Since the late 1970s, widespread research has been conducted regarding the strategies that learners use in acquiring and using second or foreign languages. It is generally recognized that learning strategies are conscious approaches that students take to improve their language learning and use (Anderson, 2005). In the FL context, it is necessary for learners to learn foreign languages autonomously because of limited exposure to the target language. Learning strategies are an important factor in enhancing the learner’s autonomy.

Numerous studies have investigated the range and type of learning strategies used by good language learners and differences in learning strategy usage between successful and less successful learners. Successful language learners have a variety of learning strategies, and employ them to accomplish their task of learning a language. However, less successful language learners tend to use the same learning strategies over and over again, and do not make significant progress in their task. In other words, less successful learners do not seem to be aware of the potential role of learning strategies in accomplishing their language task (Anderson, 2005; Chamot, 2005; Graham, 2004).

The purpose of this paper is to rearrange the various strategies proposed by many researchers on second language acquisition with focus on a foreign language learning context. This paper analyzes and reorganizes learning strategies from three perspectives: learning contexts, interrelationships among strategies, and stages in learning activities. Rearranging and reorganizing the strategies from these perspectives will serve as a foundation for teaching designed to help less successful students use or combine learning strategies appropriately.

Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to learning strategies and their importance in the FL context, and also outlines the purpose of this paper.

Chapter 2 reviews theories and research on language learning strategies. Although many researchers have variously defined learning strategies, this paper adopts the definition of Takeuchi (2003) as it covers all types of definition and its description is very clear. According to this definition, learning strategies are “methods or actions consciously adopted by learners that have the potential to make foreign language learning easier, more effective, and more efficient when they are used, independently or in combination, to help learners accomplish a specific task at a certain learning stage” (p. 34).

Various classifications of language learning strategies have been proposed by numerous researchers. Oxford (1990) proposed one of the most influential classifications, which is divided into two categories: direct and indirect strategies. Each of these is further divided into three subcategories. Direct strategies consist of memory, cognitive and compensation strategies, while indirect ones are grouped into metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Another well-known classification
is that of O'Malley and Chamot (1990), who developed a tripartite classification of learning strategies: metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. Though this paper mainly adopts their classification of learning strategies, social and affective strategies are handled separately. In other words, the paper uses four classifications of learning strategies: metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective. Reference is also made to other categories of learning strategy such as vocabulary and grammar and other strategy categories such as interaction and motivational strategies.

It is recognized that learning strategies are influenced by a variety of factors including the learning style, character, and cultural background of the learner; this paper describes individual and contextual factors that determine the learner's choice of strategies. Reference is also made to the relationship between learning strategies and proficiency, as learners' proficiency is one of the factors that affects their use of learning strategies.

Chapter 3 discusses differences in the use of learning strategies depending on learning contexts: classroom and non-classroom settings. The classroom is influenced by distinctive features such as the presence of a teacher and peers. In a non-classroom environment, language learners must learn a foreign language by themselves. Accordingly, by comparing strategy use in these different learning contexts in the EFL situation, unique strategies for the respective environments can be identified. Discussion is also outlined on whether or not there are differences in the frequency of learning strategy usage by students.

Although a number of studies have examined learning strategies in relation to language skills, none has tried to investigate the interrelationships that exist among strategies. Chapter 4 investigates these interrelationships in terms of the four basic language skills in addition to vocabulary and grammar. From this point of view, unique and common learning strategies in relation to language skills are proposed. Examples of learning strategy combinations are also given.

Chapter 5 describes different uses of learning strategies based on the stages in learning activities. Little attention has been given to the relationship between learning strategies and stages in learning activities, but it is important to consider this because the aims of learning activities differ by stage. This paper divides learning activities into the three stages: pre-activity, during-activity and post-activity stages. Appropriate use of learning strategies is identified for each stage. Language learners need to employ strategies according to the aim of each stage.

In conclusion, it can be proposed that teachers should be aware of differences in the use of learning strategies depending on the learning contexts and the stages in learning activities. They should also consider the interrelationships that exist among strategies. The reason why teachers need to be aware of these points is that recognizing such perspectives forms the basis for instruction that helps learners employ and orchestrate learning strategies appropriately. It is therefore significant for learners and teachers to be aware of the importance of language learning strategies.