in South Africa they usually speak English a lot. So I started speaking English in 1997 but I started doing it a lot in 1998 in grade one. So when standards were increasing and increasing I learnt more and encouraged myself so that when there are some questions, like teacher gave us yesterday, I could answer them easily. . . like structure I could understand the word."

The results also seem to indicate that there is a link between proficiency and the literacy background of the students. Good students indicated that they were given books and encouraged to read a lot even before they started primary school. Further, compared to other levels, more primary school students indicated that they had started using strategies at pre-primary school level. Of course it may be that these students are more likely to remember this given their age, or it might be indicative of a new social pattern of literacy practices in Botswana families.

As already noted, the SILL results of this current research show that secondary school level students, regardless of proficiency, reported fewer strategies than their primary school and tertiary peers, although it must be noted that in the interviews they reported using more types of strategies. This is different from the findings of Chamot and her colleagues' (1987) research in which Russian and Spanish high school higher level students generally reported using more language learning strategies than their younger peers. Again, the finding of this research may suggest, older age may not necessarily be automatically linked with more use of strategies or vice versa. It may also be that

Botswana secondary school teachers may not be encouraging the use of a diverse range of language learning strategies with this age group. Alternatively it may be that adolescent students are less consciously aware of language learning strategy use and this may have resulted in low reports of use by them.

According to the SILL results tertiary students used more strategies than secondary students but fewer strategies than primary school students. Again it is unclear why this pattern of reported use emerged. It may be a function of age, or how student proficiency was determined at this level, or factors related to cognitive and metacognitive functioning at this age. However it is clear that previous findings that have favoured greater overall use of language learning strategies by older learners can not be generalized to different contexts, as this is certainly indicated in the case in Botswana. Clearly, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford and Crookall (1989) and Purdie and Oliver (1999) have observed, there remains a need for language learning strategy research to address the issue of age, particularly with respect to younger learners, or in this case, learners at lower education levels.

c) Gender

The relationship between use of strategies and gender was also explored in the current study. The findings showed that Botswana male and female students used strategies differently. Generally, female students in the current research, particularly the SILL results, recorded more use of strategies than male students. These findings are similar to those of many ESL/EFL strategy studies involving gender, which have usually favoured females as more frequent users of strategies (see Dreyer, 1992; Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Kim, 1995; Lee, 1994; Oh, 1996; Oxford, 1993, 1994a; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989a; Oxford et al., 1988; Oxford et al., 1993; Politzer, 1983).

Thus the findings of this research corroborate previous research that has found that women and men use different approaches to language learning. According to Green and

Oxford (1995), gender differences suggest that biological and/or socialization-related causes for these differences might exist and that these causes might affect language learning in the classroom. However, MacIntyre (1994) indicates that gender differences might not be as salient as learning styles, attitudes and motivations. Even so the differential use of strategies by the Botswana male and female students may be explained in terms of the prevailing conditions in the school environment. This suggestion is supported by previous research indicating that the school environment has been found to contribute to the socialisation experiences germane to sex differences in learning (Nyikos, 1990). These experiences include role models; promotion of one gender group over another in specific discipline areas; and the importance attached to test taking. Traditionally in the Botswana context, males and females are seen to be different in many respects. For instance, on the one hand men are traditionally perceived to be stronger and superior to women because they do hard manual jobs, bring food to the family, and make important family, local and national decisions. On the other hand, females are perceived to be physically and emotionally weaker, and they are expected to stay at home and to do household chores. These perceptions have permeated into the school environment where male students are expected to be physically, emotionally and academically strong, and to do difficult subjects such as engineering, science and mathematics. On the other hand, girls are expected to be physically, emotionally and academically weak and to do easier subjects like English and other arts subjects. These role differences may explain why there was different use of language learning strategies by male and female students in the current research. For instance, females in this study may have used more strategies than males because English and languages are perceived to be subjects suitable for females.

It could be speculated that the predominant use of strategies by females in the Botswana schools may be attributed to the fact that females have more language learning role models to follow than do males. There are more female English teachers than male teachers in the Botswana schools across all levels of education. This scenario might stimulate Botswana female students to consciously attempt to learn English and hence to use language learning strategies more often than male students.

However, and contrary to common patterns in language learning strategy research and unlike at secondary school and tertiary levels where females used more strategies than males the present study has found that male Botswana primary school students used more strategies than female students. Although there was no statistically significant difference between the overall means of males and females at primary school the trend suggests a possible impact for age on gender differences. This is supported by the research of Cross (1983) who administered a questionnaire to fourteen year-old students of French in two schools and contrary to his expectations found significant differences in favour of boys. Although these were not primary school students, they were younger than the cohort investigated in many other language learning strategy studies which indicates that, as others have suggested, age is clearly an area requiring further research (e.g., Oliver & Purdie, 1999; Oxford, 1989).

The Botswana primary school findings highlight the fact that the difference between male and female students in the use of language learning strategies may not be the same in all contexts and that the use of strategies by males and females may be influenced by other equally important situational factors. For instance, it is possible that, in some of the schools investigated in the current research, male primary school students may have been influenced by their teachers or parents in such a way that promoted their use of language learning strategies. Again these are variables worthy of further research.

9.2.2 Categories of strategies

In addition to exploring overall use of strategies by Botswana students this research also explored the use of different categories of strategies. The SILL results showed that Botswana students, regardless of age/educational level, used all six categories of language learning strategies. They used metacognitive strategies; social strategies; cognitive strategies; memory strategies; affective strategies; and compensation strategies (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989a). However, it seems that in the Botswana context some categories are preferred over others. Specifically, metacognitive, social and cognitive strategies were more preferred than affective, memory and compensation strategies across

all levels of education. For instance, at primary school social strategies were recorded as being used more often than metacognitve strategies, followed by cognitive, memory, affective and compensation strategies. At secondary school metacognitive strategies were used more often than social, cognitive, affective, memory and compensation strategies. Finally, at the tertiary level metacognitve strategies were the most preferred followed by cognitive, social, affective, memory and compensation strategies.

The findings of this research support an observation made by Wharton (2000) that the types of strategies used depend on the kind of learners and setting in which learning occurs. This appears to be the case in Botswana, too, because the combination of strategies preferred by the Botswana students is not the same as that shown in the results of studies in other settings. For example, these findings contrast to Chang's (1991) study, where the most preferred strategies by the 50 Chinese ESL students were compensation strategies and the least preferred were affective strategies, whereas in this study compensation strategies were the least preferred across all ages/levels of education.

In the current research less successful students prioritized their strategies in a pattern similar to that for successful learners. Perhaps the main difference was in the frequency of strategy use and not the types of strategies used by the students. Therefore, the present findings seem to differ from previous findings where it was found that less successful students do not know how to choose the appropriate strategies from different categories or how to link them together in a useful strategy chain (Block, 1986; Galloway & Labarca, 1991; Stern, 1975; Vann & Abraham, 1990). In addition, less skilled learners have been found to apply these strategies in a random, even disparate manner, without careful orchestration and creativity shown by more effective learners (Vann & Abraham, 1990). In contrast to this, in the current research, lower proficiency primary school students (i.e., those of poor and fair proficiency) preferred social, metacognitive, and cognitive strategies more than memory, affective and compensation strategies. A similar pattern of commonality in preferences also occurred at the secondary and tertiary levels.

a) Metacognitive strategies

As mentioned earlier, metacognitive strategies were used more than the other five strategies by secondary and tertiary students, and at primary school they were the second most preferred after social strategies. This shows that metacognitive strategies are widely used by Botswana students, thus, suggesting that students in this context consciously undertake steps to control their learning.

However, the metacognitive strategies were used more often by tertiary students than their younger peers. These findings confirm previous language learning strategy research findings that older and/or advanced learners use more metacognitive strategies than lower level students. For example, Chamot et al (1987) found that students at higher course levels used more metacognitive strategies (see Bialystok, 1981; Chamot et al., 1987; Oxford, 1989; Politzer, 1983). These findings seem to suggest that age is a determinant in the use of metacognitive strategies. Perhaps this is because older learners are better able to plan, evaluate and monitor their learning because of their experience, age and level of cognitive development.

Further, in the interviews the tertiary students described a wider range of metacognitive strategies such as: 'studying a lot', 'researching for words', 'I correct my mistakes', 'using study skills', 'asking myself questions', 'preparing in advance', 'checking my progress', 'revising lecture materials', 'using timetable', 'participating in debates'. These were not the same type of things described by the primary and secondary students who used metacognitve strategies. It is possible that tertiary students used more metacognitive strategies more often because of the learning resources available at the University of Botswana (for instance, computers and library resources that are not widely available at primary school and secondary schools) and because university teaching and learning has been designed to produce independent learners who can plan, evaluate and monitor their learning.

Gender differences were also apparent: female students reported more use of metacognitive strategies than male students across all levels of education. These findings are similar to Ehrman and Oxford (1988) who found that women exhibited greater use of self-management strategies, sometimes called metacognitive strategies, which involve taking charge of one's own learning through self-monitoring, self-evaluation, identifying goals, planning for language tasks, and so on (see also Sy, 1994 cited in Green and Oxford 1995).

The predominant use of metacognitive strategies by Botswana female students may be due to the type of tests used in that country. This is an explanation proffered by Nyikos (1990). According to Nyikos, the type and nature of the test given may emphasise some exercises and therefore use of some language learning strategies that may induce gender bias. In the Botswana situation, the gender bias may also be evoked by the mode through which these tests are administered. In Botswana schools, tests and examinations are almost always written and this is a mode that requires the use of metacognitive strategies of planning and evaluation. Evidently females respond to this with great use of such strategies, however, why it does not have the same impact on males is unclear and an area that warrants further exploration.

b) Social strategies

Just like metacognitive strategies, social strategies were preferred more often than other strategies. It is possible that Botswana students may have used more social strategies because the Botswana English language curricula emphasises sociolinguistic and communicative competencies. Consequently, the students use English to communicate with other people. For example, the interviews showed that the students use more social strategies because they recognise the need to speak English with others both locally and internationally. They also said they used English to work with others in groups at school and to ask them questions. However, the current reality is that most of them rarely use English to communicate with people outside the school environment. Even those who indicated that they needed English to communicate with people internationally perhaps

did so because of the fact that English is an official and international language. It is important, therefore, to note that the Botswana students' responses highlight the contrast between their understanding of need and their actual social practices.

The findings of the current research also show that females used social strategies more often than males. These results are comparable to those of Sy's (1994) study which found that female students of English in the Republic of China significantly surpassed males in their use of social strategies. Politzer (1983) also reported females using social learning strategies significantly more often than males.

As females have been shown to have a stronger social orientation than males it is possible that female Botswana students may use more social strategies because of this reason. This is supported by the results of Politzer (1983) who found that females reported a significantly greater propensity than males to engage in second language social interactions with others outside the classroom. Similarly, Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) indicate that females are superior to, or at least very different from males, in their use of social skills, with females showing a greater social orientation. Culturally, Botswana females generally interact in groups and join societies more so than do males. Consequently, this pattern of socialization may result in female students using more social strategies.

c) Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies were the second most preferred type of strategy at the tertiary level. At the primary and secondary levels cognitive strategies were used less than metacognitive strategies and social strategies and more so than memory, affective and compensation strategies. Their overall frequent use at all educational levels is not surprising given their centrality to English language learning. The students use them to analyse and assimilate English words and sentences during the process of language learning. Comparatively the preference for them by Botswana tertiary students may be as a consequence of their need to meet the high demands of their courses.

Interestingly this pattern of use increasing with the educational level of the students is different from the findings of Chamot et al.,(1987) in which cognitive strategies decreased as the course level increased. Similarly, Bialystok (1981) and Oxford and Nyikos (1989a) found that formal practice with rules and forms (or cognitive strategies) was less used as students advanced. Whether Botswana is simply an unusual situation for English language learning, especially given its post colonial history and context, and this leads to the current pattern of use or whether it is because of other reasons is unclear. Therefore, this suggests that more research is required to clarify the relationship between course level and use of cognitive strategies.

Another pattern that emerges is that the use of cognitive strategies, it seems, is not always related to proficiency. The findings of the current research were mixed showing good students using more cognitive strategies more often than poor and fair students (arranged in descending order) at primary school; fair followed by good and poor at secondary school, and fair followed by poor and then good at tertiary level. These findings are different from other research in this area, such as that by Green and Oxford (1995) in which cognitive strategies were used by more successful students. Again this suggests the importance for considering cultural context with regard to use of language learning strategies.

The gender results are also mixed showing that males and females at different levels of education used cognitive strategies in different ways. Specifically, at the primary school level male students used the same number of cognitive strategies as female students. The primary school results seem to suggest that, at least for this age, there is no relationship between gender and use of cognitive strategies. However, at the secondary school level females did use more cognitive strategies than males. The secondary school results support the findings of previous research that has favoured females. For example, Oxford and Nyikos (1989a) found that females used significantly more formal rule-based practice strategies and general study strategies (i.e. cognitive strategies). Further, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) found significant gender differences in the SILL (favouring women) with respect to this type of strategy use. Despite this, at the tertiary level in Botswana, it was

found that males use more cognitive strategies more often than females, again demonstrating the complex relationship between gender and language learning strategy usage. Thus there is a need to replicate gender research in Botswana, as well as in other settings, in order to understand better how gender relates to the use of cognitive strategies.

d) Affective strategies

Affective strategies were used less than metacognitive, social and cognitive strategies but more than memory and compensation strategies at secondary and tertiary levels in Botswana. At the primary school level they were used more than compensation strategies only. These findings substantiate those of other language learning strategy research which has shown less use of affective strategies among L2 learners. For instance, Chamot et al., (1987) discovered that affective strategy use remained low across all course levels. Also, both Chamot and Kupper (1989) and Goh and Kwah (1997) have consistently represented the perspective that language learners tend not to use socio-affective strategies in language learning.

Botswana students may have used a low level of affective strategies because they may be unaware of the significance of these strategies. They may be like students in Oxford's (1993) study who were largely unaware of the potential of affective strategies. It could also be argued that Botswana students use few affective strategies because they may not be familiar with paying attention to their own feelings. For instance, they may not be aware of the inhibiting nature of anxiety. For Botswana students, language anxiety may be caused by lack of proficiency and a fear of being laughed at when making English mistakes, and by a fear of failing the language course. It should be noted that it is not uncommon for Botswana people to laugh at others when they make English mistakes. Further, making mistakes in English is commonly associated with a lack of education or even a lack of intelligence. These attitudes may, therefore, increase the students' anxiety and as a consequence they choose to use metacognitive strategies, rather than other types of strategies, such as affective ones.

As far as gender is concerned, the findings of this current research show that secondary and tertiary female students used more affective strategies than their male peers. These findings confirm previous findings which have also favoured females. For example, Green and Oxford (1995) found that females pay greater attention to affective strategies. Oxford (1993) also found that female high school students who enrolled in the Japanese Satellite Programme in the USA showed a number of differences from boys in terms of affective factors and Japanese language achievement. It is possible that Botswana females used more affective strategies than males because the former may be more motivated to learn the English language and, like in many other parts of the world, it is generally perceived to be a women's field of study in Botswana.

Despite this, the primary school results in the current study provide contrary evidence. Specifically, male primary school students used more affective strategies than did their female peers (although the difference was small). This seems to suggest that age and gender interact in terms of influence and so at this stage of learning sex differences (emotional, motivational and attitudinal development) may not be clearly pronounced. The result does point to the need for more research into the relationship between gender, age and use of affective strategies.

e) Memory strategies

Memory strategies were infrequently used by the Botswana students compared to other strategies. They were used less than social, metacognitive and cognitive strategies but more than affective and compensation strategies at primary school. At the secondary and tertiary levels they were second least preferred to compensation strategies. These findings are similar to those of Oh's (1996) study in which memory strategies were used at a low frequency.

It is surprising that Botswana students reported that that they did not use memory strategies much because most of them had indicated in the interviews that they read a lot of books to learn vocabulary and generally memory strategies are associated with

vocabulary learning (e.g., Oxford, 2004). It may be that Botswana students lack the awareness and skills to use memory strategies, such as grouping words and using mnemonics. This is something that Botswana teachers could incorporate into their classroom practices.

It can be deduced from these findings that there are age differences in the preference for memory strategies (e.g., primary school students preferred memory more than did the older students). Why this might be so is unclear. It may be that young students are more concerned with vocabulary learning and as Oxford et al., (2004) suggest, memory strategies are relevant to such learning and thus this explains their preference for them. This is something that requires further investigation.

Memory strategies were also used more often by females than by males at secondary and tertiary levels of education, and vice versa at primary level. It could be that the prevalent use of memory strategies by Botswana female students may be related to the type of tests used to assess English language learning. According to Nyikos (1990) research has shown that tests biased towards recall (rather than the assigned tasks) evoke a specific set of sub-skills which appear to favour women. The English language assessment in Botswana schools focuses on what has been taught at school rather than testing interpretative learning. Academic testing in Botswana, therefore, would naturally be biased towards recall tasks as opposed to tasks that require natural use of language and favour female students.

f) Compensation strategies

Compared to the other five strategies, compensation strategies were the least used across all ages/levels of education in Botswana. These results are not unusual in that similar findings have occurred elsewhere. For example, in Nyikos and Oxford's (1993) study which involved 1200 foreign language students from a midwestern university, it was found that they rarely used functional practice (authentic language use) strategies, also known as compensation strategies.

As with the choice of social and metacognitive strategies this may occur because of a lack of emphasis on such an approach in the curriculum (especially at primary and secondary levels). Although the syllabus does make reference to inferring what the speaker says, making deductions based on what is heard, and use of gestures, facial expression, pause and intonation as appropriate, no specific reference is made to the type of strategies that could be taught to students to help them achieve this end. Without such an explicit direction it is unlikely that teachers will employ such a practice in their pedagogy, and this might be the reason why students did not report using many compensation strategies.

The restricted use of compensation strategies by Botswana students may also be related to the academic and/or grade-oriented testing used in Botswana schools as opposed to the functional and/or communicative type of assessment. According to Nyikos and Oxford (1993) even if functional language practice opportunities and more realistic communication patterns and processes can be integrated in classroom teaching, often examinations and grading procedures do not reflect a communicative orientation. They further point out that this testing which lacks authentic and purposeful language use may discourage students from carrying out the functional practice strategies even if they are made aware of them.

The limited use of compensation strategies by the Botswana students may also be related to their environment which is not conducive for continuous communication in English. The environment has been found to play a significant role in the use of language learning strategies. According to Carson et al., (2002) a rich target environment with continuous communication reinforces the use of compensation and conversation strategies. In reality most of the Botswana students, especially at primary and secondary levels, do not regularly communicate in English at home. This is due to the fact that most of them come from families where there is very limited or no use of English for day-to-day communication. Even at school the use of English is limited to the classroom and when it is used this is often limited to use for instrumental purposes only. As a consequence, Botswana students only use English with their teacher and once they leave the classroom they interact with their friends in Setswana or another language other than English. In

addition, the teachers often use Setswana or a vernacular during teaching. Even at the University of Botswana English is not always the language of instruction. It could, therefore, be concluded that a poor target environment could have contributed to limited use of compensation strategies by the Botswana students.

In relation to gender, only at the secondary school level did female students use more compensation strategies than their male peers. At the primary and tertiary levels compensation strategies were used more often by males than by females. These findings may suggest that in Botswana male students may be striving more than female students to make up for their limited knowledge of English by using these strategies, and this may occur because in Botswana females are generally more competent in the English language than males. However, at different age/level of education, these results varied once again pointing to the complex interrelationships between age and gender with respect to language learning strategy use. Thus, these findings once again indicate the need for further research.

9.2.3 Summary of use of strategies

On the whole, the findings of the present research are consistent with previous SILL studies in showing that more overall language learning strategies were used more often by more successful learners than less successful ones across all levels of education. In addition, there was higher overall strategy use by women though this pattern was not consistent for all types of strategies. Thus, there was also a complex relationship between gender and strategy use. This research also reported mixed findings of strategy use related to age/level of education. In some cases older students used more strategies than did younger students, and sometimes this pattern was reversed. The findings also varied with respect to different categories of strategy use. For example, in some cases more proficient students used certain strategies more so than did less proficient students, and sometimes the reverse was true. Many of the findings of this research support previous language learning strategy investigations, but at other times the findings were contrary to

earlier studies. Clearly, there is still room for a great deal more research relating to strategy use, the context in which it occurs and the contributions of various factors.

9.3 Self-efficacy beliefs

In this section the results of the MJSES questionnaire and the interviews, both pertaining to self-efficacy beliefs of primary, secondary and tertiary students are discussed. This discussion begins with a summary of the findings, followed by a general discussion of these. Then, the self-efficacy beliefs are discussed in relation to the factors of proficiency, age/level of education and gender.

The findings of this research, as predicted, are consistent with previous research findings that students have different types and degrees of self-efficacy beliefs. The results show that Botswana students across all levels of education have positive, but moderate levels of self-efficacy beliefs with respect to learning the English language. Like previous research this study found that the higher the self-efficacy beliefs, the higher the proficiency or performance. Further, the results showed that self-efficacy beliefs were related to age although the association cannot be explained in terms of a linear relationship, as it was not simply that the younger or the older, the greater or the lesser the self-efficacy beliefs. Comparatively, the results for gender did not show any significant differences at any level of education. However, more complex patterns of self-efficacy beliefs were revealed by the interviews.

9.3.1 Overall self-efficacy beliefs

The results of the MJSES questionnaire show that the Botswana students across all levels of education have moderately positive self-efficacy beliefs in relation to their English proficiency. However, the interview results show that, in fact, the students thought that they were average at speaking the English language but good at learning or studying it. The interview results suggest that Botswana students' self-efficacy beliefs, perhaps like students in other contexts, vary according to the subject, task or issue at hand. This

supports Pajares and Britner's (2001) observation that self-efficacy beliefs are task and context-oriented. The Botswana students' average self-efficacy beliefs in regards to speaking English may be related to the fact that the students do not use English fully, for example, for regular day to day communication. Further, their good self-efficacy beliefs in learning or studying English suggest that they are instrumentally motivated to achieve high grades and further that they approach learning it as they do other content subjects. Therefore, most of them indicated that they thought they were good because they were passing English.

a) Proficiency

As far as proficiency is concerned, the MJSES results of the current research show that at primary and secondary school levels the pattern was one where the higher the proficiency, the higher the self-efficacy beliefs. Thus it can be seen that good students scored the highest mean of self-efficacy beliefs followed by fair students and finally poor proficiency students. However, it should be noted that there were only small differences between the proficiency groups. The tertiary results also showed that proficient students were more self-efficacious than less proficient ones, although good and fair students had the same mean, which was only marginally higher than that of the poor proficiency students. Even though these findings did not show marked difference, the general pattern does support the findings of others, such as Lent, Brown, and Larkin's (1986) who found that students with high self-efficacy for educational requirements achieved higher grades than students with low self-efficacy (see also Andrew, 1998; Chacko & Huba, 1991; Collins, 1982; Pajares, 2002).

However, contrary to expectation, some of the proficient students had low self-efficacy beliefs. The interviews showed that some of the Botswana students with average self-efficacy beliefs were good and fair proficiency students. The interviews offered some explanation in that some students indicated that they underestimated their capability because they felt that by so doing they were encouraging themselves to work harder. This finding seems to suggest that, at least in the Botswana context, low self-efficacy beliefs

are not always consistent with performance. There is support for this from Pajares (2002) who suggests a high sense of efficacy may not produce behaviour consistent with that belief if engaging in that behaviour will have undesired effects. Therefore, there appears to be a need to investigate and interpret self-efficacy beliefs according to the student's prevailing perceptions and motivations.

b) Gender

The relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and gender was also examined in the current research. The findings show that across all levels of education, both genders were confident about their learning of English language. However, male students scored higher on self-efficacy beliefs than female students at primary and tertiary levels although the difference was not significant. At the secondary school level there was no significant difference between male and female students. Thus, it would seem that, in Botswana, gender does not seem to impact on self-efficacy beliefs. These non-significant results are in contrast to previous research, for example in the Britner and Pajares study (2001) where it had been found that girls had both higher self-efficacy and achievement than boys. They concluded that in areas related to arts, female students tend to exhibit stronger confidence than male students. Yet, in the current study set in Botswana, this does not seem to be the case.

c) Age

The findings of this study showed that the average mean of self-efficacy beliefs for primary level was higher than that for tertiary and secondary levels respectively (arranged in descending order). These findings are comparable to those of Pajares and Valiante (1997) who found that 6th grade students in the first year of middle school reported stronger self-efficacy beliefs and found writing more valuable than did their older peers. They also reported a higher level of self-efficacy for self-regulation than did the 7th grade students. However, Pajares and Valiante (1997) also found that the 7th grade students in their sample had weaker self-beliefs and were judged less competent writers than either

their younger or older schoolmates. The findings of the current study, just like those of Pajares and Valiante, seem to suggest that self-efficacy beliefs and grade level are not related in a consistent upward or downward linear trend, for example, with high level students always having greater self-efficacy than middle and low students or vice versa. It would seem that people judge their capability differently depending on the activity, level of task demand and situational circumstances, a suggestion made by (Bandura, 1977).

Furthermore, the adolescent level of development of secondary school students may have an impact on their self-efficacy beliefs compared to the students at primary and tertiary level. The differences between primary school students' higher self-efficacy beliefs and tertiary and secondary students' lower self-efficacy beliefs may also be understood in terms of culture. For instance, learning in Botswana primary schools is more often characterized by oral and choral/group activities than at either tertiary or secondary institutions.

9.3.2 Summary of self-efficacy beliefs

The findings of the current research show that Botswana students across all ages/levels of education are moderately efficacious about their learning of the English language although, as the interviews demonstrated, they are less confident at speaking than at studying English. Thus, it would seem that they could be assisted to enhance their confidence in speaking English. The current research also supports the findings of previous research which found that proficient students are more efficacious than less proficient students, though not consistently so. Comparatively, the results showed that in Botswana self-efficacy beliefs are not that significant as far as gender is concerned. The results of age were mixed, sometimes favouring younger learners and at other times older learners.

9.4 Relationship between language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs

This section discusses the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of language learning strategies. The results of this study showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of overall language learning strategies across all proficiency levels (although, this relationship is not strong). These findings confirm previous findings that there is an association between self-efficacy beliefs and language learning strategies. Specifically, self-efficacy beliefs have been related to self-regulated learning variables and use of learning strategies (for example see Feather, 1988; Fincham & Cain, 1986; Pajares & Valiante, 1997; Pape & Wang, 2003; Paris & Oka, 1986; Pokay & Blumenfeld, 1990; Schunk, 1994; Schunk & Gunn, 1985; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990). Pajares and Schunk (2001) found that students who believed they were capable of performing tasks used more cognitive and metacognitive strategies and persisted longer at those tasks than those who did not. They further point out that academic self-efficacy influences cognitive strategy use and self-regulation through use of metacognitive strategies, and it is correlated with in-class seatwork and homework, exams and quizzes, essays and reports.

The findings of the current study also show that there is a direct link between the self-efficacy beliefs and the use of strategies by Botswana students, although in this case the link is not strong. Even so, in Botswana the general trend is that as the self-efficacy beliefs of the students increase so do their use of English language learning strategies and vice versa. The fact that the strength of the relationship between these two variables is not strong could be because in Botswana other personal and situational factors, such as awareness of strategies, school culture, tests and availability of resources could have a greater impact on the use of language learning strategies than self-efficacy beliefs. However, at this point such explanations are merely conjecture and therefore there is a need for more research on what influences the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and the use of language learning strategies in Botswana. This research may be important because as Wang (2004) indicates, self-efficacy beliefs have been rarely investigated in the field of ESL.

With respect to proficiency, there was a complex range of relationships. The correlation for good students was positive but weak at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. At the primary level this was significant, but it was not significant at the secondary and tertiary levels. For fair students the correlation was positive, moderate and significant at primary and secondary levels, but it was strong, positive but not significant at tertiary level. The correlation for poor proficiency students was strong, positive and significant at primary and secondary levels, but it was weak, positive but not significant at tertiary level.

At the primary and secondary school levels the correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and use of language learning strategies increases as proficiency decreases. Thus these results are different from those of Huang, Lloyd and Mikulecky (1999) in which higher achieving students were found to have higher self-efficacy beliefs and to employ more different categories of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies. The findings of the current study suggest that the stronger self-efficacy beliefs for weaker students (poor and fair) may have more impact on their use of language learning strategies than it may for good students. The same can be said about fair students at tertiary level where the correlation was higher than that for good and weak students. Previous self-efficacy research has found that self-efficacy may influence aspects of behaviour such as choice of activities, effort, persistence, learning, and achievement (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1989a; Schunk, 1989). The tertiary level results may also highlight the fact that self-efficacy beliefs play a more important role in the use of strategies at lower levels than it does at higher levels of learning.

The emerging trend from the findings is that there is an association between self-efficacy beliefs, proficiency and use of strategies across all levels of education. Further, it seems that as the self-efficacy beliefs increase so do the use of language learning strategies. This finding suggests that self-efficacy beliefs may make an important contribution, not only in relation to the use of language learning strategies but in terms of language learning in general. However, there remains a need to further explore the role of self-efficacy beliefs in these areas.

The relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and language learning strategies was also investigated in relation to gender. Both Botswana male and female students recorded a positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and use of strategies across the different levels of education. This means that for both male and female students as the self-efficacy beliefs increase so do the use of language learning strategies. However, the primary and secondary school level findings showed a stronger correlation for males than for females, whereas at tertiary level the correlation was stronger for females. Again these findings suggest that self-efficacy beliefs may be more important for males than for females at lower levels than at higher levels of education, whereas at higher levels the reverse was true. Perhaps because of their success in attaining entry to higher levels of education Botswana students at these levels are in fact those individuals whose beliefs and strategy use do not subscribe to the usual stereotypical behaviour associated with language learning in particular, and academic achievement in general. Hence female students at tertiary level are those who have high levels of self-efficacy beliefs, higher even than their male counterparts.

In summary, this research has found that there is a positive, significant but weak relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and use of overall language learning strategies across all proficiency levels in Botswana. However, the strength of this relationship decreased as the level of proficiency increased. Also, the strength of the relationship decreased as age increased. The correlation between these two variables was stronger for males than for females at lower level of education and the opposite was the case at higher levels of education.

9.5 The implications of this study

Several implications for language pedagogy and learning emerge from this study. First, it seems that Botswana students do not utilise the full range of language learning strategies such as those listed in the SILL questionnaire. This may be because many of the students may not be fully aware of what they can do to assist their language learning. To overcome this, Botswana students could be assisted in developing their knowledge of the

types of language learning strategies they could use. To this end, teachers could employ strategy assessment by means of surveys (e.g., the SILL), interviews, diaries, think-aloud protocols, and such like (see for instance Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995) as well as strategy training. It would seem that this would be particularly useful if implemented at an early age as the results of this study showed proficient students began using the strategies when they were quite young. Therefore, if possible, in Botswana, the strategies could be introduced while the children are still at pre-school or early primary school.

As the interview results showed many Botswana students across all levels of education use a narrow range of strategies because they are not aware of many other existing types. To address this problem strategy instruction should be integrated into the curricula in order to help the students (both proficient and less proficient) to become aware of a broad range of language learning strategies (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Crookall, 1989). It is important that this integration should be done in a way that will make learning natural, comfortable, explicit and interesting to the students. Students have been reported to understand and learn better when the new material they are learning is integrated with strategies (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). Strategies can be interwoven into the lessons through simulations, games and other active exercises to motivate the students to initiate their use of the newly taught strategies (see Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; O'Malley, 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1994b; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989a; Taguchi, 2002; Wakamoto, 2000). Further as O'Malley (1987) cautions the students should be given time to familiarize themselves with the strategies. As suggested by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995), and taking into account the complex interrelationship of affective factors, teachers should keep in mind differences such as motivation, learning style, proficiency, gender, and age that affect learning strategy use when providing the training.

The findings of this research showed that Botswana students do not use the different types of language learning strategies (i.e., metacognitive, social, cognitive, memory, affective and compensation strategies) to the same extent. Given that all types are useful

to language learning it seems that Botswana language teachers need to put more emphasis on the use of some strategies, integrating the teaching of these within the normal curriculum. According to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) language learning, more than almost any other discipline, is an adventure of the whole person, not just a cognitive and metacognitive exercise. Oxford (1993) suggests a balanced focus on cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies because the "whole learner" should be taken into account during learning strategy training. Therefore, Botswana students should be encouraged to take part in conversations and situations where they will be exposed to natural use of the English language. It has been suggested that students should be made aware of the active use strategies involving naturalistic practice especially where opportunities for practice are widely available (Green & Oxford, 1995). They should be encouraged to take risks and communicate in English, without being afraid of making errors. At the same time opportunities need to be given with normal classroom activities for such interaction to occur. Because of the backwash effect of assessment (i.e., teachers teach to the text) this will not occur unless speaking is made part of final assessment in the Botswana schools across levels of education.

The MJSES results of this study showed that the self-efficacy beliefs in relation to language learning of Botswana students were moderate. This suggests that Botswana students are not fully exploiting their self-efficacy beliefs to their own advantage in spite of the fact that high self-efficacy beliefs are deemed to help students achieve more in language learning (Pajares & Graham, 1999; Pajares & Valiante, 1997). With a view to that, Botswana students should be assisted not only to identify their self- efficacy beliefs but also to develop these in a positive way. According to Pajares and Johnson (1996) teachers should pay as much attention to students' self-efficacy beliefs about their competence as to their actual competence, for it is the beliefs that may more accurately predict students' motivation and future academic choices. Parents can also assist their children to develop self-efficacy in a positive way by giving their children challenging tasks and meaningful activities that can be mastered (Pajares & Schunk, 2001). As the interview results showed, the Botswana students are less efficacious in speaking than in studying the English language. Therefore particular attention should be paid to

encouraging the students to develop more confidence in speaking. Once again this highlights the need to develop and improve this aspect of the curriculum in Botswana.

9.6 Limitations of this study

One of the limitations of this study, is the small number of schools used, makes it difficult to generalise the findings of this research to the entire population of students in Botswana. However, it is important to point out that the students used in this study share important common attributes such as that, in the respective levels: they all belong to government or government aided schools, they belong to the same level of education, their ages do not vary a lot, they use the same English curriculum; and they write common English examinations at the end of their final years.

The second limitation of this study concerns the method used to select students for this study. Teachers and lecturers were asked to select good, fair and poor students either by using marks or their knowledge of the students' performance in English. It should be noted, however, that there may have been some variation in the procedures used by the teachers and lecturers to select the students. In retrospect, however, it should be noted that some of the previous strategy studies referred to in this study used a similar methodology whereby teachers selected the students and so this was followed in the current research. A standardised test may have provided data that allowed for more reliable comparisons.

9.7 Future Research

The current language learning strategy research has made available information on the strategies used by second language learners particularly in Botswana. However, the results show that there is still need for more research particularly on factors (such as age and gender) that influence the students' strategy choice. According to Oxford (1993) more research is necessary especially on factors that affect strategy choice as well as on

the success of strategy instruction, although some tentative conclusions have been reached.

The findings of the current research did show that Botswana students used metacognitive, social and cognitive strategies more than affective and compensation strategies. Whether Botswana students did not recognise the importance of these strategies needs to be investigated. Specifically, more research is needed to investigate the role played by affective factors in strategy choice and language learning. According to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) language researchers must include examination of affective factors in their research because language learning requires more than just cognitive and metacognitive operations.

Previous language learning strategy research has shown that more proficient students use more and better strategies than less proficient students. Although the findings of the current research do provide support for this, it seems that the relationship between proficiency and strategy use is more complex than has previously been found. For instance, in this study sometimes fair students recorded greater use of strategies than good or poor proficiency students. The results of this study may have been influenced by the fact that the classification of students into proficiency levels was done by teachers and therefore human error was possible. Therefore, there may still be a need for more research in Botswana in which more standardized proficiency tests are used to classify students in order to provide more accurate findings.

The findings of this research showed that females generally used more metacognitive strategies than males and that may have been influenced by language tests that are more academic and therefore biased more towards females than towards males. Whether this is the case, particularly in Botswana, still needs further investigation. Such research will provide more information on the influence of testing on gender-related differences in language learning.

To get an even a better picture of the strategies used by students of different ages/levels of education, proficiency levels and gender it could be necessary to conduct more studies (particularly in Botswana) which would compare individual strategies rather than comparing only overall strategy use and use of strategies in their different categories as this study has done.

This study has shown that there is a weak relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs and language learning strategies of the Botswana students. Perhaps another research study could be undertaken to find out why the link between these two variables is not strong, and could also investigate the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and the use of language learning strategies in Botswana.

Finally, this study recommends more research to investigate self-efficacy beliefs proficiency, age and gender related differences in language learning in Botswana. For example, such research could investigate the influence of different types of assessment for English language learning assessment, particularly related to gender.

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusion

Despite its limitations, this research confirms that, like other ESL learners, Botswana students across all ages/levels of education use language learning strategies. However, Botswana students tend not to favour affective and compensation strategies. Further, as the data from the interviews indicated, many of the students across all ages/levels of education used only few strategies within a wide range of strategies that they had mentioned. In particular, reading novels, listening to the radio (including watching TV) and speaking to others (especially at school) were the most popular strategies given by many of the interviewees. Thus the findings of this research confirm previous research suggesting that ESL students use a narrow range of language learning strategies.

The findings of this research support previous language learning strategy research that successful students use more strategies than less successful students. However, good, fair and poor proficiency students across all levels of education used the same combination of strategies. Thus, these findings confirm that even less successful students use language learning strategies. The most important outcome of the current study is that proficiency and use of strategies are not related in a linear way because at times fair and poor students recorded more strategies than good students. However, these particular results should be accepted with caution because of the way in which students' proficiency was determined.

The findings of this research are suggestive of a developmental trend in terms of strategy use in that students at different ages/levels of education do use different strategies. At the same time, however, an important finding of this research is that primary school students used more overall strategies than either secondary or tertiary students, but that tertiary level students used more than secondary school students. Once more, in this case in relation to age, the pattern of strategy use is not linear. However, it is important to note that, as the findings of this research indicated, the younger the learners started using the

strategies the greater their proficiency increased. This highlights the relationship between strategy use and language learning.

Gender was also investigated and the findings of this research confirmed those of the previous research that female students use more strategies than male students. The only exception was at primary school where males use more strategies than female students. To explain this it was speculated that situational factors could have influenced this unusual finding.

Finally, this research investigated the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and the use of language learning strategies. The results showed that although a relationship did indeed exist the correlations across all ages/levels of education were rarely strong. In addition, it appears that Botswana students generally have low self-efficacy in relation to their speaking ability, though they have higher estimations of themselves with regard to studying the English language. This research speculated that the reason for this may be because Botswana students worked hard to study English in order to get higher marks and they used English to communicate with others about school related matters, rather than for day to day purposes.

This study is very important because it is the first related to the language learning strategies undertaken in Botswana. A further original contribution of this research to the broad field of language learning strategies is in that new information has been provided about the use of strategies in a different cultural context. Most importantly, this study has added another dimension to the language learning strategy research by investigating the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and the use of language learning strategies. Self-efficacy beliefs have not been given enough attention in the language learning area despite the fact that, as the findings of this research showed, they may have an impact not only in the use of language learning strategies but in many areas of language acquisition.

This research has opened up important areas of future research. For example, more research is needed to investigate the role of affective factors, such as self-efficacy beliefs,

first in relation to the use of language learning strategies and then to language learning in general. There is also a need for more research using self-efficacy instruments specifically designed for the ESL field and specific to language learning tasks. Further, more research is necessary in second language learning contexts, such as that of Botswana, so as to further refine the language learning strategy theory.

The implication of this research is that students, particularly in Botswana, should be assisted to balance their use of strategies especially by encouraging them to use compensation and affective strategies. But before this can be done the students should be helped to identify their strategies by use of interviews, diaries and other methods. In addition, language learning strategies use should be incorporated into the curriculum right from preschool. It is also clear that language testing should also reflect natural use of language. Finally, positive self-efficacy beliefs should be promoted in the schools and the students should be encouraged to speak English without fear of making mistakes. Clearly, there is still much more to do in this area in general and in Botswana in particular.

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APPENDIX A

A full list of Oxford's strategies

[Oxford, Lavine, and Crookall, (1989)]

1. Memory strategies
    - (a) Creating mental linkages
        - (i) Grouping
        - (ii) Associating/elaborating
        - (iii) Placing new words into a context
    - (b) Applying images and sounds
        - (i) Using imagery
        - (ii) Semantic mapping
        - (iii) Using key words
        - (iv) Representing sounds in memory
    - (c) Reviewing well
        - (i) Structured reviewing
    - (d) Employing action
        - (i) Using physical response
        - (ii) Using mechanical tricks or sensation

2. Cognitive strategies
    - (a) Practicing
        - (i) Repeating
        - (ii) Formally practicing with sounds and alphabets
        - (iii) Recognizing and using formulas and patterns
        - (iv) Recombining
        - (v) Practicing naturalistically
    - (b) Receiving and sending messages
        - (i) Getting the idea quickly
        - (ii) Using resources (dictionaries, etc.) for

receiving and sending messages

(c) Analyzing and reasoning

(i) Reasoning deductively

(ii) Analyzing expressions

(iii) Analyzing contrastively (across languages)

(iv) Translating

(v) Transferring

(d) Creating structure for input and output

(i) Taking notes

(ii) Summarizing

(iii) Highlighting

3. Compensation strategies

(a) Guessing intelligently

(i) Using linguistic clues

(ii) Using other clues

(b) Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

(i) Switching to the mother tongue

(ii) Getting help

(iii) Using mime or gesture

(iv) Avoiding communication partially or totally

(v) Selecting the topic

(vi) Adjusting or approximating the message

(vii) Coining words

(viii) Using a circumlocution or synonym

4. Metacognitive strategies

(a) Centering your learning

(i) Overviewing/linking with already known material

(ii) Paying attention

(iii) Delaying speech production to focus on listening

(b) Arranging and planning your learning

(i) Finding out about language learning

(ii) Organizing

(iii) Setting goals and objectives

(iv) Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening/reading/speaking/writing)

(v) Planning for a language task

(vi) Seeking practice opportunities

(c) Evaluating your learning

(i) Self-monitoring

(ii) Self-evaluating

5. Affective strategies

(a) Lowering your anxiety

(i) Using progressive relaxation

(ii) Using music, deep breathing, or meditation

(iii) Using laughter

(b) Encouraging yourself

(i) Making positive statements

(ii) Taking risks wisely

(iii) Rewarding yourself

(c) Taking your emotional temperature

(i) Listening to your body

(ii) Using a checklist

(iii) Writing a language learning diary

(iv) Discussing your feelings with someoneelse

6. Social strategies

(a) Asking questions

(i) Asking for clarification or verification

(ii) Asking for correction

(b) Cooperating with others

(i) Cooperating with peers

(ii) Cooperating with proficient users of the new language

(c) Empathizing with others

(i) Developing cultural understanding

(ii) Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

Note: Oxford's system is based partly on earlier classification work done by researchers such as O'Malley, Chamot, Rubin, Tarone, Dansereau, Weinstein and others (Oxford, et al.,1989).

APPENDIX B

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

[Adapted from Version 7.0 (EFL/ESL) © R.L. Oxford, 1989]

Background Questionnaire adapted for Botswana schools

1. Name (optional)_____

(Tick the appropriate answers to # 3,4 and 5)

2. Age: 5-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐
   16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐
   25 (and above) ☐
3. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
4. Level of education: Primary ☐
   Secondary ☐
   Tertiary ☐
5. Mother tongue or language you grew up speaking _____
6. Language(s) you speak at home_____
7. Language you learn at school other than the language(s) listed in # 6 and 7 above

   _____
8. How many years have you been studying English i.e. from the time you first started learning it?_____
9. Why do you want to learn English? *(Tick the appropriate ones)*
   - Interested in the language ☐
   - Interested in the culture ☐
   - Have friends who speak the language ☐
   - Required to take a language course to graduate ☐
   - Need it for my future career ☐
   - Need it for travel ☐
   - Other reason *(list)*: _____

     _____
10. Do you enjoy language learning? *(Tick the appropriate one)* Yes ☐ No ☐
11. Why do you enjoy or dislike language learning?

    _____

    _____

SILL Questionnaire adapted for Botswana schools

Directions

This form of the STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL) is for students to whom English is not a mother tongue. You will find statements about learning English. Please read each statement and choose the appropriate response that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS *(See the example below).*

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Agrees
4. Strongly agree

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people think you are. There are no wrong or right answers to these statements. This usually takes about 20 to 30 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, feel free to ask them immediately.

Example

Read the item, and circle a response (1 through 4).

	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4
1.	I relate what I learn in English to my experiences or to what I already know	1	2	3	4

For Primary and Secondary School Students

Read the item, and circle a response (1 through 4).

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. I relate what I learn in English to my experiences or to what I already know.	1	2	3	4
2. I use English words in a sentence so that I can remember the words.	1	2	3	4
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	1	2	3	4
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	1	2	3	4
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words. Rhymes are words that sound like the new words I want to learn. E.g. 'see' sounds like 'sing'.	1	2	3	4
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words. Flashcards are cards with the word or phrase written on it.	1	2	3	4
7. I physically act out new English words. For example, to learn the word 'kick' I would kick something.	1	2	3	4
8. I review or revise English lessons often. To revise means to study again.	1	2	3	4
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
10. I say or write new English words several times.	1	2	3	4
11. I try to talk like native English speakers. These are people for whom English is their mother tongue (They grew up speaking English).	1	2	3	4
12. I practice the sounds of English. For example, I would repeatedly say the sound /t/ in the word 'talk' to learn the sound.	1	2	3	4
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.	1	2	3	4
14. I start conversations in English. In other words, I use English to talk to other people.	1	2	3	4
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or listen to the radio programmes presented in English.	1	2	3	4
16. I read for pleasure in English. For example, reading novels and magazines written in English.	1	2	3	4
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	1	2	3	4
18. When reading, I first skim an English passage then go back and read carefully (Skim means reading the passage quickly).	1	2	3	4
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
20. I try to find patterns in English. For example, I look to see if some English sentences are formed the same way.	1	2	3	4
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	1	2	3	4
22. I try not to translate word-for-word. To translate means to change words from one language to another. e.g., Setswana to English.	1	2	3	4
23. I summarise or go over the information that I hear or read in English.	1	2	3	4
24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses. Unfamiliar words are words I do not know.	1	2	3	4
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures. For example, I use my finger to point so that the person can know that I am talking about the word 'point'.	1	2	3	4
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	1	2	3	4
27. I read English without looking up every new word in the dictionary.	1	2	3	4
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	1	2	3	4
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	1	2	3	4
30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	1	2	3	4
32. I pay attention or listen carefully when someone is speaking in English.	1	2	3	4
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	1	2	3	4
34. I plan my schedule or timetable so that I will have enough time to study English.	1	2	3	4
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.	1	2	3	4
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English. For example, I go to the library; I buy books; I ask teacher to give me more reading.	1	2	3	4
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills. In other words, I know why I want to improve my English skills.	1	2	3	4
38. I think about my progress in learning English.	1	2	3	4
39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	1	2	3	4
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	1	2	3	4
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. For example, I give myself a sweet when I pass English.	1	2	3	4
42. I notice if I am tense, nervous or frightened when I am studying or using English.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary/book.	1	2	3	4
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	1	2	3	4
45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	1	2	3	4
46. I ask other to correct me when I talk in English.	1	2	3	4
47. I practice English with other students.	1	2	3	4
48. I ask for help from people who can speak English.	1	2	3	4
49. I ask questions in English.	1	2	3	4
50. I try to learn about the culture or way of life of English speakers.	1	2	3	4

51. Describe the techniques or things you do to help you to learn English language.

52. How do the things you have mentioned in # 51 above help you to learn English?

For Tertiary Students

Read the item, and circle a response (1 through 4).

	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4
1.	I relate what I learn in English to my experiences or to what I already know	1	2	3	4
2.	I use English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	1	2	3	4
3.	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	1	2	3	4
4.	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	1	2	3	4
5.	I use rhymes or related words to remember new English words.	1	2	3	4
6.	I use flashcards to remember new English words. Flashcards are cards With words written on it.	1	2	3	4
7.	I physically act out new English words.	1	2	3	4
8.	I often review or revise English lessons.	1	2	3	4
9.	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	1	2	3	4
10.	I say or write new English words several times.	1	2	3	4
11.	I try to talk like native English speakers.	1	2	3	4

	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4
12	I practice the sounds of English.	1	2	3	4
13	I use the English words I know in different ways.	1	2	3	4
14.	I start conversations in English.	1	2	3	4
15.	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	1	2	3	4
16.	I read for pleasure in English.	1	2	3	4
17.	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	1	2	3	4
18.	When reading I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	1	2	3	4
19.	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	1	2	3	4
20.	I try to find patterns in English.	1	2	3	4
21.	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	1	2	3	4
22.	I try not to translate word-for-word.	1	2	3	4
23.	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	1	2	3	4
24.	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	1	2	3	4
25.	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	1	2	3	4
26.	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	1	2	3	4

	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4
27.	I read English without looking up every new word.	1	2	3	4
28.	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	1	2	3	4
29.	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	1	2	3	4
30.	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	1	2	3	4
31.	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	1	2	3	4
32.	I pay attention when someone is speaking in English.	1	2	3	4
33.	I try to find out how to be a better leamer of English.	1	2	3	4
34.	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	1	2	3	4
35.	I look for people I can talk to in English.	1	2	3	4
36.	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	1	2	3	4
37.	I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	1	2	3	4
38.	I think about my progress in learning English.	1	2	3	4
39.	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	1	2	3	4
40.	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	1	2	3	4

	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4
41.	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	1	2	3	4
42.	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	1	2	3	4
43.	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	1	2	3	4
44.	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	1	2	3	4
45.	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	1	2	3	4
46.	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	1	2	3	4
47.	I practice English with other students.	1	2	3	4
48.	I ask for help from English speakers.	1	2	3	4
49.	I ask questions in English.	1	2	3	4
50.	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	1	2	3	4

51. Describe the techniques or things you do to help you to learn English language.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

52. How do the things you have mentioned in # 51 above help you to learn English?

_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX C

Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES)

[*Adapted from* Jinks, & Morgan (1999) inventory]

MJSES Questionnaire adapted for Botswana schools

Directions

This form of the MORGAN-JIMKS STUDENT EFFICACY SKILLS (MJSES) is for students who study English. You will find statements about learning English. Please read each statement and choose the appropriate response that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS *(See the example below)*.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Agrees
4. Strongly agree

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people think you are. There are no wrong or right answers to these statements. This usually takes about 20 to 30 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, feel free to ask them immediately.

EXAMPLE

Read the item, and circle a response (1 through 4).

Item	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. I work hard in English.	1	2	3	4

For Primary School Students

Read the item, and circle a response (1 through 4).

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. I work hard in English.	1	2	3	4
2. I could get the best grades or marks in English if I had tried hard enough.	1	2	3	4
3. Most of my classmates like to do English because it is easy.	1	2	3	4
4. I would get better grades or marks if my English teacher liked me better.	1	2	3	4
5. Most of my classmates work harder on their English homework than I do.	1	2	3	4
6. I am a good English student.	1	2	3	4
7. I will pass Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE).	1	2	3	4
8. I go to a good school.	1	2	3	4
9. I always get good grades or marks in English when I try hard.	1	2	3	4
10. Sometimes I think the English assignment or class exercise is easy when other students in class think it is difficult.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
11. I am good at English.	1	2	3	4
12. Adults who have good jobs probably were good at English when they were students.	1	2	3	4
13. When I finish primary school I will go to secondary school.	1	2	3	4
14. I am one of the best students in my English class.	1	2	3	4
15. No one cares if I do well in school.	1	2	3	4
16. My English teacher thinks I am very good.	1	2	3	4
17. It is important to go to secondary school.	1	2	3	4
18. Generally I am a good student.	1	2	3	4
19. My classmates usually get better marks in English than me.	1	2	3	4
20. What I learn in school is not important.	1	2	3	4
21. I usually understand my English homework assignment.	1	2	3	4
22. I usually do not get good grades in English because it is hard.	1	2	3	4
23. It does not matter if I do not do well in school.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
24. Students who get better marks in English than I do get more help from the teacher than I do.	1	2	3	4
25. I read a lot.	1	2	3	4
26. It is not hard for me to get good grades/marks in school.	1	2	3	4
27. I am very good at English.	1	2	3	4
28. I will stop coming to school soon as I get the chance.	1	2	3	4
29. Teachers like students even if they do not pass well.	1	2	3	4
30. When the English teacher asks a question I usually know the answer even if the other students don't.	1	2	3	4

For Secondary School Students

Read the item, and circle a response (1 through 4).

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. I work hard in English.	1	2	3	4
2. I could get the best grades or marks in English if I tried hard enough.	1	2	3	4
3. Most of my classmates like to do English because it is easy.	1	2	3	4
4. I would get better grades or marks in English if my teacher liked me better.	1	2	3	4
5. Most of my classmates work harder on their English home work than I do.	1	2	3	4
6. I am a good English student.	1	2	3	4
7. I will pass secondary school leaving examinations or my General Certificate School Examinations (GCSE) examinations.	1	2	3	4
8. I go to a good school.	1	2	3	4
9. I always get good grades or marks in English when I try hard.	1	2	3	4
10. Sometimes I think the English assignment or class exercise is easy when other students in class think it is difficult.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
11. I am good at English.	1	2	3	4
12. Adults who have good jobs probably were good at English when they were students.	1	2	3	4
13. When I finish secondary school I will go for further education.	1	2	3	4
14. I am one of the best students in my English class.	1	2	3	4
15. No one cares if I do well in school.	1	2	3	4
16. My English teacher thinks I am very good	1	2	3	4
17. It is important to go for further studies.	1	2	3	4
18. Generally I am a good student.	1	2	3	4
19. My classmates usually get better marks in English than me.	1	2	3	4
20. What I learn in school is not important.	1	2	3	4
21. I usually understand my English homework assignment.	1	2	3	4
22. I usually do not get good grades in English because it is hard.	1	2	3	4
23. It does not matter if I do not do well in school.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
24. Students who get better marks in English than I do get more help from the teacher than I do.	1	2	3	4
25. I read a lot.	1	2	3	4
26. It is not hard for me to get good grades or marks in school.	1	2	3	4
27. I am very good at English.	1	2	3	4
28. I will stop coming to school soon as I get the chance.	1	2	3	4
29. Teachers like students	1	2	3	4
30. When the English teacher asks a question I usually know the answer even if the other students do not.	1	2	3	4

For Tertiary Students

Read the item, and circle a response (1 through 4).

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. I work hard in English.	1	2	3	4
2. I could get the best grades/marks in English if I tried hard enough.	1	2	3	4
3. Most of my classmates like to do English because it is easy.	1	2	3	4
4. I would get better grades/marks if my English lecturer liked me better.	1	2	3	4
5. Most of my classmates work harder on their English home work than I do.	1	2	3	4
6. I am a good English student.	1	2	3	4
7. I will pass all my English examinations.	1	2	3	4
8. I go to a good university.	1	2	3	4
9. I always get good grades/marks in English when I try hard.	1	2	3	4
10. Sometimes I think the English assignment or class exercise is easy when other students in class think it is difficult.	1	2	3	4
11. I am good at English.	1	2	3	4
12. People who have good jobs probably were good at English when they were students.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
13. When I finish university I will go on to further (post-graduate) studies.	1	2	3	4
14. I am one of the best students in my English class.	1	2	3	4
15. No one cares if I do well in school.	1	2	3	4
16. My English lecturers think I am very good.	1	2	3	4
17. It is important to go for further studies.	1	2	3	4
18. Generally I am a good student.	1	2	3	4
19. My classmates usually get better marks in English than me.	1	2	3	4
20. What I learn in school is not important.	1	2	3	4
21. I usually understand my English homework assignment.	1	2	3	4
22. I usually do not get good grades in English because it is hard.	1	2	3	4
23. It does not matter if I do not do well in my studies.	1	2	3	4
24. Students who get better marks than I do in English get more help from the lecturers than I do.	1	2	3	4
25. I read a lot.	1	2	3	4
26. It is not hard for me to get good grades/marks in the university.	1	2	3	4
27. I am very good at English.	1	2	3	4

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
28. I will finish studying at university as soon as I get a chance.	1	2	3	4
29. Lecturers like students even if they do not pass well.	1	2	3	4
30. When the English lecturer asks a question I usually know the answer even if the other students don't.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D

The Interview Protocol

1. Do you use any particular strategies when you are learning English? That is things you do to help you learn better or more effectively.
2. Can you tell me which strategies you use most of the time to learn English?
3. Under what circumstances do you use these strategies?
4. How does using these strategies help you improve your learning of English?
5. When did you start using these strategies?
6. How do you rate yourself as an English speaker?
7. Do you think you are good at learning English?
8. Do you think other students in your class are good at English too?
9. Do you think learners at different ages use different strategies?
10. Do you think girls are better than boys in English or vice versa?
11. Do you think your self-belief about learning English affects your choice and use of strategies?