

Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Turkish EFL Students at Karabük University

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Abstract: This study aims to find out the frequency of the use of foreign language vocabulary learning strategies employed by Turkish EFL students at Karabuk University. The second aim of the study is to investigate the connection between the frequency of vocabulary learning strategies and field of study, achievement and student status i.e. regular or evening students. In the article, a Vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS) questionnaire, which is an adapted version proposed by Gu & Johnson (1996), was administered to 158 Turkish EFL students. The data were analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive, correlation and regression analyses were implemented in order to answer the research questions. The results indicated that the participants had a moderate level of vocabulary learning strategies. Statistically significant differences were observed among the participants from different fields in terms of top-down strategies, note taking strategies, repetition strategies, activation strategies, and anxiety level. The results indicated that regular and evening students differed in terms of top-down strategies, dictionary strategies, memory repetition strategies, and activation strategies. Finally, selective attention, using linguistic clues, and anxiety were found to be important predictors of academic success.

Keywords: vocabulary, learning strategies, Turkish EFL students, learning a foreign language, vocabulary learning

Karabük Üniversitesi'ndeki Türk EFL Öğrencilerin Kelime Öğrenme Stratejileri

Öz: Bu çalışmanın amacı Karabük'te eğitim gören İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin Kelime Öğrenme Stratejileri kullanım sıklığını belirlemektir. Çalışmanın ikinci amacı, kelime öğrenme stratejileri ile bölüm, başarı ve öğrenci statüsünün ilişkisini araştırmaktır. Makalede, Gu ve Johnson'un (1996) öne sürdüğü Kelime Öğrenme Stratejileri anketi 158 İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrenciye uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sorularına cevap verebilmek için betimleyici, korelasyon ve regresyon analizleri uygulanmıştır. Çalışma, öğrencilerin orta seviyede kelime öğrenme stratejisi kullandıklarını tespit etmiştir. Farklı bölümlerden katılımcılar arasında tümevarım stratejileri, not alma stratejileri, tekrar etme stratejileri, harekete geçirme stratejileri ve endişe seviyeleri açısından farklılıklar görülmüştür. Çalışmanın sonuçları, gündüz ve akşam grubu öğrencilerinin tümevarım stratejileri, sözlük stratejileri, tekrar etme stratejileri ve harekete geçirme stratejileri açısından farklılık gösterdiklerini belirtmektedir. Sonuç olarak, seçici dikkat, dilsel ipuçlarının kullanımı ve endişe seviyesi değişkenlerinin başarının önemli belirleyicileri olduğu bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kelime öğrenme stratejileri, İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrenciler, yabancı dil öğrenmek, kelime öğrenme

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Introduction

Vocabulary plays a central part in the process of language learning on account of the fact that it is not possible to perform properly in other language skills i.e. speaking, listening, writing, or reading without sound vocabulary knowledge (Asgari & Mustapha, 2011, Boonkongsan & Intaraprasert, 2014). Nation (2009) points out that for learners to perform adequately in reading skill, they need to have substantial vocabulary knowledge. Stæhr (2008, p. 1) also states that “vocabulary knowledge is generally assumed to be a good predictor of language proficiency in a second or a foreign language.”

In Turkish context at university level, the tendency of students is to memorize a new word when it is taught by the teacher. In other cases, students look up the words they do not know in a dictionary. However, it is very likely that, as Boonkongsan and Intaraprasert (2014) point out, these learners forget these words very quickly. Students are supposed to practice newly learned vocabulary items repeatedly so that they can acquire the vocabulary items. However, Turkish learners at university level do not pursue the opportunities to learn vocabulary items properly. Therefore, as Nation (2001) points out, vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) come to fore as facilitators to acquire new vocabulary items on the part of students. According to Krashen (1989), learners must give importance to vocabulary acquisition because vocabulary seems to be a real indicator of language ability. Now that different students use different strategies, it is important to investigate VLS in an attempt to help language teachers decide their vocabulary learning methods.

Cengizhan (2011) states that vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, grammar, and writing are seen as the essential components while learning a language. Especially, vocabulary has a greater role as it is the main part of comprehension and communication. Lewis (1993) points out that vocabulary ought to be at the core of language learning but vocabulary acquisition is not an easy process. Snow & Kim (2006) states that for EFL students, vocabulary progress is one of the difficulties in learning English especially when these learners are not exposed to English sufficiently. Nation (1990) claims that substantial exposure is needed for second language learners to acquire a language. According to Hirschel & Fritz (2013), while teaching and learning a foreign language, the question is how effectively a learner can put words into long-term memory.

When all these factors are considered, the use of vocabulary learning strategies is crucial for learners to help them take control of their own learning. The purpose of this study is to investigate the frequency of vocabulary leaning strategy use by Turkish EFL students at Karabuk University in relation to their field of study, grade level, and academic success.

Studies on Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Subekti and Lawson (2007) claim that there are few studies to investigate vocabulary learning strategies. Gu & Johnson (1996) studied the vocabulary language strategies of

850 third year Chinese students, who were non-English major, by means of a vocabulary learning questionnaire. They realized that *self-initiation strategies* and *selective attention strategies* were positive predictors of their participants' proficiency, which was measured by their college English test scores. Moreover, they realized that skillful dictionary use, contextual encoding, contextual guessing, using newly learned words and paying attention to word formation had a positive connection with participants' test scores. They also found that instead of individual vocabulary learning strategies, combination of these strategies might have made positive differences in their participants' vocabulary learning.

In terms of the relation between reading and VLS, Laufer's (1992) study discovered a close relationship between vocabulary size and reading. Similarly, Albrechtsen, Haastrup, and Henriksen's study (2008) revealed a high correlation between L2 vocabulary size and L2 reading ability. Laufer and Goldstein (2004) concluded that vocabulary accounted for 42.6% of the variance in learners' foreign language class grades. In a similar vein, Alderson (2005) found that vocabulary had a strong relationship with reading, writing, listening and grammar. Therefore, it can be argued that "language ability is, to quite a large extent, a function of vocabulary size" (Alderson, 2005, p.88).

Fan (2003) worked with 1067 college students in Hong Kong and discovered that they did not make use of *key word technique* and *management strategy* while they utilized *dictionary* and *contextual guessing strategies*. Marin (2005) investigated vocabulary learning strategies employed by 150 EFL students at the University of Quintana and found that *guessing meaning from context*, *using dictionary to check the meaning* and *repeating silently* were the most commonly used strategies. In a recent study, Arjomand and Sharififar (2011) investigated the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and gender among Iranian EFL learners. They concluded that cognitive strategy was the most commonly used strategy, while social strategy was the least frequently used one.

Vocabulary learning strategy use was also studied in relation to motivation. Mertinnet's (2008) study supported the link between motivation and vocabulary learning strategies, revealing that highly motivated learners used a wider array of VLSs compared to slightly motivated students. Amirian and Heshmatifar's (2013) study found that determination strategies such as *guessing from context* and *consulting a dictionary* were the most popular strategies, while *social strategies* were the least popular. Another important finding of this study was that the majority of the participants did not use certain vocabulary learning strategies such as semantic maps and *discovering meaning through group work activity*. The authors stated that it was vitally important for students to be trained on vocabulary learning strategies.

Research Questions

1. What is the frequency of vocabulary learning strategy use of the EFL students at Karabuk University?

2. Are there any differences among students from different departments in terms of vocabulary learning strategy use?
3. Are there any differences between regular and evening students in terms of vocabulary learning strategy use?
4. Which vocabulary learning strategies predict academic success for preparatory level students?

I. Methodology

A. Participants

The participants of the study are 158 Turkish EFL prep students in School of Foreign Languages of Karabuk University. The number of female students is 82 (52.6%), and the number of male students is 74 (47.4%). In terms of status, the number of regular students is 88 (56.4%), and for evening students it is 68 (43.6%). When it comes to field of study, the number of engineering faculty students is 31 (19.9%), faculty of fine arts 7 (4.5%), faculty of Letters 47 (30.1%), school of health 25 (16.0%), faculty of business 13 (8.3%), administration, faculty of economics and administrative sciences 27 (17.3%), and other departments 6 (3.8%). Their gender and department were chosen randomly and evenly. All the participants' level of English was Pre-Intermediate. Their average English grades were calculated based on the results of midterm exams which they take during a semester. The students of Prep School of Karabuk University had 16 hour main courses for a week face to face by means of a course book including integrated skills. They had additional 4 hour laboratory classes for a week.

B. Instrument

The research instrument was a Vocabulary Learning Strategy questionnaire, which was adapted from Gu & Johnson (1996). The questionnaire that consisted of forty-six vocabulary learning strategies statements in addition to the information of department, gender, status and English grade of the EFL students was used to investigate the frequency of vocabulary learning strategy use of Turkish EFL students. The data consists of three parts and were analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The first part included four questions asking the learners' department, gender, status and English grade. The second part contained forty-six items which were divided into eight categories including "beliefs about vocabulary learning (items 1-11), metacognition regulation (items 12-18), guessing strategies (items 19-25), dictionary strategies (items 26-32), note-taking strategies (items 33-37), memory/ repetition strategies (items 38-41), activation strategies (items 42-43), and anxiety (items 44-46)". All of these items were evaluated in terms of 5 points rating scale such as 1 point for "never" and 5 point for "always". The reliability of the scale was measure by means of Cronbach's alpha. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha values of the variable of the study

Variables	α	Number of items
beliefs about vocabulary learning	.552	11
metacognition regulation	.591	7
use background knowledge	.576	4
using linguistic clues	.536	3
dictionary strategies	.692	7
note taking strategies	.607	5
memory/ repetition strategies	.655	4
activation strategies	.637	2
anxiety	.512	3
total	.762	46

As we can understand from Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha values for the sub-dimensions of the scale range from .512 to .692. The Cronbach' alpha value for the whole scale is .762. Therefore, we can say that the scale is highly reliable.

II. Results and Discussion

In order to analyze all types of vocabulary learning strategies, the results of 158 participants were grouped as *low*, *moderate*, and *high*. To do this, the maximum values were divided into three in order to find the cut-off points. The results are presented in Table 2. The cut-off points for the variables are as follows: *memorization* (low=1-7, moderate=8-15, high=16-20), *bottom up strategies* (low=1-5, moderate=5-10, high=10-15), *top-down strategies* (low=1-7, moderate=8-15, high=16-20), *self-initiation strategies* (low=1-5, moderate=5-10, high=10-15), *selective attention strategies* (low=1-7, moderate=8-15, high=16-20), *using background knowledge* (low=1-7, moderate=8-15, high=16-20), *using linguistic clues* (low=1-5, moderate=5-10, high=10-15), *dictionary* (low=1-12, moderate=13-25, high=26-35), *note taking strategies* (low=1-8, moderate=9-16, high=17-25), *memory/ repetition strategies* (low=1-7, moderate=8-15, high=16-20), *activation strategies* (low=1-3, moderate=4-7, high=8-10), *anxiety* (low=1-5, moderate=5-10, high=10-15). The results are presented in Table 1. We can understand from Table 1 that the participants rated themselves moderate at memorization strategies, top-down strategies, self-initiation strategies, using background knowledge, using linguistic clues, dictionary strategies, note taking strategies, memory/ repetition strategies, and anxiety. They rated themselves high at bottom up strategies, selective attention, and activation strategies.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics about all vocabulary learning strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies	Low		Moderate		high	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Memorization strategies	2	1.26	111	70.00	45	28.48
Bottom up strategies	2	1.26	58	36.70	98	62.05
Top-down strategies	4	2.54	90	56.96	64	40.50
Self-initiation strategies	8	5.07	150	94.93	0	0
Selective attention	1	0.63	60	37.97	97	61.39
Using background knowledge	2	1.26	110	69.62	46	29.11
Using linguistic clues	5	3.16	150	94.93	3	1.90
Dictionary strategies	6	3.79	93	58.86	59	37.34
Note Taking	21	13.29	87	55.06	50	31.64
Memory/ Repetition strategies	12	7.59	101	63.92	45	28.48
Activation strategies	7	4.43	59	37.34	92	58.22
Anxiety	28	17.72	88	55.69	42	26.58

In order to determine whether there are differences among students from different departments in terms of vocabulary learning strategies, an ANOVA was carried out. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. ANOVA results for field of study and VLS use

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
memorization	Between Groups	11,695	6	1,949	,330	,920
	Within Groups	879,741	149	5,904		
	Total	891,436	155			
bottom-up	Between Groups	17,327	6	2,888	,645	,694
	Within Groups	666,980	149	4,476		
	Total	684,308	155			
top-down	Between Groups	145,651	6	24,275	2,802	,013
	Within Groups	1291,016	149	8,665		
	Total	1436,667	155			
self-initiation	Between Groups	19,821	6	3,304	,764	,599
	Within Groups	643,922	149	4,322		
	Total	663,744	155			

selective attention	Between Groups	49,084	6	8,181	,872	,517
	Within Groups Total	1397,756	149	9,381		
background knowledge	Between Groups	46,209	6	7,701	1,237	,291
	Within Groups Total	927,535	149	6,225		
linguistic clues	Between Groups	49,952	6	8,325	1,372	,229
	Within Groups Total	903,964	149	6,067		
dictionary	Between Groups	268,587	6	44,765	1,688	,128
	Within Groups Total	3951,490	149	26,520		
note taking	Between Groups	281,168	6	46,861	2,673	,017
	Within Groups Total	2611,807	149	17,529		
repetition	Between Groups	163,295	6	27,216	2,260	,041
	Within Groups Total	1794,622	149	12,044		
activation	Between Groups	43,107	6	7,184	2,264	,040
	Within Groups Total	472,816	149	3,173		
anxiety	Between Groups	96,150	6	16,025	2,686	,017
	Within Groups Total	888,927	149	5,966		

Table 3 indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between students from different fields of study in terms of memorization strategies ($p. 92 > .05$), bottom-up strategies ($p. 69 > .05$), self-initiation strategies ($p. 59 > .05$), selective attention ($p. 51 > .05$), background knowledge ($p. 29 > .05$), dictionary strategies ($p. 22 > .05$), and using linguistic clues ($p. 22 > .05$). However, the results indicate that there are statistically significant differences among students from different fields of study in terms of *top-down strategies* ($p. 01 < .05$), *note taking strategies* ($p. 01 < .05$), *repetition strategies* ($p. 04 < .05$), *activation strategies* ($p. 04 < .05$), and *anxiety level* ($p. 01 < .05$). Students from business administration use *note-taking strategies*, *repetition strategies*, and *activation strategies* more frequently than students from other departments. Students from faculty of letters were found to implement *top down strategies* more frequently than students from other departments.

In order to determine whether there are differences between regular and evening students in terms of vocabulary learning strategies, a T-test was carried out. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. T-test results for vocabulary learning strategies for regular and evening students.

Variables	status	N	M	F	Sig.
Memorization strategies	Regular	88	12,1250	,002	.985
	Evening	68	12,1324		
Bottom up strategies	Regular	88	10,1364	2,56	.906
	Evening	68	10,1765		
Top-down strategies	Regular	88	12,0000	,163	.002
	Evening	68	13,5294		
Self-initiation strategies	Regular	88	8,2500	,043	.273
	Evening	68	8,6176		
Selective attention	Regular	88	14,1932	,000	.980
	Evening	68	14,2059		
Using background knowledge	Regular	88	12,4773	4,56	.212
	Evening	68	11,9706		
Using linguistic clues	Regular	88	8,6023	,627	.072
	Evening	68	9,3235		
Dictionary strategies	Regular	88	20,5795	6,60	.006
	Evening	68	22,8676		
Note Taking strategies	Regular	88	13,6705	3,08	.094
	Evening	68	14,8382		
Memory/ Repetition strategies	Regular	88	10,8636	,900	.004
	Evening	68	12,5147		
Activation strategies	Regular	88	6,5227	,252	.004
	Evening	68	7,3529		
Anxiety	Regular	88	7,8864	,156	.837
	Evening	68	7,9706		

When we examine Table 4, we can understand that there are no statistically significant differences between regular and evening students in terms of memorization strategies ($p > .05$), bottom up strategies ($p > .05$), self-initiation strategies, selective attention ($p > .05$), using background knowledge ($p > .05$), using linguistic clues ($p > .05$), anxiety ($p > .05$), note taking strategies ($p > .05$). However, statistically significant differences were observed between regular and evening students in terms of top-down strategies ($p < .05$), dictionary strategies ($p < .05$), memory/ repetition strategies ($p < .05$), and activation strategies ($p < .05$).

For all these strategy types, evening students were observed to have higher mean scores compared to regular students: Top-down strategies (regular=12.00, evening=13.52), dictionary strategies (regular=20.57, evening=22.86), memory / repetition strategies (regular=10.86, evening=12.51), and activation strategies (regular=6.52, evening=7.35).

Descriptive statistics indicate that evening students ranked higher than regular students in terms of the three items under top-down strategies. These are: “*I revise the new words I have learned*”, “*I use the words that I have learned*”, and “*When I learn the word, I pay close attention to its new usage and new meaning*”. In terms of dictionary strategies, evening students also ranked higher than regular students in terms of the items “*I use an English dictionary*”, “*I use the dictionary to find only the meaning of the word*”, “*I look in the dictionary for the grammatical patterns of the word*”, “*I look in the dictionary for collocation patterns*”, and “*I use the dictionary to find the appropriate usage (example sentence) of the word*”. Regular and evening students also differed in relation to memory/ repetition strategies. Evening students were found to perform better in writing a word repeatedly, creating a mental image of the new word to help them remember the word, and analyzing a word by breaking it into different parts (prefix, root, and suffix). Finally, evening students were also found to be better than regular students in terms of making use of the words they learn in speaking, writing, and in everyday situations. It seems that evening students perform better than regular students in terms of a number of important points. This may be due to the fact that evening students have to pay extra fee for the school and they cannot risk failing their courses.

In order to see the correlation among the variables of the study, a correlation analysis was carried out. The results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Pearson Product-Moment correlations among VLS and academic success

	Aca	Mem	Bot	Top	Self	Sel	Back	Lin	Dic	Not	Rep.	Act.	Anx.
Aca		,102	,157	,095	,076	,251**	,061	,226**	,103	,188*	,054	,081	-,198*
Mem			,102	,148	,154	,041	,046	,116	,330**	,308**	,367**	,070	,172*
Bot				,150	,180*	,186*	,193*	,161*	,142	,071	,082	,254**	-,098
Top					,317**	,278**	,265**	,420**	,392**	,257**	,435**	,393**	-,108
Self						,465**	,263**	,267**	,298**	,296**	,390**	,236**	,137
Sel							,286**	,197*	,130	,271**	,246**	,392**	-,059
Back								,318**	,059	,031	,101	,159*	,061
Lin									,374**	,342**	,467**	,259**	-,129
Dic										,485**	,497**	,282**	,087
Not											,473**	,210**	,017
Rep												,347**	-,005
Act													-,103
Anx													1

Notes: * $p < .05$; ** $p > .01$

Aca: academic success, **Mem:** Memorization strategies, **Bot:** bottom-up strategies, **Top:** top-down strategies, **Self:** self-initiation strategies, **Sel:** Selective attention strategies, **Back:** Using background knowledge, **Lin:** Using linguistic clues, **Dic:** Dictionary strategies, **Not:** Note taking strategies, **Rep:** Repetition strategies, **Act:** Activation strategies, **Anx:** anxiety

As can be seen from Table 6, there were positive relationships between academic success and selective attention ($r = .25, p < .01$), using linguistic clues ($r = .23, p < .01$), note-taking strategies ($r = .19, p < .01$). As we can understand from the table, anxiety negatively correlates with academic success ($r = -.20, p < .01$), the highest correlation occurred between selective attention and academic success ($r = .25, p < .01$). Correlation results indicated that all of the independent variables except for anxiety were in positive relationships with students' satisfaction.

Table 6. Results of multiple regression analysis for academic success and VLS

Variables	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	4,405	,822			,000
Memorization strategies	,063	,043	,126	5,359	,146
Bottom-up strategies	,049	,046	,086	1,460	,295
Top-down strategies	-,011	,037	-,028	1,052	,767
Self-initiation strategies	-,027	,055	-,048	-,297	,617
Selective attention strategies	,100	,037	,257	-,502	,008
Using background knowledge	-,024	,041	-,050	2,704	,568
Using linguistic clues	,103	,046	,214	-,572	,028
Dictionary strategies	,007	,023	,032	2,224	,751
Note taking strategies	,029	,026	,105	,318	,273
Repetition strategies	-,057	,036	-,171	1,101	,110
Activation strategies	-,042	,060	-,065	-1,607	,477
Anxiety	-,083	,039	-,175	-,713	,035

Notes: $R = .42$; $R^2 = .17$; $F(2, 49) = 7.43$; $p = .005$

Table 5 reports the results of multiple linear regression analysis for which vocabulary learning strategies predict academic success. The multiple correlation coefficient was .42, revealing that nearly 17% of the variance in the sample can be accounted for the linear combination of the vocabulary learning strategies. T-test results for the significance of regression coefficients illustrated that *selective attention* ($\beta = .28, p < .05$), *using linguistic clues* ($\beta = .21, p < .05$), and *anxiety* ($\beta = -.17, p < .05$) were the significant predictors

of academic success. It must be noted that anxiety negatively correlates with success, meaning that as success increases anxiety decreases. Other variables were not significant in predicting distance education students' satisfaction ($\beta = .13, p > .05$; $\beta = .09, p > .05$; $\beta = .02, p > .05$, $\beta = .05, p > .05$, $\beta = .05, p > .05$, $\beta = .03, p > .05$, $\beta = .11, p > .05$, $\beta = .17, p > .05$, and $\beta = .06, p > .05$, respectively).

The major finding of the present study is that among the eleven different vocabulary learning strategies, *bottom up strategies*, *selective attention strategies*, and *activation strategies* were reported as the most frequently-used strategies, followed by using linguistic clues, self-initiation strategies, memorization strategies, dictionary strategies, repetition strategies, note taking strategies, and top-down strategies. It is important to note that unlike some other studies in literature (Gu and Johnson, 1996, Wei, 2007), the present study emphasized activation strategies. The present study also found that the participants had a moderate level of vocabulary learning strategies. The results indicated that regular and evening students differed in terms of *top-down strategies*, *dictionary strategies*, *memory/ repetition strategies*, and *activation strategies*. Evening students ranked higher than regular students in the use of these strategies.

The second aim of the study was to measure the differences in vocabulary learning strategy use based on field of study. In literature, there is sound evidence that supports the connection between learners' field of study and their vocabulary learning strategy use (Wei, 2007; Bernardo & Gonzales, 2009; Tsai & Chang, 2009). Gu (2002), for example, found a statistically significant difference in strategy use between science and arts students. The results of that study indicated that science students tended to employ strategies such as relying on visual coding more frequently than arts students. Similarly, Mingsakoon (2002) discovered that science students employed VLS differently from the arts students. Bernardo and Gonzales (2009) found that the use of determination and social VLSs was significantly different among the Filipino students across five disciplines; Liberal Arts and Education; Computer Science and Engineering; Business Education, Hospitality Management and Allied Medical Science. Quite recently, Boonkongsan and Intaraprasert (2014) conducted a study on the effects of fields of study (arts, business and science-oriented) on the use of VLSs among Thai tertiary-level students and found that field of study affected the students' overall VLS use. The present study also found differences in terms of *top-down strategies*, *note taking strategies*, *repetition strategies*, *activation strategies*, and *anxiety level* based on field of study. *Top down strategies* were most frequently used by students of faculty of letters, *note-taking strategies*, *repetition strategies*, and *activation strategies* were most frequently used by students from faculty of business administration.

The study also investigated which vocabulary learning strategies were predictors of success. Multiple regression results indicated that *selective attention strategies* and *using linguistic clues* positively correlated with academic success and *anxiety* negatively

correlated with academic success. These findings are not in line with the findings from other studies. Gu & Johnson's (1996) study also discovered that that *self-initiation strategies* and *selective attention strategies* were positive predictors of their participants' proficiency. There are also some other studies in Turkish context the results of which contradict with the results of the present study. Tılfarlıoğlu and Bozgeyik's(2012) study, for example, found that *memory strategies* positively correlated with academic success. Selective attention strategies are categorized under metacognitive strategies, the importance of which have been shown by a number of studies in literature (Rasekh and Ranjbar, 2003; Zhao, 2009; Nosidlak, 2013). Therefore, we can say that the present study emphasized the importance of *metacognitive vocabulary strategies* on academic success. There is evidence in literature that supports the connection vocabulary learning process and metacognitive strategy use. The study conducted by Sagarra and Alba (2006), for example, found that the Spanish FL students who used more metacognitive learning strategies improved significantly more than those who relied on rote repetition and other memorization techniques.

Conclusion

“Vocabulary learning is one of the major challenges that foreign language learners face during the process of learning a language” (Ghazal 2010, p. 84). Therefore, in order to help learners develop their vocabulary learning strategies, it is useful to carry out studies that focus on measuring VLS in relation to different variables. Although different patterns of strategy use may emerge in the literature, there are also similar patterns. Metacognitive strategies, for example, have been shown to have a direct relation with academic success. Therefore, language teachers can provide explicit input for VLT as Nation (2001) maintains that there is enough evidence to support the impact of explicit instruction. It is also important to note that, as Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) state, strategy training leads to learner autonomy, which helps learners to become aware of their own preferences and take on more responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, Waldvogel (2013) makes that point that novice language learners do not know the contributions of VLSs to effective learning. Therefore, language learners must be provided with explicit strategy training and teachers must be encouraged to do so.

Since most FL students at schools in Turkey do not receive explicit instruction on vocabulary learning strategies, it is very likely the FL learners in this study have never been taught or have not fully developed effective language learning strategies and techniques to enhance their vocabulary learning. Now that research indicates that training in VLS use contributes to learner autonomy (Amirian and Heshmatifar, 2013) and, as Nation (2001) states, explicit instruction supports the vocabulary learning process of students, it is advisable that future research experimentally focus on whether instruction helps Turkish FL learners gain the ability to use VLS effectively.

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