



Perceived Importance, Use and Instruction of Vocabulary Learning Strategies from Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

This study aimed to unearth and compare students' and teachers' perspectives in relation to the perceived importance, use and instruction of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). A total of 548 ninth grade students studying at ten different Anatolian high schools in Antalya, Turkey and 56 English language teachers working at these schools participated in the study. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of VLS. Following a validation process and conducting confirmatory factor analysis, further statistical analysis was carried out. The results indicated that the students and teachers who ascribed a higher level of importance to VLS used and taught them to a significantly larger extent. The study found no statistically significant difference between the levels of importance attached to the use and instruction of VLS by the students and teachers. However, teachers' frequency of strategy instruction appeared to be significantly higher than students' frequency of strategy use except for cognitive strategies. Therefore, it was concluded that while teachers reported actively teaching a wide variety of VLS, students implemented the strategies to a more limited extent. Based on the results, it was recommended to explore the reasons for this discrepancy between the students and teachers.

Öğrenci ve Öğretmen Bakış Açısıyla Kelime Öğrenme Stratejilerinin Algılanan Önemi, Kullanımı ve Öğretimi

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, kelime öğrenme stratejilerinin algılanan önemi, kullanımı ve öğretimi konusundaki öğrenci ve öğretmen bakış açılarını saptamak ve karşılaştırmaktır. Türkiye'de, Antalya ilinde yer alan on farklı Anadolu lisesinde öğrenimlerini sürdüren toplam 548 dokuzuncu sınıf öğrencisi ile bu okullarda görev yapan 56 İngilizce öğretmeni çalışmaya katılmıştır. Schmitt'in (1997) kelime öğrenme stratejileri sınıflandırmasından yola çıkılarak oluşturulmuş bir anket aracılığıyla veri toplanmıştır. Geçerlilik çalışması ve doğrulayıcı faktör analizinin ardından diğer istatistiksel analizler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar, kelime öğrenme stratejilerine daha çok önem veren öğrencilerin bu stratejileri daha fazla kullandığını, öğretmenlerin de daha fazla öğrettiğini göstermiştir. Öğrencilerin kelime öğrenme stratejilerinin kullanımına verdiği önem düzeyi ile öğretmenlerin bu stratejilerin öğretimine verdiği önem düzeyi arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. Fakat bilişsel stratejiler dışında, öğretmenlerin stratejileri öğretme sıklığının öğrencilerin stratejileri kullanma sıklığından anlamlı ölçüde fazla olduğu görülmüştür. Bu nedenle, öğretmenlerin birçok farklı stratejiyi etkin biçimde öğrettiklerini ifade etmelerine karşın öğrencilerin stratejileri daha sınırlı bir oranda uyguladıkları sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu sonuçlardan yola çıkılarak, öğrenciler ve öğretmenler arasındaki bu uyumsuzluğun nedenlerinin araştırılması önerilmiştir.

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Introduction

Among various aspects of a language, vocabulary, most probably, constitutes one of the elements that are of paramount importance. Therefore, the centrality of lexis in language learning is continually highlighted for decades even though it was once referred to as a neglected area (Meara, 1980). Vocabulary is even called “the heart of language comprehension and use” (Hunt & Beglar, 2005, p. 24), and it is pointed out that regardless of how adept a language learner is at grammar and pronunciation, meaningful communication in a second/foreign language (L2) is absolutely impossible without a certain amount of vocabulary knowledge to express oneself (McCarthy, 1990). Thus, developing lexical competence might be regarded as one of the major determinants of acquiring proficiency in an L2.

In addition to its significant role in L2 learning, the versatile nature of vocabulary learning sheds light on how worthy it is of being researched with its various aspects. Besides the need to learn a large number of lexical items, vocabulary learning requires mastering diverse elements involved in each of these items including meaning, form and contextual use, and given the multitude of lexical items in English, lexical development turns into a remarkably challenging task for English language learners (Schmitt, 2008, 2010). Moreover, vocabulary acquisition takes place incrementally with various aspects of lexical knowledge building on one another and proceeding on a continuum (Takač, 2008). Hence, the formidable development of vocabulary knowledge as a gradual process cannot be restricted to the classroom context. Indeed, language learners have to take control of their own vocabulary learning, and teacher guidance might help them get involved in this process and promote their learning of how to cope with it (Nation, 2008). The crucial role of vocabulary learning strategies, which form a subgroup of language learning strategies (Nation, 2001; Oxford, 1990; Takač, 2008), stands out at this juncture.

In the last decades, there has been an important shift from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred one emphasizing the role of individual language learner in the field of second/foreign language learning, and language learning strategies employed in this process have been a major concern in L2 research (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). Studies on language learning strategies started with an interest in how good language learners approach language learning (Rubin, 1975), and continue to be conducted for years. The rationale behind the use of language learning strategies is one’s desire to facilitate and take control of the learning process. As highlighted by Oxford and Nyikos (1989), “Use of appropriate learning strategies enables students to take responsibility for their own learning by enhancing learner autonomy, independence, and self-direction.” (p. 291). Thus, language learning strategies (LLS) are of considerable value particularly for the language learners aiming at attaining a high level of proficiency in an L2.

According to Klapper (2008), language learners implement strategies in vocabulary learning more often compared to any other aspects of language learning because they ascribe importance to vocabulary learning and the nature of vocabulary learning provides the opportunity to simply use strategies. Bearing in mind the complex construct of vocabulary knowledge as well as the abundance of lexical items in any language, it seems that vocabulary learning is one of the areas that require independent learning as well. Therefore, with the movement from a principally teacher-dominated language education to a learner-oriented perspective highlighting the way individual language learners approach and deal with language learning, vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) started to draw considerable interest (Schmitt, 2000). Vocabulary learning strategies have been constantly researched and further explored since then in order to benefit from these tools more. It has been recurrently pointed out that vocabulary learning strategies promote lexical development by helping learners take control of their vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 1997).

In an attempt to classify VLS, different taxonomies have been put forward in the last couple of decades (e.g., Fan, 2003; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Nation, 2001). Of all taxonomies of VLS, Schmitt’s (1997) taxonomy might be the most comprehensive classification scheme as asserted by several researchers (Segler, Pain, & Sorace, 2002; Takač, 2008). In response to the need for an extensive VLS taxonomy, Schmitt (1997) initially compiled a list of VLS through literature review and by making use of students’ self-reports on their ways of learning vocabulary as well as teachers’ experiences, which resulted in a list of 58 VLS. During the classification process, these strategies were initially categorized according to Oxford’s (1990) four categories of LLS, namely *social strategies* (SOC), *memory strategies* (MEM), *cognitive strategies* (COG) and *metacognitive strategies* (MET). This was followed by the addition of determination strategies (DET) as a fifth category. Moreover, a further distinction was made

between *discovery strategies* that are utilized to find out the meanings of lexical items and *consolidation strategies* that are employed to remember these items.

Even though vocabulary learning strategies prove to be invaluable tools for lexical development when effectively used, language learners need to strive for it in order to make the most of these strategies. However, students do not attain autonomy and take responsibility for their language learning on their own in the classroom context and need teacher guidance in learning about the strategies and putting them into practice (Little, 1995). Thus, strategy instruction is treated as a significant requirement for effective use of strategies. Anderson (2005) specifies the principal goal of strategy instruction as making language learners aware of potential strategies and subsequently giving them the opportunity to choose suitable ones for their own learning purposes. Pointing out the significant role of teacher guidance, Oxford (2003) concludes that L2 teachers should try to find ways of incorporating strategy instruction into their classes.

A review of the literature reveals the attention paid to VLS especially in the last couple of decades. Studies on vocabulary learning strategies have centered on topics such as strategy use of good and poor language learners (e.g., Gu, 1994; Lawson & Hogben, 1996), specific VLS and their effectiveness (e.g., Brown & Perry, 1991; Prichard, 2008; Sagarra & Alba, 2006; Sarıçoban & Başıbek, 2012; Walters & Bozkurt, 2009), the relationship between strategy use and learner-related variables (e.g., Catalán, 2003; Çelik & Toptaş, 2010; Gu, 2002; Üster, 2008), the relations between strategy use and learning outcomes or success (e.g., Gu & Johnson, 1996; Kojic-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999; Sanaoui, 1995), and the comparison of perceived usefulness and frequency of use regarding VLS (e.g., Fan, 2003; Schmitt, 1997; Wu, 2005). Among the last group of studies, Schmitt's (1997) survey study on the strategy use of 600 EFL learners investigated the VLS found useful by the learners and the ones used for vocabulary development. The study found that the learners did not employ some certain strategies despite finding them effective. Accordingly, the study recommended that strategy training might be beneficial for language learners to try using various strategies. Similarly, Fan (2003) explored any potential discrepancies between perceived usefulness of VLS and students' frequency of use. The study revealed a disparity between the VLS found useful by L2 learners and the ones used regularly. The present study included a similar dimension by investigating the importance attached to the use of VLS by students and to the instruction of these strategies by teachers along with students' actual use and teachers' actual instruction of these strategies.

When the literature is reviewed, it is also seen that a variety of studies have been conducted on different groups of vocabulary learning strategies and their instruction (e.g., Akın & Seferoğlu, 2004; Atay & Ozbulgan, 2007; Kobayashi & Little, 2018; Mizumoto & Takeuchi, 2009; Rasekh & Ranjbary, 2003). Atay and Ozbulgan (2007) carried out an experimental study in relation to strategy instruction and focused specifically on memory strategies. They investigated the way training on memory strategies and contextual learning influenced the ESP vocabulary development of Turkish EFL learners. The results revealed that the treatment group that received the aforementioned training outperformed the control group that focused only on contextual learning. In a similar vein, Rasekh and Ranjbary (2003) carried out an experimental study which lasted ten weeks. The study sought for the influence of explicit strategy training on metacognitive strategies and unearthed the significant contribution of strategy training to EFL learners' lexical development. Likewise, Mizumoto and Takeuchi (2009) explored the impact of cognitive and metacognitive strategy training on vocabulary development. Therefore, they conducted an experimental study with university level Japanese EFL learners. The study found that the learners in the experimental group that were exposed to strategy instruction outperformed the control group in the post-test on vocabulary. The researchers underlined that strategy training promoted the development of students' strategy repertoire and frequency of strategy use.

Although strategy training has been one of the major concerns of researchers in VLS research, no studies incorporating teachers' perceptions of VLS instruction into the scope of the research and evaluating student perceptions along with teacher perceptions were encountered in the literature at the time of data collection. Lai (2005) included teacher beliefs in a descriptive study on strategy instruction, explored Taiwanese EFL teachers' instruction of VLS together with their awareness of and beliefs about the strategies, concluded that teachers were aware of various VLS, and detected positive correlations between teachers' beliefs about VLS and their instruction of the strategies. However, the scope of that study was restricted with teacher perspectives. Unlike previous research, this study sought to investigate how vocabulary learning strategies are addressed by both students and teachers by placing a particular emphasis on strategy instruction. Before starting a more systematic strategy

training, it would be more reasonable to investigate the current situation including both student and teacher perspectives.

The present study set out to pave the way for more systematic, organized and well-planned strategy training studies on vocabulary learning strategies by depicting the current situation about strategy instruction. Therefore, the aim of this study was to compare perceived importance, use and instruction of vocabulary learning strategies from students' and teachers' points of view. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the strategy use of students attaching a higher and lower level of importance to VLS?
2. Is there a significant difference between the strategy instruction of teachers attaching a higher and lower level of importance to VLS?
3. Is there a significant difference between the levels of importance attributed to the use and instruction of VLS by the students and teachers?
4. Is there a significant difference between the students' frequency of strategy use and the teachers' frequency of strategy instruction?

Method

Setting and Participants

For the current study, a research group involving 9th grade students and teachers of English was determined via purposeful sampling. In this study, it was deemed necessary to carry out the research on students and teachers of schools that place a high emphasis on English language teaching. While determining the specific schools, general characteristics of the schools were taken into account, and ten Anatolian high schools that have a deep-rooted background in terms of English language teaching were specifically chosen. After getting permission for conducting the research from the provincial directorate of national education, two classes were chosen randomly in each of these ten schools. Attention was paid to these two classes' having different English language teachers in order for the classes to better represent the 9th graders in a school. At the time of data collection, there were a total of 71 English language teachers in these ten schools, and 56 of these teachers (39 female, 17 male) voluntarily took part in the study. Demographic information about the participant teachers is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of Participant Teachers

Variables	n
Age	
30-39 years	14
40-49 years	34
50 years and more	8
Gender	
Female	39
Male	17
Major	
English Language Teaching	42
English Language and Literature	5
Translation and Interpreting Studies	2
English Linguistics	2
Other	5
Graduation Degree	
BA	50
MA	5
PhD	1
Teaching Experience	
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	13
16 years and more	40
VLS training	
Received	37
Not received	19
<i>Total</i>	<i>56</i>

To determine the participant students, the two classes chosen randomly in these ten schools were taken as a basis. A total of 548 students participated in the study. Demographic information about participant students is illustrated in Table 2. The schools of the participant students are symbolized with numbers for confidentiality.

Table 2. Demographics of Participant Students

Variable	n	%
Gender		
Female	323	58.9
Male	225	41.1
School		
School 1	55	10
School 2	59	10.8
School 3	55	10
School 4	51	9.3
School 5	66	12
School 6	58	10.6
School 7	55	10
School 8	53	9.7
School 9	39	7.1
School 10	57	10.4
<i>Total</i>	548	100

Data Collection Tool

Two types of questionnaires were used in search of a general picture about 9th grade students' and English language teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the use and instruction of VLS. A student questionnaire was formed first according to Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies involving a total of 58 strategies (14 for discovery and 44 for consolidation). As stated previously, Schmitt's taxonomy of VLS involves five strategy groups: determination strategies (9 items), social strategies (8 items), memory strategies (27 items), cognitive strategies (9 items) and metacognitive strategies (5 items). While forming the student questionnaire, Catalán's (2003) questionnaire of vocabulary learning strategies, which was designed based on Schmitt's taxonomy, was largely made use of. Permission for the use of the taxonomy and the questionnaire was obtained from both researchers through e-mail. While translating the questionnaire into Turkish, certain changes were made on some items in terms of wording, explanations and examples.

Apart from the changes in the expressions, another modification was made on scaling. While the respondents of the questionnaire indicated whether they used each strategy or not with "Yes" or "No" in Schmitt's (1997) study and by marking the strategies employed with a cross in Catalán's (2003), five-point likert scales were utilized in the present study so that a wider range of responses could be elicited from the participants. Rating scales such as likert scales are found beneficial for researchers as they provide the opportunity to reach a variety of responses with more subtlety (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In this study, two types of five-point likert scales indicating the level of importance (1: not important at all, 2: somewhat important, 3: important, 4: quite important, 5: extremely important) and the level of application (1: never apply it, 2: rarely apply it, 3: sometimes apply it, 4: usually apply it, 5: always apply it) of vocabulary learning strategies were used. Since the respondents were going to indicate how important they find the use of each strategy and to what extent they think they apply it during vocabulary learning strategies, the items were provided accordingly. The layout of the questionnaire was also adjusted according to these scales. In order to clarify the way the two scales were to be filled out, explanatory information was added to the introduction part and the scales were placed at the right and left sides of the items so that the respondents would follow each item with ease and indicate the level of importance and the level of application without interruption.

As for the teacher questionnaire on vocabulary learning strategies, the student questionnaire was taken as a basis while forming this questionnaire. The teacher questionnaire was administered in English; however, the changes about wording, explanations and examples were reflected on this questionnaire as well. As the purpose was to compare student and teacher perceptions and practices, special attention was paid to the equivalence of the

student and teacher questionnaires. Therefore, the same examples and explanations were used in the items of both questionnaires. Yet, since the teachers' perceptions regarding the instruction of each vocabulary learning strategy were sought for, wording was changed accordingly, and teachers were asked to what extent they find important teaching and creating awareness of each strategy and to what extent they think they implement the instruction of these strategies in their classes. After the two questionnaires were formed, expert opinion was received from academics with a PhD in English language teaching and Turkish language teaching for the equivalence of the resulting teacher and student questionnaires as well as the equivalence of English and Turkish versions. Experts were also provided with Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of VLS and Catalán's (2003) questionnaire so that they would evaluate the modifications made on the questionnaires. Based on the feedback received from the experts, the necessary changes and corrections were made on both forms. After this process, Turkish version of the questionnaire prepared for students was translated back into English by a native speaker of English who has advanced speaking skills in Turkish and has been teaching English in Turkey for many years. As a result of the feedback acquired through back translation, some minor changes were made on the student form. Then, student and teacher forms were compared and checked for equivalence for the last time. By this way, the final forms of the questionnaires were constructed.

Data Collection

Data were gathered from students and teachers on a voluntary basis. The questionnaire was applied to students during class time in each school. Students were asked to pay particular attention to filling out both of the two scales, level of importance and level of application, for each item. The administration of the student questionnaire lasted approximately 30-35 minutes. As for the teacher questionnaire, it was administered to all volunteer English language teachers in these ten schools. The teacher questionnaire was administered to small groups of teachers successively in each school. It took about 25-30 minutes to administer each teacher questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were subjected to statistical analysis using two statistical software packages: LISREL and SPSS. As stated previously, VLS questionnaires used in this study are based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of VLS. In addition to the distinction of discovery and consolidation strategies, Schmitt divided the vocabulary learning strategies into five categories. In this process, he grounded these categories on the groups of social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies in Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies and added determination strategies as a fifth group of VLS. However, the resulting categories were not validated through factor analysis. In order to see whether these categories occur statistically in the present research study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using LISREL. The five-factor structure of Schmitt's taxonomy, which was taken as a basis for the questionnaires, was tested using CFA. Following an assumption check, the data gathered from students were subjected to a CFA. After the confirmation of the factor structure, the subscales were also checked for internal consistency reliability. To do this, the results obtained from the level of importance and application scales were checked in a row. Based on the level of importance scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each strategy group as follows: DET = .70; SOC = .75; MEM = .90; COG = .83; MET = .53. The values were a bit lower based on the level of application scale. A reliability coefficient of .70 or greater is generally found adequate for the reliability of test scores (George & Mallery, 2016). Therefore, alpha values of the abovementioned four subscales can be considered as acceptable. As for the subscale of metacognitive strategies, the alpha coefficient was calculated as .53 for this subscale, which may have partly resulted from its consisting of only five items. However, this value increased to .61 in the case that the 57th item in the questionnaire was omitted. Nevertheless, the relevant item was not eliminated as it was thought that the item can yield different results with different samples.

Then, answers were sought for the research questions. For this purpose, higher and lower levels of importance were initially determined for the students by using mean values and standard deviations. For each subscale, higher level of importance was defined as the rounded form of the mean plus one standard deviation and above, and lower level of importance was defined as the rounded form of the mean minus one standard deviation and below. By this way, two groups of students attributing a higher and lower level of importance to the use of VLS were determined. For each subscale, the values used for the identification of these two groups are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Identification of Higher and Lower Levels of Importance for Students

Subscale	M	SD	Higher Level	Lower Level
Determination Strategies	31.62	5.85	37 and above	26 and below
Social Strategies	27.40	6.06	33 and above	21 and below
Memory Strategies	92.27	17.96	110 and above	74 and below
Cognitive Strategies	33.63	7.31	41 and above	26 and below
Metacognitive Strategies	17.36	3.78	21 and above	14 and below

By using the values in Table 3, the two groups of students attaching a higher and lower level of importance to the use of VLS were determined and coded as upper group and lower group respectively. Then, for each subscale, an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether the application scores of the students attaching a higher and lower level of importance to the use of strategies significantly differ from each other. The same procedure for determining higher and lower levels of importance was followed for teachers. As in the identification of these levels for students, means and standard deviations were calculated and used for this purpose. In each subscale, higher level of importance was defined as the rounded form of the mean plus one standard deviation and above while low level of importance was defined as the rounded form of the mean minus one standard deviation and below. Accordingly, the two groups of teachers giving a higher and lower level of importance to the instruction of VLS were identified and coded as upper group and lower group. For each subscale, the values used in the identification process of these groups are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Identification of Higher and Lower Levels of Importance for Teachers

Subscale	M	SD	Higher Level	Lower Level
Determination Strategies	30.79	4.67	35 and above	26 and below
Social Strategies	26.11	4.02	30 and above	22 and below
Memory Strategies	98.04	15.13	113 and above	83 and below
Cognitive Strategies	30.96	5.96	37 and above	25 and below
Metacognitive Strategies	18.18	4.03	22 and above	14 and below

The values illustrated in Table 4 were taken as a basis for comparing the VLS instruction of the teachers in the upper and lower groups. However, for teachers, it was not possible to carry out t-test as the sizes of upper and lower groups, namely the teachers ascribing a higher and lower level of importance to the instruction of VLS, were not sufficient for performing t-test based on a principle requiring a group size of at least 30 (Ravid, 2011). Therefore, a Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare VLS instruction of upper and lower groups. Lastly, an independent samples t-test was performed to test whether the levels of importance attributed to the use and instruction of VLS by students and teachers significantly differ from each other and whether there is a difference between these two groups' frequencies of VLS use and instruction. The five subscales within the student and teacher questionnaires of VLS were taken as a basis for all calculations since it would not be meaningful to calculate and interpret total scores with VLS. In addition, the significance level was set at $p < 0.05$ for all the statistical analyses.

Findings

The Comparison of Strategy Use of Students Attaching a Higher and Lower Level of Importance to VLS

The aim of the first research question was to discover any significant differences between the strategy use of students attaching a higher and lower level of importance to VLS. After the identification of upper and lower groups, the application means of the students in these groups were compared through an independent samples t-test. The results are presented in Table 5 for the subscales of determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies respectively.

Table 5. The Differences between Application Means of the Students Attaching a Higher and Lower Level of Importance to VLS

Subscale	Upper Group			Lower Group			df	t	p	η^2
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD				
DET	117	34.12	4.86	107	23.45	4.91	222	16.335	.000	.546
SOC	122	25.77	5.61	90	16.11	4.18	209.970	13.616	.000	.469
MEM	101	96.43	17.51	93	57.61	10.26	163.725	19.010	.000	.653
COG	111	33.41	7.63	94	19.71	5.83	201.019	14.557	.000	.511
MET	115	16.65	4.11	124	11.54	2.73	195.964	11.235	.000	.348

As is clear from Table 5, regarding the determination strategies, the difference between the application means of students in the upper and lower groups was statistically significant with a large effect size, $t(222)=16.335$, $p=.000$, $\eta^2=.546$. Therefore, it was revealed that the students giving a higher level of importance to determination strategies had a higher mean score on the application of these strategies ($M=34.12$) compared to the application mean score of the students attaching a lower level of importance to determination strategies ($M=23.45$). Similarly, there was a statistically significant difference between application means of the students attributing a higher and lower level of importance to social strategies, which was evident with a large effect size, $t(209.970)=13.616$, $p=.000$, $\eta^2=.469$. Hence, it was found that the application mean of the students attaching a higher level of importance to social strategies ($M=25.77$) was higher than that of the students placing a lower level of importance on these strategies ($M=16.11$). As for memory strategies, a statistically significant difference showing a large effect size was similarly present between the application means of students in the upper and lower groups, $t(163.725)=19.010$, $p=.000$, $\eta^2=.653$. Consequently, it can be pointed out that the application mean of the students ascribing a higher level of importance to memory strategies ($M=96.43$) was higher than that of the students giving a lower level of importance to these strategies ($M=57.61$). For cognitive strategies, the difference between the application means of upper and lower groups was statistically significant with a large effect size too, $t(201.019)=14.557$, $p=.000$, $\eta^2=.511$. Thus, it can be noted that the students attaching a higher level of importance to cognitive strategies had a higher application mean ($M=33.41$) compared to application mean score of the students attaching a lower level of importance to these strategies ($M=19.71$). Lastly, for metacognitive strategies, a statistically significant difference with a large effect size was found between the application means of students giving a higher and lower level of importance to metacognitive strategies, $t(195.964)=11.235$, $p=.000$, $\eta^2=.348$. Therefore, it can be concluded that the application mean of the students ascribing a higher level of importance to metacognitive strategies ($M=16.65$) was higher than that of the students giving a lower a level of importance to these strategies ($M=11.54$). In sum, the results of the independent samples t-test performed on all five subscales indicated a statistically significant difference with a large effect size. Hence, for each subscale, it was concluded that the students attaching a higher level of importance to the use of VLS had a higher mean score on the application of these strategies compared to those attributing a lower level of importance to the use of the relevant strategies.

The Comparison of Strategy Instruction of Teachers Attaching a Higher and Lower Level of Importance to VLS

The second research question set out to determine any significant differences between the frequency of strategy instruction of teachers attaching a higher and lower level of importance to VLS. After the identification of upper and lower groups for teachers, the application mean scores of these two groups were compared. As the non-parametric equivalent of independent samples t-test, a Mann-Whitney U test was carried out for each subscale. The results are provided for the subscales of determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies in Table 6.

Table 6. The Differences between Application Mean Ranks of the Teachers Attaching a Higher and Lower Level of Importance to the Instruction of VLS

Subscale	Upper Group			Lower Group			U	p
	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks		
DET	14	16.46	230.50	9	5.06	45.50	.500	.000
SOC	11	15.77	173.50	11	7.23	79.50	13.500	.002
MEM	9	14.00	126.00	10	6.40	64.00	9.000	.003
COG	13	17.92	233.00	11	6.09	67.00	1.000	.000
MET	11	16.86	185.50	11	6.14	67.50	1.500	.000

As demonstrated in Table 6, a statistically significant difference was present between the application mean ranks of the teachers in the upper and lower groups, $U=.500$, $p=.000$. When the teachers' mean ranks were evaluated, it was seen that the application mean rank of the teachers attaching a higher level of importance to the instruction of determination strategies (mean rank=16.46) was higher than that of the teachers placing a lower level of importance on the instruction of these strategies (mean rank=5.06). Social strategies constituted the second strategy group for the comparison of the application mean ranks of teachers. The difference between the application mean ranks of the teachers was also statistically significant in this strategy group, $U=13.500$, $p=.002$. Through the evaluation of the application mean ranks of the teachers, it was found that the teachers attributing a higher level of importance to the instruction of social strategies had a higher mean rank on the application of their instruction (mean rank=15.77) compared to the application mean rank of the teachers placing a lower level of importance on it (mean rank=7.23). As for memory strategies, a statistically significant difference was also revealed between the application mean ranks of the teachers in the upper and lower groups, $U=9.000$, $p=.003$. When the mean ranks of these two groups of teachers were examined, it was seen that the mean rank of the teachers placing a higher level of importance on the application of the instruction of memory strategies (mean rank=14.00) was higher than that of the teachers giving a lower level of importance to their instruction (mean rank=6.40). Similarly, a statistically significant difference existed between the application mean ranks of the teachers placing a higher and lower level of importance on the instruction of cognitive strategies, $U=1.000$, $p=.000$. Through the evaluation of the application mean ranks of these two groups of teachers, it was revealed that the mean rank of the teachers attaching a higher level of importance to the instruction of cognitive strategies (mean rank=17.92) was higher than that of the teachers placing a lower level of importance on their instruction (mean rank=6.09). Finally, the difference between application mean ranks of the teachers in the upper and lower groups in relation to metacognitive strategies was also statistically significant, $U=1.500$, $p=.000$. When these two groups of teachers' mean ranks of application were examined, it was seen that the mean rank of the teachers attaching a higher level of importance to the instruction of metacognitive strategies (mean rank=16.86) was higher than that of the teachers placing a lower level of importance on their instruction (mean rank=6.14). To conclude, the results of the Mann-Whitney U test demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the application mean ranks of the teachers in the upper and lower groups under each strategy group. The test results indicated that teachers attributing a higher level of importance to the instruction of VLS under each strategy group had a higher mean rank on the instruction of the relevant strategies compared to those attaching a lower level of importance to the instruction of these strategies.

The Comparison of the Levels of Importance Attributed to the Use and Instruction of VLS by the Students and Teachers

The third research question aimed to reveal whether there was a significant difference between the levels of importance ascribed to the use and instruction of VLS by the students and teachers. To do this, an independent samples t-test was performed for each strategy group. The results are provided for the subscales of determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies in Table 7.

Table 7. The Differences between the Levels of Importance Attributed to the Use and Instruction of VLS by the Students and Teachers

Subscale	Student			Teacher			df	t	p	η^2
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD				
DET	548	31.62	5.85	56	30.79	4.67	602	1.038	.300	–
SOC	548	27.4	6.06	56	26.11	4.02	83.038	2.164	.033	.008
MEM	548	92.27	17.96	56	98.04	15.13	602	2.318	.021	.009
COG	548	33.63	7.31	56	30.96	5.96	602	2.636	.009	.011
MET	548	17.36	3.78	56	18.18	4.03	602	1.534	.126	–

As can be seen in Table 7, the difference between students' and teachers' mean scores on the subscale of determination strategies was not statistically significant, $t(602)=1.038$, $p=.300$. A statistically significant difference was found between the mean scores of students and teachers on the subscale of social strategies, $t(83.038)=2.164$, $p=.033$, $\eta^2=.008$. However, the aforementioned difference was not found remarkable in practical terms as the effect size was small. As for the group of memory strategies, a statistically significant difference also existed between students' and teachers' mean scores on this subscale, $t(602)=2.318$, $p=.021$, $\eta^2=.009$. Yet, this difference was not regarded as considerable in practice since the effect size was small. When it comes to cognitive strategies, the mean score of the students on this subscale differed statistically significantly from that of the teachers, $t(602)=2.636$, $p=.009$, $\eta^2=.011$. However, as the effect size was small, the relevant difference was not acknowledged to be remarkable in practical terms. Lastly, the difference between the mean scores of students and teachers on metacognitive strategies was not statistically significant either, $t(602)=1.534$, $p=.126$. To sum up, as a result of the independent samples t-test conducted for all five subscales, no statistically significant difference was detected between students' and teachers' mean scores on the subscales of determination strategies and metacognitive strategies. As for the subscales of social strategies, memory strategies and cognitive strategies, there was a statistically significant difference between students' and teachers' mean scores; however, as the effect size was small for these subscales, the aforementioned difference was not considered to be remarkable in practical terms.

The Comparison of the Students' Frequency of Strategy Use and the Teachers' Frequency of Strategy Instruction

The fourth research question aimed to find out whether there was a significant difference between the students' frequency of strategy use and the teachers' frequency of strategy instruction. The data gathered from both students and teachers via the application scale were normally distributed and the group sizes were above 30. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to compare the students' and teachers' application levels via independent samples t-test as in the comparison of the levels of importance. The t-test results related to the subscales of determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies are provided in Table 8.

Table 8. The Differences between the Students' Frequency Strategy Use and the Teachers' Frequency of Strategy Instruction

Subscale	Student			Teacher			df	t	p	η^2
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD				
DET	548	28.65	5.77	56	32.02	4.90	71.568	4.818	.000	.037
SOC	548	21.67	5.55	56	25.98	4.94	602	5.591	.000	.049
MEM	548	77.77	17.65	56	97.71	15.74	602	8.134	.000	.099
COG	548	27.12	7.80	56	30.66	6.17	74.195	3.979	.000	.026
MET	548	14.34	3.65	56	17.86	3.85	602	6.820	.000	.071

As displayed in Table 8, there was a statistically significant difference between students' and teachers' mean scores on the subscale of determination strategies with a medium effect size, $t(71.568)=4.818$, $p=.000$, $\eta^2=.037$. Accordingly, it was seen that the mean score of the teachers on the subscale of determinations strategies ($M=32.02$) was significantly higher than that of the students ($M=28.65$). A statistically significant difference with a medium effect size also existed between the mean scores of students and teachers on the subscale of social strategies,

$t(602)=5.591, p=.000, \eta^2=.049$. Therefore, it was found that the teachers had a significantly higher mean score on social strategies ($M=25.98$) compared to the students' mean score on this strategy group ($M=21.67$). As for the third group of strategies, the difference between students' and teachers' mean scores on the subscale of memory strategies was also statistically significant with a large effect size, $t(602)=8.134, p=.000, \eta^2=.099$. Thus, it was seen that the teachers' mean score on memory strategies ($M=97.71$) was significantly higher than that of the students ($M=77.77$). There was a statistically significant difference between the groups' mean scores on the subscale of cognitive strategies too, $t(74.195)=3.979, p=.000, \eta^2=.026$. Yet, the aforementioned difference was not found remarkable in practice as the effect size was small. Finally, the t-test results indicated a statistically significant difference with a medium effect size between the mean scores of students and teachers on the subscale of metacognitive strategies, $t(602)=6.820, p=.000, \eta^2=.071$. Accordingly, it was found that the teachers had a significantly higher mean score on metacognitive strategies ($M=17.86$) compared to the students' mean score on this subscale ($M=14.34$). In sum, the results of the independent samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between students' and teachers' application mean scores on memory strategies with a large effect size. As for determination strategies, social strategies and metacognitive strategies, a statistically significant difference was detected between students' and teachers' application mean scores on these three subscales with a medium effect size. Although a statistically significant difference was ascertained on the subscale of cognitive strategies as well, this difference was not found considerable in practice as the effect size was small. Hence, the teachers' application mean scores were significantly higher than those of the students for all strategy groups except for cognitive strategies.

Discussion and Conclusion

As the two integral parties of the teaching-learning process, students and teachers jointly shape and manage the process of language learning. Constituting one of the most crucial and challenging aspects of foreign language learning, vocabulary acquisition requires special attention from both students and teachers. Therefore, evaluating VLS utilized by language learners to foster vocabulary acquisition from the perspectives of both students and teachers might provide better insights into the importance and application of these tools. For this purpose, the present study investigated and compared student and teacher perceptions and practices in relation to the use and instruction of VLS.

Departing from the fact that language learners are mostly aware of the prominence of vocabulary knowledge for effective communication in a second language (Read, 2004), the study initially sought to reveal whether the importance attached to the VLS reflected on students' use of those strategies for language learning. The results indicated that the students attributing a higher level of importance to the use of VLS under each strategy group had a higher mean score on the application of these strategies compared to those giving a lower level of importance to the use of the relevant strategies. Therefore, this finding leads us to the fact that the students that attach a higher level of importance to the use of VLS have a significantly higher level of application regarding these strategies. This means that if the students attach a higher level of importance to the use of specific groups of VLS, they use them more for lexical development. This finding is congruent with the result reached by Fan (1999, cited in Fan, 2003) in a study investigating students' beliefs and strategy use, which indicated that language learners' beliefs in the importance of specific strategies foster and increase the use of those strategies. Indeed, learner beliefs are one of the individual learner differences that affect the learners' use of learning strategies together with the situational factors (Ellis, 1994). Therefore, if the students' beliefs in the importance of various VLS can be promoted, their implementation of a diverse range of strategies might be facilitated. Raising the learners' awareness of a wide variety of strategies might enable them to discover new strategies and use these strategies for their own lexical development.

As highlighted by Nunan (1995), we cannot expect students to automatically choose their own ways of learning. Hence, teachers have a crucial role in introducing and creating awareness of various VLS in order for students to realize the benefits of different strategies and apply them in their vocabulary learning process, which justifies the rationale behind this study. Thus, the present study also tested whether the strategy instruction frequency of the teachers who give a higher level of importance to VLS differed significantly from that of the teachers who attach a lower level of importance to VLS. The study found a significant difference between the application mean ranks of these two groups of teachers in each group of VLS. The results demonstrated that the teachers attaching a higher level of importance to the instruction of VLS under each strategy group had a higher mean rank on the instruction

of these strategies compared to those attributing a lower level of importance to the instruction of relevant strategies. This leads us to the conclusion that if the teachers attach a higher level of importance to the instruction of VLS, they teach or create awareness of the strategies to a larger extent. This finding is quite in line with those attained in Lai's (2005) study in which positive correlations were detected between teachers' beliefs in the effectiveness of VLS and their instructional practices regarding the strategies. The results of the current study also coincide with those of Şen's (2009) study in which EFL teachers' perceptions of LLS were compared with students' use of strategies, and it was ascertained that if the teachers are conscious of LLS, believe in their usefulness and find them practical, they employ them to a larger extent in their classes. In the present study, the consistency between the teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of VLS instruction and the teaching practices related to the strategies indicate that teachers' positive attitudes towards the instruction of VLS seem to reflect on their actual instruction of VLS. The fact that the teachers that attach a higher level of importance to the instruction of different groups of VLS teach those strategies to a larger extent justifies the need for raising the teachers' awareness of a variety of VLS before starting a systematic strategy training program because teachers might be convinced of the importance of various strategies and transfer these to their strategy instruction by this way. In this respect, it might be more beneficial if the teachers try to learn different strategies and do not limit strategy instruction with the VLS they personally find useful so that the students might get exposed to a wide variety of VLS.

As well as evaluating students' frequency of strategy use and teachers' frequency of strategy instruction in relation to the levels of importance attached to VLS, the present study also set out to compare student and teacher perspectives. To this end, the study sought to test whether there was a significant difference between the levels of importance attached to the use and instruction of VLS by the students and teachers. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference between students' and teachers' mean scores on the subscales of determination strategies and metacognitive strategies. As for the subscales of social strategies, memory strategies and cognitive strategies, a statistically significant difference was detected between students' and teachers' importance mean scores on these subscales; however, as the effect size was small for all three subscales, the aforementioned difference was not found remarkable in practical terms. The significance of this difference may have resulted from the large sample size. Hence, the result that students and teachers have similar perspectives about the importance of VLS use and instruction with remarkably positive attitudes and assumedly no statistically significant difference between the levels of importance ascribed to them is quite promising as both parties are conscious of the crucial role of VLS in lexical development. This finding was in line with previous research on language learning strategies which indicated that teachers attribute great importance to strategies and that the ones frequently used by students are generally congruent with the ones the teachers regard as quite important (Griffiths, 2007).

Since students and teachers similarly believed in the prominence of VLS use and instruction, they were expected to reflect their ideas on their practices and actively implement VLS use and instruction. Thus, another major dimension of the study involved the comparison of students' frequency of strategy use and teachers' frequency of strategy instruction. As a result, it was revealed that teachers had significantly higher mean scores on determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies and metacognitive strategies compared to the students, but the difference between these two groups on cognitive strategies was not considerable in terms of effect size. Hence, it can be concluded that teachers' frequency of strategy instruction was significantly higher than students' frequency of strategy use except for cognitive strategies. In other words, teachers reported teaching and creating awareness of the strategies to a significantly larger extent compared to the students' implementation of the VLS under each strategy group except for cognitive strategies. The results of the present study coincide with those of Şen's (2007) study which indicated that teachers have a significantly higher frequency of LLS instruction than the students' frequency of LLS use. Hence, it can be pointed out that a disparity might come out between student and teacher practices regarding LLS and VLS as a subgroup of LLS. Therefore, studies of strategy training should take this problem into account. The exception regarding cognitive strategies which involve verbal repetition of the word, written repetition, making and revising word lists, using flashcards, taking notes, revising vocabulary sections in textbooks, listening to recordings and CDs of word lists, putting English labels on physical objects and keeping a vocabulary notebook might stem from these strategies' being appropriate for students and teachers to implement together during class time. As most of these strategies might constitute an integral part of the vocabulary learning-teaching process in class, frequencies regarding students' strategy use and teachers' strategy instruction might not result in a big difference.

The incongruity between student and teacher practices demonstrates that although a wide variety of strategies were reported to be introduced and taught, this did not completely or properly reflect on students' use of VLS. Even though it was found through self-report data that various strategies were actively taught in English classes, strategy instruction may not have been pursued as efficaciously as needed or it may not have turned out to be effective enough to convince the learners of the usefulness of different kinds of strategies or to persuade them to use these strategies for lexical development. As underlined by Nation (2001), "...it is certainly not sufficient to demonstrate and explain a strategy to learners and then leave the rest to them." (p. 223). Therefore, just introducing strategies to the students might not yield favourable results in terms of strategy instruction. It is necessary for teachers to spend considerable time on strategy training and help learners to gain more insight into various strategies by focusing on both their benefits and implementation. The discrepancy between students' and teachers' practices may have resulted from students' not making the necessary efforts to incorporate these strategies into their vocabulary learning process as well. Hence, as a learner variable, VLS need to be ascribed a high level of importance. They should be practiced by the students to a large extent in order for these strategies to be automatically used during vocabulary learning. As learners' achievements in language learning largely depend on their own endeavours for making the most of the opportunities to learn (Oxford, 1990), success in vocabulary development via the effective use of VLS would be possible only if the students fulfil their own responsibilities and try to make good use of the strategies taught by the teachers. Otherwise, strategy training would not serve any purpose. However, it is the teacher's responsibility to guide the learners from the very beginning in order to help them gain this independence and learn how to learn.

In sum, this study indicated that the students and teachers who ascribed a higher level of importance to VLS used and taught them more frequently, which was a remarkably encouraging result. However, it seems that difficulties are encountered in reflecting these positive attitudes on strategy use and instruction since a significant difference was detected between student and teacher practices. In the light of all these findings, it can be concluded that both students and teachers need to pay close attention to vocabulary learning strategies and their instruction. In order for strategy training to achieve its purpose, it is essential to learn how to get rid of the problems related to the disparity between student and teacher practices regarding strategy use and instruction. Therefore, students' and teachers' joint endeavours are needed in order for successful strategy instruction and effective strategy use to come true.

Based on the results of the present study, it should be pointed out that students' general awareness of the importance of VLS for lexical development may not entirely reflect on their implementation of these strategies. Students might not manage independent learning and gain autonomy by themselves. Teachers' crucial role in promoting learner independence in terms of lexical development stands out at this point. In the present study, it was found that although students believe in the prominence of VLS, they apply them to a limited extent. However, it was also ascertained that if they attribute a higher level of importance to any group of strategies, they apply these strategies to a larger extent. These findings indicate that students need to be guided and convinced of the importance of various strategies so as to put them into practice. Therefore, certain steps need to be taken for promoting students' implementation of VLS. Hence, if such contextual factors as time constraints, intense curriculum, and crowded classes hamper effective instruction of VLS, the necessary precautions might be taken to eliminate these restrictions. Curriculum designers might try to include strategy training in regular English classes as it would prove to be much more beneficial in the long-term. The constraints related to weekly course hours might prevent the teachers from spending enough time on not only strategy training but also the other elements involved in an English course; therefore, some certain steps might be taken to find a solution to this problem. Moreover, if the teachers' instruction of VLS does not entirely reflect on students' application of these strategies or if these strategies are not effectively taught, teachers might try to improve themselves more in terms of strategy instruction. Strategy training might yield more favourable results if the instruction is carried out more systematically. Therefore, teachers might attempt to learn how to teach VLS more effectively. In this regard, VLS training courses might be incorporated into pre-service and in-service teacher training programs.

As the ultimate aim of the present study was to compare students' perceptions of VLS with those of their teachers, it was not possible to reach a large number of teachers. Therefore, further studies might be conducted by reaching a larger number of teachers. The present study indicated a discrepancy between the students' implementation of VLS and the teachers' instruction of VLS although both groups acknowledged the importance of VLS use and instruction. Therefore, the reasons for this disparity might be investigated through further research.

As the present research is based on self-report data gathered from students and teachers through questionnaires, further studies might be conducted by making use of other instruments such as think aloud protocols, diaries and journals. Lastly, task-specific use and instruction of VLS might be explored as well through longitudinal studies.

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