English Learning Strategies of Various Nations: A Study in Military Context

Farklı Ulusların İngilizce Öğrenme Stratejileri: Askeri Ortamda Bir Çalışma

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ABSTRACT: How successful learners learn English has been one of the primary interest of scientists and researchers in recent years. Therefore, this study aimed to determine what language learning strategies the military personnel from different nations used while learning English. 56 subjects from 14 different nations deployed in three different military settings in the world participated in the study. Strategies Inventory of Language Learning was used to collect data about the research. According to the result of the study, although a native speaker of a language more or less used learning strategies to be a successful language user, he\she was not much better than the others at using learning strategies in every aspect. However it can be stated that some native speakers used language learning strategies more frequently than others.

Keywords: English learning strategies, learning strategies in military context, learning strategies of various nationals

ÖZ: Son yıllarda başarılı İngilizce öğrenicilerinin nasıl başarılı olduğu bilim adamları ve araştırmacıların başlıca ilgi alanı olmuştur. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma farklı uluslardan ingilizce öğrenen askeri personelin ingilizce iletişimde başarılı olmak için hangi dil öğrenme stratejilerini kullandığını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırmaya dünyanın farklı merkezlerinde görev yapan 14 farklı ulustan 56 personel katılmıştır. Denekler Belçika, İspanya ve Türkiye'de bulunmaktadır. Araştırma hakkında veri toplamak için Dil Öğrenme Strateji Envanteri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, bir dilin doğal konuşmacısı başarılı bir dil öğrenicisi olmak için az veya çok öğrenme stratejisi kullanmasına rağmen, her yönüyle öğrenme stratejilerini kullanmada diğerlerinden daha başarılı değildir. Ancak, bazı doğal konuşmacıların diğerlerine göre daha sık öğrenme stratejileri kullandığı ifade edilebilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: İngilizce öğrenme stratejileri, askeri ortamda öğrenme stratejileri, farklı ulusların dil öğrenme stratejileri

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been observed by many researchers and teachers that each language learner uses consciously or unconsciously learning strategies during the learning process. In education, every individual is considered as a whole person having his-her own learning strategies that make him/her different from others. Therefore, how learners learn, remember and process new information and what kinds of strategies they use to understand have been the primary concerns of researchers dealing with language learning since 1960s. Especially, cognitive psychology has contributed in a large extent to the studies done on language learning strategies (Williams and Burden, 1997). The common core of these studies has been to identity what successful language learners do to learn a second or foreign language.

Although language learning strategies have been studied in various contexts, especially at universities, it has been rarely researched in military context in international dimension. Therefore, the implications of this study will shed light on the new teaching methods and syllabi which will aim to prepare the military personnel for international joint missions in terms of language proficiency.

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2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Some researchers define the term language learning strategy as follows: Richards and Platt (1992) state that learning strategies are "intentional behavior and thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information." Faerch Claus and Casper (1983:67) stress that a learning strategy is "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language." Wenden and Rubin (1987) define learning strategies as "... any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information." According to Stern (1992), "the concept of learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques."

One of the most prominent figures on language learning strategies, Oxford (1990) classifies the learning strategies into six main categories. *Cognitive strategies* help the learner to use the language material in direct ways. Learners take advantage of the strategies like analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to reach the objectives. *Metacognitive strategies* consist of identifying one's own learning needs while planning, organizing, arranging, monitoring and evaluating the learning process. Various studies conducted in different countries proved that metacognitive strategies directly influenced foreign and second language proficiency (in South Africa, Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; and in Turkey, Oxford, Judd, & Giesen, 1998).

Memory-related strategies help learners to learn and retrieve information in an orderly manner via acronyms, rhyming, images, the keyword method, body movement, mechanical means and location. Learners usually benefit from memory-related strategies to memorize vocabulary and structures in early stages of language learning. *Compensatory strategies* help the learner make up for missing knowledge like guessing from the context in listening and reading, using synonyms, gestures or pause words. *Affective strategies* involve the strategies like identifying one's mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself for good performance, and using deep breathing or positive selftalk. Affective strategies can be useful for beginner learners but learners do not need these strategies as they go through proficiency (Oxford, 1996). *Social strategies* help the learner work with others like asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task (Oxford, 1996).

In addition, according to Oxford (1990), motivation, gender, type of task, age and L2 stage, cultural background, learning style, tolerance of ambiguity, attitudes and beliefs are the factors influencing the choice of strategies used by language learners. She also maintains that using these strategies effectively "make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford 1990, p. 8). Moreover, it was revealed that learning strategies also enabled students to become more independent, autonomous, lifelong learners (Allwright, 1990; Little, 1991).

The recent studies on language learning strategies have mainly focused on the types of language learning strategies of university students. Çakmak (2010) explored learning strategies and motivational factors influencing information literacy self-efficacy of e-learning students in Turkey. This study was administered to 119 e-learners and results of the study revealed that metacognitive, critical thinking strategies, and control belief influence literacy self-efficacy.

Ünal et al. (2011) studied the use of language learning strategies by university students learning English, German and French in Turkish context. They found that teaching memory, cognitive and affective strategies were necessary for language learners. In addition, they revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the strategy types except one.

Demirel (2012) investigated language learning strategies of university students to determine whether there were any significant differences between the use of strategies in terms of gender and academic achievement. She conducted language learning strategy inventory on 702 university students in Turkey and her study suggested that university students had an average level of language learning strategies and they mostly used composition strategies and they rarely used memory strategies. In addition, she revealed that females took advantage of language strategies more than males and the use of language strategies were directly related to language achievement.

Korkmaz (2013) explored the most and the least frequently used language learning strategies of ELT learners when learning German or French as their third language. The study revealed that while compensation strategies were the most frequently used ones; affective strategies emerged as the least frequently used ones. Furthermore, no positive significant correlation was found between the use of strategies and the learners' achievement except for the memory strategies used by French learners. Moreover, negative correlation was found between the learners' affective strategy use and academic success for German learners.

3. THE AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARH QUESTIONS

In international joint missions in military context, there are many military personnel from different nations with different ages, educational background, language levels and mother tongues. In these missions, it is vital to use accurate and fluent language to accomplish the mission. Otherwise, misunderstanding sometimes results in causalities on the battle field. The personnel in these joint missions demonstrate various language proficiencies while performing their duties. In other words, some personnel are proficient enough to communicate effectively in English though some others have lower level of language skills. Therefore, this study aims to find out what language learning strategies the military personnel from different nations have used to learn a foreign or second language. Although language learning strategies have been studied in various contexts, it has been rarely researched in military context in international dimension, which makes this study unique. Moreover, the large number of participants from many different nations makes the scope of the study extended and distinguishes it from the current literature.   It is believed that the data collected in this study will shed light on the new teaching methods and syllabi which will aim to prepare the military personnel for international joint missions in terms of language proficiency. The following research questions were answered in this study.

1. What strategies were used the most and the least by the participants?
2. How frequently did the participants use language learning strategies?
3. What were the highest and lowest means in terms of subfactors?
4. What was the relationship between mother tongues in terms of learning strategies?

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1.Instrument

Descriptive research model was used in this study and data were collected by means of the SILL questionnaire (Strategies Inventory of Language Learning) by Rebecca Oxford (1990). There were six parts in the questionnaire and the parts were composed of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Three- point likert scale ranging from "I agree" to "I disagree" was used to measure the participants' ideas about the topic. The questionnaire was conducted on three different locations: NATO Headquarters in Belgium, NATO Headquarters in Spain and a Military Language School in Turkey.

4.2.Participants

As for subjects, there were four main groups. The first and second groups were the military personnel from different nationals who used English as a means of communication and served at NATO headquarters at different positions in Belgium and Spain. The third group was the military personnel from different nationals (Gambian, Jordanian, Azeri and Kyrgyz who could speak English and they were taking professional military education at military facilities in Turkey. The fourth group was the Turkish military personnel who had a certain level of proficiency in English and they were taking English course in Turkey to improve their English level. There are totally 56 subjects from 14 different countries and there were equally four subjects from each nation. Since Gambians knew several tribal mother tongues and they acquired English as official language, English speakers referred to Gambian military personnel in the study. In addition, Arabic native speakers referred to Jordanian military personnel whose mother tongue was Arabic. As for the first and second group, the SILL questionnaire was sent to a mediator at NATO headquarters in Belgium and Spain and it was given to the participants on the volunteering basis. As for the third and fourth group, the questionnaire was administered to the military personnel taking professional and English education (Gambian, Jordanian, Azeri, Kyrgyz and Turkish) in Turkey. In addition, participants were informed about the aim and the content of the questionnaire beforehand.

5. THE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data collected were analyzed by SPSS and Excel program. Primarily, the data collected were analyzed in terms of participants' mother tongues and their choice of language learning strategy while learning English. The means show the frequency of the usage of learning strategy during the learning process. The three items or strategies which were marked at the highest rate by native speakers were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Three Strategies Which Were Marked At the Highest Rate by Native Speakers

Mother tongues	item number-item	mean
	3 I connect sounds with images or pictures of new words	3
	6 I use flashcards	3
Arabic	7 I physically act out new words	3
	9 I remember the location of the page or blackboard	3
	18 I look for similarities between English and native words	3
Azeri	21 I translate word for word	3
	8 I review English lessons	3
	10 I say or write words several times	3
Dutch	12 I use known words in different ways	3
	11 I talk to native speakers	3
	13 I watch English movies or news	3
English	14 I read in English	3
	1 I establish the relationship between already known and new things	3
	2 I use words in sentences	3
French	4 I connect word with a special situation	3
	1 I establish the relationship between already known and new things	3
	2 I use words in sentences	3
German	4 I connect word with a special situation	3
Greek	22 I make summaries of information	3

	23 I guess the meaning of unknown words	3
	28 I use word and phrases which mean the same thing	3
	23 I guess the meaning of unknown words	3
	25 I make up new words	3
Hungarian	26 I continue to read without looking up every word	3
	34 I try to relax when I feel afraid of using English	3
	35 I encourage myself to speak English	3
Kyrgyz	36 I reward myself when I do well in English	3
	12 I use known words in different ways	3
	13 I watch English movies or news	3
Lithuanian	16 I speak in English	3
	39 When I do not understand someone I ask him to slow down and say it again	3
	41 I like to practice English with other students	3
Polish	42 I like to learn about the culture of English speakers	3
	34 I try to relax when I feel afraid of using English	3
	35 I encourage myself to speak English	3
Portuguese	36 I reward myself when I do well in English	3
	31 I try to find how to be a better learner	3
	35 I encourage myself to speak English	3
Spanish	41 I like to practice English with other students	3
	8 I review English lessons	3
	9 I remember the location of the page or blackboard	3
Turkish	15 I listen in English	3

Arabic speakers connected sounds with images or pictures of new words, used flashcards and physically acted out new words. As to Azeri speakers, they remembered the location on the page or blackboard, looked for similarities between English and native words and translated word for word. Dutch speakers reviewed English lessons, said or wrote words several times and used known words in different ways. French speakers stated that they established the relationship between already known and new things, used words in sentences and connected word with a special situation. As for English speakers they maintained that they talked to native speakers, watched English movies or news and read in English. Greek subjects marked that they guessed the meaning of unknown words, used words or phrases which mean the same thing and made summaries of information. As to Hungarian speakers they guessed the meaning of unknown words, made up new words and continued to read without looking up every word. Krygyz speakers tried to relax when they felt afraid of using English, encouraged themselves to speak English and rewarded themselves when they did well in English. As for Lithuanian speakers, they preferred to use known words in different ways, watched English movies or news and spoke in English. As for Polish speakers they asked someone to slow down and said again if they did not understand him, liked to practice English with other students and liked to learn about the culture of English speakers. Portuguese speakers cited that they tried to relax when they felt afraid of using English, encouraged themselves to speak English and rewarded themselves when they did well in English. Spanish speakers stated that they tried to how to be better learner, encouraged themselves to speak English and liked to practice English with other students. Finally, Turkish speakers preferred to review English lessons, remembered the location on the page or blackboard and listened in English.

The following table shows the three items or strategies which were marked at the lowest rate by native speakers.

Table 2: Three Strategies Which Were Marked At the Lowest Rate by Native Speakers

Mother tongues	item number-item	mean
	23 I guess the meaning of unknown words	1
	38 I use language learning diary	1
Arabic	42 I like to learn about the culture of English speakers	1
	17 I write in English	1,25
	4 I connect word with a special situation	1
Azeri	42 I like to learn about the culture of English speakers	1
	21 I translate word for word	1
	25 I make up new words	1
Dutch	38 I use language learning diary	1
	9 I remember the location of the page or blackboard	1
	24 I use gestures	1
English	27 I try to guess what the other person will say next	1
	24 I use gestures	1
	26 I continue to read without looking up every word	1
French	34 I try to relax when I feel afraid of using English	1
	32 I plan schedule in a way to have enough time to study English	1,5
	37 I notice if I am tense or nervous while studying English	1,5
German	24 I use gestures	1
	27 I try to guess what the other person will say next	1
	34I try to relax when I feel afraid of using English	1
Greek	37I notice if I am tense or nervous while studying English	1
	21I translate word for word	1
	34 I try to relax when I feel afraid of using English	1
Hungarian	37 I notice if I am tense or nervous while studying English	1
	1 I establish the relationship between already known and new things	1,5
	19 I focus on structures	1,5
Kyrgyz	22 I make summaries of information	1,5
	38 I use language learning diary	1
	40 I ask English speakers to correct me	1
Lithuanian	42 I like to learn about the culture of English speakers	1
	6 I use flashcards	1,75
	37 I notice if I am tense or nervous while studying English	1,75
Polish	7 I physically act out new words	1,5
	21 I translate word for word	1
	26 I continue to read without looking up every word	1
Portuguese	37I notice if I am tense or nervous while studying English	1
	32 I plan schedule in a way to have enough time to study English	1,5
	21I translate word for word	1,25
Spanish	20 I divide English words into parts that I understand	1
	38 I use language learning diary	1,5
	42 I like to learn about the culture of English speakers	1,5
Turkish	25 I make up new words	1,25

Arabic speakers declared that they guessed the meaning of unknown words, used language learning diary and liked to learn about the culture of English speakers. As for Azeri speakers, they wrote in English, connected word with a special situation and liked to learn about the culture of English speakers. Dutch speakers translated word for word, made up new words and used language learning diary. French speakers used gestures, continued to read without looking up every word and tried to relax when they felt afraid of using English. English speakers stated that they remembered the location of the page or blackboard, used gestures, tried to guess what the other person would say next. Greek subjects marked that they tried to guess what the other person would say next, tried to relax when they felt afraid of using English and noticed if they were tense or nervous while studying English. As for Hungarian speakers, they translated word for word, continued to read without looking up every word and noticed if they were tense or nervous while studying English. Kyrgyz speakers maintained that they established the relationship between already known and new things, focused on structures and made summaries of information. Lithuanian speakers used language learning diary, asked English speakers to correct themselves, liked to learn about the culture of English speakers. As to Polish speakers, they used flashcards, noticed if they were tense or nervous while studying English and physically acted out new words. Portuguese speakers cited that they translated word for word, continued to read without looking up every word and noticed if they were tense or nervous while studying English. Spanish speakers stated that they planed schedule in a way to have enough time to study English, translated word for word and divided English words into parts that they could understand. Finally, Turkish speakers used language learning diary, liked to learn about the culture of English speakers and made up new words.

The following Table shows the frequency of using learning strategies by native speakers in terms of all the items in the questionnaire.

Table 3: The Frequency of Using Learning Strategies by Native Speakers

Mother Tongues	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
English	42	1,00	3,00	2,44	,66
Kyrgyz	42	1,50	3,00	2,64	,49
Arabic	42	1,00	3,00	2,48	,72
Azeri	42	1,00	3,00	2,20	,57
German	42	1,00	3,00	2,41	,56
Dutch	42	1,00	3,00	2,30	,67
French	42	1,00	3,00	2,46	,77
Lithuanian	42	1,00	3,00	2,14	,78
Spanish	42	1,00	3,00	2,45	,57
Turkish	42	1,25	3,00	2,50	,51
Greek	42	1,00	3,00	2,48	,65
Portuguese	42	1,00	3,00	2,55	,63
Hungarian	42	1,00	3,00	2,48	,68
Polish	42	1,50	3,00	2,60	,44
Valid N (Listwise)	42				

According to the Table, Kyrgyz (2,64), Polish (2,60) and Portuguese (2,55) native speakers got the highest means in using English learning strategies. On the other hand, Lithuanian (2,14), Azeri (2,20) and Dutch (2,30) native speakers were the subjects who used the learning strategies at the lowest rate.

Table 4 displays the mother tongues which had the highest and lowest rates of strategy use in terms subfactors.

Table 4: The Mother Tongues Which Had the Highest and Lowest Means In Terms of Subfactors

PART (memory strategies)		1	PART (cognitive strategies)		2	PART (compensation strategies)		3
Mother Tongues	*Frequency*	*Mean*	*Mother Tongues*	*Frequency*	*Mean*	*Mother Tongues*	*Frequency*	*Mean*
Turkish	4	2,75	German	4	2,60	Kyrgyz	4	2,75
Arabic	4	2,69	Polish	4	2,56	Hungarian	4	2,75
Portuguese	4	2,69	English	4	2,54	Polish	4	2,6
Azeri	4	2,22	*Lithuanian*	4	2,38	*Turkish*	4	2,16
English	4	2,17	*French*	4	2,31	*Dutch*	4	2,125
Hungarian	4	2,11	*Azeri*	4	2,08	*English*	4	1,875

PART (metacognitive strategies)		4	PART (affective strategies)		5	PART (social strategies)		6
Mother Tongues	*Frequency*	*Mean*	*Mother Tongues*	*Frequency*	*Mean*	*Mother Tongues*	*Frequency*	*Mean*
English	4	2,95	Kyrgyz	4	2,85	English	4	3,00
Kyrgyz	4	2,9	Polish	4	2,65	Kyrgyz	4	3,00
French	4	2,9	Portuguese	4	2,6	Polish	4	2,88
Spanish	4	2,3	*Hungarian*	4	2,1	*Arabic*	4	2,50
Azeri	4	2,1	*Dutch*	4	1,55	*Azeri*	4	2,00
Lithuanian	4	1,65	*Lithuanian*	4	1,4	*Lithuanian*	4	1,56

According to the Table 4, Turkish (2,75), Arabic (2,69), and Portuguese (2,69) speakers had the highest rate in memory strategies. In this subfactor, Azeri (2,22), English (2,17) and Hungarian (2,11) speakers were the subjects who scored the least of all. In accordance with cognitive strategies, although German (2,60), Polish (2,56) and English (2,54) speakers marked the highest points, Lithuanian (2,38) , French (2,31) and Azeri (2,08) native speakers had the lowest ones. In compensation strategies, Krygyz (2,75), Hungarian (2,75) and Polish (2,6) subjects preferred to use learning strategies dominantly, but Turkish (2,16), Dutch (2,12) and English (1,87) speakers used this group of strategies the least. As to metacognitive strategies, English (2,95), Kyrgyz (2,9) and French (2,9) speakers had the highest means while Spanish (2,3), Azeri (2,1) and Lithuanian (1,65) speakers marked the lowest. Affective strategies were primarily used by Kyrgyz (2,8), Polish (2,6) and Portuguese (2,6) speakers, however Hungarian (2,1), Dutch (1,55) and Lithuanian (1,4) speakers preferred to use them at the lowest rate. Finally, English (3,0), Kyrgyz (3,0) and Polish (2,88) speakers got the highest rates in using social strategies. On the other hand, in this group Arabic (2, 50), Azeri (2,0) and Lithuanian (1,56) speakers were at the lowest.

The following Table displays the relationship between mother tongues in terms of learning strategies by means of Pearson Correlation method.

Table 5: The Relationship between Mother Tongues in Terms of Learning Strategies (Pearson Correlation)

Mother Tongues	English	Kyrgyz	Arabic	Azeri	German	Dutch	French	Lithuanian	Spanish	Turkish	Greek	Portuguese	Hungarian	Polish
English	1	-,37	,60	,12	,25	,31	,62	,17	-,26	,30	-,23	,44	,28	,87
Kyrgyz	-,37	1	-,68	-,85	-,44	-,74	-,71	-,21	-,07	,38	-,32	-,77	-,69	-,74
Arabic	,60	-,68	1	,51	,19	,90	,96	,67	,00	,16	,31	,24	,36	,70
Azeri	,12	-,85	,51	1	,75	,51	,61	,42	,54	-,73	,67	,74	,37	,46
German	,25	-,44	,19	,75	1	-,02	,36	,40	,69	-,75	,54	,69	-,09	,35
Dutch	,31	-,74	,90	,51	-,02	1	,81	,51	-,11	,13	,28	,17	,48	,55
French	,62	-,71	,96	,61	,36	,81	1	,67	,20	-,03	,47	,38	,42	,70
Lithuanian	,17	-,21	,67	,42	,40	,51	,67	1	,52	-,06	,64	-,11	-,31	,13
Spanish	-,26	-,07	,00	,54	,69	-,11	,20	,52	1	-,77	,90	,18	-,20	-,26
Turkish	,30	,38	,16	-,73	-,75	,13	-,03	-,06	-,77	1	-,67	-,61	-,14	,07
Greek	-,23	-,32	,31	,67	,54	,28	,47	,64	,90	-,67	1	,17	,05	-,14
Portuguese	,44	-,77	,24	,74	,69	,17	,38	-,11	,18	-,61	,17	1	,56	,69
Hungarian	,28	-,69	,36	,37	-,09	,48	,42	-,31	-,20	-,14	,05	,56	1	,52
Polish	,87	-,74	,70	,46	,35	,55	,70	,13	-,26	,07	-,14	,69	,52	1

According to Table 5, there were three main levels of correlation as follows: 0-0,3 (low correlation), 0,3-0,7 (medium correlation), 0.7-1 (high correlation). In accordance with the scale, there was high correlation between English and Polish native speakers in using learning strategies, however, no correlation was found between English and Kyrgyz, and Lithuanian, Spanish, Greek native speakers. As of Kyrgyz native speakers, there was nearly no correlation between Kyrgyz and other language speakers. Arabic native speakers had high correlation with Dutch, French and Polish native speakers but no correlation with Kyrgyz native speakers. Azeri native speakers marked that they had high correlation with German and Portuguese native speakers, but no correlation with Kyrgyz and Turkish native speakers. Dutch native speakers stated that they had high correlation with Arabic and French native speakers, however no correlation with Kyrgyz, German and Spanish native speakers. French native speakers had high correlation with Arabic, Dutch and Polish native speakers, but no correlation with Kyrgyz and Turkish native speakers. Lithuanian native speakers had medium correlation with Arabic, Azeri, German, Dutch, French, Spanish and Greek native speakers, however no correlation with Kyrgyz, Turkish, Portuguese and Hungarian native speakers. As of Spanish native speakers, they marked high correlation with Greek native speakers, however no correlation with English, Kyrgyz, Dutch, Turkish, Hungarian and Polish native speakers. Turkish native speakers stated medium correlation with English and Kyrgyz native speakers but no correlation with Azeri, German, French, Lithuanian, Spanish, Greek, Portuguese and Hungarian native speakers. Greek native speakers maintained high correlation with Spanish native speakers but no correlation with English, Kyrgyz, Turkish and Polish native speakers. Portuguese native speakers displayed high correlation with Azeri native speakers, however no correlation with Kyrgyz, Lithuanian and Turkish native speakers. As for Hungarian native speakers, they had medium correlation with Arabic, Azeri, Dutch, French, Portuguese and Polish native speakers but no correlation with Kyrgyz, German, Lithuanian, Spanish and Turkish native speakers. Finally Polish native speakers

stated high correlation with English, Arabic and French native speakers, however no correlation with Kyrgyz, Spanish and Greek native speakers in using language learning strategies.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A human being is quite different from others in many aspects, so his\her learning strategies are naturally diversified from one nation to the others. This study proves that a native speaker of a language more or less uses learning strategies to be a successful language user. However, it is not true to state a native speaker of a language is much better than the others at using learning strategies in every aspect.

According to the results of the present study, while Kyrgyz, Polish and Portuguese speakers are the groups that use the learning strategies the most, Lithuanian, Azeri and Dutch speakers prefer to benefit from the strategies the least. In addition, it is understood that as of memory strategies Turkish speakers, as for cognitive strategies German speakers, as of compensation and affective strategies Kyrgyz speakers, as for metacognitive and social strategies English speakers are the best users of the relevant strategies. In accordance with the correlation between the languages, high level of correlation is determined between the following languages: English with Polish native speakers; Arabic with Dutch, French and Polish speakers; Azeri with German and Portuguese speakers; Dutch with Arabic and French speakers; French with Arabic, Dutch and Polish speakers; Spanish speakers with Greek speakers; Portuguese with Azeri speakers and finally Polish with English, Arabic and French speakers. On the other hand, there is no correlation between Kyrgyz and other language speakers. Since the scarcity of the studies on language learning strategies in military context, the comparison of the findings of this study and the current literature cannot be stated.

Furthermore, it can be understood from the study, the data collected gives some clues about the ways of learning foreign languages of different nationals. For example, Arabic speakers like to act out new words, remember the location of the page and look for the similarities between English and native words. On the other hand, they do not like to learn about the culture of target language, do not like to write in English, and do not like to connect word with a special situation. Therefore, these characteristics should be taken into consideration while designing a syllabus and developing materials to prepare native speakers for international joint missions in terms of language proficiency.

It does not imply that the more a speaker or learner uses language learning strategies, the more he\she is successful in communicating in English. Reminding that language learning is a social, behavioral and mental process, becoming a good user of language learning strategies helps to spend less time, effort and money to be a successful communicator in the target language.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study focused on the differences and similarities of English learning strategies of some nationals in military context. However, it did not explain the reasons for the differences and similarities in the use of language learning strategies. Whether the reasons for the differences and similarities in learning strategies resulted from culture or other factors it would be the focus of another study in the same or a various context.

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Uzun Özet

Birçok eğitimci ve araştırmacı, dil öğrenicilerinin öğrenme sürecinde bilinçli veya bilinçsizce öğrenme stratejilerini kullandığını kabul eder. Hatta bazı öğrencilerin dil öğrenme stratejilerini daha etkin ve verimli kullanarak bu süreçte diğerlerine göre daha hızlı ve kolay yol aldıkları gözlenmiştir. Richard ve Platt (1992) öğrenme stratejilerini " öğrenme sırasında öğreniciler tarafından yeni bilginin daha iyi anlaşılmasına, öğrenilmesine ve hatırlanmasına yardımcı olacak amaçlı davranış ve düşünceler " olarak ifade eder.

Dil öğrenme stratejileri üzerine en kapsamlı çalışmayı Oxford (1990) yapmıştır. Oxford (1990) çalışmasında, dil öğrenme stratejilerini doğrudan ve dolaylı olmak üzere iki ana grupta toplar. Doğrudan stratejiler, hafıza, bilişsel, telafi, üst bilişsel, duygusal ve sosyal stratejiler olmak üzere altı çeşittir. Oxford'a göre (1990) dolaylı stratejiler ise üstbilişsel, duygusal ve sosyal üzere üç alt grupta sınıflandırılır. Oxford (1990) ayrıca dil öğrenme stratejileri seçimini etkileyen faktörleri şu şekilde sıralamaktadır: Güdülenme, inançlar ve düşünceler, cinsiyet, görevin çeşidi, yaş ve yabancı dil seviyesi, kültürel özgeçmiş ve öğrenme tarzıdır.

Başta NATO olmak üzere askeri bağlamdaki birçok müşterek görevde, farklı uluslardan çeşitli yaş, eğitim ve dil düzeyinde askeri ve sivil personel bulunmaktadır. Bu tür görevlerde iletişim amacıyla İngilizce kullanılmaktadır ve İngilizcenin doğru ve akıcı kullanılması görevin başarılması adına hayati öneme sahiptir. Hatta muharebe alanında dilin yanlış kullanılması, zayiatlara sebebiyet vermektedir. Bununla birlikte, müşterek görevlerde bulunan farklı ülkelerden personel daha önce sınavla belirlenen bir İngilizce yeterliliğine sahip olsa da bu yeterlilik kişiden kişiye değişmektedir. Bu noktada, dil öğrenme sürecinde farklı dil öğrenme yeteneği ve strateji kullanımı durumu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma farklı uluslardan askeri personelin İngilizce öğrenirken kullandıkları öğrenme stratejilerini tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu verilerin aynı zamanda farklı ülkelerde yapılabilecek müfredat ve materyal geliştirme faaliyetlerine esas teşkil edebileceği değerlendirilmektedir.

Araştırmada veri toplamak için Rebecca Oxford (1990) tarafından hazırlanan Dil Öğrenme Strateji Anketi kullanılmıştır. Anket, hafıza stratejisi, bilişsel, üstbilişsel, sosyal ve duygusal stratejiler olmak üzere altı bölümden oluşmaktadır ve ankette katılıyorum, fikrim yok, katılmıyorum şeklinde üçlü likert ölçeği esas alınmıştır. Anket, Belçika ve İspanya'daki NATO karargahları ile Türkiye'de askeri bir okulda uygulanmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan denekler Ürdün (Arapça), Azerbaycan, Hollanda, Gambiya (İngilizce), Fransa, Almanya, Yunanistan, Macaristan, Kırgızistan, Litvanya, Polonya, Portekiz, İspanya ve Türkiye'dendir. Araştırmaya ondört farklı ülkeden toplam 56 katılımcı iştirak etmiştir ve her ülkeden eşit oranda dört katılımcı mevcuttur. Katılımcılar önceden çalışmanın amacı ve içeriği konusunda bilgilendirilmiş ve katılımcıların seçiminde gönüllülük esas alınmıştır. Toplanan veriler, SPSS ve Excel programlarıyla analiz edilmiştir. Veri analizleri aşağıda belirtilen başlıklar altında beş ana grupta tablo haline getirilerek aktarılmıştır: Konuştukları ana dile göre en çok tercih edilen üç strateji, konuştukları ana dile göre en az tercih edilen üç strateji, dillere göre öğrenme stratejilerinin kullanım sıklığı, anketteki bölümlere göre en yüksek ve en düşük ortalamalar, öğrenme stratejilerinin kullanılması yönüyle ana diller arasındaki ilişkilerdir.

Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, her ulustan dil öğrenen bir kişi, başarılı olmak için az veya çok dil öğrenme stratejilerine başvurur. Fakat araştırmada adı geçen ülkelerden herhangi bir grubun, başka ülkelerden olan katılımcılarla karşılaştırıldığında, dil öğrenme stratejilerini her yönüyle diğerlerine göre daha fazla kullandığı söylenemez.

Anadili Kırgızca, Lehçe ve Portekizce olan katılımcılar, dil öğrenme stratejilerini en üst düzeyde kullanırken, ana dili Litvanyaca, Azerice veya Flemenkçe olan katılımcılar dil öğrenme stratejilerinden en az düzeyde faydalanmaktadırlar. Hafıza stratejileri dikkate alındığında ana dili Türkçe olanlar, bilişsel stratejilerde ana dili Almanca olanlar, telafi ve duygusal strateji kullanımında ana dili Kırgızca olanlar, üst bilişsel ve sosyal stratejilerde ana dili İngilizce olan Gambiyalılar diğerlerine göre ilgili stratejiyi kullanmada daha başarılı değerlendirilmektedir. Diller arasındaki ilişki dikkate alındığında, İngilizce ile Lehçe, Arapça ile Flemenkçe ve Lehçe, Azerice ile Almanca ve Portekizce, Flemenkçe ile Arapça ve Fransızca, Fransızca ile Arapça, Flemenkçe ve Lehçe, İspanyolca ile Yunanca, Portekizce ile Azerice ve son olarak ta Lehçe ile İngilizce, Arapça ve Fransızca konuşucuları arasında öğrenme stratejileri yönüyle benzerlik bulunmaktadır. Ancak, ana dili Kırgızca olanlar ile diğer dilleri konuşanlar arasında bir ilişkiye rastlanmamıştır.

Ek olarak, toplanan veriler farklı ana dili konuşan kişilerin yabancı dil öğrenme stratejileri hakkında da ipucu vermektedir. Örneğin, ana dili Arapça olanlar yeni kelimeleri öğrenirken hareketle anlatır, bilginin sayfa yerini hatırlar ve İngilizce ile ana dildeki kelimeler arasında benzerlik arar. Diğer taraftan, yine aynı grup hedef dilin kültürü hakkında öğrenmek istemez, İngilizce yazı yazmayı sevmez ve yeni kelimeyi özel ortamlarda kullanmayı tercih etmez.

Anadili Türkçe olanların ise, ingilizce derslerini tekrar gözden geçirmeyi, yeni konu veya kelimenin sayfadaki veya tahtadaki yerini hatırlamayı ve ingilizcede dinlemeyi tercih ettikleri anlaşılmıştır. Ancak, aynı grubun ingilizce öğrenirken, günlük yazmayı, hedef dilin kültürü hakkında öğrenmeyi ve yeni kelimeler uydurmayı tercih etmedikleri tespit edilmiştir.

Bu özelliklerin, çalışmada yer alan ülke personelini uluslararası görevlere dil yeterliliği yönüyle hazırlamada müfredat ve materyal geliştirirken dikkate alındığında fayda sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Ancak, dil öğrenicisinin dil öğrenme stratejilerini tek başına çok iyi kullanması başarılı olması için yeterli değildir. Dil öğreniminin sosyal, davranışsal ve zihinsel boyutları dikkate alındığında, tüm faktörlerin etkin kullanımı dil öğrenme sürecinin daha kısa ve verimli geçmesine katkı sağlayacaktır.

Citation Information