

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES
AND SUCCESS FOR TURKISH UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY STUDENTS

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AND SUCCESS FOR TURKISH UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY STUDENTS

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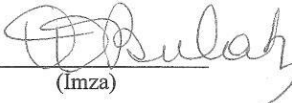
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELLSI	English Language Learning Strategy Inventory
ESL	English as a Second Language
GLL	Good Language Learner
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
L2	Second language
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

ÖZET

Türk Üniversiteleri Hazırlık Okulu Öğrencilerinin Dil Öğrenme Stratejileri ve Başarıları arasındaki İlişki

Bu çalışma, Türk Üniversiteleri İngilizce Hazırlık Okulu öğrencilerinin kullandıkları dil öğrenme stratejilerini bulmayı ve dil öğrenme stratejilerinin kullanımı ile İngilizce'deki başarıları arasındaki bağlantıyı ortaya çıkartmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışmaya İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi İngilizce Hazırlık Okulu'ndan 170 öğrenci (105 erkek, 65 kız) katılmıştır. Çalışmanın yürütüldüğü sırada bütün katılımcılar farklı İngilizce yeterlik düzeyindeki (başlangıç, alt orta ve orta seviye) sınıflarda idi. Veriler Griffiths (2003b) tarafından hazırlanan İngiliz Dili Öğrenme Strateji Anketi aracılığı ile toplanmıştır. Katılımcılar çalışmaya yeterlilik sınavı öncesinde katılmışlardır. Ayrıca yeterlilik sınavı sonuçları ve sınav sonrası yapılan elektronik posta görüşmeleri çalışmada kullanılmıştır.

Elde edilen veriler, dil öğrenme stratejileri ve dil öğrenmedeki başarı arasındaki ilişkinin tespit edilmesi için SPSS (16) programında analiz edilmiştir. Bu faktörlerin birbiriyle olan bağlantısını bulmak için Spearman'ın korelasyon katsayısı uygulanmıştır.

Çalışma sonunda, dil öğrenme stratejilerinin kullanılması ile İngilizce öğrenmedeki başarı arasında anlamlı bir ilişkinin olmadığı bulunmuştur. Ancak, dört stratejinin sınav sonuçları ile arasında pozitif anlamlı bir ilişkinin olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca farklı İngilizce yeterlik düzeyindeki öğrencilerin çok yakın oranlarda dil stratejileri kullandığı görülmüştür. Çalışma öncesi cinsiyet faktörünü çalışmak

amaçlanmamıştır ancak veri analizlerinde cinsiyet farklılıkları bulununca cinsiyet faktörü çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Sonuçlar kızların İngilizce öğrenirken erkeklere oranla daha fazla dil öğrenme stratejisi kullandığını ancak sınavda erkeklerin daha başarılı olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Dil öğrenme stratejilerinin dil öğrenme başarısında etkilerinin olduğu ancak başka faktörlerin de öğrencilerin dil öğrenme strateji seçimini ve başarısını etkilediği sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu faktörler öğrencilerin dil öğrenme sürecini daha iyi anlamak ve İngiliz dili öğretimini iyileştirmek için araştırılmalıdır.

Anahtar sözcükler: başarı, cinsiyet, dil, dil öğrenme, dil öğrenme stratejileri, öğrenci kaynaklı faktörler

ABSTRACT

The Relationship between Language Learning Strategies and Success for Turkish University Preparatory Students

This study intended to investigate the language learning strategies used by Turkish University Preparatory English students aiming to find the strategies they utilize and to discover the link between their strategy use and achievement in English.

170 (105 male, 65 female) students from Istanbul Technical University English Preparatory School participated in the study. At the time of the study the participants were in three different proficiency levels (i.e. elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate). The data were gathered through the English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI) constructed by Griffiths (2003b). The participants responded to the inventory before the proficiency exam was held. The results of the proficiency exam and email interviews conducted after the exam were also used in the study.

The data were analyzed through SPSS (16) to find the relationship of language learning strategies and achievement in learning the target language. To reveal the correlation between these factors, Spearman's correlation coefficient was performed on the gathered data.

According to the findings of the study, overall use of language learning strategies was not significantly correlated with success in English. However, a group of four strategies was found to be significantly positively related to the exam results. It was also found that students from different proficiency levels used strategies with very similar

frequency. Initially, gender was not aimed to be studied but when gender differences emerged out of the data, it was added to the study. The results revealed that females used language learning strategies significantly more frequently when learning English although they were actually slightly less successful than males in the proficiency exam.

It was concluded that even though language learning strategies may have some effect on language learning performance, there are clearly other factors which affect students' choice of language learning strategies and language performance. These other factors need to be investigated in order to gain more insight into the learning process of students and to enhance the effectiveness of English language instruction.

Keywords: gender, language, language learning, language learning strategies, learner related factors, success

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the field of foreign language education there has been a shift from teachers and teaching to learners and learner related factors over the last four decades. Various learner factors such as age, aptitude, motivation, attitude, anxiety, self-esteem, learning styles and learning strategies have been identified in relation to foreign language learning (Çavuşoğlu, 1992). Learning strategies have been the subject of a considerable amount of research as it has been suggested that in order to gain insight into how students learn best and our classroom teaching, we are obliged to study strategy use by learners in detail and rigorously. As, Naiman, Frohlich, Stern and Todesco (1978, p.1) stated; “All forms of language teaching could be greatly improved if we had a better understanding of the language learner and of the language learning process itself.” Also recently, attention to not only ‘what to learn’ but also to ‘how to learn’ has been emphasized in educational programs. Therefore, more emphasis is placed on studying and developing learning strategies generally. It has been strongly recommended that teachers should be aware of various kinds of strategies in order to inform subsequently their students about using and about the advantages of the strategies. Wenden (1985, p.7) stated that teachers should become “attuned to their students’ learning strategies and they need to be sensitive to how their students approach language learning and to the beliefs they have about it”.

The significance of language learning strategies (LLS) as key elements in the acquisition of English as a second or foreign language is a subject that has received

considerable attention by many researchers worldwide. Green and Oxford (1995, p.265) stated that the studies done on LLS “contribute to our understanding of how students use learning strategies”.

Research on language learning strategies has also been done in Turkey. Çavuşoğlu (1992), Yalçın (2006), Algan (2006), Karatay (2006), Cesur (2008), Aslan (2009), Şen (2009), and Demirel (2012) conducted research on the topic. Still, research on language learning strategies is very limited in Turkey and it is difficult to state that we know everything about it. Thus, this current study deals with the use of language learning strategies of students and its relation to language performance at the School of Foreign Languages of Istanbul Technical University.

1.1 Background of the Study

Until the 1970s, language learning was essentially seen as a psychological phenomenon (Grenfell and Macaro, 2007). LLS research first began in the late 1960’s, with a single strategy focus, with works of Carton (1966), Taylor (1975) and Richards (1975).

The research on language learning strategies gained speed worldwide when Rubin (1975) published her seminal article: ‘What the “Good Language Learner” Can Teach Us’ in which she introduced the idea of strategies employed by the “good language learner” (GLL). This was followed with great contributions by Stern (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978). The proposal of social and cognitive strategies by Wong-Fillmore (1976) was followed by Bialystok’s (1981) study on the role conscious language learning strategy choices.

In 1985, the scope of LLS research changed as LLS was aligned with cognitive psychology. Wenden (1985) who also elaborated upon on the concept of cognitive strategies took the first step in studying the metacognitive strategy field. Researchers such as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990) emphasized the differences among cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategies, with significant contributions by Oxford (1990) who suggested a more systematic and detailed system of language learning strategies which included six broad strategy groups and sixty-two specific strategies.

Since then, there have been a great number of studies exploring LLS use and its relation to numerous variables, such as proficiency, age, gender, nationality and major (Cohen, 1998; Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003b, 2008; Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). Recently Oxford (2011) revisited LLS and introduced the Strategic Self-Regulation Model of language learning in which learners actively and effectively use strategies to control their own learning.

Among the numerous variables, language learning strategies seem to be one of the most important ones having a tremendous impact on performance in second language learning. In order to determine the precise role strategies in language learning much more investigation is needed in the field. Hence, it can be stated that teachers need to become more aware of and familiar with learning strategies to be able to help their students with different preferences and design lesson plans that meet their needs.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in universities often face the difficult task of gaining a certain degree of proficiency especially in preparatory classes. What is generally observed is that while some learners adapt to the learning atmosphere quickly and make progress easily, others experience great difficulty in learning a new language. As educators, we have to improve the success of the classroom teaching, and if we are to improve it, we will need to know a great deal more about the learning process.

It has been accepted that students' use of LLS is of vital importance for enhancing their learning process and attaining higher achievement. The purpose of the study is to investigate the language learning strategies used by the learners and to investigate the link between strategy use and success which is hoped to give insights into how to improve the success of the classroom teaching.

Also, few studies have been done with preparatory classes in Turkey to enrich the educators' understanding of the students' LLS use and its relationship with their achievement. In order to bridge the gap, this study was carried out to investigate the strategy use of students and demonstrate the correlation between strategies and language achievement.

1.3 Significance of the Study

In Turkey universities provide either two or four years of education for undergraduates. Some universities also ask for an additional year of English preparatory study to be completed before the start of studies. The aim of university preparatory

programmes in Turkey is to prepare students to be able to comfortably undertake a degree program delivered in English. These preparatory units usually provide one-year education and some have level systems. Some of these levels systems make it possible for students to attend the courses in their departments even if in the middle of an academic year, while some others follow entire-year systems requiring that students attend preparatory programs for at least an entire academic year and go to their departments after they prove successful.

Every year, approximately 2500 students go through a preparatory year and try to get the required points to pass at Istanbul Technical University. To effectively cope with the learning demands of this huge group of students, the researcher thinks that it is vital to investigate the use of language learning strategies by these students. The results of the study might help with producing new ideas to improve the English language instruction at the institution.

Teacher development is a necessary part of teaching as it keeps teachers up-to-date on new research on how students learn, emerging technology tools for the classroom and new curriculum resources. As teachers' careers develop in addition to being trained through teacher training courses, teachers need to try to develop themselves and their teaching (Harmer, 2007). Conducting action research is a one of the useful ways teachers can develop themselves professionally. Teachers conduct action research so as to assess or improve aspects of their teaching and look for solutions to problems that emerge in the classroom (Harmer, 2007). This study was also conducted as a part of teacher development aiming to raise the researcher's awareness of students' learning processes, to enable her to make decisions about what she or her students do in

class and see how she might change her classroom teaching for the better according to her students' needs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the last few decades the role of the English language around the world as the lingua franca for economic, scientific, technological, and political exchange has grown rapidly. The term lingua franca means ‘a contact language used among people who do not share a first language and is commonly understood to mean a second language of its speakers’ (Jenkins, 2007, p. 1). Due to the international spread of English that has been growing since the latter part of 20th century, English is frequently the mutual language of choice in settings such as, conferences, business meetings, and political gatherings. According to Crystal (2003), 85% of the world's international organizations use English as their official language intransnational communication. Also about 80% of the published academic articles in several academic fields, such as linguistics, are written in English. Crystal (2003) concludes that a total of 1.500 million people use English with a native or non-native command. The global spread of English has created a large need for many people who can communicate in English, which has increased the demand in English language learning.

High demand in English language learning led to improvements and innovations in the field. Especially throughout the twentieth century, the English language teaching tradition was subjected to a tremendous change. It led to a number of different and

sometimes conflicting methods, each trying to be a major improvement over the previous or contemporary methods (Thanasoulas, 2002).

Since the 1970s, there has been a prominent shift within the field of education with greater emphasis being put on learning rather than teaching. Researchers started to focus more on classrooms or teaching processes, investigate learner behaviours, or the attitudes of learners, for their explanation of the learning process, feeling that “too strong a concern for the language system distracted attention from other equally important aspects of the language learning process” (Naiman, et al. 1978, p. 7). One consequence of this shift was an increasing awareness of the importance of learner based factors significant in language learning. A variety of factors affecting the success in the target language have been related to “the characteristics of the learner, such as language learning aptitude, attitude and motivation and personality variables” (Bialystok, 1981, p. 24) It has also been accepted that a learner is an individual with his or her unique differences such as age, sex, learning needs, abilities, feelings, styles, strategies, etc. Apparently, all these factors would have considerable effect on language learning. Of these factors strategies have gained a lot of interest by scholars as unlike other factors, strategies are said to be teachable (Oxford, 1990, 2011).

Strategies defined as “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge” (Rubin, 1975) were found to be used frequently by successful learners in order to process new information and to understand, learn or remember the information while acquiring the language (Rubin,1987; Stern, 1992). In their study on successful students’ use of language learning strategies, Naiman et al. (1978) stated that the study helped them understand how less successful learners may benefit from the

experience of more successful ones. Thus, the need to become aware of the strategies in language learning has gained recognition effective learning.

2.2 Background of Language Learning Strategies

Research into language learning strategies began in the 1960s. Carton (1966) published his study entitled “The Method of Inference in Foreign Language Study”, which was the first attempt to explore learner strategies (Wenden, 1987). Carton (1966) focused on a single strategy (inferencing with regard to learners’ ability to use the strategy) and aimed to find out whether inferencing enhances foreign language learning. Carton based his analysis on the cues that the learners use and he put cues into three groups:

1. Intra-lingual cues are those that are supplied by the target language.
2. Inter-lingual cues include all the possible derivations that may be made on the basis of loans between languages, the cognates and regularities of transformation from one language to another.
3. Extra-lingual cues are those which learners use to predict what is said by using what they know about the real world.

Carton’s work is significant as it recognizes the cognitive dimension of language learning, (i.e., inferencing) as the important ability in acquiring a foreign language. However, the results generally confirmed that inferencing does not enhance foreign language achievement.

In addition to Carton’s focus on a single strategy (inferencing), Taylor (1975) and Richards (1975) continued the study of single strategies by analyzing transfer,

overgeneralization and simplification. In his study, Taylor (1975) investigated the use of transfer and overgeneralization by elementary and intermediate students of ESL. According to the results of the study, elementary students made more use of the transfer strategy and overgeneralization was a more prevalent strategy among intermediate students than elementary students. Taylor (1975, p.84) explained this difference stating “As a learner’s proficiency increases he will rely less frequently on his native language and on the transfer strategy, and more frequently on what he already knows about the target language and on the overgeneralization strategy”. Richards (1975) who studied the simplification strategy defined it as “increasing the generality of rules through extending their range of application, and through dropping rules of limited applicability” (p. 116). He further commented that since simplified language varieties are used in all language communities, they are also the varieties likely to be used by those acquiring a foreign language as well.

In the 1970s a shift from single strategies to good language learners took place. In most research on language learning strategies, the primary concern was on "identifying what good language learners report they do to learn a second or foreign language, or, in some cases, are observed doing while learning a second or foreign language" (Wenden and Rubin 1987, p. 19). Rubin (1975) introduced the idea that the good language learners might be doing something different that one can learn from. She started her research by emphasizing the importance of learner strategies, as examining what strategies successful language learners employ will enable teachers to help their less successful students improve their performance by making use of learner strategies already seen as productive. She stated that “I would like to suggest that if we knew more

about what the “successful learners” did, we might be able to teach these strategies to poorer learners to enhance their success record” (p.42). In her work, she listed seven characteristics of GLLs which are as follows:

1. The good language learner is a willing and accurate guesser. The good guesser uses all the clues the setting offers and can comfortably narrow down what the meaning of the communication might be.
2. The good language learner has a strong drive to communicate, or to learn from a communication. He is willing to do many things to get his message across.
3. The good language learner is often not inhibited. He is willing to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate.
4. The good language learner is prepared to attend to form. He attends to the form in a particular way, constantly analyzing, categorizing, and synthesizing.
5. The good language learner practices. He will seek out opportunities to use the language to practice pronouncing words or making up sentences.
6. The good language learner monitors his own and the speech of others. He constantly attends to how well his speech is being received and whether his performance meets the standards he has learned.
7. The good language learner attends to meaning (pp. 45-48).

Rubin (1981) later proposed a classification scheme that groups learning strategies into two broad types: strategies that directly affect learning (clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive reasoning,

deductive reasoning, and practice) and those which contribute indirectly to learning (creating practice opportunities and using production tricks such as communication strategies).

Stern (1975) drew up a list of 10 strategies of good learners, derived from three main sources: Stern's interpretation of language competence, his experience as a teacher and learner, and his reading of the literature of language learning.

1. Planning Strategy: A personal learning style or positive learning strategy.
2. Active Strategy: An active approach to the learning task.
3. Empathic Strategy: A tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and its speakers.
4. Formal Strategy: Technical know-how of how to tackle a language.
5. Experimental Strategy: A methodical but flexible approach, developing the new language into an ordered system and constantly revising it.
6. Semantic Strategy: Constant searching for meaning.
7. Practice Strategy: Willingness to practice
8. Communication Strategy: Willingness to use the language in real communication.
9. Monitoring Strategy: Self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use.
10. Internalization Strategy: Developing L2 more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it.

In 1976, Wong-Fillmore observed five Mexican children in a longitudinal study of learning strategies in a naturalistic environment. In this study, she proposed a

different system of classification from that of Rubin (1975) or Stern (1975) by dividing learning strategies into two groups: social and cognitive strategies. She commented that social strategies were more important than cognitive ones in the context of children, as they had to be social and use social strategies in order to learn the target language and have social relationships (cited in Wenden and Rubin, 1987).

Naiman, Frohlich, Todesco and Stern (1978) also studied GLLs in the same way as Rubin had done, based on the observation. Their study set out from the fact that some learners are more successful than others. The question they aimed to find out was whether good learners tackle the language learning task differently from poor learners, and whether learners have certain characteristics which predispose them to good or poor learning. They identified five major strategies which describe the overall approach to language learning and appear to be essential to successful language acquisition.

1. Active task approach: GLLs actively involve themselves in the language learning task.
2. Realization of Language as a System: GLLs develop or exploit an awareness of language as a system in dealing with language as a system.
3. Realization of Language as a Means of Communication and Interaction: GLLs develop and exploit an awareness of language as a means of communication (i.e. conveying and receiving messages) and interaction (i.e. behaving in a culturally appropriate manner).
4. Management of Affective Demands: GLLs realize initially or with time that they must cope with the affective demands made upon them by language learning and succeed in doing so.

5. Monitoring of L2 Performance: GLLs constantly revise their L2 systems. They monitor the language they are acquiring by testing their inferences (guesses); by looking for needed adjustments as they learn new material or by asking native informants when they think corrections are needed.

The participants of their study consisted of only successful language learners although they initially aimed to interview both successful and unsuccessful students. Thus, it should not be ruled out that there is always the possibility that poor language learners also used the strategies successful learners employ but other factors contributed to their failure. They also concluded their study by stating that homogeneity of achievement levels and heterogeneity of social and educational background and professions would provide a more clearly defined sample although the study could answer the question; “What can be learned from the good language learner?” in detail.

Following Wong-Fillmore’s (1976) study, the role of conscious language learning strategy choices was also investigated within a theoretical framework by Bialystok (1981). In the study, Bialystok described learning strategies in terms of a formal dimension and a functional dimension. Thus, Bialystok classified learning strategies into two major classes: formal strategies and functional strategies, and identified four types of learning strategies: formal practice strategies, monitoring strategies, functional practice strategies and inferencing strategies. Bialystok stated that the focus of functional practicing strategies is language use. Conversely, formal practicing strategies relate to language form. Bialystok (1981) carried out a research project regarding the role of conscious strategies in contributing to second language proficiency. It was found that the use of all four strategies influenced achievement in

certain kinds of tests positively, and that the functional strategies greatly affected performance for all tasks. The strategy type that the learners use depends on the type of knowledge required for a given task. According to Bialystok, there are three types of knowledge: explicit linguistic knowledge, implicit linguistic knowledge, and general knowledge of the world. She assumed that inferencing might be used with implicit linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world. Monitoring, formal practicing (such as verbal drills in a second language class), and functional practicing (such as completing a transaction at a store) contribute to both explicit and implicit knowledge. That is to say, if strategies are implicitly introduced in a formal setting, they can contribute to implicit linguistic knowledge, activating students' ability to understand and produce spontaneous language.

In the 1980s, the interaction of cognitive psychology and language learning strategies led to a change in the extent of language learning strategies research. Particularly, developments in cognitive psychology influenced much of the research done on language learning strategies (Williams and Burden, 1997). Wenden (1982, 1986) was the first researcher who studied a new dimension; metacognitive understanding of learner strategies in the field. She added 5 areas of metacognitive knowledge:

1. the language,
2. student proficiency,
3. outcome of students' learning endeavors,
4. the student's role in the language learning process,
5. how best to approach the task of language learning

(cited in Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p.22).

Wenden (1985) aimed to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they need in order to plan and implement learning which will enable language learners to become more autonomous. According to her, learning strategies should be included in plans along with other learner training content to promote learner autonomy. She examined two kinds of strategies in detail: cognitive and self-management (referred as metacognitive) strategies as they had been shown to be used by active and successful students. In their study on LLS, Wenden and Rubin (1987) brought papers on LLS in the 1980s together, including the definitions and classifications of LLS, research methodology of LLS, LLS use and how to train learners in using strategies effectively. In this book, Wenden (1987) emphasised the importance of learner autonomy again, stating that the research on LLS and the development of learner training activities will make students more efficient at learning and using their second language and more capable of self-directing these attempts. Wenden (1991) has attached a further dimension to the process of learning by claiming that the use of LLS is operated by the knowledge of an individual to control the learning process which is called metacognitive knowledge. Thus, awareness has developed of the need to recognize the strategies used in language learning and to obtain knowledge about managing the process.

O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo and Küpper (1985) divided strategies into three groups: cognitive, metacognitive and socioaffective. They conducted a study so as to find out the range of learning strategies students were already using for specific language activities. ESL students and their teachers were interviewed to identify strategies associated with a range of tasks typically found in ESL classrooms

and in other settings. It was found that learners at all levels reported the use of a great variety of learning strategies. High-achieving students reported greater use of metacognitive strategies. They concluded that the more successful students are probably able to use greater metacognitive control over their learning.

Oxford (1990) provided a comprehensive and detailed classification of strategies; a comprehensive list of six broad strategy groups and sixty-two specific strategies. Oxford also divided her system into two main classes: Direct strategies and indirect strategies. Each class mutually supported the other. She stated that strategies are important in language learning as appropriate strategies lead to improved proficiency and greater self-confidence. More recently, Oxford (2011) thoroughly analyzed the vast amount of research in the field of LLS. She suggested practical ways to assess, teach, and research LLS charting the field in a comprehensible and organized way. She presented the Strategic Self-Regulation Model of language learning in which “learners actively and constructively use strategies to manage their own learning” (p. 7). In the Strategic Self-Regulation Model, Oxford (2011) put strategies under three major headings of L2 learning: cognitive, affective, and sociocultural-interactive. Cognitive strategies enable learners to build up, adapt, and utilize L2 knowledge. Through affective strategies, learners can create positive emotions and attitudes. Finally, sociocultural-interactive strategies help the learner with communication, sociocultural contexts and identity.

Oxford (1990) also generated the "Strategy Inventory for Language Learning" or "SILL", a questionnaire which has been used in a great deal of research over the years. The questionnaire includes six parts, respectively dealing with six major LLS categories.

These strategies are not overtly stated in the questionnaire but are embodied in 50 statements. The SILL has been widely used as an instrument to measure the frequency level of strategy use of learners (See 2.3.3 for details).

Oxford and Lee (2008) focused on the influence of strategy awareness, English-learning self-image (the students' self-rating of their English proficiency) and the importance of English in the Korean context. They found that students who thought that English was important evaluated their own proficiency as high. Also the ones who were already aware of a variety of language learning strategies employed learning strategies more frequently than those who did not. Different from the previous research and expectations, it was found that gender did not have significant main effects alone unless combined with other variables. They concluded it is good from a teaching point of view because it is not possible to change gender. Thus, if the effect size of gender is smaller, it is easier for teachers or learners to improve learning for both males and females.

Cohen (1998) divided the learner strategies into two systems which are second language (L2) learning strategies and second language use strategies. According to him, language learning strategies are used by learners consciously or semi-consciously explicitly aiming to improve their knowledge and understanding of a target language. The language learning strategies include identifying the material for learning, distinguishing it from other material, grouping it for easier learning, repeatedly engaging oneself in contact with the material, and remembering it by means of effort.

He defined second language use strategies as conscious techniques employed after L2 learning has occurred, when the material is accessible for communicative use. According to Cohen (1998), L2 use strategies include four types:

1. Retrieval strategies: for calling up information about the L2 already stored in memory,
2. Rehearsing strategies: for rehearsing target language structures
3. Cover strategies: to give the learner the sense of gaining control over their learning
4. Communication strategies: for conveying a meaningful message in the second language (pp. 6-7)

He emphasized that language use strategies can only be employed when the language material is already available whereas language learning strategies are used to improve learners' knowledge of a given language. Thus, language use strategies focus primarily on helping students apply the language that they have already learned to any degree. He also believed that some strategies for language learning and language use may appear similar, such as certain rehearsal strategies. However, other strategies are very different from each other, such as strategies for initial learning of new vocabulary versus strategies for using the new vocabulary once it has been learned well enough to recognize the words in use and perhaps to produce some or many of them (Cohen 1998).

In a recent book which offers a comprehensive overview of the research in the LLS field, Cohen (2007) designed a questionnaire to collect views of strategy experts about the issues in the field. According to the results the following themes were associated with the endeavors to define LLS:

- 1- Level of consciousness: The majority of the respondents stated that strategies must have a metacognitive component by which the learner consciously and intentionally attends to a learning task.
- 2- Extent of attention: The respondents agreed that attention depends on the strategy being used by a learner as there could be a shift in the level of attention during the strategic process.
- 3- Explicitness regarding 'action': The statement that the action component in a given learning situation needs to be explicit created a range of opinions from the respondents. Cohen summarized different ideas stating the conceptualization of a strategy as being a behavior may change according to the given learner.
- 4- Degree of goal orientation: The majority of the respondents thought that any given strategy can be placed on a continuum from more to less goal-oriented.
- 5- Strategy size: While most of the respondents did not make a distinction between macro- and micro-strategies, some believed that there could be advantages of doing so.
- 6- Amount of strategy clustering: A strong agreement was found with the statement that for a strategy to be effective in improving learning, it has to be combined with other strategies in strategy clusters at the same time or in sequence in strategy chains.
- 7- Potential for leading to learn: The majority agreed that included in a description of a strategy would be its potential for leading to learning. Several felt that it is important to specify relations between a certain strategy and its consequences in learning (pp.32-36).

This questionnaire and its findings have an important place in the field of LLS as it is the first of its kind and it produced a number of insights. On the whole, while there was consensus that strategies improve performance in language learning and use, many agreed that strategy use and effectiveness will depend on the learner, learning task and environment.

Griffiths (2003b) conducted a study so as to investigate the relationship between course level and reported frequency of language learning strategy use by speakers of other languages and to search for patterns of strategy use according to course level and according to other learner variables such as sex, age and nationality. According to results, higher level students used a large number of language learning strategies highly frequently. No statistically significant differences were found according to either sex or age. Statistically significant differences were found, however, according to nationality. European students reported using language learning strategies significantly more frequently than other students. Griffiths (2003b) commented that it would be worth exploring the Europeans' language learning strategy patterns for any insights into effective strategy use.

Griffiths (2008) drew attention to the importance of constructing an operational definition of language learning strategy and 30 years of controversy about it. She aimed to provide a definition of language learning strategy, which some scholars call “virtually impossible” and touched on six essential features by bringing the 30 years of debate together:

1. Language learning strategies are what students do (Rubin, 1975), suggesting an active approach. The term activities instead of actions (Oxford, 1990, p.8), can be used to include both physical and mental behaviour.
2. Consciousness is argued by many to be a basic characteristic of language learning strategies.
3. It would seem self-evident that strategies are chosen by learners, since learners who unthinkingly accept activities imposed by others can hardly be considered strategic given the emphasis on active involvement in the learning process by writers such as Oxford (1990).
4. In language learning strategies, the purpose is to learn language.
5. Learners use language learning strategies to regulate or control their own learning.
6. The goal of language learning strategies is the facilitation of learning (p.85-87).

These features lead to a clear and comprehensive definition of language learning strategies: “activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning” (p. 87). Griffiths conducted a study on students’ language learning strategy use with the students at two different levels: lower and upper level. According to the results, higher level students reported more frequent use of a larger number of language learning strategies than do lower level students, which suggests a generally positive relationship between the higher level language learner and language learning strategy use. These findings support the results of O’Malley et al. (1985) as they also found that intermediate level students use more strategies compared to beginning level students and linked proficiency level to strategy use. Griffiths (2008)

summarized the particular behaviors of the good language learners according to the results of the study as follows:

Higher level learners frequently use a large number of language learning strategies, or activities consciously chosen for the purpose of regulating their own language learning, especially

- strategies to manage their own learning (metacognitive)
- strategies to expand their vocabulary
- strategies to improve their knowledge of grammar
- strategies involving the use of resources (such as TV or movies)
- strategies involving all language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking)

(p.92)

Griffiths (2008) also accepted that lower level students should not be labeled “bad” because they reported less frequent use of language learning strategies. She states there might be other factors that cause them to be in a lower level class.

2.3 Definition of Language Learning Strategies

The issue of strategies has been the subject matter of many studies and there have been definitions of language learning strategies stated so far by many authors dealing with this issue. However, no consensus on the definition of language learning strategies has been reached. Ellis (1994) underlined this difficulty with his description of LLS as “a somewhat fuzzy one” and “not easy to tie down” (Ellis, 1994, p. 529).

Rubin (1975) first defined learner strategies by stating: “By strategies, I mean the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge (p.43). Language

learning strategies were then defined by Bialystok (1978) as “optimal means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language” (p.71). Tarone (1983) further improved this definition by stating a language learning strategy is “an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language” (p.67). Stern (1983) defined LLS as “general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner, leaving learning techniques as the term to refer to particular forms of observable learning behavior, more or less consciously employed by the learner” (p.405). Later Green and Oxford (1995) defined language learning strategies stating; “Language learning strategies are specific actions or techniques that students use, often intentionally, to improve their progress in developing L2 skills” (p. 262). According to Weinstein and Mayer (1986), learning strategies are the attitudes and ideas that a learner employs while learning and they are aimed to affect the learners’ encoding process.

Rubin later (1987) redefined learning strategies by stating: “Learning strategies are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly” (p.23). According to Chamot (1987), “Learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning, recall of both linguistic and content area information”(p. 71).

Oxford, the author of many publications and articles concerning this issue, defines language learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations”(1990, p.8). Furthermore, Oxford (1990) spread her

definition by listing key features of language learning strategies, among others she emphasized features such as communicative competence, developing of learners' self-directions and expanding the role of teachers. In her most recent book, Oxford (2011) redefined L2 learning strategies within the Strategic Self-Regulation Model as "deliberate, goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to learn the L2" (p.12).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) provided a similar definition to Oxford's: language learning strategies are "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p.1). According to Wenden (1991) learning strategies are "mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so" (Wenden, 1991, p.18). According to Ellis (1994, p.533), strategies are "production sets that exist as declarative knowledge and are used to solve some learning problems". He then redefined language learning strategies as "Learning strategies are the particular approaches or techniques that learners employ to try to learn an L2" (1997, pp.76-77).

Cohen (1990) defined strategies as "learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner" (cited from Cohen 1998, p. 4). Then, Cohen (1998) made additions to his earlier definition of learning strategies and stated that "language learning strategies can be defined as those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language" (p.4). According to Cohen (1998), the element of consciousness is important as it is what distinguishes strategies from those processes that are not strategic. In a book which brought thirty years of research on LLSs together, Cohen (2007) agrees with

Oxford's definition and adds that the purpose of language learner strategies is to enhance learning, to perform specific tasks, to solve specific problems, to make learning easier, faster, and more enjoyable and to compensate for a deficit in learning (pp.38-39). In his most recent work, Cohen (2011) redefined the term as "thoughts and actions, consciously selected by learners, to assist them in learning and using language in general, and in the completion of specific language tasks (p. 682).

After analyzing the 30 years of debate over the definition of LLS, Griffiths (2008) suggested a definition of language learning strategies as "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning" (p.87).

Even if defining language learning strategies is not a simple matter and their definitions differ, they all concur on one thing, namely that language learning strategies help learners make their language learning easier and acquire language more effectively.

2.4 Classification and Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies have been classified by many scholars (O'Malley et al. 1985; Oxford 1990; Stern 1992; Wenden and Rubin 1987, etc.). However, most of these attempts to classify language learning strategies reflect more or less the same categorizations of language learning strategies without any radical changes.

2.4.1 Rubin's (1987) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Rubin, who laid the groundwork in the field of strategies, makes the distinction between strategies contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to

learning. According to Rubin, there are three types of strategies used by learners that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning. These are:

- 1) Learning Strategies
- 2) Communication Strategies
- 3) Social Strategies

1) Learning Strategies

They are of two main types, being the strategies contributing directly to the development of the language system constructed by the learner:

- a) Cognitive Learning Strategies
- b) Metacognitive Learning Strategies

a) Cognitive Learning Strategies

They refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem-solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Rubin identified 6 main cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning:

- i. Clarification / Verification: These are the strategies learners use to verify or clarify their understanding on the new language in the process of learning it.
- ii. Guessing / Inductive Inferencing: These strategies use previously obtained linguistic or conceptual knowledge to derive explicit hypotheses about the linguistic form, semantic meaning or speaker's intention.

- iii. Deductive Reasoning: This is a problem-solving strategy in which the learner looks for and uses general rules in understanding the new language. In deductive reasoning the learner is looking for and using more general rules whereas in inductive reasoning the learner is looking for a specific meaning or rule.
- iv. Practice: This involves strategies such as; repetition, rehearsal, experimentation, application of rules, imitation, and attention to detail which all contribute to the storage and retrieval of language with a focus on accuracy of usage.
- v. Memorization: These strategies also focus on the storage and retrieval of language, but here, the focus is on the storage and retrieval process. The goal of memorization strategies is organization.
- vi. Monitoring: These are the strategies in which the learner notices errors, observes how a message is received and then decides what to do about it (pp.23-25).

b) Metacognitive Learning Strategies

These strategies are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning. According to Wenden (1982, 1986, cited in Rubin, 1987) learners manage their learning by planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning activities. Four planning strategies have been identified that students use:

- i. Choosing: Students assess their needs and preferences and choose they want to learn and how they should learn a language
- ii. Prioritizing: Students prioritize the aspects of language they want to learn
- iii. Setting goals: By choosing and prioritizing students set their own learning goals

- iv. Planning: Students plan what their learning strategies should be and change them if they are not successful (p.25).

2) Communication Strategies

They are less directly related to language learning since their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended. Communication strategies are used by speakers when faced with some difficulty due to the fact that their communication ends outrun their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by a co-speaker.

3) Social Strategies

Social strategies are those activities learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge. Although these strategies provide exposure to the target language, they contribute indirectly to learning since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language (Rubin and Wenden 1987, p.23-27).

2.4.2 O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) started a longitudinal study of learning strategies used by foreign language learners for different language tasks. They elicited information from students accounts of their cognitive processes as they engaged in a variety of language tasks during the think-aloud sessions. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) proposed a more detailed schema by dividing LLS found in their previous studies into three major categories (pp.137-139):

- 1) Metacognitive strategies which involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating one's own performance
- 2) Cognitive strategies which involve interacting with the material to be learned, manipulating the material mentally or physically, or applying a specific technique to a learning task
- 3) Social and affective strategies which involve interacting with another person to assist learning or using affective control to assist a learning task.

LEARNER STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
1) METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	
Planning	Previewing the organization of a learning task, proposing strategies for handling and upcoming task
Directed attention	Deciding in advance to attend to a learning task
Selective attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of a learning task
Self-management	Understanding and arranging the conditions enabling one to learn
Self-monitoring	Checking, verifying, and correcting one's performance/comprehension
Problem identification	Explicitly identifying the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task
Self-evaluation	Checking outcomes of one's own performance
2) COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	
Repetition	Repeating a word or phrase while performing a language task
Resourcing	Using reference sources about the target language
Groupings	Ordering, classifying, or labeling materials used in a task
Note taking	Writing down key words in abbreviated form
Deduction/Induction	Consciously using rules to produce or understand the language
Substitution	Selecting alternative approaches to accomplish a task

Elaboration	Relating new information to prior knowledge
Summarization	Summarizing information mentally or by writing
Translation	Rendering ideas from one language to another
Transfer	Using previously acquired linguistic knowledge to accomplish a task
Inferencing	Using information to guess the meanings or usages of language items
3) SOCIAL AND AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	
Questioning for clarification	Asking for clarification, explanation, or verification about the task or material, asking questions to the self
Cooperation	Working together with peers to solve a problem
Self-talk	Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques
Self-reinforcement	Providing personal motivation when a task has been accomplished

2.4.3 Oxford's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990, p.8) sees the aim of language learning strategies as being oriented towards the broad goal of communicative competence. She supports the view that the development of communicative competence is encouraged through the operation of strategies. Oxford divides language learning strategies into two main classes, direct and indirect, which are further subdivided into 6 groups. In Oxford's categorization system, metacognitive strategies help learners to regulate their learning, and to assess their progress as they move toward communicative competence. Affective strategies help learners develop self-confidence and perseverance, which are needed to actively participate in language learning, while social strategies bring about increased interaction and more empathetic understanding. Cognitive strategies are the mental strategies learners use to comprehend new information, memory strategies are those used for storage of information, and compensation strategies help learners to overcome

knowledge gaps to continue the communication. Oxford's (1990, p.17) taxonomy of language learning strategies is shown in the following:

1) DIRECT STRATEGIES

a) Memory strategies

- i. Creating mental linkages
- ii. Applying images and sounds
- iii. Reviewing well
- iv. Employing action

b) Cognitive strategies

- i. Practising
- ii. Receiving and sending messages strategies
- iii. Analysing and reasoning
- iv. Creating structure for input and output

c) Compensation strategies

- i. Guessing intelligently
- ii. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

2) INDIRECT STRATEGIES

a) Metacognitive Strategies

- i. Centering your learning
- ii. Arranging and planning your learning
- iii. Evaluating your learning

b) Affective Strategies

- i. Lowering your anxiety
 - ii. Encouraging yourself
 - iii. Taking your emotional temperature
- c) Social Strategies
- i. Asking questions
 - ii. Cooperating with others
 - iii. Empathizing with others

It can be seen that much of the recent work in this area has been underpinned by a broad concept of language learning strategies that goes beyond cognitive processes to include social and communicative strategies. Oxford's system also organizes well-known metacognitive, cognitive, and memory strategies while uniting the whole range of compensation strategies.

Based on her classification system, Oxford introduced different versions of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to investigate learners' language learning strategies. There are two versions of the SILL that are popular as widely used learning strategy questionnaires. One is for foreign language learners whose native language is English (version 5.1, 80 items), and the other one is for EFL/ ESL learners (version 7.0, 50 items). The SILL is a structured survey which according to Nyikos and Oxford (1989) includes the strategies which are gathered from extensive literature reviews. The SILL has been used in various studies to show how much strategy use correlates with various variables such as gender, learning style, proficiency level, task, and culture (Çavuşoğlu, 1992; Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003b; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). The fact that SILL has been used in many studies

enables the researchers to compare the results of their studies with the results which were found by other related studies in the literature. Making suggestion of pedagogical implications thus, becomes more useful when such results can support each other (Fazeli, 2012).

2.4.4 Stern's (1992) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Stern (1992, p. 262-266) divided language learning strategies into 5 main groups. These are as follows:

1) Management and Planning Strategies

These strategies are concerned with the learner's intention to direct his/her own learning. Learners can take charge of the development of their own programme when they are helped by a teacher who has the role of an adviser and resource person. That means that the learner must:

- decide what commitment to make to language learning
- set reasonable goals
- decide on an appropriate methodology, select appropriate resources, and monitor progress,
- evaluate achievement in the light of previously determined goals and expectations (p.263).

2) Cognitive Strategies

These are the techniques or operations that learners employ in the deliberate study and practice of the second language. In the following, some of the cognitive strategies are exhibited (pp.263-264):

- a) Clarification / Verification
- b) Guessing / Inductive Inferencing
- c) Deductive Reasoning
- d) Practice
- e) Memorization
- f) Monitoring

3) Communicative - Experiential Strategies

According to Stern (1992) learning cannot be accomplished solely through formal study stating that a learner must look for opportunities to use the language in real-life situations. Communication strategies, such as circumlocution, gesturing, paraphrase, or asking for repetition and explanation are techniques used by learners so as to keep a conversation going. The purpose of using these techniques is to avoid interrupting the flow of communication, not to learn specific point of language.

4) Interpersonal Strategies

Language learning could sometimes pose problems and a learner tries to overcome these problems by employing interpersonal strategies. At the beginning of the learning process, learners may be dependent on help. Eventually, they cut themselves loose from

the constant need for help, monitor their own development and evaluate their own performance. Learners should also make contact with native speakers and cooperate with them in order to become acquainted with the target culture (pp.265-266).

5) Affective Strategies

Language learning involves affect and learning can be accomplished when favorable affective conditions are provided. It is evident that good language learners employ distinct affective strategies; that is, they try to create favorable conditions and deal with problems of negative affect. Language learning can be frustrating in some cases. In some cases, the feeling of strangeness can be evoked by the foreign language. In some other cases, L2 learners may have negative feelings about native speakers of L2. Good language learners are more or less conscious of these emotional problems. Good language learners attempt to eradicate these problems by creating associations of positive affect towards the foreign language and its speakers as well as towards the learning activities involved. Learning training can help students to face up to the emotional difficulties and to overcome them by drawing attention to the potential frustrations or pointing them out as they arise (Stern 1992, p.266).

2.5 Research Studies Conducted on Interrelation of Language Learning Strategies and Success in the Target Language

Various research studies have been done about language learning strategies in relation to proficiency in the target language by second language acquisition scholars. Below some significant ones will be mentioned due to their close relationship with the current study.

2.5.1 Strategy Use and English Proficiency

Since numerous studies about L2 learning strategies have focused on the distinction between good and poor learners, there are many studies about the relationship between strategy use and L2 proficiency. Most researchers have agreed that more proficient learners employ a wider range of strategies more efficiently than less proficient learners (Dreyer and Oxford, 1996; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003b; Lan & Oxford, 2003; O'Malley et al., 1985; Politzer and McGroarty, 1985).

O'Malley et al. (1985) linked proficiency level to strategy use and found that stronger students reported that they use more metacognitive strategies. It was also found that learners from different levels reported the use of a great number of learning strategies. The researchers concluded that more successful students are probably able to use greater metacognitive control over their learning.

Politzer and McGroarty (1985) conducted a similar study exploring the relationship between the proficiency level of adult ESL learners (classified according to the students' cultural background, i.e. Asian versus Hispanic) and their use of learning strategies. However, it was found that while the Asian subjects reported using fewer strategies than the Hispanics, they tended to make greater gains in linguistic competence and communicative competence. On the other hand, the Hispanic students made more progress in overall oral proficiency and in auditory comprehension. They concluded that one should be careful about claiming that a learning behaviour is a cause of proficiency

in a second language because various behaviours are helpful for learners at various levels in different cultures.

Nevertheless, studies usually showed a positive correlation between strategy use and success in the target language although there have been some differences in the findings. According to Green and Oxford (1995), more successful students used strategies for active involvement more frequently than did less successful learners in a study of learners of English in Puerto Rico. Similarly, Dreyer & Oxford (1996) found that strategy use was significantly correlated with English proficiency scores of university students learning English as a second language (ESL) in South Africa ($r=.73$, $p<.0001$). Ehrman and Oxford (1995) indicated that successful students preferred to use cognitive strategies more frequently in their study. Green and Oxford (1995) discovered that high-achieving students used all kinds of language learning strategies more frequently than low-achieving students. Griffiths (2003b) also found a statistically significant relationship between reported frequency of overall language learning strategy use and level of proficiency. As Griffiths (2003a) suggested: "These mixed findings suggest that factors such as situation, context, sample and individual styles may be important moderating variables" (p.369).

Contrary to the trend of studying successful learners and their use of language learning strategies, Vann and Abraham (1990) conducted a study on two unsuccessful language learners to discover reasons for their lack of success in completing an academic program. It was found that although their unsuccessful students appeared to be active strategy users, they "failed to apply strategies appropriately to the task at hand" (p.191). Porte (1988) also explored the strategy use of poor language learners for dealing

with new vocabulary. Similarly, the under-achieving EFL learners who took part in the study were found to be using vocabulary strategies which were very similar to those used by good language learners. They commented that it is possible that many apparently poor learners do not need solely to copy their more successful counterparts to improve, which contradicts GLLs studies that suggest that teachers and poor learners can learn from successful ones. They concluded that such learners can be better served if teachers can identify and nurture their own current repertoire of learning strategies.

2.5.2 Language Learning Strategies Studies Conducted in Turkey

Language learning strategies have been studied with different focuses by scholars in Turkey. These studies mainly focused on the relation between the use of LLS and certain language skills, such as reading, vocabulary or grammar; or on the effects of LLS use on EFL Proficiency. The impact of some variables such as age, gender, major, and proficiency level on LLS use was also explored by some scholars.

One of the first studies that concentrated on the relationship between LLS use and EFL proficiency was carried out by Çavuşoğlu (1992). In her study, she investigated the relationship between the use of LLS and EFL proficiency in terms of two levels; upper-intermediate and advanced. The study aimed to find out whether there was a difference in terms of the number and frequency of LLS use between subjects at two different levels and if there was a direct relationship between the use of LLS and EFL proficiency. Like most of the LLS studies, this study also made use of the SILL questionnaire in order to find out the LLS use of the participating students. The results showed that the advanced level students reported more frequent use of LLS and with a

greater variety than upper-intermediate level students. However, it was also found there was no significant relationship between the reported LLS use and EFL proficiency of the subjects. Thus it was concluded that the relationship between the use of LLS and EFL proficiency was not a direct one and that cultural and personal characteristics of the participants in the foreign language learning process should also be considered and studied qualitatively in order to reach more reliable results.

Following Çavuşoğlu's study, more research was conducted on strategy use and EFL proficiency in Turkey (Aslan, 2009; Cesur, 2008; Demirel, 2012; Yalçın, 2006). In his study, Cesur (2008) explored the relationship between university prep class students' language learning strategies, and language academic success. The results demonstrated that the Turkish university preparatory students use compensation strategies and then metacognitive strategies most frequently, followed by memory, cognitive, social and affective strategies. It was also found that females used strategies significantly more than males.

Aslan (2009) investigated the link between strategy use and success levels, the difference in strategy use between genders and its influence on their achievement in English. According to the findings of the study, the use of language learning strategies were positively related to success in English, females were significantly more successful than males in terms of achievement tests and they used more language learning strategies in learning English. According to the statistical results, it was concluded that there is a significant connection between gender, language learning strategies and achievement in English.

Demirel (2012) aimed to determine the language learning strategies used by university students and to investigate whether their use of learning strategies creates any difference in terms of gender and academic achievement. According to the findings in this survey, the university students have a medium level of language learning strategies (average=3.07) and they used compensation most and memory strategies least. When compared to the males, the females use language learning strategies more and as the level of the use of language strategies increase, the achievements of the students increase as well.

Unlike these studies, which suggest there is a positive correlation between strategy use and proficiency, there is also some other research which presents opposite result. Yalçın (2006) investigated the use of grammar learning strategies of the students in Preparatory School at the University of Gaziantep. The relationship between students' choice of learning strategies in grammar and foreign language achievement was then investigated in the study. It was found that both successful students and unsuccessful students use grammar learning strategies nearly in equal amount. Yalçın (2006) concluded that this result showed there is not a strong relationship between use of grammar learning strategies and students' achievement.

There were also other studies which focused merely on the perception of learners about LLS use. Karatay (2006) conducted a study so as to find the language learning strategies that are most frequently used by adult Turkish students. Three strategies which are a) I try to find out how to be a better learner of English b) If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again and c) I pay

attention when someone is speaking English were found to be the most frequently used by the adult Turkish students within the scope of the study.

Algan (2006) explored LLS employed by adult Turkish university preparation class students and their instructors' awareness of the strategy use of these learners. It was found that all the six universities which participated in the study had average scores of strategy use which indicated a "medium" level of (between 2.5 and 3.4) usage. Almost all students reported using compensation and metacognitive strategies more than memory and affective strategies. The results also revealed that the level of awareness of the participating English language instructors on the usage of LLS by their EFL students was low, since the general awareness of the teachers on the topic of LLS was not high.

Şen (2009) aimed to find out not only students' but also teachers' perceptions of language learning strategies. According to the results of the study, for most of the items in the strategy inventory, if the teachers are aware of learning strategies, if they believe in the effectiveness of LLSs instruction and find them easy to apply in the classroom, they may use them more often in their classes. When the teachers' and students' frequency of LLSs use was compared, it was found that teachers reported a higher frequency of LLSs use than their learners. However, there was a great similarity between the two parties in terms of frequency of strategy use in the most and least preferred strategy categories.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the overall design of the study. Research design, research questions, hypotheses, the setting, participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures in this study are explained in this part of the paper.

3.2 Research Design

This study aims to examine the use of language learning strategies of preparatory school students at Istanbul Technical University with relation to proficiency exam results. Following a descriptive design, the study was mainly based on quantitative data. However, qualitative data obtained from interviews was also used to triangulate and provide support for the questionnaire findings. Triangulation was suggested to be “one of the ways that researchers ensure that the story they relate is valid” (Flood, Lapp, Squire and Jensen, 2005, p. 127). Thus, triangulation was chosen in order to be able to ensure greater reliability of the results.

The research was carried out with Turkish EFL university students from Istanbul Technical University. The research instruments included a questionnaire and a proficiency test as quantitative data sources and interviews as the qualitative data source. Combined use of quantitative and qualitative data analysis contributed to the validity and the reliability of the results and conclusions in the study.

3.3 Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in the present study:

- a) What language learning strategies do the students at the School of Foreign Languages of Istanbul Technical University utilize, and how often do they use them?
- b) How does language learning strategy use relate to achievement on the course?

3.4 Hypotheses

It was expected there would a positive correlation between overall LLS use and achievement in English. It was also expected that some strategies would be more strongly related to achievement than others.

3.5 Terms and Concepts

In the present study the term strategy refers to the 28 activities that students utilize in the adapted version of the ELLSI in order to reach a certain degree of proficiency in English and pass the proficiency exam conducted at the end of the preparatory school at Istanbul Technical University.

3.6 Setting

The study was conducted at Istanbul Technical University (ITU), Turkey. ITU is an English medium university. Students are required to take either 30% or 100 % of overall courses in English, depending on their major. The preparatory program at Istanbul Technical University consists of four English proficiency levels: A - Upper-

Intermediate; B - Intermediate; C - Pre-intermediate; and D - Elementary. Students are placed in one of these levels according to the scores they get in the Placement Test which is given at the beginning of the academic year. Students are also provided the opportunity to change their level by means of a Level Change Quiz at the beginning of the Fall Term. A-level students have 20 hours, B-level and C-level students have 22 hours and D-level students have 26 hours per week. Students are required to attend a minimum of 85% of the lessons of each term.

During the year students take 4 integrative quizzes, 4 cumulative exams, a mid-year and an end-of-year exam. Also students' performance grade for Writing, Speaking, Listening and Note-Taking exams is taken into consideration. Students with an average grade of 60% are entitled to take the Proficiency Exam which consists of four main sections: language use, reading, listening and writing. Students who score a passing mark of 60% or more on the Proficiency Exam are able to begin their degree program.

A-level and B-level students can complete the preparatory program in one semester. A-level students who get an average grade of 60 and B-level students who get an average grade of 70 in the fall term and have not exceeded the limit of absenteeism can take the proficiency exam at the end of the fall semester. According to the result of this exam, students with a score of 60 and above are allowed to attend courses in their faculties. Students with a score of 59 and below continue to attend courses in the preparatory program in the spring term together with B-level students. For that reason, there are three levels: B, C and D in the second term.

3.7 Participants

The participants of the study were 170 preparatory school students at Istanbul Technical University. Participants are from different English proficiency levels. 90 of the participants (52.9 %) are at intermediate, 38 of them (22.4%) are at pre-intermediate and 42 of them (24.7%) are at elementary level. There were 105 male participants (61.8%) and 65 (38.2%) female participants.

Table 3.1: Distribution of participating students according to level and gender

Level	N	%	Gender	N	%
Elementary	42	24.7	Male	105	61.8
Pre-intermediate	38	22.4	Female	65	38.2
Intermediate	90	52.9			
Total	170	100	Total	170	100

The samples were drawn from the population by relying on a convenience sampling technique as it is fast, inexpensive, and easy and the subjects are readily available. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) supported the use of convenience sampling by stating:

Researchers often need to select a convenience sample or face the possibility that they will be unable to do the study. Although a sample randomly drawn from a population is more desirable, it usually is better to do a study with a convenience sample than to do no study at all -- assuming, of course, that the sample suits the purpose of the study (p. 228).

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

The instruments used in this study included an adaptation version of a LLS questionnaire called the English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI - Griffiths 2003b, 2008) and an email interview schedule (See Appendix A and C).

3.8.1 English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI)

Data was collected using a questionnaire with a Likert scale in the native language of the participants (i.e. Turkish) to provide quantitative data (see Appendix B). The questionnaire method was chosen as it is a commonly used method for collecting information, provides structured data and is comparatively easy to analyze (Frazer and Lawley, 2000).

The questionnaire used was an adapted version of the English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (Griffiths, 2003b). The ELLSI is a language learning strategy questionnaire using student input and constructed in a real teaching/learning situation for the assessment of language learning strategies used by ESL learners. The original questionnaire was changed slightly by removing four items since they applied to a target language environment. A total of 28 statements comprised the ELLSI questionnaire where students were asked to indicate frequency with which they use the strategy items on a 5-point scale from 1= *Never or almost never true of me* to 5= *Always or almost always true of me*.

Some of the items in the ELLSI are presented in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Sample strategy items from the ELLSI

Strategy Items	Rating	Comments
1) I do homework regularly and on time.		
2) I learn from the teacher.		
3) I read books in English for pleasure.		

3.8.2 Email Interviews

Email interviews with students who got the highest scores in the proficiency exam were used so as to collect qualitative data. Email interviews were used so as to collect qualitative data, as it was convenient and fast. Opdenakker (2006) stated that, due to asynchronous nature, one of the advantages of e-mail interviewing is the extended access to participants, compared to face-to-face interviews. He further defended the use of e-mail interviews by saying e-mail interviewing has another benefit that the interviewer can formulate the questions, and the interviewee can answer the questions at his or her own convenience without noise disturbance due to independence of place and time. In addition, the interviewee has more time to reflect on the questions which will increase the reliability of the results.

The interview was semi-structured as questions were constructed according to the responses to the questionnaire. Students were initially asked about the strategies they used most, what they found most difficult about learning English and what strategies they use to overcome it. Students' responses to the questionnaire were also used to form the interview questions about the strategies they reported they used most and least in the questionnaire. The interview questions were designed to encourage students to give examples and justify their responses by giving personal experience. The questions were

written both in English and Turkish and students were given the choice to answer them in either language to ensure that they could express themselves best.

Some questions from email interviews were listed below. These questions were constructed in order to understand why students use certain strategies a lot, what benefits these strategies provide for students and why they use some strategies least.

- 1- You gave the highest rating to the strategy: “I watch TV in English.” Can you explain why you always or almost always use this strategy? In what ways this strategy is effective in your English learning progress? What channels and programmes do you prefer to watch?
- 2- Can you explain why you always or almost always use the strategy: “I write letters/emails in English”? How often and in what situations do you write letters/emails? How do you think this strategy affect your achievement in English?
- 3- You gave the lowest rating to the strategy: “I write a diary in English”. Can you explain why you use it least?

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The required data for the present study was mainly collected by means of the responses given to the questions and statements of the questionnaire (See Appendix A) prepared for this study. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher at Istanbul Technical University School of Foreign Languages. Before administering the questionnaire, consent was obtained from the Director. Also a pilot questionnaire

including 47 participants was applied before administering the questionnaire. The alpha co-efficient for reliability of the pilot questionnaire was .83.

The real questionnaire was conducted in April and May 2012 in individual classes. Students were told that there were no right or wrong answers to all the items in the questionnaire and they should answer it according to their true situation. The students were given about 20 minutes to finish the questionnaire in class.

For the email interviews, among 170 students, 12 of the most successful students according to the result of the proficiency exam were selected to be interviewed. (Students whose marks were above 80 were considered to be within the most successful group). The email interviews were conducted after the results of the proficiency exam were announced.

Students were sent an e-mail which kindly asked them to participate in the interview by answering the questions designed according to their responses to the questionnaire. Students were told that they were chosen for the questionnaire as they were in the group of students who successfully passed the exam. 10 of the students participated in the interview by replying to the email.

3.10 Data Analysis

The questionnaire data was entered to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 16) and analyzed for reliability and means and then correlated with the results of the proficiency test using Spearman correlation for non-parametric data). Ratings were also correlated with biographical data sex.

After an email response was received from 10 students, their answers were analysed through pattern-coding with the aim of gaining useful insights into strategy use and they were summarised in Results, Chapter 4. Pattern-coding was suggested as a useful data analysis procedure by (Flood et al., p.53) stating “patterns lead to the formulation of ideas which are valuable because they explain and enlighten the evidence”. The students’ comments were later used in order to compare quantitative data with students’ qualitative statements.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this research both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to gather data. So as to collect quantitative data, a total of 170 participating students were given an adapted version of the ELLSI (English Language Learning Strategy Inventory - Griffiths, 2003b). A total of 28 statements comprised the ELLSI questionnaire, where students gave each statement a point from 1 to 5. 1 point meant “*Never or almost never true of me*” while 5 points meant “*Always or almost always true of me*”. These data were entered onto SPSS and analysed for reliability, for mean frequencies and for statistical correlations.

For the qualitative data, students who got the highest scores in the proficiency exam were asked to do an email interview. Questions were asked according to their responses to the questionnaire.

4.2 Quantitative Results

The quantitative analysis involved several statistical procedures, including alpha reliability, descriptive statistics, and a Spearman correlation analysis. The results of the statistical analyses of the data are presented as follows.

The alpha co-efficient for reliability of the instrument across all students was .82. In Griffiths' (2003b) study, the alpha co-efficient reliability of the ELLSI was measured .87.

The students who participated in this study (N=170) reported an average frequency of strategy use over all ELLSI items of 2.9, ranging from 1.2 to 4.2.

The results showed that Items 11, 25 and 27 were the most frequently used strategies with a rate of 4.2. Also, these three strategies were the only strategies that fall into the rating of "*Usually true of me*". Items 5, 2, 22, 21, 18, 13, 4, 1, 15, 20, and 14 were used with a "*Somewhat true of me*" rating. Items 9, 17, 16, 3, 6, 23, 26, 24, 19, and 8 were under the rating "*Seldom true of me*". Finally, Items 27, 10, 12, and 28 fall into the "*Never or almost never true of me*" category (See Table 4.1).

The frequency of strategy use was reported using Oxford's (1990) key to understanding mean scores on the SILL which also uses the 5-point Likert scale. According to Oxford's frequency table (Oxford 1990, p. 300) the average scores which fall in the range of 3.5-5.0 are defined as high frequency, averages between 2.5 and 3.4 are medium frequency, and averages in the 1.0-2.4 range are low frequency.

There were 6 strategies in total which were used at a high rate of frequency (average=3.5 or above). These strategies were shaded for emphasis in Table 4.1.

4.2.1 LLS Use of Students

Table 4.1: Average reported frequency of language learning strategy use for all students with standard deviation and the number of students giving ratings for each items with percentages.

Strategies	Mean	Std.	1		2		3		4		5	
	(\bar{x})	(σ)	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11. I use a dictionary to check the meanings of words.	4.2	0.8	2	1.2	3	1.8	18	10.6	81	47.6	66	38.8
25. I watch movies in English.	4.2	1.0	2	1.2	11	6.5	25	14.7	49	28.8	83	48.8
7. I listen to songs in English.	4.2	1.1	5	2.9	9	5.3	30	17.6	37	21.8	89	52.4
5. I watch TV in English.	3.7	1.2	12	7.1	14	8.2	39	22.9	55	32.4	50	29.4
2. I learn from the teacher.	3.6	0.9	7	4.1	11	6.5	47	27.6	82	48.2	23	13.5
22. I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing and learn from them.	3.5	0.9	3	1.8	16	9.4	68	40.0	66	38.8	17	10.0
21. I listen to native speakers of English.	3.4	1.1	10	5.9	27	15.9	43	25.3	58	34.1	32	18.8
18. I don't worry about making mistakes when learning.	3.4	1.2	15	8.8	20	11.8	45	26.5	58	34.1	32	18.8
13. I study English grammar.	3.4	1.0	6	3.5	21	12.4	66	38.8	55	32.4	22	12.9
4. I use a computer program to learn or practice English.	3.3	1.2	14	8.2	31	18.2	52	30.6	38	22.4	35	20.6
1. I do homework regularly and on time.	3.2	1.0	14	8.2	26	15.3	49	28.8	68	40	13	7.6
15. I make use of a notebook.	3.2	1.5	29	17.1	34	20	26	15.3	34	20	47	27.6
20. I try to think in English.	3.0	1.1	18	10.6	35	20.6	56	32.9	47	27.6	14	8.2
14. I try different techniques to learn new vocabulary.	3.0	1.1	16	9.4	43	25.3	56	32.9	40	23.5	15	8.8
9. I listen to music while studying.	2.9	1.4	34	20	34	20.0	49	28.8	23	13.5	30	17.6

17. I manage my time so that English study is done.	2.8	1.0	18	10.6	47	27.6	63	37.1	34	20.0	8	4.7
16. I talk to native speakers of English.	2.5	1.1	30	17.6	56	32.9	60	35.3	14	8.2	10	5.9
3. I read books in English for pleasure.	2.5	1.0	37	21.8	43	25.3	67	39.4	20	11.8	3	1.8
6. I revise what I have learnt in class regularly.	2.4	1.0	33	19.4	53	31.2	64	37.6	18	10.6	2	1.2
23. I spend a lot of time studying English.	2.4	0.9	32	18.8	63	37.1	56	32.9	17	10.0	2	1.2
26. I learn about the culture of English speakers.	2.4	1.2	50	29.4	47	27.6	42	24.7	24	14.1	7	4.1
24. I make friends with native speakers.	2.3	1.2	54	31.8	46	27.1	46	27.1	12	7.1	12	7.1
19. I use a self-study center to study English.	2.1	1.2	80	47.1	34	20.0	30	17.6	20	11.8	6	3.5
8. I write letters/e-mails in English.	2.0	1.1	70	41.2	51	30.0	34	20.0	9	5.3	6	3.5
27. I listen to the radio in English.	1.8	1.1	99	58.2	30	17.6	20	11.8	14	8.2	7	4.1
10. I talk to other students in English whenever I can.	1.8	0.8	65	38.2	81	47.6	19	11.2	4	2.4	1	.6
12. I read newspapers in English whenever I can get them.	1.7	0.9	90	52.9	50	29.4	23	13.5	3	1.8	4	2.4
28. I write a diary in English.	1.2	0.7	156	91.8	6	3.5	1	.6	4	2.4	3	1.8
Overall average reported frequency of strategy use	2.9	0.4										

4.2.2 LLS Use and Proficiency Level

When grouped according to the proficiency levels the students were at, there were 42 (24.7%) elementary, 38 (22.4%) pre-intermediate, and 90 (52.9 %) intermediate students when the questionnaire was conducted. Table 4.2 shows that there is no significant correlation between LLS use and students' proficiency level. It also shows that the three groups used strategies almost equally.

Table 4.2: Overall LLS use mean with standard deviation according to proficiency level and significance of overall LLS use and proficiency level according to Spearman's correlation coefficient

Level	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
Elementary	42	2.9	.44	,630
Pre-intermediate	38	2.8	.46	
Intermediate	90	2.9	.43	

As can be seen from Table 4.2, the overall average reported frequency of strategy use of three different levels are very close to each other with a frequency of 2.9 for the elementary group, 2.8 for the pre-intermediate group, and 2.9 for the intermediate group.

The frequency of strategy use according to these three different levels was also very similar for almost all items. Table 4.3 shows that while only Item 10 was used with the same frequency by all levels, the other items differed only slightly with regard to the proficiency level. Except for Items 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 17, 19, and 20, all the other strategies were used within the same range, which showed that students tend to use strategies with a similar frequency regardless of their levels. Items that fall in the high frequency use range (i.e. the range of 3.5 and above which was defined as high frequency by Oxford, 1990) are shaded for emphasis in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Average reported frequency of language learning strategy use for elementary level (E, N= 42), pre-intermediate (P, N=38) and intermediate level (I, N=90) and all students (AS, N=170) for each items and overall with number of strategies reportedly used highly frequently. Strategies used highly frequently are shaded for emphasis.

ELLSI	E	P	I	AS
1 I do homework regularly and on time.	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.2
2 I learn from the teacher.	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.6
3 I read books in English for pleasure.	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5
4 I use a computer programme to learn or practice English.	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.3
5 I watch TV in English.	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7
6 I revise what I have learnt in class regularly.	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.4
7 I listen to songs in English.	3.7	4.1	4.4	4.2
8 I write letters/e-mails in English.	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.0
9 I listen to music while studying.	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.9
10 I talk to other students in English whenever I can.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
11 I use a dictionary to check the meanings of words.	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2
12 I read newspapers in English whenever I can get them.	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7
13 I study English grammar.	3.8	3.5	3.2	3.4
14 I try different techniques to learn new vocabulary.	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.0
15 I make use of a notebook.	3.9	3.3	2.9	3.2
16 I talk to native speakers of English.	2.3	2.2	2.8	2.5
17 I manage my time so that English study is done.	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.8
18 I don't worry about making mistakes when learning.	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.4
19 I use a self-study centre to study English.	2.7	2.0	1.8	2.0
20 I try to think in English.	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.0
21 I listen to native speakers of English.	3.3	3.2	3.6	3.4
22 I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing and learn from them.	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.5
23 I spend a lot of time studying English.	2.8	2.4	2.2	2.4
24 I make friends with native speakers.	2.1	2.0	2.5	2.3
25 I watch movies in English.	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2

26	I learn about the culture of English speakers.	2.1	2.1	2.6	2.4
27	I listen to the radio in English.	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.8
28	I write a diary in English.	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2
Overall average reported frequency of strategy use		2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9
Number of strategies reportedly used highly frequently		7	8	8	6

4.2.3 LLS Use and Language Achievement

The students were divided into two groups according to their proficiency exam results: Pass (score 60 and above) and Fail (score 59 and below). Students who pass the proficiency exam can pass into the faculty, whereas students who fail have to repeat the preparatory school. There was no significant relation between LLS use and exam results according to Spearman's correlation coefficient as can be seen in Table 4.4. It can also be seen that there is almost no difference between students who pass and students who fail in terms of the frequency of LLS use in both groups.

Table 4.4: Average reported frequency of language learning strategy use of students who pass and students who fail with standard deviation and significance of overall LLS use and achievement according to Spearman's correlation coefficient

Achievement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
Fail	26	2.8	.35	.077
Pass	144	2.9	.45	

According to Spearman correlation, there is a positive correlation between more successful results and the use of the Strategies 7 (I listen to songs in English), 8 (I write letters/e-mails in English), 18 (I don't worry about making mistakes when learning) and 20 (I try to think in English).

Items 13 (I study English grammar) and 15 (I make use of a notebook) were found to be significantly related to lower results. These results are set out in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Average reported frequency of language learning strategy use for all students (Av=Average) and Spearman's correlation coefficient (r).

ELLSI		Av.	r.
1	I do homework regularly and on time.	3.2	
2	I learn from the teacher.	3.6	
3	I read books in English for pleasure.	2.5	
4	I use a computer programme to learn or practice English.	3.3	
5	I watch TV in English.	3.7	
6	I revise what I have learnt in class regularly.	2.4	
7	I listen to songs in English.	4.2	.233**
8	I write letters/e-mails in English.	2.0	.153*
9	I listen to music while studying.	2.9	
10	I talk to other students in English whenever I can.	1.8	
11	I use a dictionary to check the meanings of words.	4.2	
12	I read newspapers in English whenever I can get them.	1.7	
13	I study English grammar.	3.4	-.219**
14	I try different techniques to learn new vocabulary.	3.0	
15	I make use of a notebook.	3.2	-.183*
16	I talk to native speakers of English.	2.5	
17	I manage my time so that English study is done.	2.8	
18	I don't worry about making mistakes when learning.	3.4	.206**
19	I use a self-study centre to study English.	2.0	
20	I try to think in English.	3.0	.220**
21	I listen to native speakers of English.	3.4	
22	I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing and	3.5	

	learn from them.	
23	I spend a lot of time studying English.	2.4
24	I make friends with native speakers.	2.3
25	I watch movies in English.	4.2
26	I learn about the culture of English speakers.	2.4
27	I listen to the radio in English.	1.8
28	I write a diary in English.	1.2

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Items that are significantly positively correlated to successful exam results (Items 7, 8, 18, and 20) were grouped and correlated with proficiency results.

Table 4.6: The significance of the group of four significantly positively related strategies and positive exam results according to Spearman’s correlation coefficient.

Strategy Items	Sig.
7. I listen to songs in English.	
8. I write letters/e-mails in English.	
18. I don’t worry about making mistakes when learning.	.000
20. I try to think in English.	

According to Spearman’s correlation coefficient, the group of four strategies had a significant positive correlation with exam success ($p < 0.01$).

4.2.4 LLS Use of Males and Females

When grouped according to sex, there were 105 (61.8%) male students and 65 (38.2%) female students. According to Spearman’s correlation, it was found that gender is significantly correlated to LLS use. Similar to Griffiths’ (2003b) study which

indicated that females had a higher frequency of language learning strategies than men, the results of this study also shows that women reported using language learning strategies (average=3.0) more frequently than men (average=2.8). The results are displayed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Overall LLS use mean with standard deviation according to gender and significance of overall LLS use and gender according to Spearman's correlation coefficient

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
Male	105	2.8	.44	.000
Female	65	3.0	.39	

The results also showed some individual strategy items were used significantly more frequently by females. The results are presented in Table 4.8. Items that fall in the high frequency use range (i.e. the range of 3.5 and above which was defined as high frequency use by Oxford, 1990) are shaded for emphasis.

Table 4.8: Average reported frequency of strategy use according to sex (M=male, N=105, F= Female, N=65) and across all students (AS, N= 170) with Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) for each item.

ELLSI	M	F	r	AS
1 I do homework regularly and on time.	2.9	3.7	.347**	3.2
2 I learn from the teacher.	3.5	3.7		3.6
3 I read books in English for pleasure.	2.2.	2.8	.287**	2.5
4 I use a computer programme to learn or practice English.	3.2	3.4		3.3
5 I watch TV in English.	3.6	3.9		3.7
6 I revise what I have learnt in class regularly.	2.3	2.7	.217**	2.4
7 I listen to songs in English.	4.0	4.5	.218**	4.2
8 I write letters/e-mails in English.	2.0	2.0		2.0
9 I listen to music while studying.	2.6	3.3	.235**	2.9

10	I talk to other students in English whenever I can.	1.8	1.8		1.8
11	I use a dictionary to check the meanings of words.	4.1	4.3		4.2
12	I read newspapers in English whenever I can get them.	1.7	1.8		1.7
13	I study English grammar.	3.2	3.6	.197*	3.4
14	I try different techniques to learn new vocabulary.	3.0	3.0		3.0
15	I make use of a notebook.	2.8	3.8	.336**	3.2
16	I talk to native speakers of English.	2.6	2.3		2.5
17	I manage my time so that English study is done.	2.6	3.0	.200**	2.8
18	I don't worry about making mistakes when learning.	3.5	3.4		3.4
19	I use a self-study centre to study English.	2.0	2.1		2.0
20	I try to think in English.	3.0	3.0		3.0
21	I listen to native speakers of English.	3.3	3.7		3.4
22	I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing and learn from them.	3.5	3.5		3.5
23	I spend a lot of time studying English.	2.3	2.5		2.4
24	I make friends with native speakers.	2.3	2.3		2.3
25	I watch movies in English.	4.1	4.2		4.2
26	I learn about the culture of English speakers.	2.2	2.6	.153*	2.4
27	I listen to the radio in English.	1.7	2.1		1.8
28	I write a diary in English.	1.1	1.2	.158*	1.2
Overall average reported frequency of strategy use		2.8	3.0		2.9
Number of strategies reportedly used highly frequently		7	10		6

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to these results, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17, 26 and 28 are used significantly more frequently by female students. However, although female students used LLS more frequently on average than men, and 10 strategies were used significantly more frequently by female students, according to proficiency exam scores

(as can be seen in Table 4.9), male students proved to be more successful on average, although this was not statistically significant.

Table 4.9: Proficiency exam score mean of males and females with standard deviation and significance of proficiency exam scores and gender according to Spearman's correlation coefficient

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
Male	105	68	15.7	-.969
Female	65	66	17.5	

4.3 Qualitative Results: Individual Interviews

The qualitative data gathered through email interviews are presented and discussed in this section. 12 students who got the highest scores in the proficiency exam were chosen for email interviews. They were requested to join the interview via their emails by answering the questions prepared according to their responses to the questionnaire. 10 students participated in the interview by replying to the email.

Participants' email interviews were analyzed carefully and learner profile for each student were formed according to the interview notes and personal information they provided in the questionnaire. Learning difficulties and the strategies they used most which were referred as "key strategies" by Griffiths (2003b) were added to learner profiles. Students were asked which strategies they used most, what they find most difficult about learning English and how they can overcome these difficulties. The interview results and proficiency results of the participants are also presented in Table 4.10.

4.3.1 Learner Profiles

In this section, student profiles consisting of learner characteristics, ELLSI results, proficiency results, learning difficulties and key strategies of the ten selected interviewees were presented. The ELLSI results and achievement were summarised in table form (Table 4.10).

Student Profile 1: Gani

Learner characteristics

Sex: male Age: 19

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 2.8

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 5

Proficiency Result: 87

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

Key strategies

* Watching TV or movies to improve listening and pronunciation

* Listening to music to improve listening

* Playing computer games

* Doing homework and revision regularly.

* Using online dictionaries to learn new vocabulary

Student Profile 2: Akıncan

Learner characteristics

Sex: male Age: 19

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 2.5

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 0

Proficiency Result: 89

Learning difficulties

*Speaking in English

* Vocabulary

Key strategies

* Watching movies to improve pronunciation and learn new vocabulary

* Translating

* Talking to native speakers to improve speaking skills.

* Using online dictionaries to learn new vocabulary

* Trying different ways to learn new vocabulary

Student Profile 3: Ece

Learner characteristics

Sex: female Age: 20

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 3.2

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 4

Proficiency Result: 88

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

* Writing

* Listening

Key strategies

* Doing homework and revision regularly

* Using monolingual dictionaries to improve vocabulary

* Studying grammar and vocabulary

Student Profile 4: Bulut

Learner characteristics

Sex: male Age: 20

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 2.5

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 0

Proficiency Result: 86

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

* Writing

Key strategies

* Talking to native speakers in English to improve speaking skills.

* Watching movies to improve pronunciation and learn new vocabulary

* Reading stories to improve reading and vocabulary

Student Profile 5: Okan

Learner characteristics

Sex: male Age: 19

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 2.6

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 1

Proficiency Result: 83

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

* Listening

Key strategies

* Listening to songs to improve listening

* Watching movies with English subtitles to learn new vocabulary

* Playing computer games to learn new vocabulary

Student Profile 6: Ata

Learner characteristics

Sex: male Age: 19

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 2.9

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 4

Proficiency Result: 89

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

* Listening

Key strategies

* Watching movies or TV programmes with English subtitles to learn new vocabulary

* Keeping a notebook

* Asking for help

* Thinking in English

Student Profile 7: Ahmet

Learner characteristics

Sex: male Age: 19

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 3.3

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 8

Proficiency Result: 84

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

* Listening

Key strategies

* Using computer programmes to practice English

* Listening to songs to improve listening

* Watching movies with English subtitles to learn new vocabulary

* Using both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries to improve vocabulary knowledge

* Talking to native speakers to practice speaking

Student Profile 8: Semih

Learner characteristics

Sex: male Age: 19

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 3.6

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 8

Proficiency Result: 87

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

* Vocabulary

Key strategies

* Using computer programmes to practice English

* Watching movies and TV programmes with English subtitles to improve English

* Thinking in English

* Talking to native speakers to practice speaking

Student Profile 9: Bahadır

Learner characteristics

Sex: male Age: 18

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 3.6

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 9

Proficiency Result: 88

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

* Vocabulary

Key strategies

* Using computer programmes to practice English

* Watching movies and TV programmes with English subtitles to improve English

* Reading newspapers and books to improve grammar and writing

* Talking to native speakers to practice speaking

* Asking for help and being corrected when speaking and writing by a peer or teacher

Student Profile 10: Emine

Learner characteristics

Sex: female Age: 19

ELLSI results and achievement

Average reported frequency of use: 2.8

Number of strategies rated 5 (always or almost always): 5

Proficiency Result: 80

Learning difficulties

* Speaking in English

* Listening

Key strategies

* Keeping a notebook

* Watching movies and TV programmes with English subtitles to improve English

The ELLSI results of the 10 selected student interviewees are presented in Table

4.10. Items rated 5 are shaded for emphasis.

Table 4.10: Reported frequency ratings of language learning strategy use (ELLSI) of interviewees 1-10, the number of strategies they gave the highest rating (No.) and their proficiency exam results (Prof.).

ELLSI	Gani	Akın	Ece	Bulut	Okan	Ata	Ahmet	Semih	Baha	Emine
1	3	3	5	3	1	2	3	2	3	4
2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4
3	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	3	3	3
4	3	3	4	3	3	4	5	5	5	1
5	5	4	3	4	4	5	4	5	5	5
6	2	2	4	3	1	2	3	2	3	3
7	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	3	5	5
8	3	4	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	1
9	2	1	2	1	3	1	2	1	1	3
10	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	1	2
11	5	3	5	4	4	3	5	3	3	4
12	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	1	2	2
13	3	2	5	3	3	3	2	3	5	3
14	2	3	2	2	3	4	5	4	5	1
15	3	2	3	1	1	5	2	1	4	5
16	2	4	3	2	3	3	4	5	2	1
17	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	4	4	3
18	5	3	4	4	4	4	5	3	5	5
19	1	1	4	1	3	1	2	3	2	1
20	4	4	4	2	3	3	4	5	3	1
21	4	3	4	4	4	3	5	5	5	3
22	4	3	3	2	3	4	5	5	5	4
23	2	2	4	2	1	2	3	3	2	2
24	1	2	2	2	2	3	4	5	1	1
25	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
26	2	1	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	2
27	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	4
28	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Av.	2.8	2.5	3.2	2.5	2.6	2.9	3.3	3.6	3.2	2.8
No.	5	0	4	0	1	4	8	8	9	5
Prof.	87	89	88	86	83	89	84	87	88	80

4.3.2 The Results of the Interviews

In this section, the results of the interviews are presented. The frequency of strategy use was reported using Oxford's (1990) key to understanding mean scores on SILL.

The results of Gani's ELLSI indicated that he reported using language learning strategies within medium frequency use range (average = 2.8) with 5 of the 28 items being given the maximum rating of 5 (always or almost always). He gave a rating of 5 ("always or almost always") to Item 5 ("I watch TV in English"), 7 ("I listen to songs in English"), 11 ("I use a dictionary to check the meanings of words"), 18 ("I don't worry about making mistakes when learning"), and 25 ("I watch movies in English").

Gani was highly motivated and determined yet a little quiet. He stated that he enjoyed activities or tasks on which he worked individually; thus, the strategies he favoured were more individual and did not require interaction with other people. He indicated that watching movies and TV programmes contributed a lot to his progress in English. He often watched TV series like "Two and a Half Men" with Turkish subtitles, which helped him better understand daily expressions in English and learn more vocabulary. He stated that compared to movies and TV programmes, listening to songs is less useful but still effective for improving pronunciation. To improve vocabulary knowledge, he said he used online dictionaries and preferred to use monolingual ones first. If he did not understand the definition, he then referred to a bilingual dictionary. He also believed that playing computer games helped him learn new vocabulary and

grammar items. Gani stated that making mistakes helped his understanding as long as he was corrected immediately, thus making mistakes did not worry him at all.

Akın is one of the two students who got the highest score (89) in the Proficiency Exam and surprisingly he gave none of the items the maximum rating of 5 (always or almost always). The results of Akın's ELLSI showed that his LLS use was lower than Gani's (average = 2.5), one of the lowest averages among the ten students taking part in the questionnaire, but it still fell into the medium frequency use range.

Although the results indicated that his language strategy use was not high, he gave a variety of strategies he employed while learning English in the interview and he was also observed to be an active and enthusiastic learner by the researcher. Akın gave credit to two strategies for his success: watching movies with English subtitles and translating. He said because of his sleeping problems, he watched 4-5 movies every day with English subtitles during the school year. While watching, he wrote the words he did not know or the forms he did not understand and after watching he checked them in a dictionary or asked a teacher. For him, watching movies helped him a lot to improve his English.

As for translation, he translated simple sentences like "I went to Kadıköy" or more complex ones such as, "This issue has to be analyzed with the different point of view indeed" during the day even while talking to his friends. He stated that this was not an easy thing to do and many people refrain from doing this as it is hard and not very enjoyable. However, he said he wanted to learn English, unlike most of his classmates who simply wanted to pass the proficiency exam and when he realized translating

contributed to his learning a lot, he continued doing that for almost a year. Apart from these simultaneous translations, he translated articles in newspapers, mostly from Turkish to English. He said he owed a great part of his success to translating.

While learning vocabulary, instead of writing the word with its definition, he preferred to build new sentences with examples from his own life. For instance, for the word “toddler”, he said he wrote a sentence like “My cousin Doruk is a toddler”. This way, he built a connection between his cousin Doruk and the word “toddler” and he never forgot it. He further commented that he had some difficulties with speaking skills, and the best way to overcome this difficulty was speaking with native teachers or foreigners whose native language is English.

According to Ece’s ELLSI results, she had a medium frequency of language learning strategy use (average= 3.2) but rated a low number of strategies 5 (always or almost always, n=4). She gave a rating of 5 to Item 1 (“I do homework regularly and on time”), 7 (“I listen to songs in English”), 11 (“I use a dictionary to check the meanings of words”), and 13 (“I study English grammar”). She was a hard-working student doing her homework regularly, attending almost every class and participating in every activity enthusiastically except for speaking activities. As quite a shy student, she rarely spoke to the teacher and her friends in English. Being aware of her difficulty in speaking English, she said she always promised herself to talk more in the class as it was the only environment where she could practice speaking. However hard she tried, she could not manage to overcome her shyness. She, then, focused more on grammar as she thought it was very important for writing and for the exam as well. Doing homework regularly and studying grammar every other day contributed a lot to her success. When she did

homework regularly, she realized that she learnt and remembered better; hence, she did better in the exams. According to Ece, listening to songs in English was also helpful in improving her pronunciation, learning new vocabulary, expressions, and different sentence forms. For developing vocabulary, she indicated that using dictionaries, both monolingual and bilingual was a great asset for her. Especially model sentences, synonyms, antonyms, and different forms of a word which are provided in a monolingual dictionary make it more valuable for her.

Bulut's ELLSI results were very similar to Akin's results. According to Bulut's ELLSI, he reported using language learning strategies at medium frequency (average=2.5) but still at a lower frequency compared to other interviewees. He also used none of the strategies "always or almost always" (rating=5). When he was asked what strategies he used most to learn English, he stated that he watched TV programmes and movies and listened to songs like most of the interviewees. These strategies contributed to his pronunciation and listening skills. He admitted that he did not really like learning English and his sole purpose at the school was to pass the proficiency exam. For that reason, he only studied a few days before the quizzes and some other exams held throughout the year. According to Bulut, doing revision by himself and asking for help from a peer or his teachers if he needed it afterwards was the only useful thing he did for the exams.

Bulut stated that his main difficulty was speaking but because it felt awkward for him to talk in English with his Turkish classmates, he refrained from doing so. For him, it was the common problem of Turkish learners. Speaking with classmates or non-native teachers was not helpful as it never felt "real". However, since his parents lived in a very

touristic place in the south of Turkey, he had the chance to talk to native speakers during summer holidays, which helped him with his pronunciation and fluency a lot. He also added that he sometimes read graded readers, which helped him with vocabulary and writing. Moving from lower levels to advanced level readers in a year, he felt that seeing “correctly used forms” helped him better understand grammar and encouraged him to write sentences like the ones he read in those readers. But then, he admitted he did not do it very often.

Like Bulut, Okan also had a medium frequency of language strategy use (average= 2.6) but rated only Item 7 (“I listen to songs in English”) 5 (“always or almost always”). He was a very quiet student in the classroom, rarely participating in the activities or interacting with his classmates. He accepted that many strategies had to be followed in order to succeed but he was not motivated at all to do most of them. He stated that doing homework on time, reading books or newspapers in English, doing revision regularly, and keeping a diary in English would be very effective in learning English and he was planning to do them in the following year at school. Just like Bulut, Okan also admitted that he only studied a few days before the exams and he never enjoyed studying English. The only strategy he used quite often was listening to songs in English, which he believed was helpful in listening exams. Being very exam-oriented, he said he never tried to learn English. All he wanted was to pass the exams during the year and the proficiency exam at the end of the year and he was happy that he managed to do so. Okan added that he sometimes played computer games, watched movies or TV series with English subtitles and tried to speak with native speakers whenever he could. He

believed that although he did not use these strategies very often, they contributed to his success.

Ata was different from most of the students as he was not exam-oriented at all. He was very talkative, hard-working, motivated and quite knowledgeable about many things. The results of Ata's ELLSI indicated that he reported using language learning strategies at medium frequency (average = 2.9) with 4 of the 28 items being given the maximum rating of 5 (always or almost always). He gave a rating of 5 ("always or almost always") to Item 5 ("I watch TV in English"), 7 ("I listen to songs in English"), 15 ("I make use of a notebook"), and 25 ("I watch movies in English").

Like most of the interviewees, Ata was also very fond of listening to music and watching movies. He stated that because he liked doing these activities and because the language of most well-known movies or songs is English, they improved his English while entertaining him. He liked watching popular American talk shows such as "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" and "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno". He believed that as language is a big part of a culture, one can learn daily expressions or idioms and how native speakers use them better only in "real-life" TV programmes. He said most movies are also based on real-life stories and within a meaningful context, either real or fiction, he learnt how sentences are formed or how expressions are used easily and did not forget for a long time. As for listening to songs in English, trying to figure out the sentences or even words while listening to a song enabled him to improve his listening skill.

Ata kept a notebook for the whole year and he claimed that he had the neatest notebook in his class. For him, grammar was very important but it was not easy to keep

all the forms and rules in mind. Hence, keeping a notebook helped him organize what he learnt every day and revise regularly. He further commented that thinking in English helped him with his fluency as even if the activity he was doing was very simple (such as, “I’m watching TV now, maybe I will read later”), he tried to translate it. After a while he could translate more complex sentences much more easily. As for vocabulary, he also used a similar strategy; using the word in a sentence. Thus, he not only learnt the meaning but also the use of the new word. Whenever he could, he read BBC News Online, which also enabled him to learn more vocabulary and improve his reading skills.

Like Ata, Ahmet was a very competent, enthusiastic and positive student. His characteristics accord with his ELLSI results, showing a medium frequent use of LLS (average=3.3) and a good number of strategies (n=8) with the highest rate (5=always or almost always). He gave a rating of 5 to Item 4 (“I use a computer programme to learn or practice English”), 7 (“I listen to songs in English”), 11 (“I use a dictionary to check the meanings of English words.”), 14 (“I try different techniques to learn new vocabulary”), 18 (“I don’t worry about making mistakes when learning English.”), 21 (“I listen to native speakers of English”), 22 (“I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing”), and 25 (“I watch movies in English”).

One of Ahmet’s key strategies was using computer programmes to practice English. He said he used a computer and the Internet every day and a lot of information provided there and most of the websites he visited were in English. He, for instance; intentionally used one of his most visited websites, Facebook, in English in order to do some practice. Another example of a website he visited a lot was www.nba.com as a basketball fan. He read a lot of recent news and watched videos on this site. This

enabled him to learn new vocabulary and daily expressions, improve his reading comprehension and listening skill. Listening to songs in English had a similar impact on his English. Learning how native speakers express themselves when they are happy, sad, or emotional was one of the benefits of listening to songs in English for him. When he could not follow or understand the lyrics, he found them on the Internet and read while listening to the song. He used a similar strategy while watching movies in English with English subtitles. For him, this was a very effective way to improve his listening. Talking to native speakers especially to an American teacher at school also enhanced his listening skills a lot along with speaking skills. Whenever he could, he tried to talk to her and in time he realized that he could express himself better.

He stated that although he often tried to determine a new word's meaning using context clues, he always checked it in a dictionary later and made sure he understood it. He used online dictionaries (both monolingual and bilingual ones) more often as they are much more practical. When he looked up a word in the dictionary, he also paid attention to its part of speech, which, he thought, had a huge effect on his success. Also whenever he learnt a new word, he also tried to learn its synonyms and antonyms. This enriched his vocabulary to a great extent.

Ahmet was a very confident student and making mistakes never seemed to worry him. He felt that making mistakes can be beneficial as one could learn lessons from mistakes and try to avoid them in future. He said he liked being explicitly corrected by the teacher since this made him remember the mistake and correct it himself next time he repeated it.

According to Semih's ELLSI results, he had the highest frequency of language learning strategies use among the interviewees (average= 3.6) and rated a higher number of strategies (n=8) 5 (always or almost always) compared to his counterparts. He gave a rating of 5 to Item 4 ("I use a computer programme to learn or practice English"), 5 ("I watch TV in English"), 16 ("I talk to native speakers of English"), 20 ("I try to think in English"), 21 ("I listen to native speakers of English"), 22 ("I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing"), 24 ("I make friends with native speakers") and 25 ("I watch movies in English").

Semih was a very motivated, hard-working but quiet student. He accepted that he was shy in the classroom but always attempted to speak with native speakers whenever he could. Speaking with native speakers was effective for him as it improved his pronunciation and listening skills. He learnt many daily expressions and how to express himself in certain situations through talking to native speakers. He said when he was at home, he often spent time watching television or surfing on the Internet. The information on the Internet is usually in English, so on the blogs or the websites he visited, he often read English texts or articles, which helped him improve his vocabulary and reading skills. He said he loved playing computer games and through games he learnt a lot of forms and vocabulary. A sentence like "Targets have been destroyed" taught him passive forms and the image of a map which says "Map" on it taught him the word; "map". Because he learnt some forms and words within a context not only with their Turkish equivalent, he could still remember them.

A science entertainment television programme "Mythbusters" was one of his favourite programmes. He started watching it on television with Turkish subtitles. Then

he found more videos of this programme on the Internet but he had to watch them without subtitles. Although it was difficult at first, he enjoyed it so much that he did not give up watching it. Watching this programme was particularly useful as his curiosity about the programme made him realize that he could still understand the general message even if he did not catch the details and this definitely improved his listening skills. He watched movies and television series with English subtitles, which was also an asset for him to develop his listening skills and vocabulary.

He also used “thinking in English” as a strategy very frequently. Whenever he could, he tried to think in English and he soon realized that he could express himself better. It is definitely an effective strategy for him. He stated that making mistakes when learning a foreign language is so natural and noticing the mistakes is very important in order not to repeat them. When he realized that he made a mistake, he tried not to make it again. He thought it was important to be corrected by the teacher whenever he made a mistake while speaking and writing.

The results of Baha’s ELLSI indicated that he reported using language learning strategies in the medium frequency use range (average = 3.2) with 9 of the 28 items being given the maximum rating of 5 (always or almost always). He gave a rating of 5 to Item 4 (“I use a computer programme to learn or practice English”), 5 (“I watch TV in English”), 7 (“I listen to songs in English”), 13 (“I study English grammar”), 14 (“I try different techniques to learn new vocabulary”), 18 (“I don’t worry about making mistakes when learning”), 21 (“I listen to native speakers of English”), 22 (“I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing”), and 25 (“I watch movies in English”).

Baha said he used all the technological devices including his mobile phone and computer in English to practice his English. He often used www.vocabulary.com to play online vocabulary games through which he learnt a lot of new words.

He watched TV series and movies in English very often. First, he watched them with Turkish subtitles but soon he realized that he did not listen but read the Turkish subtitles. Then he forced himself to watch movies with English subtitles and although it was hard at first, he got better and started to have higher scores in his listening exams. Watching movies and computer programmes gave him a great opportunity to enhance his listening skills but he felt he was not fortunate enough to talk to native speakers face to face. He felt that a foreign language can be learnt by imitating what you hear like a child and this can be done best only with a native speaker. He stated that he liked listening to songs in English as songs were easy to memorize and he often memorized and learnt phrasal verbs or idioms through them. Listening to songs was an effective way to improve memory and vocabulary for him. Also, since it was easier to learn vocabulary in chunks for him, using a new word in a sentence was also an effective strategy to develop vocabulary.

According to Baha, learning grammar was very important but he never preferred traditional ways to learn it. He learnt grammar better when he read news or articles written in a formal and complex language and he could transfer what he learnt to writing.

Making mistakes did not worry him as he did not feel that learning English was a burden on his shoulders. He wanted to learn English as he liked it and he knew that he would need it in the future. His motives to learn English made him more comfortable

and less anxious about his mistakes. He often chatted online with his foreign friends and he asked them to correct him whenever he made a mistake. Although this interrupted the conversation a lot, he felt that it was useful for him.

Like Bulut, Akın, and Okan, Emine had a relatively low frequency of language strategy use which was still in medium frequency use range (average= 2.8) with 5 items being given the maximum rating of 5 (always or almost always). She gave a rating of 5 to Item 5 (“I watch TV in English”), 7 (“I listen to songs in English”), 15 (“I make use of a notebook”), 18 (“I don’t worry about making mistakes when learning”), and 25 (“I watch movies in English”)

One of her key strategy was watching TV in English and her favourite TV channel was NHK World English aired in Japan. She liked watching programmes on this channel as they were educational and it was easier to understand compared to American or British channels. Watching TV in English was a good way to learn vocabulary for her. As she was watching, she noted the words she did not know on a notebook. Then she looked them up in a dictionary and wrote them on a piece of paper to hang somewhere she could see. She stated that she followed similar strategies when watching movies with English subtitles. Keeping a notebook was the most important strategy according to Emine. She felt that keeping a notebook properly enabled her to learn and revise more easily and effectively. Like most of her counterparts, she also thought being corrected and given feedback by the teacher when she made a mistake was necessary to learn from it.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this section, the discussions of the results are provided in the same order as the results were given. The discussion of the results of the ELLSI questionnaire is the initial point which is followed by the discussion of the results of email interview.

5.2 Discussion of the results of the ELLSI Questionnaires

The results that are yielded from the ELLSI are discussed in this section.

5.2.1 LLS Use of Students

The alpha co-efficient for reliability of the instrument across all students was .82. De Vaus (1995, p. 184) stated that “As a rule of thumb alpha should be at least 0.7 before we say that the scale is reliable”, which indicates the ELLSI is a reliable instrument.

The overall LLS use of preparatory students at Istanbul Technical University was found to be at a medium level: 2.9 (The average scores which fall into the range of 2.5-3.4 are defined as medium frequency by Oxford, 1990). Compared to the results of Griffiths’ (2003b, 2008) study which also used the ELLSI and reported overall average frequency of strategy use 3.1, the average in the present study is rather lower.

A close examination of the results of this thesis reveals there were six strategies that were identified to be used at a high rate of frequency (average=3.5 or above) by the preparatory students at Istanbul Technical University.

Item 11 “I use a dictionary to check the meanings of words” was one of the most commonly used strategies by all students (mean=4.2). The idea that language learners are individuals who can take charge of their own learning and achieve autonomy using learning strategies has been researched and promoted by educators such as Wenden (1985, 1987) and Oxford (1990). One resource which is often considered to be connected with learner autonomy is the dictionary. A dictionary is an essential and invaluable resource for ESL students at various levels facilitating the learning process and promoting learner autonomy (Taylor, 2004). Thus, it is not surprising that dictionaries are used the most by students aiming to control their learning environment and learning process. Another possible reason for the high frequency of this strategy is that almost all of the students had smart mobile phones in which they had dictionary software embedded or they used online dictionaries by connecting to the Internet with their mobile phones. The convenience of using an online dictionary might have increased the frequency of this strategy. The use of electronic dictionaries in language classrooms is supported in that they simplify and speed up the learning process (Yonally and Gilfert, 1995).

This result accords with the findings of Griffiths’ (2003b) study which also found this strategy as the most used one by all students. Although the profile of the participants and context are very different in these two studies, the fact that using a dictionary was found to be the most used strategy suggests that it is important and that the use of

dictionaries should be encouraged since dictionaries present a very useful tool in English classrooms. However, it is very important that teachers explicitly teach students this strategy so that they can be utilized to maximum extent.

Item 25 “I watch movies in English” also falls in the highest average range (mean=4.2). Students often see the year they spend at preparatory school as the time they can relax and have fun before they start their studies at their faculties. During this time, watching movies seems to be one of the most popular pastimes for young adults at preparatory schools. It is also recognized that students who are trying to learn the target language in an artificial medium like a language school in a country where the mother language is not English tend to feel the need to get in touch with real English in order to reinforce what they are learning at school. A convenient way for such a contact with real life English for students is to watch movies in English. Watching movies provides a great deal of benefit for learners, such as a platform for spoken English, awareness about different accents, knowledge of common English idioms and phrases and entertainment. King (2002, p. 510) supports using films in the EFL classroom stating “it is a refreshing learning experience for students who need to take a break from rote learning of endless English vocabulary and drill practices, and replace it with something realistic, a dimension that is missing in textbook-oriented teaching”. She commented that films offer endless opportunities for developing fluency. However, teachers need to make the most of learning opportunities by means of films in the classroom with pedagogically sound activities. Thus, teachers need careful planning to design the activities that will integrate four skills, encourage student involvement and avoid passive viewing when using movies to guarantee students get all the benefits from them.

Another commonly used strategy is Item 7; “I listen to songs in English” (mean=4.2). This preference might be explained with students’ high interest in listening to songs and the popularity of American or British songs in Turkey. This result implies that songs should be integrated into lesson plans more since activities involving songs will motivate students and encourage them to learn English while they are having fun. Schoepp (2001) supports using songs in language classroom as songs have become an integral part of our language experience, and songs can be of great value if they are used in coordination with a language lesson.

Item 5 “I watch TV in English” was found to be the fourth most used strategy by all students (mean=3.7). Just like Item 25 “I watch movies in English”, watching TV in English is also an activity many young adults do to have pleasure in their leisure time. Especially channels like CNBC-e, E2, or Discovery Channel which broadcast mostly American TV shows are watched a lot by students. Students particularly enjoy watching American or British TV series on TV or on the Internet with the choice of English or Turkish subtitles. Some stand-up shows are also watched a lot by students as they can listen to conversations with real-life responses to real-life situations. If such TV programmes are thought to be appropriate for school, teachers can make use of them in the classroom designing lesson plans and activities for them bearing in mind that in order to make the most of learning opportunities while watching TV programmes it is crucial to provide students with well-structured tasks and activities designed to promote active viewing and stimulate involvement.

The fifth most used strategy was Item 2 “I learn from the teacher” (mean=3.6). In the present study, this strategy is used less compared to Griffiths’ (2003b) study which

was the second most used strategy in her study (mean=4.0). Strategic learners aim to get benefits from as many resources as they can. Identifying the needs of individual students in their classes, designing lesson plans to meet every single need, letting students navigate their own learning: teachers themselves are invaluable resources for students.

The last strategy within the high rate of frequency was Item 22 “I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing and I learn from them” (mean= 3.5). This strategy was also found to be used a lot by students with a higher average (3.6) in Griffiths’ (2003b) study. Failure is considered to be one of the best teachers. The results show that students also agree with this statement and try to turn disadvantages into advantages by learning from their mistakes. It is very important for teachers to help students understand their mistakes by providing constructive feedback.

5.2.2 LLS Use and Proficiency Level

According to the Spearman correlation coefficient, no significant correlation between LLS use and students’ proficiency level was found. The overall average reported frequency of strategy use of the elementary and intermediate groups is equal with a rate of 2.9 and very slightly higher than the frequency of strategy use of the pre-intermediate group which was 2.8. When examined closely, the results show that students from different levels used almost all the strategies with a very close rate. This result accords with the studies conducted by Porte (1988) and Vann and Abraham (1990) who found that lower level students used similar strategies to those used by higher level students. These findings suggest that lower level students should not be simply asked to follow what higher level students do as they might be active strategy users as well or

using similar strategies but it is possible that there are some other factors affecting their success. Therefore, it could be suggested that all students should be encouraged to use similar strategies regardless of their levels and other possible factors important to success need to be studied in order to identify the reason why they are not equally successful although their strategy use is similar.

5.2.3 LLS Use and Achievement

Although many research studies (Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003b, 2008) have found that strategies are significantly related to successful learning, the present study could not find a significant relation between LLS and overall achievement, which accords with the studies conducted by Murray (2010), Polizter and MacGroarty (1985), Şanal (1992), and Yalçın (2005) who found no or a very low significant correlation between LLS and achievement. The results of the study also revealed that students who passed (mean=2.9) and students who failed (mean=2.8) reported almost the same average of LLS use. This relation is similar to the one between LLS use and proficiency level. One possible reason for this might be other factors that relate to success other than strategies as mentioned above. Moreover, it is possible that learners may have other strategies that were not included in ELLSI. It was also argued that it is not the frequency of strategy use but the appropriateness of strategy use in a specific context that determines learning outcomes (Cohen, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to consider how a strategy is used in the given context as well as measuring strategy use frequency.

However, a group of strategies positively related to overall achievement was found. These strategies were grouped using SPSS 16 and correlated to overall

achievement of students (Spearman's correlation). According to the results, this group of strategies had a significant positive correlation with final exam scores at .303** (**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, 2-tailed). This finding implies that this group of strategies accounts for 9.2% (i.e. nearly one tenth) of the variance in the final scores, which suggests that these strategies play a role in students' achievement along with all the other learner related factors.

These strategies were 7 (I listen to songs in English), 8 (I write letters or emails in English), 18 (I don't worry about making mistakes when learning) and 20 (I try to think in English). Listening to songs in English was also found to be one of the most used strategies by all students. Students feel more comfortable and ready to learn when they are also having fun. Listening to songs in English is thought to have a positive impact on learning as it is one of the favourite activities of students. Also, because songs can be memorable and contain repetitions, listening to them could make it easy to remember some words or phrases. Moreover, songs offer a change from routine classroom activities, they are precious resources to develop students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing and songs can also give new insights into the target culture through authentic English materials, which can all increase students' motivation and have them build a positive attitude in regard to learning (Sarıçoban & Metin, 2000). Therefore, this study suggests that using songs needs to be thought through in advance to engage students effectively by choosing appropriate songs within students' level and designing suitable tasks for them.

Although writing letters or emails falls into the rating "*Seldom true of me*", it was found to have a positive relationship to successful exam results. Using emails in the

classroom was supported by Belisle (1996) on the grounds that it gives shy students a chance to express their opinions more openly and thus to have more self-confidence and eventually improve their writing ability. Also, he thought that by using e-mail in the writing class students become familiar with a communication tool that is vital to their survival in the 21st century. Considering the fact that most email servers are in English, writing emails will increase the exposure to the language besides being a meaningful and real-life task.

The strategy “I don’t worry about making mistakes when learning” (average=3.4) also had a positive effect on the exam results. When learners accept the fact that making mistakes is part of learning a language and stop worrying about it, they feel less afraid to participate, get lots of practice and make progress quickly. Bearing this in mind, teachers need to create a comfortable, friendly and open environment in the classroom where students can relax and express themselves freely with no pressure and overcome their fear of making mistakes.

Another strategy that was significantly positively correlated to successful exam results was Item 20 “I try to think in English”. When a new word or phrase is learnt, the brain translates the expression into the first language. However, when learners immerse themselves in English, this translation slowly fades. Eventually their brains stop translating into their own language and start thinking in English. In order to encourage students to think in English, teachers could advise their students to think about what they are doing in English if they are not in an English speaking environment. The more time they spend thinking in English, the more their fluency will improve as they will need less thinking time.

Items 13 (I study English grammar) and 15 (I make use of a notebook) were found to be significantly related to lower results. Lower level students often give a lot of importance to grammar as it gives students the feeling that they can understand and control what is going on (Swan, 2002). Thus, they believe that their success mostly depends on their grammar knowledge. On the other hand, higher level students often feel they need to focus on skills and aim to improve their speaking and listening especially in order to have a fluent conversation with teachers and native speakers.

5.2.4 LLS Use of Females and Males

Gender was not aimed to be explored initially in the present study. However, when gender differences arose out of the data results, it was analysed and added to the study. In most of the studies in which gender differences emerged, the results showed that females reported using language learning strategies significantly more often than males (Aslan, 2009; Ehrman and Oxford, 1989; Green and Oxford, 1995; Li, 2005; Politzer, 1983). Like most of these studies, the results of this study revealed that females used strategies more (mean=3.0) than males (2.8). The possible reason for this could be that females are often observed to be more determined and motivated. Gender was also found to be significantly related to LLS use according to Spearman's correlation. The results imply that women and men are using different approaches to language learning as Green and Oxford (1995) suggested; hence, it is important for teachers to acknowledge that different instruction and strategies may be more suitable for males than females and vice versa. Considering the present study and many studies in the field that proved that females reported higher frequency of strategy use than males, it might be beneficial for teachers to help males discover and improve their language learning strategies.

However, gender differences in language learning strategies do not necessarily mean that people of one gender are more successful at language learning than people of the other as suggested by Green and Oxford (1995). The findings of this study indicate that, according to the proficiency exam scores males were more successful than females even though they had lower LLS use frequency. This result reinforces the idea that language learning involves other factors such as, motivation, nationality, age, aptitude, personality, learning styles etc. along with gender and they need to be considered as well.

Ten strategies were used significantly more often by females in this study, although there were no strategies used significantly more often by males. (See Table 4.7 for the list) The reason why Items 1, 3, 6, 13, 15, 17, and 28 were used significantly more by females could be explained with females' high motivation and dedication to learn English. Item 7 which also had a high frequency use across all students and Item 9 involve listening to songs, which supports the idea that songs might be a valuable teaching tool to attract students' attention and motivate them. Finally Item 26 might be attributed to females' interest in English and the culture of English speakers.

5.3 Discussion of the results of the email interviews

The email interviews provided a lot of insights into how students perceive strategies and how certain strategies lead to learning. Watching TV (Item 5) and movies in English (Item 25) were two of the most commonly used strategies in this study. Watching TV was reported to be used very frequently by 70% of the interviewees and 80% of the interviewees reported that they watched movies very frequently. Interviews

revealed a number of reasons why students use them. In general interviewees believed that watching TV programmes or movies in English enabled them to enhance their vocabulary, listening, and pronunciation. They stated that they learnt a lot of new daily expressions and idioms thanks to these strategies. One of the students thought that these strategies also helped him learn the culture of English speaking countries. He also thought that these strategies facilitate the learning process as they give an opportunity to learn in context, which makes learning more meaningful and memorable for him. Two of the students followed other strategies as they were watching: taking notes of the words or forms they did not understand, and then checking them on the dictionary or asking a teacher. One of these students even made a list of these items, hung them somewhere she could see at home, read and tried to remember this way. Most of the interviewees watch with English subtitles as they believed it was more beneficial for them. Two students first preferred Turkish subtitles but when they forced themselves to watch with English subtitles they realized they got better at listening. It can be clearly seen that watching movies and TV programmes offer a variety of benefits to students and using them effectively in the classroom by designing meaningful and purposeful tasks can be even more beneficial for students. It is a strategy that students both enjoy and from which they learn; thus, encouraging students to use these strategies will help their motivation and build a positive attitude towards learning English.

Another commonly used strategy was listening to songs in English (Item 7). It was reported to be used very frequently by 70% of the interviewees. This strategy also enables students to learn and enjoy at the same time, which is thought to be the most important reason why students do it. Students listed a number of advantages of listening

to songs which are improving pronunciation and listening and learning new vocabulary and different forms. One of the students stated that because songs are very memorable, they make it easier to learn and remember vocabulary. This strategy can also be integrated into lesson plans to increase interest and motivation.

Using dictionaries (Item 11) was also found to be a commonly used strategy to learn vocabulary. It was reported to be used very frequently by 50% of the interviewees. The majority stated that they used both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. They made use of dictionaries by looking a word's definition, synonyms and antonyms (if any), model sentences, different forms of it and its part of speech. Some stated that they preferred online or electronic dictionaries as they were fast and user friendly. Teaching students how to make the best use of a dictionary and encouraging them to use it with activities and tasks will ensure students to use the strategy more consciously, take control over their learning and become more autonomous.

50% of the interviewees favored the strategy: "I don't worry about making mistakes when learning English" (Item 18). All of them felt that making mistakes will make them learn better as long as they are corrected either by the teacher or a peer. This way they will identify their weaknesses and try to improve them. One of the students said it was very natural to make mistakes when learning a language. Teachers also need to be tolerant with their students' mistakes and need make sure to give feedback rather than correcting mistakes alone. A combination of appropriate praise and helpful suggestions about how to improve in the future will contribute to student development a lot (Harmer, 2007). Also, encouraging students to peer-check and correct especially in

writing classes will give students a chance to learn how to identify mistakes, reflect on them, think of ways to correct or improve it and become more autonomous.

Another strategy used by the interviewees was using a computer programme to learn or practice English (Item 4). This strategy was reported to be used very frequently by 50% of the interviewees. Because spending time on computers and the Internet is one of the favourite activities of the young generation and because most of the information available on the Internet is in English, students are exposed to English a lot. According to the students, the benefits of this strategy were learning new words and forms besides improving reading and listening. Considering the amount of time students spend on computers and the Internet, students could be given a list of useful websites suitable for self-study. Also, through blogs, wikis, podcasts and other Web 2.0 tools, teachers can have a good opportunity to develop and create different, enjoyable tasks in EFL classrooms giving students a chance to see the real world in the classrooms and getting them motivated, active, and involved in the language learning process (İlter, 2009).

Only two of the interviewees favoured using notebooks (Item 15), which was found to be significantly related to lower results. Those two students stated that they found keeping notebook very useful as it helps them organize what they learn every day and do revision regularly and more easily. Another strategy which was significantly correlated with lower results was found to be studying grammar (Item 13). Also for this strategy, only two of the interviewees stated that they used it. Both felt that grammar was very important for their exams and for writing. They stated that they transformed the grammar points they learnt to writing, which shows that they were using this strategy consciously and purposefully. One of the students stated that he never used formulas and

rules while studying grammar. He preferred to read authentic articles from newspapers or magazines in which he encounters a lot of advanced and new grammar forms. Even if he can't understand them all, by using context clues to figure out the meaning of these forms he believed that he improved his grammar. For the two strategies that were negatively correlated to achievement, it could be suggested that depending too heavily on these strategies might have adverse effects. Since the notion of accuracy is highly valued in Turkish culture and education, students give too much importance to rules and forms but ignore the importance of productive skills. Hence, it is suggested taking the students' level and prior knowledge and their purposes in learning the language into account, teachers should give equal weight to all skills, accuracy and fluency.

The interview results of one of the students revealed that he employed a strategy of his own which was not included on the ELLSI. He attributed his success mostly to translation which he tried to do both when he was speaking and reading. The role of translation in foreign language acquisition has been controversial and translation as a teaching tool is still waiting to be recognized in the field (Zojer, 2008). Zojer (2008) supports the use of translation stating that when used appropriately, translation can actually counteract learner's tendencies to transfer structures from their mother tongue. Teachers can use techniques and activities which involve elements of translation and which can be accommodated within contemporary approaches to teaching in order to enable students to utilize this strategy. This finding also supports the notion that it is possible that students use their own strategies which are not on the ELLSI; thus, reporting a low frequency of strategy use does not necessarily mean they are not active strategy users or successful.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study was based on LLS use of preparatory school students at Istanbul Technical University. In order to explore students' LLS use, an adapted version of the English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (Griffiths, 2003b) was used. Also, with the purpose of gaining a more precise picture of learning strategy use among our students, email interviews were conducted.

By considering the need for understanding the role of strategies in English language learning and its relation to students' success, the study aimed to investigate the frequency with which students use LLS and how it is related to students' achievement at school using the results of the questionnaire, email interviews and proficiency test scores.

Throughout this chapter, a summary of the findings and implications drawn from this finding are presented. Furthermore limitations and suggestions for further research are discussed.

6.2 Summary of the Findings

The main findings of the study may be summarized as follows:

Firstly, the overall LLS use of preparatory students at Istanbul Technical University was found to be at medium level (average=2.9, as defined by Oxford, 1990). The most frequently used strategies were “I use a dictionary to check the meanings of words”, “I watch movies in English” and “I listen to songs in English” with an overall average rate of 4.2.

Secondly, no significant correlation between LLS use and students’ proficiency level was found. Students at elementary and intermediate group reported equal frequency of overall LLS use with a rate of 2.9 which was very slightly higher than the frequency of strategy use of pre-intermediate group which was 2.8.

Thirdly, the present study could not find a significant relation between average overall LLS use and overall achievement of students. However, according to the results, a group of four strategies had a significant positive correlation with successful exam results, accounting for nearly 10% of the variance.

Finally, gender was found to be significantly related to overall LLS use. The results of this study revealed that females used strategies more (mean=3.0) than males (mean=2.8). However, in spite of a slightly higher strategy use, females were slightly less successful on average than the male students.

6.3 Implications

Although language learning strategies have been believed to have a fundamental place in second language acquisition since they became well known in the 1980s and 1990s, they have disappointed classroom teachers due to their vague nature (Gu, 2010, cited in Oxford, 2011). The elusiveness of LLS caused some misconceptions which was

underlined by Oxford (2011, p. 13) stating that “Some people might have believed that strategies would remove all the hard work from language learning and teaching”.

According to the results of this study, even though strategies may have some effect on language learning performance, it has been found that they are only one part of a bigger puzzle. It is important for English teachers to recognize the importance of LLS use. However, they should also bear in mind that there are a variety of other factors involved in the language learning process and it may not be judicious to attribute the language learning success of students to only one factor, i.e. strategies.

Nevertheless, the results of this study showed that there were some strategies which were positively related to achievement for these students. LLS may not be the only learning tool a student has but it is clear that they have an important role in the language learning process. Therefore, teachers need to encourage students to use the strategies that were positively related to achievement by designing classroom activities or tasks to reinforce them or by providing strategy instruction in order to ensure students utilize these strategies to the maximum extent.

Strategy instruction is very important as teachers may not be able to teach all the language skills that students will need in the future. Helping students become aware of and acquire LLS should be a crucial task for teachers. Teachers can provide strategy instruction by offering examples of how they have used strategies for similar language tasks. They may explicitly discuss how a strategy works, when it might be used and why they need it. Explicit instruction in strategies can make students use the learned strategy more frequently and more effectively, help them become better language learners, help

them add strategies to their repertoire of learning tools, and encourage them to decide which strategies are most effective for particular tasks (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary & Robbins, 1999).

In conclusion, LLS is a part of the language learning process which should not be ignored. However, there are many other factors which affect students' choice of LLS and language performance. Green and Oxford (1995, p. 292) emphasised the importance of those factors stating:

The more that teachers know about such factors, the more readily the teacher can come to grips with the nature of individual differences in the classroom. Such knowledge is power —the power to plan lessons so that students with many different characteristics, including varied strategies, can receive what they need.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The current study has some limitations due to the number and profile of participants and data collection instruments. The first limitation is the number of the participants. The research included only students at the School of Foreign Languages at Istanbul Technical University. For this reason, the results may actually be limited to the characteristics of the community of young adult university students at Istanbul Technical University where the study was carried out. It could have been more beneficial and enlightening if the study had been carried out on a much larger scale. Besides, comparison of preparatory school students and those who learn English in other settings for different purposes is needed to have insights into other factors involved such as motivation and age.

As a data collection instrument, email interviewing has its benefits along with its drawbacks. It is believed that more data could have been drawn if the interviews had been constructed face-to-face. Think-aloud protocols and diaries could have been used so as to triangulate qualitative data obtained through email interviews.

6.5 Suggestion for Further Research

Although strategies may have some effect, it is clear that there are a variety of other factors involved. To view the whole picture of language learning strategy use by preparatory school students in Turkey, it is suggested that other learner based factors such as anxiety, motivation, attitude, learners' beliefs about language learning, learning styles, family background and support etc. should be explored in future studies.

Future research should also focus on methods to integrate language learning strategy training into language instruction aiming to enhance students' language learning and the effect of strategy instruction on language learning.

The age factor was not included in the study as all the participants were young adults. Further study should compare other age groups with the findings of the current study.

A longitudinal study could be constructed to understand how LLS use of students develops over time and how it relates to achievement at the end.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY INVENTORY

There are 2 sections in this questionnaire. In Section 1, fill in the information about you. Then read the sentences in Section 2 and answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers. Write your answers on the line beside the number of the statement. Also, if you have any comments regarding the strategies, please write them in the Comments box.

Section 1

- 1) Name: 2) Present Level of English.....
3) Date of birth:..... 4) Gender: Male ____ Female ____
5) How long have you been learning English? _____

Section 2

Please rate the following statements according to whether you

- 1) Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither agree nor disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly agree

Strategies	Rating	Comments
1) I do homework regularly and on time.		
2) I learn from the teacher.		
3) I read books in English for pleasure.		
4) I use a computer programme to learn or practice English.		
5) I watch TV in English.		
6) I revise what I have learnt in class regularly.		
7) I listen to songs in English.		
8) I write letters/e-mails in English.		
9) I listen to music while studying.		

10) I talk to other students in English whenever I can.		
11) I use a dictionary to check the meanings of English words.		
12) I read newspapers in English whenever I can get them.		
13) I study English grammar.		
14) I try different techniques to learn new vocabulary.		
15) I make use of a notebook.		
16) I talk to native speakers of English.		
17) I manage my time so that English study is done.		
18) I don't worry about making mistakes when learning English.		
19) I use a self-study centre to study English.		
20) I try to think in English.		
21) I listen to native speakers of English.		
22) I notice the mistakes I make when speaking or writing English and learn from them.		
23) I spend a lot of time studying English.		
24) I make friends with native speakers.		
25) I watch movies in English.		
26) I learn about the culture of English speakers.		
27) I listen to the radio in English.		
28) I write a diary in English.		
Are there any other strategies you use when learning English?		

Appendix B

İNGİLİZ DİLİ ÖĞRENME STRATEJİ ANKETİ

Bu ankette bölüm vardır. İlk bölümde kendinizle ilgili bilgileri doldurun. Daha sonra ikinci bölümdeki her bir ifadeyi okuyun ve size ne kadar iyi tanımladığını dikkate alarak işaretleyin. Nasıl olmanız gerektiği veya başkalarının ne yaptığını düşünerek cevaplamayınız. İfadelerin doğru ya da yanlış cevabı yoktur. Cevaplarınızı ifadenin sırasındaki Derece kutusuna yazınız. Eğer stratejiyle ilgili yorumunuz varsa Yorumlar kutusuna yorumunuzu yazınız.

Bölüm 1:

- 1) İsim: 2) Şuanki seviyeniz:
3) Doğum tarihi: 4) Cinsiyet: Bay ____ Bayan ____
5) (Genel olarak) Ne kadar süredir İngilizce öğreniyorsunuz? _____

Bölüm 2:

Aşağıdaki dil öğrenme stratejilerini belirten 28 ifadeyi okuyup 1) Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
2) Katılmıyorum 3) Fikrim yok 4) Katılıyorum 5) Kesinlikle katılıyorum
seçeneklerinden size en uygun olanını ilgili bölüme yazınız.

Stratejiler	Derece	Yorumlar
1) Ödevlerimi düzenli olarak, zamanında yaparım.		
2) Öğretmenim aracılığı (sayesinde) ile öğrenirim.		
3) Kendi isteğimle keyif aldığım için İngilizce kitap okurum.		
4) İngilizce öğrenmek ve pratik yapmak için bilgisayar programlarını (internet, kelime oyunları vb.) kullanırım.		
5) İngilizce TV programları izlerim. .		
6) Sınıfta öğrendiklerimi düzenli bir şekilde tekrar ederim.		
7) İngilizce şarkılar dinlerim.		
8) İngilizce mektup/e-mail yazarım.		
9) Ders çalışırken müzik dinlerim.		
10) Diğer öğrencilerle mümkün olan her durumda İngilizce konuşurum.		

11) İngilizce kelimelerin anlamlarını bulmak için sözlük kullanırım.		
12) Alabildiğim/edinebildiğim her zaman İngilizce gazete okurum.		
13) İngilizce gramer çalışırım.		
14) Yeni kelime öğrenmek için değişik yöntemler denerim.		
15) Defter kullanırım.		
16) Ana dili İngilizce olan kişilerle konuşurum.		
17) Zamanımı iyi yönettiğimden İngilizce çalışmamı da yaparım.		
18) İngilizce öğrenirken yanlış yapmak beni endişelendirmez.		
19) İngilizce çalışmak için bir bireysel çalışma merkezi kullanırım.		
20) İngilizce düşünmeye çalışırım.		
21) Ana dili İngilizce olan kişileri dinlerim.		
22) İngilizce konuşurken ve yazarken yaptığım yanlışları farkeder, onlar sayesinde öğrenirim.		
23) İngilizce çalışmaya çok vakit ayırırım.		
24) Ana dili İngilizce olan kişilerle arkadaşlık ederim.		
25) İngilizce film izlerim.		
26) Ana dili İngilizce olan insanların kültürünü öğrenirim.		
27) İngilizce radyo dinlerim.		
28) İngilizce günlük yazarım.		
İngilizce öğrenirken kullandığınız başka stratejiler var mıdır?		

Appendix C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear,

Congratulations for your success in the Proficiency exam. I conducted a questionnaire about language learning strategies during the year in your class and I would like to ask you some questions about your responses to this questionnaire. I wanted to contact you for an interview because your exam result was one of the highest scores in your class. I will appreciate if you can answer those questions which will help me understand language learning strategy use better.

1- Which language learning strategies do you use most? Why?

2- What do you find most difficult about learning English? How do you think you can overcome this difficulty? ¹

3- You gave the highest rating to the strategy: “I watch TV in English.” Can you explain why you use this strategy a lot? In what ways this strategy is effective in your English learning progress? What channels and programmes do you prefer to watch?

4- Can you explain why you use the strategy: “I write letters/emails in English” always or almost always? How often and in what situations do you write letters/emails? How do you think this strategy affect your achievement in English?

5- You gave the lowest rating to the strategy: “I write a diary in English”. Can you explain why you use it least? ²

Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Questions 1 and 2 were asked to all students participating in email interviews.

² Questions 3, 4 and 5 were written to provide examples of other questions which varied according to students' responses to the questionnaire.