

# The Comparison of Language Learning Strategies between Iranian and Iraqi EFL Learners Based on 1990 Oxford's Model

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## Abstract

The present study investigates the comparison of language learning strategies between Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners based on Oxford's model. To accomplish this, 60 BA-level participants—30 Iraqi and 30 Iranian EFL learners—from the Public University in Babylon, Iraq, and the Islamic Azad University in Shiraz, Iran—were given the 5-point Likert scale of 50 questions from Oxford's Strategies Inventory of Language Learning (SILL). They were between the ages of nineteen and twenty-eight. This quantitative and survey study used frequencies, means, standard deviations, and t-scores to quantify the dimensions of language learning strategies (LLS) and compare LLS between Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners. According to descriptive data, all LLSs among Iraqi EFL learners fell into the medium range. However, Iranian EFL students exhibited metacognitive and memory strategies more frequently and moderately. The results also distinguished Iranian and Iraqi EFL students' language learning approaches. According to the study, Iranian learners used different English learning strategies than Iraqi students. To this end, this research can also serve as a reference in language learning strategies and specify the dimensions of LLS used by Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners. The important implication of this research is that if EFL learners and teachers get aware of language learning strategies, they may develop their learning and teaching more easily and successfully.

**Keywords:** Language Learning Strategies; Oxford's model; language learning; Iraqi EFL learner; Iranian EFL

## Introduction

Learning an EFL/ESL is among the greatest educational concerns in many schools worldwide. There has been a noticeable shift in the profession of language instruction over the past 20 years, with a stronger emphasis on

students and learning than on teachers and teaching. Several studies demonstrate how crucial language-learning strategies are for improving the effectiveness of language acquisition and having a beneficial impact on learners' language use. Learning strategies for foreign or second languages (L.S.) are certain

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conducts, activities, procedures, or methods (R. Oxford, 1994). According to Oxford (1989), language learners utilize techniques at all levels. However, many or most do not fully understand the tactics they are adopting or which ones are most helpful.

Many academics have categorized language learning strategies (O'Malley, J.M., & Chamot, 1990; R. Oxford, 1994; Rubin, 1987). According to Rubin, learners employ three strategies that directly or indirectly aid in language learning (Hismanoglu, 2000). As stated by O'Malley, J.M., and Chamot (1990), teaching strategies can be divided into three broad categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies (Chan, 2011). According to the Oxford (1990) definition, direct strategies are those language learning strategies that directly connect to the target language. Memory, cognition, and compensating mechanisms are some of these strategies. All of these direct strategies involve the mental processing of language. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, are metacognitive, effective, and social strategies that indirectly support language learning through concentration, planning, appraisal, opportunity seeking, fear control, increased cooperation and empathy, and other means (R. Oxford, 1990).

A literature review shows that many works on language learning strategies have already been done. Most such works have already been done on samples and participants from a specific country. As an example, Hamza (2012), in his M.A. thesis, studied the language learning strategies that Iraqi EFL undergraduate students use in learning new English vocabulary. They used a sample of 60 second-year students from the English department of Babylon University.

The participants were asked to answer a questionnaire containing four language learning strategies: social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive. He concluded that Iraqi EFL undergraduate students mainly learned new English vocabulary using memory strategies. In another study, Soodmand Afshar and Bayat (2021) studied the impact of language learning strategy instruction on the less successful Iranian EFL learner's L2 achievement. They used 40 less successful EFL students as the participants. Twenty of them were trained using a cognitive academic language learning approach, and the other 20 students were used as the control group. The participants were homogenized using the TOEFL PBT test. The independent and paired sample t-tests revealed that explicit strategy instruction had a significant positive impact on the L2 achievement of the experimental group. However, comparative studies between language learning strategies are not rare like the two mentioned above. Application behavior of participants from two different EFL environments is rare. The authors in the present study decided to undertake their comparative research to fill in this gap.

However, many students struggle to grasp the goal of learning the English language, as mentioned throughout time. Regarding this, various studies have discovered a considerable variation in how well learners pick up the English language as a foreign or second language. This important variation among learners has drawn the attention of experts worldwide. Numerous social, cognitive, affective, and metacognitive domains have been recognized as critical areas that support learning a second language since the 1960s (Brown, 2000). The various language learning strategies have included these

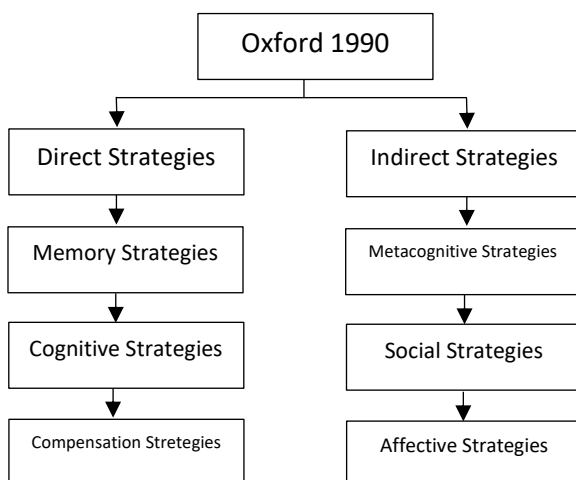
dimensions, including memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

Researchers have been interested in language learning strategies since the 1960s. Learner strategies are now becoming more popular as the focus in education has turned away from teaching methods and toward the qualities of learners and their efforts to learn (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). This shift in emphasis in applied linguistics led to a greater emphasis on students and learning, with the idea that learning begins with the student. As stated by Rubin (1987), there " was a growing interest in defining how learners can take charge of their learning and clarifying how teachers can help students become autonomous" (p.15).

As a result, research in applied (O'Malley, J.M., & Chamot, 1990; R. Oxford, 1994; Rubin, 1987) has centered on what successful language students do when learning a target language. The early research was referred to as "good

language learner studies," which later evolved into the current research on language learning techniques. According to R. L. Oxford and Ehrman (1995), these studies have repeatedly shown that people who are successful at learning a language have a propensity for employing techniques like " finding practice opportunities, guessing intelligently, using patterns, treating the language as a rule system, and often communicating in the language " (p. 362). According to Boroujeni (2014), two main goals are associated with using language learning strategies (LLSs): When language learning strategies are used correctly, students have greater autonomy in learning and are encouraged to understand and identify the target language more successfully. According to Oxford and Nyikos' study (1989), language learning strategies and students' success in learning a second language are positively correlated. According to O'Malley et al. (1985), LLSs have a significant impact as useful elements in learners' language acquisition processes.

**Figure 1**  
*The categorization of language learning strategies*



According to Griffiths and Oxford (2014), language learning strategies can result in a learning environment that is "more engaged, more effective" (p. 62). The writers also stress the need for strategy training, assessment, and research for successful language learning. According to Griffiths (2003), "the prospect that successful application of language learning strategies can contribute to language learning success is exciting" (p. 381). In addition, Griffiths and Oxford (2014) claim that despite issues with language learning techniques, language learning strategies still help students learn the language, and the literature on language learning strategies is useful for researchers, instructors, and students (p. 7).

LLS aids in the development of learners' autonomy. They also improve people's perceptions and self-efficacy, which ultimately aids in their ability to accomplish a task or sequence of tasks (Nunan & Carter, 2001). Many pioneers, including (Chamot & Kupper, 1989), emphasize that L2 learners who are unsuccessful need to be taught specific language learning practices. It will enable the strategies to be used more effectively and adequately in various situations, ultimately leading.

Furthermore, defining the LLS used by EFL learners and the factors that influence it has received much attention in the research on foreign and second language learning. e.g., Griffiths, 2004; Najafi et al., 2014; Nambiar, 2009. Finding connections between learning strategies and specific aspects of EFL learners' personalities, such as their views, learning preferences, styles, age, and gender, has been the focus of some studies e.g. Lai, 2009; Li, 2004; Nosratinia et al., 2014. Other research has concentrated

on teaching students how to use the learning strategies e.g. Hassan et al., 2005; Kozmonova, 2008; Liang, 2007 by taking into account the dearth of new content in this area in the Iranian and Iraqi contexts as well as the lack of information, that would allow teachers to determine which language-learning strategies students prefer. This study examined the preferred language learning strategies EFL learners from Iran and Iraq used. The most crucial issue is figuring out which language-learning strategies are most crucial and how much of an impact they have.

Research suggests high-skilled learners perform better at task completion and score higher than low-skilled learners because learning strategies and competency are closely correlated. Hence, (Zhang, 2013) suggested that the hypothesis that learning strategies promote ESL learners' autonomy and, as a result, help them become more proficient learners doing, is still supported by language learning strategies and associated research.

Investigating the LLS of learners and determining the most and least commonly employed strategies by EFL student teachers provided a greater contribution to the language learning strategy research for foreign language institutes and universities. This study focused on seeing the strategies employed by the Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners of EFL classes.

Based on the given objectives, the study investigated which language learning strategies are applied by Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners and whether there are any significant differences between Iranian EFL learners and Iraqi EFL learners regarding their language learning strategies.

## Method

### Research Design

This study used a descriptive methodology to describe the phenomenon as it was, attempted to understand it, and analyzed it. Also, this was quantitative and measured frequencies, means, and standard deviations and was designed as a comparative study to compare the comparison of language learning strategies between Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners. In addition, the design of this study was a survey study to investigate learners' language learning strategies, specify

the dimensions of LLS, and compare their LLS among EFL Iranian and Iraqi learners.

### Participants

The participants of this study were 60 Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners (30 Iranian EFL learners and 30 Iraqi EFL learners) from Islamic Azad University in Shiraz, Iran, and the Public University in Babylon, Iraq, studying English language teaching at the B.A. level. Their ages ranged from nineteen to twenty-eight. The sample was easily accessible to researchers; convenience sampling was used.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Information of Participants.*

Participants	Gender				Age					
	Male		Female		19-22 years		23-25 years		26-28 years	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b><i>Iraqi EFL learners</i></b>	18	60	12	40	12	40	8	26.7	10	33.3
<b><i>Iranian EFL learners</i></b>	16	53.3	14	46.7	11	36.7	13	43.3	6	20

### Instruments

#### ***The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)***

SILL is the name of a questionnaire about language learning strategies. The SILL questionnaire had 50 items ranging from "Always true of me" to "Never true of me" on a 5-point Likert scale. Six subscales of the questionnaire were identified: memory, compensatory, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social. Oxford (1990) created the measure to determine the preferred language learning strategies of the participants. Cronbach's alpha has been chosen as the SILL's

most appropriate reliability index Schmidt et al. (1996). In general, the ESL/EFL SILL reliability has been very high. Numerous examinations have proved the SILL's high reliability. For instance, it ranged between .91 and .95 for the 50-item questionnaire and was .93 with 332 Korean university EFL students (R. L. Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; R. Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Park, 1997).

### Data Collection

In order to perform the study, enough questionnaires were given to the participants' classes in February 2022. Because it was written in extremely straightforward English, the questionnaire was not translated into Arabic and

Persian. Students were also permitted to ask questions about anything they did not understand, including defining particular terms or sentences. Seldom did the students ever ask any questions. These participants had ample time to finish the survey. The students took an average of 60 minutes to complete their written responses.

## Findings and Discussion

### Finding

The initial set of analyses described language learning strategies among EFL students from Iran and Iraq. This study represented mean and standard deviation, including a frequency

analysis of the descriptive data gathered from the questionnaires. Table 2 demonstrates the mean and standard deviation of LLS dimensions among Iraqi EFL learners. Oxford (1990) suggested three levels of the strategy used high frequency (range from 3.5-5.0), medium frequency (range from 2.5-3.49), and low frequency (range from 1.0-2.49). According to this table, Memory Strategy (M.S.) scored the highest value ( $M=3.26$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ), and Effective strategy (E.S.) scored the least value ( $M=2.88$ ,  $SD=0.27$ ). According to Oxford, all dimensions of LLSs among Iraqi EFL learners were in the range of medium. However, M.S. had high scores than other dimensions.

**Table 2**

*The Descriptive Information of LLSs Dimensions among Iraqi EFL Learners*

Domain	Mean	SD
Memory Strategies	3.26	0.54
Cognitive Strategies	3.05	0.67
Compensation Strategies	3.25	0.35
Metacognitive Strategies	3.20	0.65
Effective Strategies	2.88	0.27
Social Strategies	3.06	0.21

**Table 3**

*The Descriptive Information of LLSs Dimensions among Iranian EFL Learners*

Domain	Mean	SD
Memory Strategies	3.58	0.89
Cognitive Strategies	3.33	0.54
Compensation Strategies	3.31	0.68
Metacognitive Strategies	3.66	0.98
Effective Strategies	3.19	0.53
Social Strategies	3.06	0.21

Table 3 revealed the mean and standard deviation of LLS dimensions among Iranian EFL learners. According to Oxford (1990), there are three levels of the strategy used: high level

(between 3.5 and 5.0), medium value (between 2.5 and 3.49), and low frequency (range from 1.0-2.49). According to this table, metacognitive Strategies had the highest value ( $M=3.66$ ,  $SD=$

0.98), and social strategies scored the lowest (M=3.15, SD= 0.49). According to Oxford, metacognitive and memory strategies were used by Iranian EFL students most frequently, whereas other learning-related variables were used more moderately. Iranian EFL students' language learning strategies scored high when compared to those of Iraqi EFL students.

**Significant Differences between Iranian EFL Learners and Iraqi EFL Learners in terms of their LLS**

As shown in Table 4, there was a statistically significant difference in language learning

strategies between Iranian EFL learners (M= 3.23, SD= 0.67) and Iraqi EFL learners (M= 3.11, SD= 0.34);  $t = -1.017$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in English language learning strategies between Iraqi and Iranian language learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). As a result, a noticeable difference was between the language learning strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL students. Moreover, based on the estimated averages, it could be said that Iranian learners had different learning strategies in English than students in Iraq.

**Table 4**

*An Independent Sample T-test for English LLS between Iraqi and Iranian EFL Students*

		N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Language learning strategies	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.11	0.34	0.09	0.12	-1.017	58	0.001
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.23	0.67	0.12				

**LLSs applied by Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners**

An independent sample t-test was employed in this part to look into the aspects of English language learning strategies that differed significantly. An independent sample t-test was used to examine the differences between Iranian and Iraqi EFL in terms of memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensatory strategy, metacognitive strategy, effective strategy, and social strategy.

Based on the data presented in Table 5, there was a noticeable difference between memory dimensions of language learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners (M= 3.58, SD= 0.89) and Iraqi EFL learners (M= 3.26, SD= 0.54);  $t = -2.364$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in memory strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). So, it may be inferred from the calculated means that Iranian learners had more different memory strategies than students in Iraq.

An independent t-test was utilized to assess whether language learning strategies adopted by Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners differed in terms of cognitive. Table 6 indicated that there was a noticeable difference between cognitive strategies among Iranian EFL learners (M= 3.33, SD= 0.54) and Iraqi EFL learners (M=3.05, SD=

0.67);  $t = -1.376$ ,  $p = 0.005$  and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in cognitive strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.005 and less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Finally, the mean of cognitive difference among Iranian EFL learners was higher than among Iraqi EFL learners.

**Table 5**

*An Independent Sample T-test for Memory Strategies*

Dimension of language learning strategies	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Memory strategies	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.26	0.54	-0.32	58	0.001
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.58	0.89			

**Table 6**

*An Independent Sample T-test for Cognitive Strategies*

Dimension of language learning strategies	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Cognitive	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.05	0.67	-0.28	58	0.005
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.33	0.54			

An independent sample t-test was utilized to see if there were any differences between Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners in the compensating dimension of language learning strategies. Table 7 summarized that there was not a noticeable difference between compensation strategies among Iranian EFL

learners (M= 3.31, SD= 0.68) and Iraqi EFL learners (M=3.25, SD= 0.35);  $t = -0.476$ ,  $p = 0.104$  and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in compensation strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.104 and more than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). So it was clearly shown that the mean of



compensation difference between Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners had shading. As a result, there was no significant difference between

compensation strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners.

**Table 7**  
*An Independent Sample T-test for Compensation Strategies*

Dimension of language learning strategies		N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Compensation strategies	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.25	0.35	-0.06	-0.476	58	0.104
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.31	0.68				

Based on the assessment of the difference in the metacognitive strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners, an independent t-test was utilized. Table 8 was summarized the metacognitive strategies among Iraqi EFL learners (M=3.20, SD= 0.65) and Iranian EFL learners (M=3.66, SD=0.98); t= -2.373, p= 0.001 and the significance level of the t-test, to

investigate the difference in metacognitive strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 (p<0.05). According to the value of means, the level of the mean of metacognitive difference among Iraqi EFL learners was less than among Iranian EFL learners.

**Table 8**  
*An Independent Sample T-test for Metacognitive Strategies*

Dimension of language learning strategies		N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Metacognitive strategies	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.20	0.65	-0.46	-2.373	58	0.001
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.66	0.98				

Based on the data presented in Table 9, there was a noticeable difference between effective strategies among Iranian EFL learners (M= 3.19, SD= 0.53) and Iraqi EFL learners (M= 2.88, SD= 0.27); t= -1.045, p= 0.005, and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in

effective strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.005 and less than 0.05 (p<0.05). So, it may be inferred from the calculated means that Iranian learners had more different effective strategies than students in Iraq.

**Table 9***An Independent Sample T-test for Effective Strategies*

Dimension of language learning strategies		N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Effective strategies	Iraqi EFL learners	30	2.88	0.27	-0.31	-1.045	58	0.005
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.19	0.53				

An independent sample t-test was used to assess the difference in social strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners; an independent t-test was utilized. Table 10 summarized that there was not a noticeable difference between the social dimensions of language learning strategies among Iraqi EFL learners (M=3.06, SD= 0.21) and Iranian EFL learners (M=3.15, SD=0.49);  $t = -0.906$ ,  $p = 0.089$  and the

significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in social strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.089 and more than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). So it was clearly shown that the level of social difference between Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners was small. As a result, there was no significant difference between the social strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners.

**Table 10***An Independent Sample T-test for Social Strategies*

Dimension of language learning strategies		N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Social strategies	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.06	0.21	-0.09	-0.906	58	0.089
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.15	0.49				

## Discussion

The current study aimed to compare LLSs among Iranian and Iraqi EFL Learners. In essence, the results of the descriptive analysis provided some valuable information. In this investigation, some factors such as age, gender,

and other demographic factors were not intended variables and were not discussed. Oxford (1990) offered three levels of the strategies used: high level (between 3.5 and 5.0), medium frequency (between 2.5 and 3.49), and low level (range from 1.0-2.49). Our findings indicated that memory strategies had the

highest frequency while effective strategies had the lowest value. All language learning strategies' dimensions among Iraqi EFL learners were in the range of medium. However, memory strategies had high scores than other dimensions. Based on the findings, metacognitive Strategies scored the maximum value, and social strategies scored the least. Among Iranian EFL learners., metacognitive and memory strategies were in the high-frequency range. However, other learning strategies' dimensions were in the medium frequency range contrasted with Iraqi EFL learners, language learning strategies among Iranian had high scores. According to the descriptive data on the dimensions of language-learning strategies among Iraqi EFL learners, this study was consistent with Mahdi Mutar's study (2018) in that memory scored the highest means compared to the other strategy categories. The overall use mean of LLSs has been stated as medium frequency, and memory scored the highest means overall. The results of a study by Ridha et al. (2010), which looked into how LLSs were used by Iraqi university students, contrast these findings. They discovered that learners used social and metacognitive strategies more frequently among the six Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) categories. However, the mean degree of LLSs was comparable to the present study at medium use.

It contrasts with research by Liao (2000) Chen (2002), and Yang (1992), which discovered that learners used compensatory strategies more often than other kinds of learning strategies. Further, the t scores revealed a noticeable difference between the language learning strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL students. Moreover, based on the estimated averages, it

could be said that Iranian learners had different learning strategies in English than students in Iraq. Based on the data presented in Chapter Four, there was a noticeable difference between memory dimensions of language learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners and Iraqi EFL learners, and the significance level of the t-test to investigate the difference in memory dimensions of language learning strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). So, it may be inferred from the calculated means that Iranian learners had more different memory dimensions of English language learning strategies than students in Iraq. Additionally, the results of t scores summarized that there was a noticeable difference between cognitive dimensions of language learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners and Iraqi EFL learners, and the significance level of the t-test to investigate the difference in cognitive dimensions of language learning strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.005 which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Finally, the mean of cognitive difference among Iranian EFL learners was higher than among Iraqi EFL learners. According to inferential statistics of this study, there was not a noticeable difference between the compensation dimensions of language learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners and Iraqi EFL learners, and the significance level of the t-test to investigate the difference in compensation dimensions of language learning strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.104 which is more than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). So, the level of the mean of compensation difference was clearly shown among Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners who had shading. As a result, there was no significant difference between compensation dimensions

of language learning strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners.

Regarding the difference in the metacognitive dimension of language learning strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners, the scores of an independent sample t-test indicated that there was a noticeable difference between the metacognitive dimensions of language learning strategies among Iraqi EFL learners and Iranian EFL learners, and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in metacognitive strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to the value of means, the level of the mean of metacognitive difference among Iraqi EFL learners was less than among Iranian EFL learners. The significance level of the t-test used to investigate the difference in effective strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.005 and less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to the information provided in this study, there was a significant difference between effective strategies among Iranian EFL learners and Iraqi EFL learners. So, it may be inferred from the calculated means that Iranian learners had more different effective strategies than students in Iraq. In order to measure the difference in the social strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners, the scores of an independent sample t-test indicated that there was not a noticeable difference between the social strategies among Iraqi EFL learners and Iranian EFL learners, and the significance level of the t-test, was 0.089, which is more than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). So, it was clearly shown that the level of social difference between Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners had shading. As a result, there was no significant difference between the

social strategies among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners.

Learning strategies directly influence learning and support forming the learner's language system (Wenden & Rubin, 1987). We can conclude that understanding and using language learning strategies will result in more successful language learning. While learners in Maghsoudi and Golshan's study (2017) tended to use metacognitive strategies more frequently than other approaches, social strategies were not particularly valued by the participants. Additionally, the findings of the descriptive statistics of LLS dimensions among Iranian EFL learners were consistent with those of studies by Maghsoudi & Golshan (2017), Gu & Johnson (1996), Zhang (2013), Hamzah et al. (2009) and Şener (2007) which highlighted memory and metacognitive strategies as the most favored ones. In the present study, Iraqi participants used high-frequency and metacognitive and memory strategies with high-frequency Iranian participants. It shows a similar trend in applying memory and metacognitive strategies in different RFL settings. The reason why memory strategy has been used most frequently could be rooted in the educational systems in different countries. Focusing most educational systems on memorization may justify why memory strategy is frequently used in different EFL settings.

Additionally, because the students can understand English lessons while conversing with others, this finding contradicts the study by Yen and Chou (2009) on the social elements of language learning methodologies. However, in this study, social aspects among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners had a lower t score than other learning strategy characteristics. It shows that in

these two EFL settings, social strategies are not much focused on.

## Conclusion

Ganakumaran (2003) found that learning strategies in Malaysian secondary school learners improve reading comprehension and proficiency. Garner's theory suggests that L2 learners must critically analyze texts, infer, elaborate, and discuss expectations, extracting crucial elements (Garner, 1987). Davies (1995) supports this position, stating that L2 learners should engage in strategic processes to interact, respond, and react to information. Research on learning techniques helps teachers understand learners and address their weaknesses. Further studies on L2 learners' learning strategies can guide teaching and learning tactics in L2 classrooms.

In the Iraqi EFL context, the study found that memory and compensatory techniques are the most frequently used learning strategies among Iraqi EFL learners. Memory strategies are considered significant contributors to language learning, and compensating strategies help fill linguistic gaps. These strategies improve vocabulary development, speaking and writing exercises, listening, and reading comprehension. Metacognitive strategies involve autonomous self-management of time and the learning process. Compensation and memory strategies are less frequently used, while cognitive, social, and effective strategies are less frequently used. Memory and compensatory strategies are essential for effective language learning in Iraqi EFL.

In the Iranian EFL context, the study found that metacognitive strategies, such as self-management of time and the learning process,

are the most frequently used by Iranian EFL learners. These strategies help learners manage their learning process and maintain a proper path in a target language input environment like Iran. Memory strategies are another assessment strategy, with moderate levels in Iran. Cognitive and compensatory strategies are crucial for language learning, as they help students fill in linguistic deficiencies and develop skills for vocabulary, speaking, writing, listening, and reading comprehension. Cognitive strategies consist of four types: receiving and sending messages, practicing, analyzing and reasoning, and practicing naturalistically. Social strategies are less frequently used, with the least used being social. The study provides baseline information on the EFL approach employed by English students in colleges. It compares language learning strategies employed by Iranian and Iraqi students. The study also suggests a link between academic success in language learning and language learning strategies.

The findings in this study could be used by an array of users like policymakers in education, syllabus designers, authors of books on language teaching, university professors, teachers, and students. Policymakers could use the present study's findings to introduce guidelines for the whole educational system to employ relevant strategies in the teaching environment. Syllabus designers can introduce syllabi that fit the Iranian and Iraqi environments. Similarly, book authors can introduce content based on these strategies. University professors could get familiar with these strategies and use them in their classrooms. Students can use these strategies to ease the process of language learning.

The present study also faced limitations despite the strides made by the researchers, like any other research. The number of participants was small. Gender was not dealt with here as the researchers did not deal with different levels of education. Also, the researchers selected their participants from two EFL settings, namely Iran and Iraq. Each of the limitations mentioned above can produce a basis for other researchers to continue this study and include variables that the present researchers did not consider. For instance, they can select their participants from more EFL settings, or they might want to consider participants from different levels of education. Some researchers may wish to consider both male and female participants.

In recent years, there have been good relationships between Iran and Iraq as the two neighboring countries. These ties cover many topics like trade and economy, and culture. Cooperation in education and higher education has been a prominent area. Many students from Iraq study in Iranian universities, which The present study has been an endeavor in this latter area.

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