Eğitimde Kuram ve Uygulama *2012, 8 (1):94-119*
Journal of Theory and Practice in Education *Articles /Makaleler*
ISSN: 1304-9496 *http://eku.comu.edu.tr/index/8/1/srazi.pdf*

TURKISH EFL LEARNERS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY EMPLOYMENT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

(İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN KULLANDIKLARI DİL ÖĞRENME STRATEJİLERİ)

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ABSTRACT

This study mainly aims to investigate the preferences of language learning strategies by English Language Teaching Department students. Oxford's five-scale Likert type inventory, consisting of 50 items on the use of language learning strategies, was administered to 189 participants at the ELT department of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey to identify the impact of gender, class, and period of English study on the use of strategies. Descriptive statistics indicated that the participants mostly preferred compensation and metacognitive strategies. Controversy, affective and social strategies were the least preferred strategies by the participants. A significant difference was found between preparatory class and 3rd year students in terms of use of strategies. However, t-test and post hoc test did not indicate significant differences among the participants in terms of their gender, age, and period of English study.

Keywords: Language learning strategies, SILL, strategy preferences, advanced language learners

ÖZ

Bu çalışma temel olarak İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim dalı öğrencilerinin kullandıkları dil öğrenim stratejilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Oxford'un dil öğrenim stratejileri üzerine 50 maddeden oluşan beşli Likert tipi ölçeği Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı'nda öğrenim görmekte olan 189 öğrenciye uygulanmış ve katılımcıların cinsiyet, sınıf ve İngilizce öğrenim sürelerinin strateji kullanımlarına olan olası etkileri araştırılmıştır. Sonuçlar, katılımcıların daha çok telafi ve biliş üstü stratejileri tercih ettiklerini gösterirken, duyuşsal ve sosyal stratejilerin daha az kullanıldığını ortaya koymuştur. Özellikle, hazırlık ve 3. sınıf öğrencilerinin kullandıkları stratejiler arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Ne var ki, t-test ve post hoc analizleri cinsiyet, yaş ve dil öğrenim süreleri açısından anlamlı bir fark saptamamıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Dil öğrenme stratejileri, SILL, ,strateji tercihleri, ileri seviye dil öğrencileri

Although previous researchers isolated language learning from the notion of teaching by disregarding individual differences; further educational and cognitive psychological studies assist for the interaction of teachers' effective teaching methods with learners' effective learning strategies (Weinstein, Meyer, Husman, Stone, & McKeachie, 1999). Numerous factors have an impact on the process of foreign language (FL) learning and learning

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strategies appear as cognitive learner variables (Chastain, 1988). Relatively, the present study aims to investigate the employment of language learning strategies.

Language Learning Strategies

Language learners use a variety of strategies to communicate more effectively (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992) and language learning strategies (LLSs) carry great importance for English as a foreign language (EFL) learning as their appropriate employment assist to improve learners' proficiency and self-confidence (Oxford, 1990). Initially, Rubin (1975, p. 43), a pioneering strategy researcher regarded them as "techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". Following this, Weinstein and Mayer's (1986) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) related them with behaviours. However, Oxford (1990, p. 8) expanded the definition as "operations employed by the learner to aid acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information" by adding "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations".

Several researchers indicate that learner strategies are employed consciously by learners (Anderson, 2005; Bialystok, 1978; Cohen, 1990, 1998; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Oxford & Cohen, 1992; Reid, 1998); thus, learners achieve their aims "only through conscious, systematic application of a battery of strategies" (H. D. Brown, 2001, p. 207). When learners practise a strategy adequately and develop a new habit which originates from this strategy; then, they lose their control on this strategy since it turns into a 'process' (Cohen, 1998). Then, "a lack of consensus on a strategy's relationship to skills and processes" (Macaro, 2006, p. 9) appear as a problem related with LLSs.

Not only the employment of a large number of appropriate strategies is important as indicated by a number of studies (e.g., Ehrman & Oxford, 1988; Oxford, 1989, 1990; Oxford & Crookall 1989), but also their harmonization as indicated by Ehrman and Oxford (1995). As effective language learners are aware of their strategies, they know why they employ them (Abraham & Vann, 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Moreover, learners' perceptions (Barnett, 1988) and beliefs (LoCastro, 1994; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; N. Razı, 2009) also have an impact on their employment of strategies.

Categorization of Language Learning Strategies

Following the emergence of LLSs by the 1970s, researchers have been aiming to classify them (see Anderson, 2005; Carson & Longhini, 2002; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Küpper, & Russo, 1985; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Küpper,

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1985; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1981; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Unfortunately, there has not been a consensus on their classification. Yet, Oxford deserves appreciation since she consistently questions her classification in her Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, see, Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). Thus, the classification of LLSs in this present study will be based on Oxford's.

Cognitive Strategies

Cognition is the first step of learning a skill (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990); thus, cognitive strategies are quite popular in language learning (Oxford, 1990). By employing strategies, learners interact with language items in a variety of ways (Hedge, 2000) such as "reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures), practicing in naturalistic settings, and practicing structures and sounds formally" (Oxford, 2003, p. 12). Such strategies are known to be facilitating language learning (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987).

Metacognitive Strategies

Ellis Ormrod (2006, p. 46) states that "metacognition refers both to the knowledge people have about their own cognitive processes and to their internal use of certain cognitive processes to facilitate learning and memory"; therefore, it maximizes memory by knowing its limitations. Metacognitive strategies consist of four elements, namely, *planning*, *prioritising*, *setting goals*, and *self-management* (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) by assisting learners to *orchestrate* (J. C. Brown & Campione, 1985), *regulate* (Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1981), *arrange* (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), *organize*, *plan*, *evaluate* (Richards & Lockhart, 1996), *monitor*, *control* (Busato, Prins, Elshout, Hamaker, 2000), and *co-ordinate* (Johnson, 2001) their own strategies and learning. Such strategies also involve thinking about learning, monitoring one's own production, and evaluating comprehension (Cook, 2001). Therefore, being able to monitor learning strategies can contribute to learning through metacognitive approaches ("National Research Council", 2000). Relatively, according to Demirel (1992, p. 9), metacognitive learning strategies are 'advanced organizers', 'directed attention', 'selective attention', 'self-management', 'functional planning', 'self-monitoring', 'delayed production', and 'self-evaluation', which are in parallel with Singhal (2001).

Moreover, Phakiti (2003) insists that instead of differentiating between cognitive and metacognitive strategies, research should identify the underlying goals or motivations for using a strategy and thereby define a strategy as either cognitive or metacognitive. Thus, learners employ cognitive strategies to achieve a particular goal such as understanding a text and metacognitive strategies to ensure that they have achieved this goal such as monitoring comprehension of the text.

Memory Strategies

Memory – also called *memory-related* (Oxford, 2001a) and *mnemonic* (Oxford, 2001b) – strategies which assist learners to create linkages between existing and new information are known to have been in use for a very long time. However, they do not guarantee deep understanding of the information (Oxford, 2001a). In should be kept in mind that there may not be a positive relation between memory strategies and L2 (second language) proficiency (Oxford, 2003) and it is important to differentiate 'cognitive' strategies from 'memory' strategies. Although cognitive strategies relate existing and new information at a deep level, memory strategies provide this relation only in a simple and superficial way (Oxford, 2001b).

Compensation Strategies

Through compensation strategies learners can participate both in receptive and productive skills even if they have insufficient TL (target language) knowledge. However, when such strategies are used for the productive skills of listening and writing, they are labelled as *compensatory strategies*. They are also considered to be forms of communication strategies and not regarded as LLSs (Cohen, 1998); therefore, they are used not to learn a language but to use it. However, Oxford (2001b, 2003) considers that any compensation strategy assists learners.

Affective Strategies

Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis proposes that affective factors prevent new information reaching the language acquisition device (LAD). Affective strategies contribute learners to regulate attitudinal and emotional factors on their own. "Affective strategies, such as identifying one's mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself for good performance, and using deep breathing or positive self-talk" are considered to be having a positive impact on language learning (Oxford, 2003, p. 14). However, cultural norms should also be taken into consideration to judge such strategies, as they are culture specific (Oxford, 2001b). Motivational self-regulation examines the ways that learners use to motivate themselves. In this respect, Dörnyei (2001, p. 110) classifies self-motivating strategies that can be regarded to be very similar to Oxford's (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) *affective strategies*. Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) categorize them into five classes as 'the controls of commitment', 'metacognition', 'satiation', 'emotion', and 'environment' which are based on the typologies of Kuhl (1987) and Corno and Kanfer (1993).

Social Strategies

Language is a device which enables people to communicate through interaction; therefore, learning a language should involve this interaction.

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Social strategies provide learners with the means to interact with other people through improving their understanding and enhancing language production. Social strategies not only foster learning but also relieve learners to realize the new culture (Oxford, 2001b). Asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner, and exploring cultural and social norms can be examples of such strategies (Oxford, 2003).

Language Learning Strategy Research

The study of successful learners provokes researchers to investigate their learning strategies (Hedge, 2000; Richards & Renendya, 2002). For example, Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) are known to be the first two researchers who examined the characteristics of good language learners in their studies. Following Rubin and Stern, other researchers also investigated the use of LLSs of both successful (see, Chamot, 1987; Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, Todesco, 1978; Naiman, Fröhlich, Todesco, 1975) and unsuccessful learners (see, Abraham & Vann, 1987; Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Hosenfeld, 1976, 1984; Porte, 1988; Vann & Abraham, 1990). Recent research on this issue encourages appropriate use of strategies, since it "results in improved L2 proficiency overall, or in specific language skill areas" (Oxford, 2002, p. 126). Controversy, concerning learners' inadequacy in using appropriate strategies triggered researchers to study also unsuccessful learners (see Vann & Abraham, 1990) who were attributed as having difficulties in administering strategies, such as predicting and monitoring (McNeil, 1987), since monitoring is supposed to have a positive effect on achievement (Bialystok, 1981). Good language learners adapt themselves to different situations through monitoring and adapting strategies; however, unsuccessful learners have a tendency to pursue ineffective strategies (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999).

Alptekin (2007) explored the differences in the choice of LLS and in the frequency of its use among 25 international non-Turkish students at university level in Turkey, English (FL) being learned in a tutored and Turkish (L2) being learned in a non-tutored manner. His results concerning strategy preference and frequency of use indicated significant differences between L2 and FL learning. The participants were high users of compensation and social strategies and medium users of cognitive strategies in L2 context. On the other hand, they were high users of metacognitive, cognitive, and compensation strategies and medium users of social strategies. Alptekin's results indicated that his participants were high users of compensation and social strategies in the context of learning Turkish; whereas, they were high users of metacognitive, cognitive, and compensation strategies in the context of learning English. It might be possible to relate his findings with Block's (1986) who indicates that although the use of strategies may change with

reference to L2 and FL context, it is not tied to any specific language since the use of strategy is a stable phenomenon.

The findings of LLSs indicate the superiority of females in using more strategies when compared to males (Ehrman & Oxford, 1988; Green & Oxford, 1995; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Ehrman, 1988, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Politzer, 1983). Ehrman and Oxford (1988) concluded that learners' sex and occupation had a significant impact on their use of LLS. However, they were not able to support this sex difference impact in a further study since the findings of Ehrman and Oxford (1990) did not reveal any significant differences between males and females.

Shen (2005) investigated Chinese character learning strategies and the findings indicated that participants referred to metacognitive strategies much less than cognitive ones. Although it seems to be a complicated phenomenon, Shen aims to clarify it. She explains that as there is not a linear correlation between cognition and metacognition, they do not develop concurrently.

> One reason for this may be that metacognition concerns knowledge of one's own cognitive processes and does not deal directly with processing incoming information. Thus the development of self-awareness related to a particular cognitive process … might have to wait until the learner has accumulated a critical number of cognitive strategies. (Shen, 2005, p. 62)

Besides, Shen (2005) indicates that encountering learning problems provides them chances to think about how they acquire information; thus, possessing metacognitive knowledge does not guarantee its usage through metacognitive strategies.

The findings of Chamot and El-Dinary (1999) indicated similarities between young and older learners' use of strategies. According to them, it is good learners' characteristic to monitor their learning process and adapt strategies; whereas, poor ones seem to hold to their strategies. By doing so, good learners have an intention of focusing on the task as a whole which is not the case for poor ones as they pay excessive attention to details. Similar to Chamot and El-Dinary who consider age as an effective factor, Singhal (2001) also indicates less and ineffective use of strategies by younger and less proficient learners.

Pressley and Woloshyn (1995, p. 2) refer to 'the good information processor model' and indicate that it is essential for a good strategy user to possess a large number of strategies and use them to overcome cognitive difficulties. Poor readers, on the other hand, are regarded as having difficulties in administering strategies, such as predicting and monitoring (McNeil, 1987), since monitoring is attributed to have a positive effect on achievement (Bialystok, 1981). On the other hand, several research studies indicate that more proficient users of language refer to LLSs more than less proficient ones

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(Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; Mogogwe & Oliver, 2007; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Taguchi, 2002).

STUDY

Previous research on the use of learning strategies emphasizes such strategies as being extremely valuable for FL learning. Thus, students at the department of ELT (English Language Teaching) should employ them. Therefore, the present study mainly aims to investigate learning strategy preferences of Turkish ELT department students. Moreover, a number of various factors such as gender, class, and period of English study were also involved.

The nine research questions addressed were as follows:

1. What are the most frequently used LLSs among advanced EFL learners?
2. Is there a correlation between the use of LLSs and period of English study?
3. Is there a correlation between the use of LLSs and gender?
4. Is there a correlation between the use of LLSs and class?
5. Is there a correlation between the use of LLSs and age?
6. Does the use of LLSs differ with reference to period of English study?
7. Does the use of LLSs differ with reference to gender?
8. Does the use of LLSs differ with reference to class?
9. Does the use of LLSs differ with reference to age?

Methodology

Setting

The study was conducted at the ELT Department of the Faculty of Education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey. All the participants were native Turkish speakers who did not use English as a communicative tool. To study at ELT department, they took YDS (Foreign Language Test) which was conducted by Higher Education Council Students Selection and Placement Centre of Turkey at advanced level. Besides, following their registration at the university, they were delivered an exemption examination at advanced level on their FL skills to study at ELT Department. Thus, being a student at ELT department requires an advanced proficiency level in English.

Participants

A total number of 189 participants from a variety of different classes participated in the study. The participants were young adults whose ages varied from 17 to 25 (average 20). They were all being trained to become teachers of English. At the time of data collection, they had studied English for 5-18 years (average 10 years). Since the ELT Department is female-dominant, a vast majority of the participants were females. Table 1 below shows participants' frequency statistics.

Table 1. Frequency Statistics of the Participants

Participants		Class				
	Σ	*Prep*	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*
Female	*145*	47	14	25	43	16
Male	*44*	14	2	10	12	6
Total	*189*	61	16	35	55	22

Materials

To collect data, Oxford's (1990) SILL, consisting of six groups of items on learning strategies, was delivered to the participants. The six groups are given below.

Group A: Memory strategies (Remembering more effectively)
Group B: Cognitive strategies (Using all mental processes)
Group C: Compensation strategies (Compensating for missing knowledge)
Group D: Metacognitive strategies (Organizing and evaluating learning)
Group E: Affective strategies (Managing emotions)
Group F: Social strategies (Learning with others)

The participants were also required to give demographic information about their *age*, *period of study of English*, *class*, and *gender*.

Method of Data Collection

Since the researcher was a member of the academic staff at the department where the study was conducted, the students at the department were informed about the aims of the present study by the researcher and willing students were delivered copies of the questionnaire. The participants were allowed a day to fill in the questionnaires. Although 400 copies of the questionnaire were delivered, 189 of them were returned by the participants.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire were entered into computer through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version

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10.0). The data were analysed by descriptive statistics, correlations, independent samples t-test, oneway ANOVA test, and post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe tests.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

Table 2 shows and Figure 1 illustrates the mean values of the participants to each group of items in SILL (out of a possible 5).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Use of Strategies (*N* = 189)

Groups	$\overline{X}$	*SD*
Compensation strategies (C)	3,8351	,5781
Metacognitive strategies (D)	3,7713	,6097
Cognitive strategies (B)	3,4868	,4784
Memory strategies (A)	3,3868	,5623
Social strategies (F)	3,3677	,7239
Affective strategies (E)	3,1623	,6767

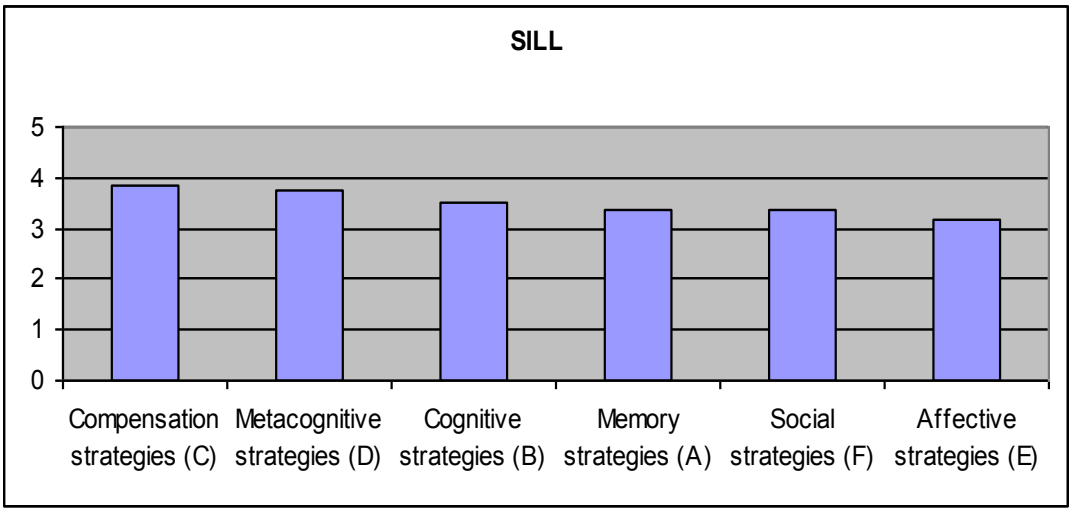

Figure 1: The Employment of Strategy Groups

As illustrated in Figure 1, the participants indicated that they use compensation strategies the most. This was followed by metacognitive strategies, which were used to organize and evaluate learning. However, affective strategies were listed at the bottom of the list by the participants. Therefore, the results in Table 2 and Figure 1 indicate that social strategies, along with affective strategies, were the least preferred ones.

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the participants in terms of use of strategies. Their uses of strategies are presented in descending order.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Use of Strategies (*N* = 189)

Items	$\overline{X}$	*SD*
Pay attention to speakers (D3)	4,3862	,7323
Guess unfamiliar words(C1)	4,1376	,8765
Try to be a better learner (D4)	4,1005	,8845
Relate existing and new knowledge (A1)	4,0529	,8362
Think about own progress (D9)	4,0423	,8557
Use known words for the non-remembering ones (C6)	4,0212	,8627
Notice mistakes (D2)	3,9365	,7338
Read without looking up every word (C4)	3,9259	1,0184
Ask others to slow down (F1)	3,9048	1,0061
Use gestures (C2)	3,8360	,9837
Watch movies in English (B6)	3,8042	1,0613
Make a mental picture of a situation (A4)	3,7884	,9663
Remember location of words on a page (A9)	3,7831	1,1534
Find many ways of using English (D1)	3,7302	,9375
Encourage himself / herself (E2)	3,7143	1,0277
Have clear goals of improving English (D8)	3,6878	1,0015
Connect the sound to an image (A3)	3,6878	,9855
Try to relax (E1)	3,6614	1,0114
Guess what the others will say (C5)	3,6614	1,0972
Not translate word-for-word (B13)	3,6561	1,2087
Talk like native speakers (B2)	3,6296	1,0108
Look for people to talk to in English (D6)	3,6032	1,0799
Use new words in a sentence (A2)	3,5979	,9209
First skim then read carefully (B9)	3,5767	1,1808
Ask questions in English (F5)	3,5714	1,0626
Practice English sounds (B3)	3,5397	,9367
Learn English culture (F6)	3,5132	1,2489
Notice whether s/he is tense or nervous (E4)	3,4868	1,1877
Look for similarities between L1 & FL words (B10)	3,4815	1,0396
Find patterns in English (B11)	3,4339	,8825
Make up new words (C3)	3,4286	1,0526
Start conversations in English (B5)	3,4127	1,0960
Make summaries (B14)	3,4021	1,1426
Write letters in English (B8)	3,3968	1,0499
Read for pleasure (B7)	3,3915	1,0595
Use words in different ways (B4)	3,3810	,9356
Find meaning in a bottom-up way (B12)	3,3757	1,0062
Read as much as possible (D7)	3,3757	1,0826
Practice with other students (F3)	3,3545	1,0897
Practice new words several times (B1)	3,3333	1,1346
Review English lessons often (A8)	3,1693	1,1075
Plan his / her schedule (D5)	3,0794	1,1388
Reward own success (E3)	2,9894	1,2716
Ask for help (F4)	2,9683	1,1801
Use rhymes (A5)	2,9577	1,0809
Askto be corrected during speech (F2)	2,8942	1,1981
Talk about emotions (E6)	2,8942	1,2114
Use flashcards (A6)	2,7831	1,1580
Physically act out new words (A7)	2,6614	1,0374
Write feelings in a diary (E5)	2,2275	1,2658

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As indicated in Table 2, the majority of the strategies are grouped in 'compensating for missing knowledge' and 'organizing and evaluating learning'. In this respect, the strategies 'paying attention to speakers', 'guessing unfamiliar words', and 'trying to be a better learner' were identified as the most preferred ones by the participants in Table 3.

The following six figures illustrate the preference of learning strategies according to the groups in the questionnaire.

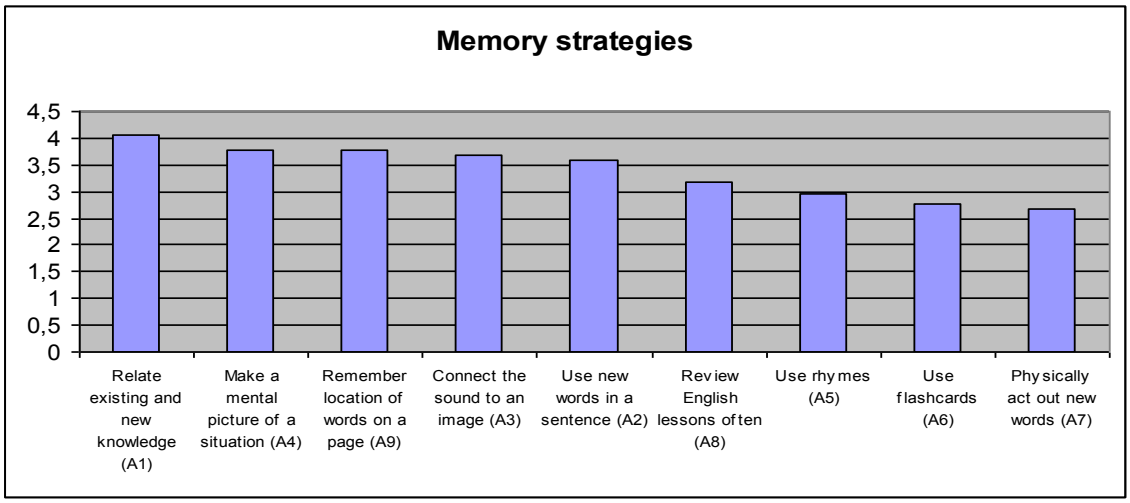

Figure 2: Participants' Use of Memory Strategies

Figure 2 indicates that to remember more effectively, the participants mostly use strategies such as 'relating existing and new knowledge' and 'making a mental picture of a situation'. 'Using flashcards' and 'physically acting out new words' are the least used ones.

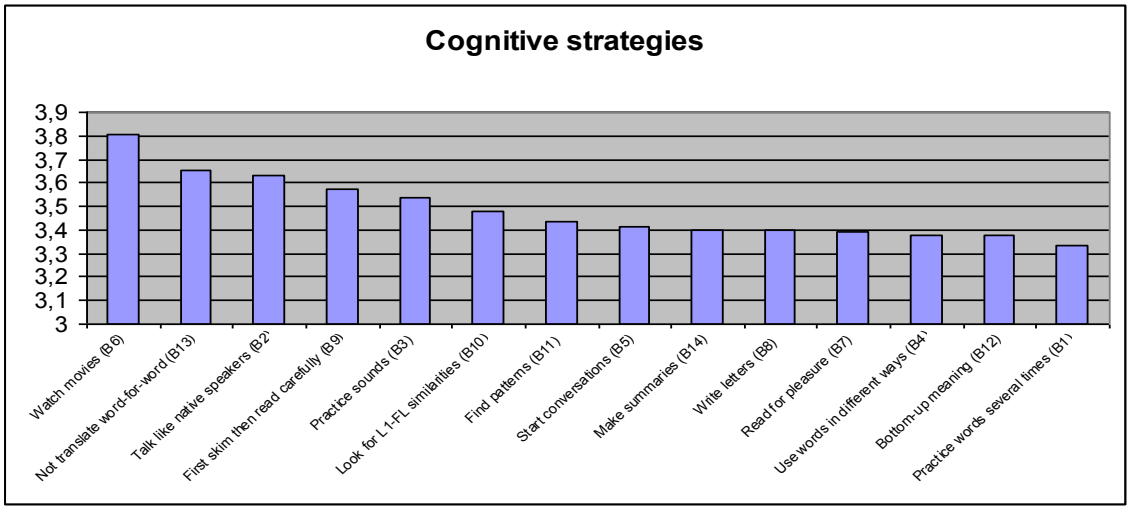

Figure 3: Participants' Use of Cognitive Strategies

Figure 3 indicates that to use all their mental processes, the participants mostly use strategies such as 'watching movies in English' and 'not translating word-for-word'. 'Combining smaller units to achieve meaning' and 'practising new words several times' are the least used ones.

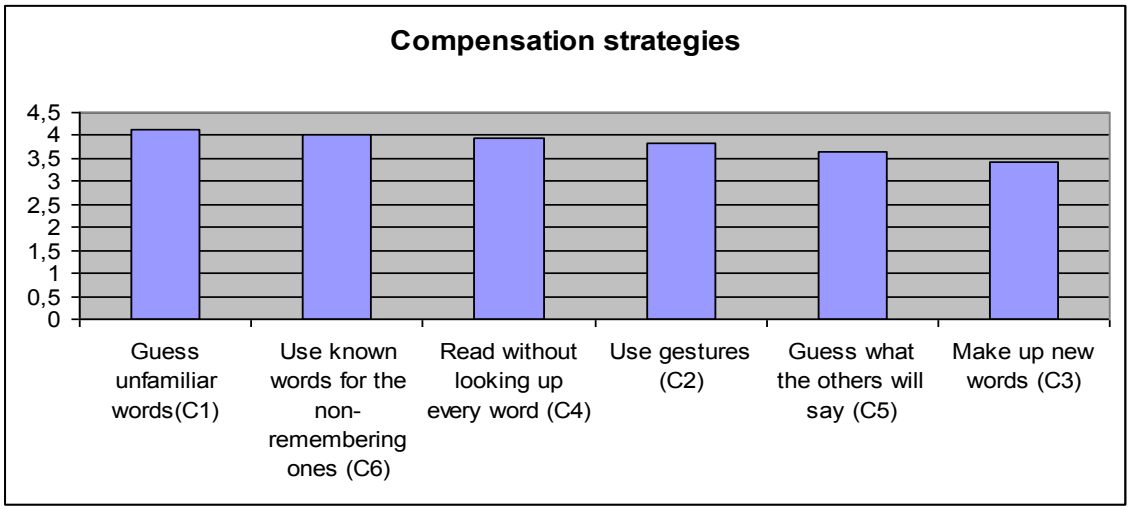

Figure 4: Participants' Use of Compensation Strategies

Figure 4 indicates that to compensate for missing information the participants mostly use strategies such as 'guessing unfamiliar words' and 'using unknown for the non-remembering ones'. 'Guessing what the others will say' and 'making up new words' are the least used ones.

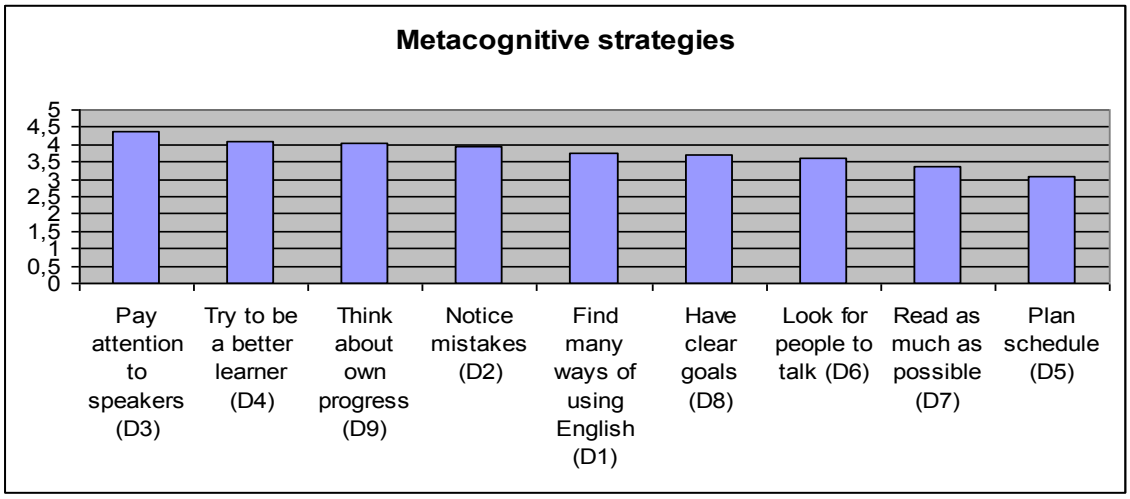

Figure 5: Participants' Use of Metacognitive Strategies

Figure 5 indicates that to organize and evaluate learning, the participants mostly use strategies such as 'paying attention to speakers' and

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'trying to be a better learner'. 'Reading as much as possible' and 'planning schedule' are the least used ones.

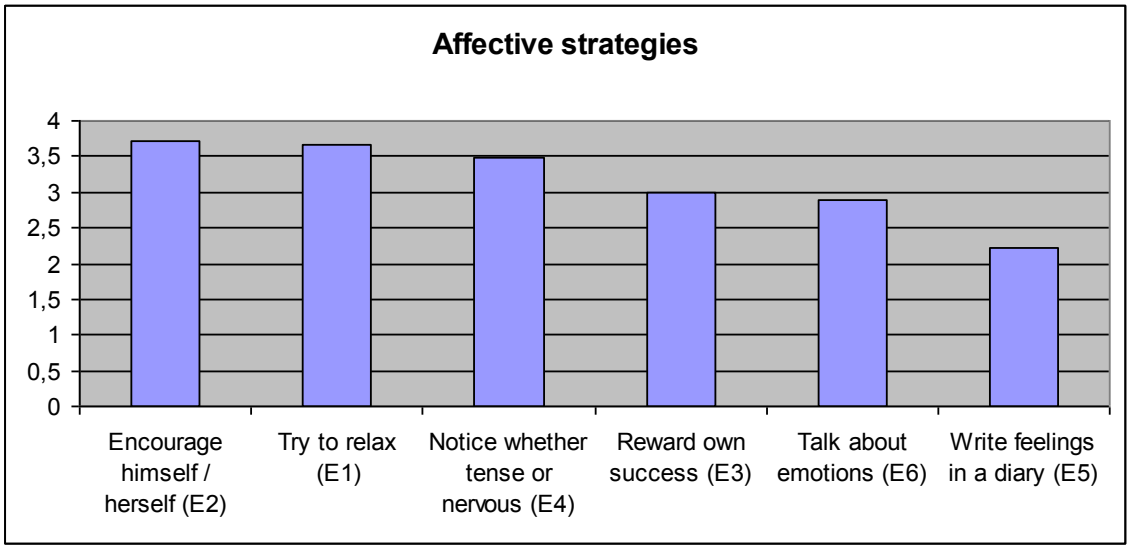

Figure 6: Participants' Use of Affective Strategies

Figure 6 indicates that to manage emotions the participants mostly use the strategies of 'encouraging himself/herself' and 'trying to relax'. 'Talking about emotions' and 'writing feelings in a diary' are the least used ones.

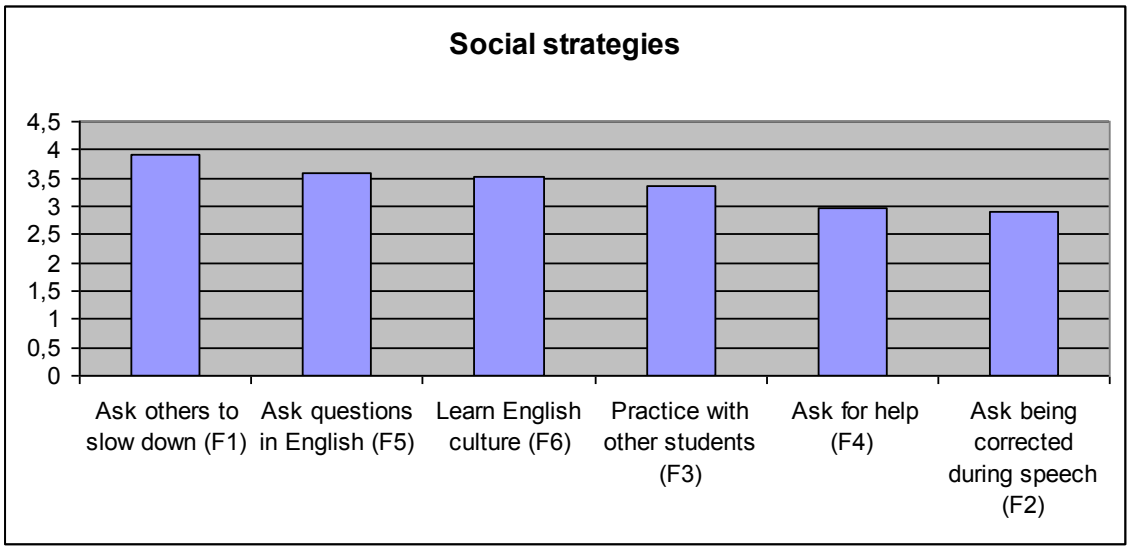

Figure 7: Participants Use of Social Strategies

Figure 7 indicates that to learn with others the participants mostly use strategies such as 'asking others to slow down' and 'asking questions in English'. However, 'asking for help' and 'asking to be corrected during speech' are the least used ones.

Research Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5

The correlation matrix in Table 4 below answers the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th research questions.

Table 4. Correlations (*N* = 189)

		Period	Gender	Class	Age	Mem.	Cog.	Com.	Meta	Affect.	Social	$\overline{X}$
	Cor.	---	-,129	,188**	-,022	,118	,133	,088	,100	,107	,002	,129
Period	*Sig.*	---	,076	,009	,760	,106	,069	,228	,170	,144	,983	,076
	Cor.	-,129	---	,027	,152*	-,184*	,062	,009	-,074	,096	,127	,002
Gender	*Sig.*	,076	---	,716	,037	,011	,396	,900	,310	,187	,082	,974
	Cor.	,188**	,027	---	,729**	,030	,115	,261**	,043	,027	,021	,105
Class	*Sig.*	,009	,716	---	,000	,686	,115	,000	,560	,711	,773	,151
	Cor.	-,022	,152*	,729**	---	,034	-,040	,038	-,054	-,024	-,011	-,019
Age	*Sig.*	,760	,037	,000	---	,639	,586	,599	,458	,740	,876	,797
	Cor.	,118	-,184*	,030	,034	---	,471**	,280**	,514**	,399**	,371**	,708**
Mem.*	*Sig.*	,106	,011	,686	,639	---	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	Cor.	,133	,062	,115	-,040	,471**	---	,422**	,646**	,468**	,475**	,839**
Cog.*	*Sig.*	,069	,396	,115	,586	,000	---	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	Cor.	,088	,009	,261**	,038	,280**	,422**	---	,433**	,252**	,319**	,581**
Com.*	*Sig.*	,228	,900	,000	,599	,000	,000	---	,000	,000	,000	,000
	Cor.	,100	-,074	,043	-,054	,514**	,646**	,433**	---	,457**	,502**	,834**
Meta.*	*Sig.*	,170	,310	,560	,458	,000	,000	,000	---	,000	,000	,000
	Cor.	,107	,096	,027	-,024	,399**	,468**	,252**	,457**	---	,423**	,670**
Affect.*	*Sig.*	,144	,187	,711	,740	,000	,000	,000	,000	---	,000	,000
	Cor.	,002	,127	,021	-,011	,371**	,475**	,319**	,502**	,423**	---	,696**
Social	*Sig.*	,983	,082	,773	,876	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	---	,000
$\overline{X}$	*Cor.*	,129	,002	,105	-,019	,708**	,839**	,581**	,834**	,670**	,696**	---
	Sig.	,076	,974	,151	,797	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	---

Note. *Mem. = memory; Cog. = cognitive; Com. = compensation; Meta. = metacognitive; Affect. = affective

The correlation matrix shows the correlations among the variables of 'period of English study', 'gender', 'class', and 'age' along with the values overall and the six strategy groups in the questionnaire.

To answer the second research question, Table 4 does not indicate a significant correlation between the mean values of 'use of strategies' and 'period of English study'.

To answer the third research question, Table 4 does not indicate a significant correlation between the mean values of 'use of strategies' and 'gender'. However, there is a low, negative but significant correlation between 'memory strategies' and 'gender' (r = .-184; $p < .05$).

To answer the fourth research question, Table 4 does not indicate a significant correlation between the mean values of 'use of strategies' and 'class'. Nevertheless, there occurs a low but significant correlation between the strategy group 'compensation strategies' and 'class' (r = .261; $p < .01$).

To answer the fifth research question, Table 4 does not indicate a significant correlation between the mean values of 'use of strategies' and 'age'. Apart from the correlations related with the research questions, the correlation matrix also shows the correlations between different parts of the

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questionnaire. It is important to note that there occur significant correlations among all strategy groups in the questionnaire ($p < .01$).

Research Question 6

To answer research question 6, Table 5 illustrates t-test statistics in terms of the participants' period of English learning to examine whether there exists a difference on the use of LLSs. Besides, Table 5 indicates whether these differences are significant or not. The table presents the results in six groups along with the overall value.

Table 5. Independent Samples T-Test Statistics for Period of English Learning

Mean	Period	*N*	$\overline{X}$	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Memory	*<10*	61	3,3078	,5233	-1,336	187	,183
	≥10	128	3,4245	,5782			
Cognitive	*<10*	61	3,4321	,4939	-1,085	187	,279
	≥10	128	3,5128	,4706			
Compensation	*<10*	61	3,7568	,5423	-1,287	187	,200
	≥10	128	3,8724	,5929			
Metacognitive	*<10*	61	3,6976	,5974	-1,148	187	,252
	≥10	128	3,8064	,6147			
Affective	*<10*	61	3,1284	,6807	-,474	187	,636
	≥10	128	3,1784	,6768			
Social	*<10*	61	3,3907	,7296	,301	187	,764
	≥10	128	3,3568	,7238			
Mean	*<10*	61	3,4551	,4213	-1,180	187	,239
	≥10	128	3,5341	,4343			

Table 5 gives the mean values for the use of strategies for period of English study comparing the ones of less than 10 years with those of 10 or more years. The mean values show very slight differences and they do not indicate significant mean differences in terms of the period of English study influencing the use of LLSs. The overall results indicate that period of English study does not have a significant impact on the use of LLSs [t = -1,180; p = .239].

Research Question 7

To answer research question 7, Table 6 illustrates t-test statistics in terms of participants' gender differences to examine whether there exists a difference for gender on the use of LLSs. Moreover, Table 6 indicates whether these differences are significant or not. The table presents the results in six groups along with the overall value.

Table 6. Independent Samples T-Test Statistics for Gender

Mean	Gender	*N*	$\overline{X}$	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
	Female	145	3,4437	,5559	2,560	187	,011
Memory	*Male*	44	3,1995	,5483			
	Female	145	3,4704	,4941	-,851	187	,396
Cognitive	*Male*	44	3,5406	,4234			
	Female	145	3,8322	,5818	-,125	187	,900
Compensation	*Male*	44	3,8447	,5722			
	Female	145	3,7962	,5966	1,018	187	,310
Metacognitive	*Male*	44	3,6894	,6512			
	Female	145	3,1264	,6682	-1,324	187	,187
Affective	*Male*	44	3,2803	,6986			
	Female	145	3,3172	,7361	-1,750	187	,082
Social	*Male*	44	3,5341	,6633			
	Female	145	3,5080	,4368	-,033	187	,974
Mean	*Male*	44	3,5105	,4144			

Table 6 above gives the mean values for the use of strategies for female and male participants. The mean values show very slight differences and they do not indicate significant mean differences in terms of gender for the use of LLSs except from memory strategies [t =2,560; p = .011]. The results indicate that female participants refer to 'memory strategies' more than male participants.

Research Question 8

To answer the eighth research question, Table 7 oneway ANOVA test for the classes examines whether there is a significant difference on the use of strategies in terms of different classes. In Table 7, the results indicate a significant difference for the use of 'compensation strategies' [F = 4.893; p < .01]. However, ANOVA test does not indicate significant differences on the use of the other groups of strategies or the overall use of strategies [F = 1.382; p = .242].

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Table 7. Oneway ANOVA Test for Classes

		SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Memory	*Between Groups*	,729	4	,182	,571	,684
	Within Groups	58,717	184	,319		
	Total	59,447	188			
Cognitive	*Between Groups*	1,217	4	,304	1,338	,257
	Within Groups	41,817	184	,227		
	Total	43,033	188			
Compensation	*Between Groups*	6,041	4	1,510	4,893	,001
	Within Groups	56,792	184	,309		
	Total	62,833	188			
Metacognitive	*Between Groups*	1,657	4	,414	1,117	,350
	Within Groups	68,224	184	,371		
	Total	69,881	188			
Affective	*Between Groups*	3,372	4	,843	1,875	,117
	Within Groups	82,708	184	,449		
	Total	86,080	188			
Social	*Between Groups*	,740	4	,185	,348	,845
	Within Groups	97,786	184	,531		
	Total	98,526	188			
Mean	*Between Groups*	1,017	4	,254	1,382	,242
	Within Groups	33,847	184	,184		
	Total	34,864	188			

In Table 8, post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe test compares different classes for the use of 'compensation strategies' to indicate where the differences occur. Table 8 indicates significant differences between the participants in preparatory and 3rd classes [$p < .01$] for the use of compensation strategies.

Table 8. Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Scheffe Test Results for Compensation Strategies

		Compensation Strategies		
Class	Class	*M Dif.*	*SE*	*p*
	1	-,2801	,1560	,523
	2	-7,7674E-02	,1178	,979
	3	-,4149*	,1033	,004
prep	*4*	-,3407	,1382	,198
	prep	,2801	,1560	,523
	2	,2024	,1677	,834
	3	-,1348	,1578	,947
1	*4*	-6,0606E-02	,1825	,999
	prep	7,767E-02	,1178	,979
	1	-,2024	,1677	,834
	3	-,3372	,1201	,101
2	*4*	-,2630	,1512	,555
	prep	,4149*	,1033	,004
	1	,1348	,1578	,947
	2	,3372	,1201	,101
3	*4*	7,424E-02	,1401	,991
	prep	,3407	,1382	,198
	1	6,061E-02	,1825	,999
	2	,2630	,1512	,555
4	*3*	-7,4242E-02	,1401	,991

Research Question 9

Table 9 illustrates t-test group statistics in terms of participants' age in order to examine whether there exists a difference for age on the use of learning strategies. Also, the independent samples t-test in the table below indicates whether these differences are significant. The table presents the results in six groups along with the overall value.

Table 9 gives the mean values on the use of LLSs for age comparing students younger than 20 years with those 20 or older. The mean values show very slight differences and they do not indicate significant mean differences in terms of age for the use of strategies. The overall results indicate that age does not have a significant impact on the use of LLSs [t = -,134; p = .894].

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Table 9. Independent Samples T-Test Statistics for Age

Mean	Age	*N*	$\overline{X}$	*SD*	*T*	*df*	*p*
Memory	*<20*	100	3,3656	,5116	-,550	187	,583
	≥20	89	3,4107	,6165			
Cognitive	*<20*	100	3,4800	,4527	-,206	187	,837
	≥20	89	3,4944	,5083			
Compensation	*<20*	100	3,7583	,4903	-1,949	187	,053
	≥20	89	3,9213	,6552			
Metacognitive	*<20*	100	3,7867	,5913	,366	187	,715
	≥20	89	3,7541	,6326			
Affective	*<20*	100	3,2217	,6423	1,282	187	,202
	≥20	89	3,0955	,7111			
Social	*<20*	100	3,3767	,6377	,180	187	,858
	≥20	89	3,3577	,8136			
Mean	*<20*	100	3,5046	,3885	-,134	187	,894
	≥20	89	3,5130	,4758			

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As discussed in the literature review, LLSs were indicated to be essential both for L2 and FL learning environments. However, it should be kept in mind that there should be a relationship between learner styles and use of LLSs. The impact of this relationship should be found in the use of LLSs. Another factor that may have an impact on the use of LLSs is the instructional methodology and materials. Therefore, while interpreting the results of the present study, these two factors should also be borne in mind.

With the assumption of their use by the students at the department of ELT, the first research question indicates the frequency of LLS use by the participants. The findings demonstrate that although they employ a variety of LLSs in learning English, the most commonly used ones appear to be compensation and metacognitive strategies; therefore, it could be concluded that the participants showed a tendency of preferring compensation and metacognitive strategies over others.

The preference for compensation strategies might be because of the participants' high participation in all language skills. This was in parallel with Alptekin's (2007) findings where compensation strategies were regarded as the mostly referred strategies. As the participants were students at the department of ELT where courses were mainly in English; thus, they needed to prevent communication breakdown and force themselves to participate in the classes. This assisted them to gain practice in compensation strategies in all language skills. For example, to compensate for their insufficient

knowledge in English, they guessed unfamiliar words while reading and listening; and they made up new words while writing and speaking. As a compensation strategy, 'guessing' was the most preferred one in this strategy group. This was in parallel with Oxford (1990) as she indicated that guessing was a strategy which was also used by advanced learners. Thus, it can be concluded that 'guessing' was the most preferred compensation strategy by the participants.

The high preference of metacognitive strategies indicates that the learners at the ELT department are able to manage their own learning. As metacognitive strategies allow learners to plan their learning, such strategies support classroom language learning (Alptekin, 2007); therefore, they are preferable in FL contexts. Studying at the department of ELT requires being a good language learner, and this finding of the present study is also in parallel with the relevant literature as Oxford (1990) considers them essential for successful language learning. Nevertheless, Anderson (1991) demonstrates that to become successful, knowing the LLSs on its own is not sufficient, students also need to know how to use them. Similarly, Carrell (1989) also calls attention to the importance of raising learners' awareness of LLSs. She indicates that strategy training should also teach why such strategies are important and when and how they can facilitate their learning. As discussed in the literature, this can be provided by metacognitive strategies. In Green and Oxford's (1995) study, metacognitive strategies were demonstrated as the mostly preferred ones both by male and female learners. Also S. Razı (2008) revealed the high use of metacognitive strategies by advance learners. Then, it could also be concluded that a large number of EFL learners refer to metacognitive strategies. This supports the existence of positive correlation between the employment of metacognitive strategies and proficiency in the TL.

Affective strategies were the least preferred ones by the participants. This finding also was in parallel with the relevant literature. In both Carson and Longhini's (2002) and Ehrman and Oxford's (1990) studies, affective strategies were among the least preferred LLSs. The low preference for this strategy group might be an indicator of the learners' lower affective filter. As EFL learners at the department of ELT can be regarded as proficient in the TL, they are able to communicate by using it. Therefore, they do not experience anxiety in speaking which in turn results in lower employment of affective strategies.

Although female participants were considered to be higher levels of strategy users compared to males (Green & Oxford, 1995), the present study did not reveal a significant difference between female and male participants. Since the present study did not mainly aim to compare gender differences, the number of female participants was much greater than the number of male

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participants. Therefore, future studies should test the impact of gender by working with equal number of participants in terms of gender.

In spite of the fact that strategies are believed to develop with age, the present study did not reveal significant differences among various classes at university level. The conclusion of this finding could be that although being in a different class at university requires the employment of different strategies, such difference is not significant. The possible explanation of this could be the participants' high level of proficiency in the TL which allowed them to employ similar LLSs in accordance with their level.

Even though a number of conclusions could be drawn from the data presented, the research questions need to be considered as hypotheses to be tested in future studies conducted with larger groups. In addition to this, the application of a strategy instruction program in an EFL setting may reveal more reliable results to test the effectiveness of these strategies; therefore, subsequent research should be conducted on this issue, especially as a parametric design. However, with reference to Oxford (2001), it should be kept in mind that it is impossible to design a single methodology which can fit all learners.

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