THE PREFERENCES OF IN-SERVICE ELT TEACHERS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

Hatice Kübra KOÇ [1]

ABSTRACT

As a still popular research area, Language Learning Strategies (LLS) researches need to be enhanced, since it consists of different phenomenon such as age, gender, individual differences and learning environment. At a glance, previous studies in the literature state that most of LLS researches are conducted in just learner-contexts in schools or at universities. Consequently, the use of LLS and LLS preferences of both adults and young learners have been tried to determine via these studies, however the concept of teachers' own LLS usage and preferences has been ignored by researchers; yet if teachers are aware of their own LLS use, then they can be more helpful for their learners in terms of LLS. Thus, the current study investigates English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers'own language learning strategies in a language teaching and learning context. Since LLS use of young learners has been a growing area, in this study, teachers who have been teaching young learners in public primary and secondary schools are determined as participants. Data is collected from 81 in-service ELT teachers via a questionnaire namely *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL) designed by Oxford (1990) and a semi-structured interview which is formed by the researcher's herself. As a result of the study, LLS usage of in-service ELT teachers are identified as moderate frequency level; additionally, taking Oxford's (1990) classification as a basis, the mostly used strategy group of ELT teachers is seen as social strategies whereas the least one is affective strategies; moreover, it is indicated that there is no mean difference on the LLS preferences of ELT teachers in terms of their genders, ages and teaching experiences.

Key Words: Language Learning Strategies, In-service ELT Teachers

1. Introduction

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) has been discussed since 1970s and 1980s, and studies on this field has begun to be popular as a result of the struggle to answer the question *who is a good language learner?* According to Rubin (1975), it has been observed that some of the learners have successfully acquired a foreign language, although some others have failed to learn it. For this reason, it has been stated that there have been some different concepts which could be seen as effective while learning a new language. At a glance, it is easily seen that LLS that are mentioned under the main title of *individual differences* (Altman& Vaughan-James, 1980; Skehan, 1989; Gradman &Hanania, 1991) can affect language learning process in some ways (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). In this sense, the term *Language Learner Strategies* have been defined

---

[1] Research Assisstant, Erzincan University, kubra.tuncarslan@gmail.com.

differently by some researchers, yet nearly all of these definitions have covered that LLS are the thoughts and actions, consciously or unconsciously selected by learners, and these have been seen as effective in language learning and assessing process. In detail, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) defined this term as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.1).

After 1990s, the definitions on this concept have begun to be more concrete, and Ellis (1994) defined a strategy as it is "a somewhat fuzzy one" (Ellis, 1994, p.529). Additionally, Cohen (1996) stated that LLS are "both to general approaches and to specific actions or techniques used to learn a second language" (Cohen, 1996, p.5). As regarding the significance of LLS on language learning, it can be said that the strategies of learners should be supported in a learning environment to supply a more attractive teaching process. For this reason, teachers should be knowledgeable on LLS and the use of strategies selected by the learners, because all of the learners, even young learners, use LLS consciously or unconsciously in their learning process (Gürsoy, 2010).

In this sense, the role of teachers has begun to be changed as a result of the developing aspects of educational sciences all over the world since 1980s (Murthy, 2006), and teachers have begun to be thought not just trainers but also active participants of a teaching process. For this reason, teachers' perspectives on education, teacher development and their professional lives on their jobs have been thought some of the keystones in education (Yang & Liu, 2004). Moreover, apart from other responsibilities, teachers must also improve themselves on their own learning strategies to present a more understandable and meaningful learning environment for their learners, because if they do not have some basic concepts of LLS and also their own learning strategies, they cannot be a part of LLS use in learning and teaching environment.

However, it can be stated that even if there have been a number of studies based on learners' LLS use and the significance of LLS in language learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Stern, 1992; Cohen, 1996; Hamamcı, 2012; Özyılmaz, 2012; İzci & Sucu, 2013; Aksoy & Şivetoğlu, 2014; Yayla, Kozikoğlu & Çelik, 2016); in the literature, there have not so many studies on LLS preferences and knowledge of in-service ELT teachers. Hence, in this study, LLS preferences and awareness of teachers who are teaching a foreign language are tried to be analyzed in terms of their own language learning strategies, as the use of LLS is a concept that should be supported for young learners (Gürsoy, 2010), primary and secondary school teachers are specifically selected as the participants of this study, and so the preferences of primary and secondary schools ELT teachers on the use of LLS is aimed to be introduced for the aim of improving LLS use in the classrooms.

Language Learning Strategies

As it stated above, in the literature, there have been some different definitions for the term Language Learning Strategies, and it is stated that LLS is a phenomenon which has been heavily studied since 1970s. As for defining this term, Rebecca Oxford (1993) gives a more specific definition as follows:
…language learning strategies—(are) specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability (Oxford, 1993, p. 18).

In this field, it is assumed that all of the language learners use some strategies consciously or unconsciously to make their learning process more understandable and also funnier. For this reason, it is suggested that language learning strategies have a crucial role for being a good language learner. However, LLS have been studied with some of the main characteristics and categories or classifications conducted by some researchers, and similar to its different definitions, there have been a number of different classifications for the term *LLS* that are preferred by language learners.

In this sense, firstly, O'Malley (1985) designed a categorization for LLS and with regard to this classification; there have been three main subcategories of LLS namely *meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies* and *socio-affective strategies.* According to O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares and Russo (1985), meta-cognitive strategies have consisted of some organizing and planning activities such as functional planning, self-evaluation and self-monitoring, whereas cognitive strategies have based on some mental and logical activities such as translation, grouping, deduction, imagery, key word, note-taking and recombination (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Additionally, the last group of this classification has been called as socio-affective strategies which are based on the activities such as cooperation, self-talk or using mental control and question for clarification (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Secondly, Rubin (1987) clarified that language learning strategies could be observed under three main titles as learning strategies, communication strategies and social strategies. Similar to O'Malley's classification on meta-cognitive strategies; according to Rubin (1987), learning strategies have been related to mental activities; while communication strategies have based on solving communication problems. Finally, there are social strategies, again similar to O'Malley's socio-affective strategies, and these strategies have been developed via some social interactions. Furthermore, another LLS classification designed by Stern (1992) suggested that there have been five sub-categories for LLS of learners as follows *management and planning strategies, cognitive strategies, communicative - experiential strategies, interpersonal strategies* and *affective strategies.* Even if Stern (1992) separated LLS into more sub-titles than the previous ones, the activities and instruments to improve LLS have been seen similar to the previous categorizations.

Finally, there is more distinct and understandable categorization for LLS of learners designed by Rebecca Oxford (1990) and according to Oxford (1990), her categories have been more comprehensive, systematic and detailed than the other categorizations. In this sense, Oxford (1990) categorizes LLS under two main titles as *direct* and *indirect* strategies, and direct strategies consists of *memory, compensation* and *cognitive strategies*; whereas indirect strategies are classified as *meta-cognitive, affective* and *social strategies*. As it is stated above, the categories of LLS designed by Oxford (1990) is seen as more understandable, concrete and practical, and therefore in Turkey, similar to other countries, it has been preferred by many researchers who have been studying on the use of LLS by learners (Tunç – Özgür, 2003; Uyar Uslan, 2006; Kozmonova, 2008; Deneme, 2008; Aslan, 2009; Gürsoy, 2010;Açıkel, 2011; Demirel, 2012; Hamamcı, 2012; Özyılmaz, 2012; İzci & Sucu, 2013; Aksoy & Şivetoğlu, 2014; Yayla, Kozikoğlu & Çelik, 2016). As there have been lots of studies on Oxford's LLS categories, in addition to the other advantages, studying with these strategies gives a chance to compare the results of a study with the other ones which have been available in the literature. Because of these advantages, in this study, Oxford's categorizes are also used to collect data on the LLS preferences of ELT teachers in their own English language learning process.

Teacher Development and the Roles of Teachers

Teachers have been seen as keystones of an educational environment for many years, and their roles in education, their different characteristics, professional developments, needs and interests have been studied by many researchers (Cropley & Dave, 1978; Wallace, 1991; Craft, 2000; Freeman, 2001; Davis &Osborn, 2003; Rhodes, Stokes & Hampton, 2004; Yang & Liu, 2004; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Murthy, 2006; Balcıoğlu, 2010; Borg, 2014; DeVoogd, Kunnath, Rocha & Jackson, 2015). In the light of these studies, it can be summarized that being a professional teacher in formal education has been seen as a critical and significant profession in modern life (Cropley & Dave, 1978). Additionally, to follow all innovations and changing aspects of educational systems, teacher development is seen as one of the critical concepts and to make it more clear, Balcıoğlu (2010) suggested that "to train creative and eclectic type of teachers in this world of ELT, a lifelong process of teacher development is needed in order for better outcomes in terms of teaching at different environments" (p. 2). In this sense, it can be stated that teacher development and teachers' own abilities or individual differences have a key role on the teaching process.

As for teachers' role and responsibilities, it is suggested that teachers are responsible for presenting learning opportunities and enhance these opportunities for their students (Gürsoy, 2010). Furthermore, teachers should be helpful for their learners to facilitate their learning process. Additionally, nowadays teachers have been seen as active participants of a teaching process and not only learners but also teachers can be involved in a language learning environment (Murthy, 2006). However, language learning strategies are one of the effective ways to accomplish some tasks on being a successful teacher (Gürsoy, 2010). But before improving learners' LLS use, first of all, teachers are required to be knowledgeable on the term *LLS* and they also need to be aware of their own learning strategies in order to present more attractive and meaningful strategy training for their learners. Therefore, awareness of language teachers on the use of LLS and their own learning strategies is one of the vital points that need consideration in the field of LLS.

However, even if there have been a number of studies on the candidate or pre-service teachers' LLS usage, perceptions and preferences in Turkey (Bekleyen, 2005; Karamanoğlu, 2005; Oflaz, 2008; Padem & Kılıç, 2014; Okumuş-Ceylan, 2014; Aydınbek, 2015), there have not been so many studies on in-service ELT teachers who have been teaching in primary or secondary schools. Yet, it is believed that if teachers have enough knowledge on their own language learning strategies, they can be more helpful for their young learners to enhance LLS use and learners awareness on this field. Moreover, it is thought that teachers who are aware of their own LLS preferences can be seen as more knowledgeable on the use of LLS and they can improve the use of learning strategies to facilitate their teaching process. Therefore, in this study, the main aim is to give information about the use of LLS and LLS preferences of ELT teachers in primary and secondary schools in detail; with the help of this study, it is believed that ELT teachers can realize the significance of LLS and they try to develop their learners' LLS preferences in a language learning environment.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

Recently, researchers have used both qualitative and quantitative research models combining them under different titles to get more valid and reliable data (Dörnyei, 2007). In this sense, the current experimental study is designed with a mixed research method and so, it is conducted via both a

questionnaire namely *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)* designed by Oxford (1990) as a quantitative data collection instrument and a semi-structured interview as a qualitative instrument. In this study, it is basically aimed to determine the primary and secondary school ELT teachers' LLS usage and preferences in terms of their gender and teaching experiences. To accomplish this aim, there are some research questions for this study as follows:

1. Which kinds of LLS are preferred by ELT teachers while they are learning a new language?
2. Is there any mean difference on LLS preferences of in-service ELT teachers in terms of their genders?
3. Is there any mean difference on LLS preferences of in-service ELT teachers in terms of their teaching experiences?

In order to answer these research questions at the end of the study, the data gathered via questionnaire was analyzed via SPSS packet program and also the data collected via the semi-structured interview was analyzed with a *description* way defined by Wolcott (1994). The results were discussed at the end of the study.

2.2 Sample and Universe

In this study, the universe was determined as ELT teachers in public primary and secondary schools in Erzincan. As in Erzincan city center, there were totally 81 ELT teachers teaching in primary and secondary schools, there was no any sampling or randomization technique, and all of the ELT teachers in the universe were involved in the current study. In this sense, as for the current study, in all; 81 participants, 55 females and 26 males, were determined in this study. The native language of all participants was Turkish, and all of them were teaching in public schools. The general information and categorizations about the participants was given in Table 1.

Table 1. The properties of participants

Variables	Categories	*N*	*%*
Gender	Female	55	67.9
	Male	26	32.1
Teaching Experiences	1-5 years	16	19.8
	6-10 years	32	39.5
	11-15 years	20	24.7
	Up to 15 years	13	16.0
Teaching Schools	Primary school	13	16.0
	Secondary school	68	84.0
	TOTAL	81	100

Since gender and teaching experiences of ELT teachers having involved in this study were seen as two significant variables, the results based on the gender and teaching experiences of ELT teachers were analyzed and discussed at the end of the study.

2.3 Data Collection Instruments

In this study, as it is stated above data collection instruments were determined as both a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The reason for choosing questionnaire was that questionnaires have been economical in terms of time and money since a researcher can easily and quickly reach large number of participants to complete a research or study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Additionally, questionnaires tend to be quantitative and more easily generate conclusive findings (Wallace, 1998).

As for the questionnaire, even if many researchers have designed their own inventories for learners as using their own classification of LLS (Bialystok, 1978; Naiman, Frochlich, Stern & Todesco 1978; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Rubin, 1987; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986); in this study, *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990) was used to get information about ELT teachers' LLS preferences because the strategies in this study were determined as basing on Oxford's taxonomy of LLS.

The SILL, version 7.0, which was used in this study as a data collection instrument is comprised of 50 items (Oxford, 1990, p. 293-300). Each item is based on a language learning strategy and learners are asked to the SILL items by selecting one response out of five Likert scale options. The SILL consists of six main titles which are related to LLS taxonomy developed by Oxford (1990) and it has been used to assess the learning strategy use of more than many learners world-wide; and furthermore, it has been translated so far into a great number of languages (Oxford, 1996); moreover, it has been translated into Turkish by Cesur and Fer (2007), and Turkish version of SILL was used for many studies in Turkey (Aslan, 2009; Baş, 2013; İzci & Sucu, 2013; Kılıç & Padem, 2014; Karatas, Balyer & Alcı, 2015). However, in this study, as participants were ELT teachers and they know English language adequately, the original version of SILL was used to collect data.

The second data collection instrument, in this study, was a semi-structured interview designed by the researcher in order to gather more reliable and meaningful data on LLS preferences of ELT teachers. The reason for using a semi-structured interview is to collect so much information on participants and compare the data from the other information (Barriball & While, 1994). As there has not been any attempt to design a semi-structured interview for teachers' LLS preferences, the researcher designed a new interview form which was based on literature and also the LLS taxonomy developed by Oxford (1990).

Although the questions designed for the interview were based on literature and Oxford's (1990) LLS taxonomy, in order to ensure the validity, before conducting the interviews, two experts in ELT department were consulted about the appropriateness of the questions which were asked on LLS preferences of ELT teachers. As a result of the consultation, two questions were re-written by the researcher to make them more understandable. As for analyzing the semi-structured interview, the *Description Mode* developed by Wolcott (1994) was used for this study, because it can supply more data on an interview session and it directly gives more clues about the participants (Wolcott,

1994). According to this model, the answers of the participants were transcribed and those were directly used in the study to discuss the results of the study.

In the semi-structured interview designed for the current study, there were 5 questions about ELT teachers' age, gender, teaching experiences and educational background to determine some demographic information about participants; and 12 questions related to LLS use and preferences of ELT teachers in a language learning environment. Meanwhile, even if the interview questions were designed in English, it was allowed to use native language during the interview sessions in order to prevent language barrier and also to create a more relax atmosphere. Furthermore, the interviews were concluded with one participant at a time, between 10 to 15 minutes. Finally, the interviews were recorded with an audio-recorder and they were transcribed one by one, then the data was analyzed and discussed by the researcher.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The current study was designed to reveal information about ELT teachers' own language learning strategies in terms of their gender and teaching experiences. This was seen as important because it was believed that teachers using LLS in their language learning process could easily improve their learners' LLS usage in a teaching environment.

After defining the problem, it was seen that LLS taxonomy designed by Oxford (1990) has been seen as more understandable, useful and systematic than the other taxonomies in this field (Oxford, 1990), and for this reason, it was used to define and analyze the data gathered in this study. As for sampling process, primary and secondary school ELT teachers in Erzincan were determined and it was realized that there were just 81 ELT teachers who have been teaching in public primary and secondary schools in Erzincan. As the number of teachers was reachable, all of the ELT teachers were involved in the study, and nine of them, 5 females and 4 males, were randomly selected for the semi-structured interview sessions.

Afterwards, to collect quantitative data on LLS preferences of ELT teachers, the SILL version 7.0 was selected as a basic data collection instrument because of its popularity, reliability and appropriateness for the study. And at the beginning of the autumn semester in 2016-2017, 81 ELT teachers teaching in public primary or secondary schools were asked one by one via SILL. In addition to the items in the SILL, they were asked about their gender and teaching experiences to determine whether there has been a mean difference on LLS preferences of ELT teachers in terms of those variables.

Then, randomly chosen 9 ELT teachers were asked about their ideas and information on LLS preferences in their own language learning process with the help of the semi-structured interview. In order to supply a more secure and confident atmosphere, the names of the teachers were hidden and they were coded as T1, T2…T9 in the discussion session of this study. Consequently, all of the data gathered in the study were analyzed and the results were given below.

3. Findings and Discussion

This study set out to investigate the frequency and choice of primary and secondary school ELT teachers on LLS. In order to answer the research questions, the SILL designed by Oxford (1990) and a semi-structured interview form were used to collect data. For the definition of the usage levels of language learning strategies in SILL, according to Oxford (1990), the use of English language learning strategies can be divided into three levels: (1) high frequency level (mean= 3.5 or above), (2) medium frequency level (mean=2.5 to 3.4), (3) low frequency level (mean= 2.4 or below). With regard to this definition, in this study, the analysis of the questionnaire was discussed in these three levels.

SPSS 21.0 packet program was used to analyze the data collected from the ELT teachers. In order to determine the mean differences in terms of variables; independent t-test and One Way Anova test were used. The results were presented in the form of means, standard deviations, and rank order of usage of each category. As a result of the analysis, ELT teachers' LLS use and the value of mean and standard deviation is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Language Learning Strategies under Six Groups

Sub-dimensions	N	Min.	Max.	X	Ss
Memory Strategies	81	2.22	3.67	2.98	.34
Cognitive Strategies	81	2.50	4.29	3.34	.39
Compensation Strategies	81	2.33	4.33	3.33	.47
Meta-cognitive Strategies	81	2.22	4.33	3.20	.47
Affective Strategies	81	1.67	3.00	2.07	.27
Social Strategies	81	2.33	4.50	3.41	.51

From Table 1, the results of the study indicated that the mean across overall strategy use was 3.05 (SD= 0.40). Among the six strategy groups, social strategies were most frequently used by the ELT teachers (M=3.41; SD=0.51) while affective strategies were the least frequently used (M= 2.07; SD=0.27). The others in the order of frequency were cognitive strategies (M=3.34), compensation strategies (M=3.33), meta-cognitive strategies (M=3.20), and memory strategies (M=2.98). All the meta-cognitive, compensation, social, cognitive, memory strategies preferred by the ELT teachers were at the medium frequency level as defined by Oxford (1990); no one strategy was at the high frequency level and only the group of affective strategy was at a low frequency level.

As one of the main aims mentioned in this study was to determine the whether there was a mean difference on the LLS preferences of ELT teachers in terms of their genders, the results were analyzed for gender differences. Data gathered via this analysis was given in Table 3.

Table 3. The analysis of sub-dimensions on ELT teachers' LLS preferences in terms of gender

Sub-dimensions	Gender	N	X	Ss	T	P
Memory Strategies	Female	55	2.99	.35	.450	.654
	Male	26	2.95	.29		
Cognitive strategies	Female	55	3.35	.40	.612	.543
	Male	26	3.30	.38		
Compensation strategies	Female	55	3.35	.50	.557	.579
	Male	26	3.28	.41		
Meta-cognitive strategies	Female	55	3.26	.45	1.629	.107
	Male	26	3.08	.48		
Affective strategies	Female	55	2.06	.28	-.407	.685
	Male	26	2.09	.25		
Social strategies	Female	55	3.46	.53	1.250	.215
	Male	26	3.30	.47		

Table 3 presented the means, standard deviations and rank order of usage of language learning strategies of male and female ELT teachers. In Table 3, it was determined that there was no a mean difference of primary and secondary school ELT teachers' LLS preferences in terms of their genders. It means that both female and male teachers have used nearly the same strategies when they have been learning English language.

Another aim of in this study was to determine whether there was a mean difference on LLS preferences of ELT teachers in terms of their teaching experiences; and the results were analyzed for ELT teachers both in primary and in secondary schools. The data on this analysis was given in Table 4.

Table 4. The analysis of sub-dimensions on ELT teachers' LLS preferences in terms of teaching experiences

Sub-dimensions	Sessions	Total of squares	Sd	Average of squares	F	P
Memory strategies	Intergroup relations	.159	3	.053	.448	.720
	In-group relations	9.112	77	.118		
	Total	9.271	80			
Cognitive strategies	Intergroup relations	.018	3	.006	.038	.990
	In-group relations	12.390	77	.161		
	Total	12.408	80			
Compensation strategies	Intergroup relations		3	.190	.840	.476
	In-group relations		77	.226		
	Total		80			

Meta-cognitive strategies	**Intergroup relations**	3	.077	.336	.799
	In-group relations	77	.229		
	Total	80			
Affective strategies	**Intergroup relations**	3	.186		
	In-group relations	77	.069	2.684	.052
	Total	80			
Social strategies	**Intergroup relations**	3	.141		
	In-group relations	77	.271	.521	.669
	Total	80			

As it is understood from Table 4, there was no mean difference on ELT teachers' LLS preferences in terms of their teaching experiences. It means that both experienced and novice teachers have preferred nearly the same strategies with the same rates while they have been learning English language.

Data collected via the semi-structured interview, on the other hand, was analyzed as transcribed the answers of the teachers; and in the following session, the results of the interview sessions were discussed with regard to the results of the SILL.

3.1 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to give information about the LLS preferences of primary and secondary school ELT teachers in their own foreign language learning. As a result of the data collected via SILL, the findings show that according to Oxford's (1990) taxonomy and inventory, Turkish ELT teachers at different primary and secondary schools report a medium frequency use of memory, meta-cognitive, cognitive, compensation strategies, social strategies and a low occurrence of affective strategies. In order to support the idea that was revealed via SILL, the semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed one by one for each participant. The data based on the semi-structured interview was also discussed in the following paragraphs.

In this sense, the first and the second questions in the semi-structure interview were about memory strategies of teachers. As a result of the answers, even if T1, T4, T7 and T8 stated that they have been highly using visual instruments; all of the teachers except for T4 claimed that they have not used physical activities in your own learning process; moreover, T3 stated that physical activities look like so "childish and time-consuming while learning a new language, so I have never used these kinds of activities or techniques in my own learning process".

As for the third and fourth questions, the participants were asked about their cognitive strategies and all of the teachers except for T3 and T5 stated that they have used some cognitive strategies in their language learning process, however T6 summarized the significance of these strategies as follows: "…learning a new language is important, but not forgetting a new learned language is more important; for this reason, cognitive strategies can be helpful to acquire a language easier and more permanently. I believe I need to use these strategies in my whole of the life to become alive in my language learning process".

Similarly, it was claimed that the participants were somehow using compensation strategies as a result of the answers of fifth and sixth questions in the semi-structured interview. However, all of the teachers have been deliberated on *using gestures or mimes* in their own learning process, whereas they stated that they have been using this technique in their teaching activities. It means that even if the teachers try to enhance their teaching environment via some LLS, they naturally cannot use them in their own language learning process because of their individual differences, age and different learning styles from young learners. Yet, when it was asked about their previous experiences, all of them, again, stated that they have never used this kind of strategies in their own learning even when they were a child. This result can be analyzed as changing and developing roles of teachers and learners in the education.

The seventh and eighth questions in the semi-structured interview were asked to determine the meta-cognitive strategies of ELT teachers, however all of the teachers except for T3, T4 and T5 stated that they needed to use meta-cognitive strategies to conduct their own learning process and to accomplish some tasks, they have used these strategies not only for language learning but also for designing their whole lives. Nevertheless, the participants in the interview stated that they have not been actively users of affective strategies answering the questions ninth and tenth in the interview. It is not surprising that affective strategies were seen as low frequency level as a result of the SILL and all of the teachers having answered the questions in the interview believed that they have not need to find ways to lower their anxiety since they could acquire a language using more mechanical activities such as writing several times, memorizing with the help of a dictionary or doing practice with tests and they have not feel anxious or nervous in those activities. However, it was stated by the participants that activities based on speaking skill made them anxious, but they did not use any specific strategy to lower it; moreover, as a result of the interviews, it was concluded that they were not aware of the group of affective strategies.

Finally, the participants were asked about their social strategies, and all of the teachers except for T3 and T4 stated that they were highly users of social strategies. Even T2 explained her thoughts via a Turkish idiom means "even if you know thousand things, still consult someone who knows just one thing". The results of the answers were seen as similar to the results of the SILL and in this sense, it was concluded that ELT teachers have tended to use social strategies in their own language learning process more than the others. For this reason, as a result of the study, teachers were thought as social in their learning environment.

If it is needed to compare the results of this study with the previous ones, in literature, a study on in-service teachers' LLS use, Farmanlu and Abdolmanafi-Rokni (2014) found that among the six strategy groups, meta-cognitive strategies were most frequently used while affective strategies were least frequently used by the in-service teachers in Iran. Although the result of the most frequently used strategy was different from the current study, the least preferable one was seen as similar. In their study on adults' LLS use in Turkey, Cephe and Yeşilbursa-Amanda (2006) suggested that, the reason of using not so much affective strategies could be due to the "cultural and social background" of the students. This means that since learners in Turkey tend to be introverted and they could not express their emotions, this is not a surprise for the researchers studying on this field (Cephe & Yeşilbursa-Amanda, 2006).

Since there have not been so many studies on in-service teachers' LLS preferences, this study was compared with a number of studies which were carried out pre-service teachers in order to supply a more detailed discussion. In this sense, in a study, Tok (2007) used a LLS questionnaire designed by Nunan (1989), Richards (1990), Skehan (1990), Richards and lockhart (1994) and adapted by Şire (1999); and as similar to the present study, he stated that pre-service teachers in ELT department were a high frequency of LLS use and they were highly users of memory strategies. As for a comparison of this study, it can be suggested that ELT teachers can use more LLS while they are students at a university; and when they are graduated, they tend to forgot LLS in their own learning process since they do not need to learn so much new phenomenon of their foreign language.

More recently, Wong (2011) has similarly stated in another study on pre-service teachers' LLS use in Malaysia with a conclusion that pre-service teachers reported moderate usage of the six categories of language learning strategies in Oxford's (1990) system of language learning strategies. Additionally, according to Wong (2011), as a similar result of this study, pre-service teachers were seen as greater users of social strategies and relatively lower users of memory and affective strategies. In another study on instructors' LLS usage, Şen (2009) found that instructors in ELT department tended to use meta-cognitive strategies most often than the others with the help of an inventory adapted version of the SILL by Lee (2006) to get teachers' perceptions on the use of LLS. As similar to the results of the current study, affective strategies were reported to be used with a lower frequency level.

Another aim of this study was to investigate gender differences in language learning strategy use of ELT teachers teaching in primary and secondary schools in Turkey. Although there are some studies on adult learners' gender differences for the use of LLS which have positive results for female learners (Tunç-Özgür, 2003; Algan, 2006; Yalçın, 2006; Aslan, 2009; Şen, 2009; Çakır, 2012; Zhou & Intaraprasert, 2015; Ayhan, 2016), there has not been enough data in literature for ELT teachers' gender differences on LLS preferences. In this study, however, the results of the independent t-test show that there was no significant difference between the overall strategy uses of the ELT teachers in terms of their gender. Yet, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) believed that gender

had 'a profound effect on strategy choice' in their study of university students learning foreign languages.

The other aim of this study was to determine whether there was a mean difference on ELT teachers' LLS preferences in terms of their teaching experiences. Regarding the frequency of use of each category of language learning strategies, it was seen that there was no mean difference of ELT teachers' LLS usage with regard to their teaching experiences. This means that both experienced and novice teachers have an average use of LLS in their own learning process. Similarly, Şen (2009) stated that instructors' perceptions on LLS were not changed in terms of their teaching experiences even if they thought that experience has been an important concept for the use of LLS in the classroom. Briefly, as for the result of this study, it can be said that there was no mean difference of ELT teachers' LLS preferences in terms of their ages, genders and teaching experiences.

4. Conclusion

The current study aimed to reveal ELT teachers' own learning strategies in order to pay attention to LLS and also to support enhancing LLS usage in a classroom environment. With regard to this aim, there were three research questions; the first one was about LLS preferences of ELT teachers, the second one was about the gender differences of ELT teachers' on the use of LLS and the last one was asked to determine whether there was a difference on LLS usage of ELT teachers in terms of their teaching experiences. For the study, the data on teachers' LLS preferences was collected via SILL designed by Oxford (1990) and a semi-structured interview prepared by the researcher. The findings of this study show that ELT teachers have reported moderate use of the five categories of language learning strategies namely memory, compensation, cognitive, social and meta-cognitive strategies in Oxford's (1990) system of language learning strategies and a lower use of affective strategies. Overall, there was no gender difference in ELT teachers' use of language learning strategies. Additionally, there was not a mean difference in ELT teachers' LLS preferences in terms of teaching experiences.

As conclusion, the use of LLS in language learning has been a rising concept for researchers and not only adults but also young learners need to be trained in the use of LLS (Gürsoy, 2010), as considering the changing and developing roles of teachers, it can be said that teachers should be guidance for their learners, especially for younger ones, to improve LLS use. For this reason, teachers, first of all, should be aware of their own learning strategies and they also need to improve themselves on LLS use to be helpful for their learners. However, in the current study, it is concluded that ELT teachers have preferred to use LLS in their own language learning process at a medium frequency level since they are not aware of the significance of LLS in language learning and they do not have adequate knowledge on LLS use.

With related to this result, it is believed that teachers cannot enhance their learners' LLS use since they do not use them in their own learning process effectively. For this reason, at the end of the study, it is suggested that teachers should be trained on the significance of LLS in language learning process which could be given by means of an in-service training. Finally, as for suggestions, the other LLS taxonomies or data collection instruments can be used to conduct a study on this field and also some other concepts in terms of ELT teachers' teaching environment can be selected for the other studies to get more detailed data on this growing research area.

References

Abed, A. Q. (2011). Teachers' awareness of second language learning strategies adopted and used by their students: A questionnaire. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 1*(3), 205-218.

Açıkel, M. (2011). *Language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs as predictors of English proficiency in a language preparatory school.* Unpublished MA Thesis. Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

Aksoy, F. & Şivetoğlu, Ö. (2014). A Correlational Study of Language Learning Motivation and Language Learning Strategies of Turkish Preparatory School Students. *Annals of the University of Craiova, 15* (1), 7-26.

Algan, N. (2006). *The language learning strategies used by the university preparatory students and the instructors' awareness of their students' use of these strategies*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Marmara University, İstanbul.

Altman, H. & Vaughan-James, C. (Eds). (1980). *Foreign language teaching: focus on the learner.* Oxford: Pergamon.

Aslan, O. (2009). *The role of gender and language learning strategies in learning English.* Unpublished MA Thesis. Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

Aydınbek, C. (2015). Language learning strategy usages of French teacher candidates. *International Journal of Language Academy, 3* (4), 233-250.

Ayhan, Ü. (2016). *The use of language learning strategies and its relationship with personality traits and individual differences: The case of Bosnian students at a private university.* Unpublished Doctorate Dissertation. International Burch University, Sarajevo.

Balcıoğlu, L. (2010). *An assessment of teacher training programs in public and private university foreign languages department preparatory schools and the instructors'' perception and relevance.* Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Maltepe University, İstanbul.

Barriball, K. L. & While, A. (1994). Collecting data using a semi-structured interview: A discussion paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 19*, 328-335.

Baş, G. (2013). The effect of teaching learning strategies in an English lesson on students' achievement, attitudes, and metacognitive awareness. *Journal of Theoretical Educational Science, 5* (1), 49-71.

Bekleyen, N. (2005). Öğretmen adayları tarafından kullanılan dil öğrenme stratejileri. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, *14*(2), 113-122.

Bialystok, E. (1978). A theoretical model of second language learning. *Language learning, 28* (1), 69-83.

Borg, S. (2014, February). *Teacher research for professional development*. Paper presented in The Fourth International Teacher Education Conference, Hyderabad, India.

Cephe, P. T. & Yeşilbursa-Amanda, A. (2006). Language Learning Strategies of Turkish University EFL Students. *Education and Science, 31* (139), 80-85.

Cesur, M. O. & Fer, S. (2007). What is the validity and reliability study of the strategy inventory of language learning. *Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, *4*(2), 49-74.

Cohen, A. D. (1996, December). *Second language learning and use strategies: Clarifying the issues.* Paper presented in Symposium on Strategies of Language Learning and Use, Seville.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education.* Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

Craft, A. (2000). *Continuing professional development: Practical guide for teachers and schools* . London: Routledge Falmer.

Cropley, A. J. & Dave, R. H. (1978). *Lifelong education and the training of teachers.* Hamburg: UNESCO.

Çakır, Y. (2012). *The relationship between language learning strategies and success for Turkish university preparatory students*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Yeditepe University, İstanbul.

Davis, J. & Osborn, T. (2003) *The Language Teacher's Portfolio: A Guide for Professional Development.* Westport: Praeger Publishers.

Demirel, M. (2012). Language learning strategies of undergraduate students. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education, 43* (?), 141-153.

Deneme, S. (2008). Language learning strategy preferences of Turkish students. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 4* (2), 1-11.

DeVoogd, G., Kunnath, J., Rocha, R. & Jackson, A. (2015, March). *Teacher Development in the English Classroom: Exploring the Affordances of Twitter to Address the Action Element of Critical Literacy.* Paper presented in Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference, Las Vegas.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, G. & Sinclair, B. (1989). *Learning to learn English: Learner's book.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Farmanlu, M. & Abdolmanafi-Rokni, S. J. (2014). Relationship between EFL In-service Teachers' Language Learning Strategies and their Beliefs toward Teaching Methodologies. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, *3*(6), 162-168.

Freeman, D. (2001). Second language teacher education. In R, Carter, & D.Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gradman, H. & Hanania, E. (1991). Language learning background factors and ESL proficiency. *The Modern Language Journal, 75*(1), 39- 51.

Gürsoy, E. (2010). Investigating Language Learning Strategies of EFL Children for the Development of a Taxonomy. *English Language Teaching, 3* (3), 164-175.

Hamamcı, Z. (2012). Üniversite hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin dil öğrenme stratejisi tercihleri. *Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 3*, 314-323.

İzci, E. & Sucu, H.Ö. (2013). Language Learning Strategies That Primary School 8th Grade Students Use While Learning English. *Inönü University Journal of the Faculty of Education, 14* (3), 19-38.

Karamanoğlu, Ş. (2005). *Almanca öğretmen adaylarında yabancı dil öğrenme stratejileri kullanımı.* Unpublished MA Thesis, Uludağ University, Bursa.

Karatas, H., Balyer, A. & Alcı, B. (2015). An Investigation of Undergraduates' Language Learning Strategies. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences ,197*, 1348-1354.

Kılıç, A. & Padem, S. (2014). The Examination of the Language Learning Strategies of University Preparatory Class Students With Respect To Various Variables. *Elementary Education Online*, *13*(2), 660-673.

Kozmonova, M. (2008). *Language Learning Strategies and Their Training in a Primary English Class.* Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Masaryk University, Brno.

Lessard-Clouston, M. (1997). Language learning strategies: An overview for L2 teachers. *Essays in Languages and Literatures, (8).* Retrieved from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Lessard-Clouston-Strategy.html

Murthy, S. R. (2006). Teacher education at cross-roads. In Sarsani, M.R. (Eds.). *Quality improvement in teacher education.* New Delphi: Sarup&Sons.

Naiman, N., Frohlich, M., Stern, H. H. & Todesco, A. (1978). *The good language learner.* Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Oflaz, A. (2008). Language learning strategies for language learning used by prospective teachers at German language teaching department. *The journal of International Social Research, 1* (3), 278-300.

Okumuş-Ceylan, N. (2014). *The effect of language learning strategy training on learner autonomy and foreign language achievement.* Unpublished Doctorate Dissertation. Gazi University/Institute of Educational Sciences, Ankara.

O'Malley, J. M., Chamot, A. U., Stewner- Manzanares, G. & Russo, R. (1985). Learning strategy application with students of English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly, 19,* 557-584.

O'Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. & Nyikos, M. (1989). Variables affecting choice of language learning strategies by university students. *The Modern Language Journal, 73* (3), 291-300.

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know.* New York: Newbury House Publishers.

Oxford, R. L. (1993). Instructional implications of gender differences in language learning styles and strategies. *Applied Language Learning, 4*, 65-94.

Oxford R.L. (1996). Employing a questionnaire to assess the use of language learning strategies. *Applied Language Learning, 7*, 25-45.

Özyılmaz, Ö. (2012). *An investigation into ELT students' academic achievement and their use of language learning strategies across gender groups. Un*published MA Thesis, Eastern Mediterranean University, Gazimağusa, North Cyprus.

Rhodes, C. Stokes, M. & Hampton, G. (2004). *A practical guide to mentoring, coaching and peer-networking: Teacher professional development in schools and colleges*. Canada: Routledge Falmer.

Richards, J. C. & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the" good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL quarterly*, *9* (1), 41-51.

Rubin, J. (1987). Learner strategies: Theoretical assumptions, research history and typology. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner Strategies and Language Learning* (pp. 15-29). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Skehan, P. (1989). *Individual differences in second language learning.* London: Edward Arnold.

Stern, H. H. (1992). *Issues and options in language teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Şen, H. (2009). *A comparison of EFL teachers' perceptions of language learning strategies (LLSs) and learners' reported use of LLSs in their English language classes.* Unpublished MA Thesis. Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

Şire, E. (1999). Language learning strategies of the 8th grade students in a state junior high school in Adana. Unpublished MA Thesis. Çukurova University, Adana.

Tok, H. (2007). Öğretmen adaylarının kullandıkları yabancı dil öğrenme stratejileri. *Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi Araştırmaları*, 191-197.

Tunç-Özgür, S. (2003). *Use of language learning strategies in relation to student characteristics at Başkent University.* Unpublished MA Thesis, Middle East Teachnical University, Ankara.

Uyar-Uslan, E. (2006). *Öğrenme stratejileri kullanımının İngilizce dilbilgisi başarısı üzerindeki etkililiği.* Unpublished MA Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir.

Wallace, M. J. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weinstein, C. & Mayer, R. (1986). The teaching of learning strategies. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, 3rd Edition (pp. 315-327). New York: Macmillan.

Wolcott, H. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data, description, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wong, M. S. L. (2011). Language learning strategy use: A study of B. Ed. (TESL) pre-service teachers. *Teacher Education Institute Batu Lintang Campus Research Journal, 9 (?).*

Yalçın, M. (2006). *Differences in the perceptions on language learning strategies of English preparatory class students studying at Gazi University.* Unpublished MA Thesis, Gazi University, Ankara.

Yang, S. C. & Liu, S. F. (2004). Case study of online workshop for the professional development of teachers. *Computers in Human Behavior, 20* (6), 733-761.

Yayla, A., Kozikoğlu, I. & Çelik, S. N. (2016). A comparative study of language learning strategies used by monolingual and bilingual learners. *European Scientific Journal, 12* (2), 1-20.

Zhou, C. Y. & Intaraprasert, C. (2015). Language learning strategies employed by Chinese English-major pre-service teachers in relation to gender and personality types. *English Language Teaching, 8* (1), 155-169.