**SQL Cursor**

You have already learned that you can include SQL statements that return a single row in a PL/SQL block. The data retrieved by the SQL statement should be held in variables using the INTO clause.

**Where Does the Oracle Server Process SQL Statements?**

The Oracle Server allocates a private memory area called the *context area* for processing SQL statements. The SQL statement is parsed and processed in this area. The information required for processing and the information retrieved after processing are all stored in this area. You have no control over this area because it is internally managed by the Oracle Server.

A cursor is a pointer to the context area. However, this cursor is an implicit cursor and is automatically managed by the Oracle Server. When the executable block issues a SQL statement, PL/SQL creates an implicit cursor.

**Types of Cursors**

There are two types of cursors:

**Implicit:** An *implicit cursor* is created and managed by the Oracle Server. You do not have access to it. The Oracle Server creates such a cursor when it has to execute a SQL statement.

**Explicit:** As a programmer, you may want to retrieve multiple rows from a database table, have a pointer to each row that is retrieved, and work on the rows one at a time. In such cases, you can declare cursors explicitly depending on your business requirements. A cursor that is declared by programmers is called an *explicit cursor*. You declare such a cursor in the declarative section of a PL/SQL block.