

Full Length Research Paper

Assessment of language learners' strategies: Do they prefer learning or acquisition strategies?

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The aim of this study is to evaluate learning and acquisition strategies used by second/foreign language learners. This study is a comparative investigation of learning and acquisition strategies of successful and less successful language learners. The main question of the study is to investigate if there is a relationship between the learners' strategies and their success; why some learners become less successful in language learning while others become more successful. Although there are many different answers to this question, in the study "the strategy" that the learners used has been scrutinized. The study, assessed the language learning strategies used by 92 university students in Turkey, using Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Also, one hundred and twenty university students in Turkey participated in an interview. They were grouped in into two parts as "successful" and "less successful" learners. The learners' levels were based on their scores in a standardized test administered at the beginning of their schools. In the questionnaire, T-Tests in statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) were used. In the interview, Fisher's Exact Test for 2x2 Tables and Chi-squared Test of Association Tests in SPSS were used. Both of the results reveal that there is a big gap between the students who use learning strategies and the ones who use acquisition strategies. The findings show that the language learners have different language learning strategies and these strategies can be grouped in two main title as learning and acquisition strategies. These findings have important implications for teachers, instructors and program designers to develop and practice different language strategies in order to have more successful students. At the end of the study, some suggestions were submitted to foreign language teachers and learners.

Key words: Strategy, acquisition, learning, language learners, language teaching, language learning.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language learning is, in fact, a kind of life-long learning. If a person is exposed to a foreign language in

all parts of his/her life, he/she certainly becomes successful. This is based on the natural way of learning.

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Although in a second language acquisition situation, the language is spoken in the environment of the learner and the learners have a lot of opportunities to use the language in natural way, in a foreign language learning situation the language is not spoken in the immediate environment, and the learners have very few opportunities to use the language in natural communication situations. Therefore, in foreign language situation, many issues are involved such as the methods, the techniques, the styles and the strategies.

Language acquisition or language learning

In language learning, of course there is no magic formula for success. However, there are some clues and tips. First of all, a person should understand the differences between language learning and language acquisition.

Acquisition is the process by which humans perceive and comprehend language, produce and use words and sentences to communicate. Language *acquisition* is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language. The speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. Error correction and explicit teaching of rules are not relevant to language acquisition (Brown and Hanlon, 1970; Brown, Cazden and Bellugi, 1973). Conscious language *learning*, on the other hand, is thought to help a great deal by error correction and the presentation of explicit rules (Krashen and Seliger, 1975). If the learners firstly are aware of this difference, they can solve the problem much more easily.

Most of the language learners are not aware of the distinction between acquisition and learning. Language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication. Learning refers to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. learning is "knowing about" a language, known to most people as "grammar", or "rules" (Krashen, 1982).

For most students the difference between acquisition and learning is blurred. Therefore they mix the strategies of learning and acquisition with each other. In fact, this is very important to be successful in language learning. According to Natural Approach, the things are acquired subconsciously, whereas, learning is a conscious process. Language learning is 'knowing the rules', having a conscious knowledge about acquiring grammar. In conscious learning, the speaker is concerned about correctness. On the otherhand, "acquisition of a language" is 'picking it up', developing ability in a language by using natural, communicative situations. The first principle of the Natural Approach is that comprehension precedes

production. The second principle is that production is allowed to emerge in stages. The Third one is that the course syllabus consists of communicative goals. This means that the focus of each classroom activity is organized by topic, not grammatical structure. The final principle is that the activities done in the classroom aimed at acquisition must foster a lowering of the affective filter of the students.

Natural Approach has five theoretical hypotheses. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis claims that learners have two distinct ways of developing competence in second languages (via acquisition or via learning). The Natural Order Hypothesis states that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order. The Monitor Hypothesis has an extremely limited function in second language performance: it can only be used as a monitor or editor. However, in acquisition, monitor system is very limited. In monitor-free situations, learners are focused on communication and not on form. The Input Hypothesis claims that we acquire language by understanding input that is a little beyond current level of competence. This hypothesis claims that listening comprehension and reading are of primary importance in the language program, and that the ability to speak or write fluently in a second language will come on its own with time. The Affective Filter Hypothesis is related to second language achievement. All of these hypotheses are related with subconscious language acquisition (Krashen and Terrell, 1995). "If the languages are learned subconsciously, students learn faster and better. In conscious learning brain analyzes grammar, memorizes vocabulary, and translates messages. The result ends with complete knowledge of grammar rules and translation abilities. However, the person can't speak well and can't understand easily. Subconscious acquisition strategies are more effective. These provide comprehensible input to the brain.

By this way, the person can acquire language and improve their four skills, grammar and vocabulary. At the same time, by acquisition, not only the learners improve their language naturally, effortlessly and tremendously but also it is a stress free process.

Strategies and styles

Throughout the language teaching history, teaching methods, textbooks, grammatical paradigms were cited as the primary factors in successful learning. In recent years, language teaching focused on the role of the learner in the process. This is based on the "styles" and "strategies" of the learners.

Style is a term that refers to consistent and rather enduring tendencies or preferences within an individual. They are general characteristics of intellectual functioning. It differentiates the person from others. Therefore, styles

vary across individuals (Brown, 2007).

Learning style research is used with personality and cognitive styles to determine ability, predict performance, and improve classroom teaching and learning (Reiff, 1992; Ehrman, 2001; Ehrman and Oxford, 1995).

Firstly, the teacher must be aware that there are a wide variety of styles and strategies in the learning process.

Secondly, the teacher needs to care about each individual separately in the class (Brown, 2001). Besides, not only the teachers but also the learners should know themselves. As an individual, a person should be aware of his/her styles and according to these styles he/she should choose the best strategies. Generally the strategies are subconsciously applied, the learners are not consciously aware of them (Brown: 2001: 207). In recent years there are some studies related to this subject. Bozavli (2016), in his study "Language learning profile of generation Y learner" explains that very few studies have been reported on the language learning profile of Generation Y. Therefore, in his study he tries to fulfill the gap in and contribute to the research on language learning profiles of Generation Y born between 1980 and 1999. The participants of the study consist of students in the department of foreign languages in a university. The results suggest that while Generation Y shows positive distinction in know-how and ability to learn, they have difficulties in learning and skills at verbal expression and comprehension.

Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. Second language learning strategies are "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques used by students to enhance their own learning." They vary within an individual. Rubin (1987) states that language learning strategies are behaviours, steps, or techniques that language learners apply to facilitate language learning. They "make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford et al, 2003). They are intentional behaviours and thoughts. These include analyzing and organizing information during learning to increase comprehension. Learning strategies vary from simple tasks to more complex tasks based on the learners' styles (Brown, 2001; Ellis, 2012).

O'Malley and Chamot (1985) view them as skills that are acquired as declarative knowledge. According to them, by the help of extensive practice, new knowledge is gained and stored. However, Oxford explains the 'mental action' aspect of strategies (Macaro, 2004). Oxford's taxonomy of language learning strategies is the most comprehensive classification which divides them into two major categories: direct and indirect (The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning-SILL). While direct strategies consist of memory, cognitive, and compensation, indirect strategies consist of metacognitive, affective, and

social strategies (Ellis, 2012).

The language strategies are related with the learning and communication strategies, as well. Learning strategies are related to input processing, storage, and retrieval. Communication strategies pertain to output. It is the production process. It aims to deliver messages to others. Learning strategies are influenced directly by learners' explicit beliefs about how best to learn, and are divided into three main categories. These are meta-cognitive, cognitive and socioaffective strategies. Metacognitive is a term used in information-processing theory that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Metacognitive strategies are advance organizing, directing attention, selective attention, self management, functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, self evaluation (Brown, 2007).

Metacognitive strategies deal with the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of language learning activities (Richards, Renandy, 2002). Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Cognitive strategies are repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, keyword, contextualization, elaboration, transfer and inferencing (Brown, 2007: 135). Also, cognitive strategies involve the identification, retention, and retrieval of language elements (Richards, Renandy, 2002: 120). Socioaffective strategies have to do with social-mediating activity and interacting with others. Socioaffective strategies are cooperation and question for clarification (O'Malley et al., 1985). Effective strategies are those that serve to regulate emotions, attitudes, and motivation.. Social strategies refer to actions learners take to interact with users of the language (Richards and Renandy, 2002).

Communication strategies are avoidance strategies and compensatory strategies (Brown, 2001). While learning strategies deal with the receptive domain of intake, memory storage, and recall, communication strategies pertain to the employment of verbal or nonverbal mechanisms for the productive communication of information (Brown, 2007). Communication strategies consist of attempts to deal with problems of communication while interaction.

A number of options are available for helping learners to identify their own styles, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses. The most common method is a self-check questionnaire in which the learner responds to various questions, usually along a scale of points of agreement and disagreement (Oxford's 1995 Style Analysis Survey). Not all learners are alike. Through checklist, and other methods teachers can become aware of students' tendencies and then offer advice on learning strategies (Brown, 2007). Style and strategy awareness are not

limited to the classroom. Many successful learners have reached their goals by means of their own self motivated efforts (Brown: 2007: 147). Rubin (1975) started the researches on the strategies of successful learners and explained that after identification such strategies could be made available to less successful learners.

Despite the strategy-based research on various aspects of language learning, virtually no research currently exists which investigates the use of the types of learning strategies by learners when they acquire two foreign languages concurrently in two different learning environments, being formal and the other non-formal. The researches have generally focused on variables affecting language learning strategy in formal settings or the effects of strategy training on target language acquisition (Alptekin, 2007).

In literature, there are a lot of studies on strategies and styles of learners. However, in recent years especially strategies and styles in language learning have been very important place in studies. Wong and Nunan (2011), presents the results of a comparative investigation into the learning styles and strategies of effective and ineffective language learners. Subjects for the study were one hundred and ten undergraduate university students in Hong Kong. The study revealed key differences in learning strategy preferences, learning styles and patterns of language use. Implications of the study are presented and discussed. In another study, Biçer (2014), in his study, aims to investigate the learning styles of students and instructors at foreign language preparatory school of a state university. It also aims to find out whether there is statistically significant difference between the academic achievement levels of students with different learning styles and achievement levels of students who have the same learning styles as their instructors and those who do not. It was found out that the most common learning style among the participants was diverging. Uhrig (2015), in his study represents an attempt to resolve the influence of language learning strategy choices through two case studies of international students' learning strategy use on tasks in professional graduate programs in the US. Data gathered from interviews, documents, and task logs were analyzed first for strategy use on specific tasks, then for patterns that may indicate consistency according to learning style. The findings indicate that the participants' learning styles provide more predictability in strategy use on particular tasks than other factors such as discipline.

The present study focuses on understanding what types of strategies language learners frequently use in learning and acquisition of foreign languages. In the study, two groups of learners, one exemplifying less successful students and the other more successful learners in English as their foreign language are searched. It is designed to explore different strategies they use and how these strategies effect their success.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The aim of this study is to expose different language strategies of language learners, and to decide which strategies (learning or acquisition) are much more affective in foreign language proficiency. In addition to this, in the study it is searched that if there is a relationship between the learners' strategies and their success; why some learners become less successful in language learning while others become more successful. In this research, the following questions are sought to be answered:

1. Is there any relationship between the strategies of foreign language learners and their success?
2. Which strategies are more affective in foreign language proficiency?
3. Is it possible to group of these strategies as acquisition and learning strategies according to the success of the learners?

In this research, literature review, document analysis and experimental data were used to search strategies both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Research settings and participants

The study represents a subsample of a longitudinal project focusing on language learning/acquisition strategies of university students in Ankara, Turkey. Two groups of Turkish EFL learners participated in this study, totaling 212 students. The first group (52 more successful students, 42 less successful students) consisted of 92 university students in Ankara. For his group, the language learning strategies were assessed by using Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The second group, on the other hand, were 120 university students in Ankara were interviewed. All of these students, who were at intermediate and upper-intermediate levels of English as a second language (ESL), range in age from 18 to 21.

Instrumentation

In the study, for the first group Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used. It consists of 50 items as six categories of strategies (Oxford's SILL appears in the Appendix). These six categories are memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensatory strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. As the memory strategies help learners to remember new information, cognitive strategies help learners to understand and to practice. With the compensatory strategies, the learners can use the language through practical ways. Metacognitive strategies enable learners to organize and evaluate themselves. Affective strategies help learners to motivate themselves. Social strategies encourage learners to interact in the society.

The second step of this research is to interview the English Language Teaching (ELT) students on what strategies they use. To investigate the differences and the similarities of the strategies in language learning and acquisition, two different groups of students were interviewed. The interview questions were made by the author of the research. The interview questions were included in the Appendix) In an attempt to elicit a set of language learning strategies typically used by university students learning English in Turkey, 120 students participated in the study. One group (60

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha values.

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	No of items
Memory	0.745	9
Cognitive	0.809	14
Compensatory	0.621	6
Meta cognitive	0.894	9
Affective	0.670	6
Social	0.728	6
Toplam	0.937	50

Table 2. Group statistics.

Variable	Student types	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean
Memory	Successful	52	3.1090	0.66247	0.09187
	Less successful	42	2.6243	0.62177	0.09594
Cognitive	Successful	52	3.3832	0.59291	0.08222
	Less successful	42	2.8588	0.64344	0.09928
Compensatory	Successful	52	3.5192	0.66311	0.09196
	Less successful	42	3.1587	0.60816	0.09384
Meta Cognitive	Successful	52	3.5321	0.74595	0.10344
	Less successful	42	2.9127	0.88363	0.13635
Affective	Successful	52	2.7019	0.82005	0.11372
	Less successful	42	2.3611	0.47700	0.07360
Social	Successful	52	3.4167	0.76874	0.10660
	Less successful	42	2.9683	0.74829	0.11546

students) consists of the students who were very successful in English lessons; the other group (60 students) consists of the students who were less successful in English lessons. The levels of the learners were based on their scores in a standardized test administered at the beginning of their first year. The interview was held with total 120 students who were randomly selected. All data collection was realized in L1. Although findings can not be generalised to the whole population, it may provide a general idea.

Data collection and analysis

English version of Oxford's SILL (1990) was given to 52 successful students; and Turkish version of it was given to 42 less successful students in ELT to understand which strategies were used in these two groups. The learners' levels were based on their scores in a standardized test administered at the beginning of their schools. 50 items in this questionnaire defines what learners do during L2 or foreign language learning. This questionnaire has a 5-point Likert scale, with 1= Never or almost never true of me, 2= usually not true of me, 3= somewhat true of me, 4= usually true of me, 5= Always or

almost always true of me. The answers of the students were analyzed by using T-test in SPSS and the results of two groups were compared. Participants completed the SILL in 20 min. In order to get reliability coefficient, by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) program, Cronbach's Alpha for internal consistency were found. This is shown in Table 1.

RESULTS

As it is seen in Table 1, the scales are reliable; Cronbach's Alpha for the whole SILL is 0.937. The comparison of the successful and less successful student was done by independent sample t-test. The means of successful and less successful students and Standard deviations are shown in Table 2, and the results of the T-tests are shown in Table 3.

According to the results of the analysis of T-test, the means of successful students in all categories are

Table 3. T-test results.

Variable	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means			
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Memory	0.306	0.582	3.624	92	0.000	0.48464
Cognitive	0.510	0.477	4.104	92	0.000	0.52440
Compensatory	0.190	0.664	2.719	92	0.008	0.36050
Meta Cognitive	1.622	0.206	3.685	92	0.000	0.61935
Affective	9.331	0.003	2.386	92	0.019	0.34081
Social	0.025	0.874	2.845	92	0.005	0.44841

meaningfully higher than the means of less successful students.

In the interview, the students were asked "how they studied English". As for qualitative data collection, the interview for students included questions dealing with their styles and strategies. The data were obtained by noting the answers of the students. According to the answers of the students some basic language learning strategies were listed. For each strategy items, total numbers of the students were defined. In this process, except interview questions, some detailed information also was gathered. These were also written as strategy items in the list. Later, as a second step, the strategy items were grouped in to parts as acquisition strategies and learning strategies. In this process, the total numbers of the students were compared in this two groups. In addition to this, four skills were also analysed. In the interview, the detailed strategies were also analyzed in order to understand the techniques of the students during their language learning/acquisition process. The interview lasted almost 3 to 5 min for each person. According to the findings, a comparison was made between these two groups.

Because of the limited number of participants, a parametric data analysis could not be performed. Instead nonparametric data analysis was applied. The findings varied in two groups. Fisher's Exact Test for 2x2 Tables and Chi-squared Test of Association were used. According to the findings, a comparison was made between these two groups. This indicates that the reason of failure in language learning is based on the learners and the strategies they used. The results of interviews are summarized in Table 4 (in the tables, the successful students are shown as "A"; and less successful students are shown as "B").

When Table 4 is scrutinized, it can be seen that learners rate their ability in "reading" skills as rather high

in both groups. However, if we compare the data of two groups, it can be seen that the rate of "watching" is rather high among the successful students. 44 out of 60 students in group A learn English by "watching TV, films, series and news". 17 out of 60 students in the same group also prefer "reading authentic materials". Except for these, there are not very high rates in this group. If we look at the data of the other group (group B) we can see that, the second highest number in the items is "learning vocabulary". 34 out of 60 students study English by learning vocabulary.

The rate of the students in group A for this item is 11. The rate of the students who watch TV, films, series in group B is 23. As mentioned above, this number for group A is very high. Another high rate in group B is for "memorization". The number of the students who memorize in group B is 15. However, for the other group there is only 1 student that prefers memorization. 13 students prefer "learning grammar" in group A, but only 3 students prefer learning grammar in group A. The number of the students who do listening are almost the same. (11 in group A, 12 in group B). The students who like games in learning English is 11 in group B, however in group A this number is only 4. The numbers of the students who prefer "conversation and practices" are not very different in both groups. In group A it is 8, in group B it is 10. Also the number of the students who listen to music, songs, and lyrics do not differ very much. (group A:10, group B: 8).

Except for these data, there are some strategies which are preferred by only group B students. These are "reading books more than twice", "doing exercises", "reading audio books", "using vocabulary cards", "reading aloud", and "testing". As the study involves two different group of learners it can be defined with Fisher's Exact Test for 2x2 Tables. In the study the hypotheses are stated below:

$$H_0: \pi_1 = \pi_2$$

H_1 : The percentage of the students who are successful in English preferred acquisition strategies is higher than the students who used learning strategies.

$$H_1: \pi_1 > \pi_2$$

Table 4. The results of interviews.

Strategies	Group A	Group B
	successful students (60)	unsuccessful students (60)
*Reading book	42	46
Learning vocabulary by using different techniques	11	34
*Reading book twice or more	-	6
Learning grammar	3	13
Memorization	1	15
Sentence production	1	7
*Listening	11	12
*Watching films and reading their books	3	2
*Playing games (especially on computers)	4	11
Repetition	2	3
Pronunciation	-	2
Conversation and practice	8	10
*Listening to music, songs, lyrics	10	8
*Watching film, series, news	44	23
Doing exercises	-	9
Only learning in lesson	-	1
*Reading audio books	-	5
Individual study	-	1
Vocabulary cards	-	4
Translation	3	4
Reading Loudly	-	6
Trying to learn by testing (especially grammar)	-	1
*Using authentic materials	17	4
Writing exercises	3	2

*These are the acquisition strategies used by students. The other ones are the learning strategies used by students.

As it is seen in Table 5, more acquisition strategies are used by the successful students than the learning strategies. Table 6 shows case processing summary. In Table 7, Crosstabulation of language learning is given. As it is seen in Table 7, high, low and total crosstabulation scores differ. Table 8 show expected count cross-tabulation. In order to analyse these, Data->Weight Cases method in SPSS is applied.

The results of Chi-Square tests are shown in Table 9. The results show that as Sig. < 0.01, we can say the percentage of the students who are successful in English preferred acquisition strategies is higher than the students who used learning strategies. According to the interviews, the strategies of the students used can be grouped in two parts as acquisition strategies and learning strategies. These are shown in Table 10. The percentages of preference of four skills are given in Table 11.

When Table 11 is scrutinized, it can be seen that learners prefer "reading" as rather high in both groups. However, if we compare the data of two groups, it can be seen that the rate of "Listening and watching visual materials" is the highest for successful students. However,

"listening audial materials is not preferred by successful students. If we look at the data, we can see that, successful students do not speak very often in language learning processes. The data shows that "writing" has the lowest percentage for both groups. The percentages of two groups in Table 11 are demonstrated in Figure 1.

In Table 12, the percentages of the main studying areas are shown. According to results of the interviews, it is understood that the students learn or acquire English in four main different areas- vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and translation. If we look at the data of the groups, we can see that less successful students spend their time learning new words. In addition to this, these students try to learn grammar. If the percentages of both groups are compared, it can be seen that there is a big gap. Besides this, both groups do not prefer studying pronunciation and translation. The percentages of two groups in Table 12 are demonstrated in Figure 2. In the interview, studying techniques of the students were also asked. Through the answers of the students, the techniques were grouped in 16 headings. The headings and the techniques are given in Table 13. Table 13 shows

Table 5. Acquisition and Learning strategies used by students.

Count/ expectation count	Group A (successful students)	Group B (less successful students)	
Acquisition strategies	131/103	117/145	248
Learning strategies	32/60	112/84	144
-	163	229	392

Table 6. Case processing summary.

Cases	Valid N Percentage (%)	Missing N Percentage (%)	Total N Percentage (%)
Metod learning starategies	392-100.0	0-0.0%	392-100.0%

Table 7. Crosstabulation of language learning.

Variable	High	Low	Total
Metod acquisition	131	117	248
learning total	32	112	144
	163	229	392

Table 8. Expected count crosstabulation.

Variable	High	Low	High success
Method acquisition count	131	117	248
Expected Count	103,1	144,9	248
Learning Count	32	112	144
Expected Count	59,9	84,1	144
Total Count	163	229	392
Expected Count	163,0	229,0	392

Table 9. Chi-square tests.

Variable	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)	ExactSig. (2-sided)	ExactSig. (1-sided)
	35.118 (b); 33.870	1	0.000		
Continuity correction (a); Likelihood ratio fisher's exact test linear-by-linear association; N of valid cases	36.696	1	0.000	0.000	0.000
	35.028	1	0.000		
	392	1	0.000		

(a) Computed only for a 2x2 table; (b) 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 59.88.

that more different learning strategies were used by the students who were less successful in language. These students preferred mostly memorization. They play games more than group A. In addition to this, they do exercises,

read loudly, use vocabulary cards, try to produce full sentences in language learning. In contrast to these, students in group A mostly prefer reading authentic materials and listening to music and songs to learn

Table 10. Acquisition and Learning strategies used by students.

Strategies	Acquisition strategies	Learning strategies
1	Reading book	Learning vocabulary by using different techniques
2	Reading book twice and more	Learning grammar
3	Listening	Memorization
4	Watching film and reading their books	Sentence production
5	Playing games (especially on computers)	Repetition
6	Listening to music, songs, lyrics	Pronunciation
7	Watching film, series, news etc.	Conversation and practice
8	Reading audio books	Doing exercises
9	Using authentic materials	Only learning in lesson
10	-	Class study
11	-	Using vocabulary cards
12	-	Translation
13	-	Reading loudly
14	-	Trying to learn by testing (especially grammar tests)
15	-	Writing exercises

Table 11. Four skills.

Strategies (Four skills)	Group A succesful students (%)	Group B less succesful students (%)
Reading	70	76
Listening (Audio)	18.3	20
Listening and Watching (Visua Materials)	73.3	38.3
Speaking	13.3	16.6
Writing	5	3.3

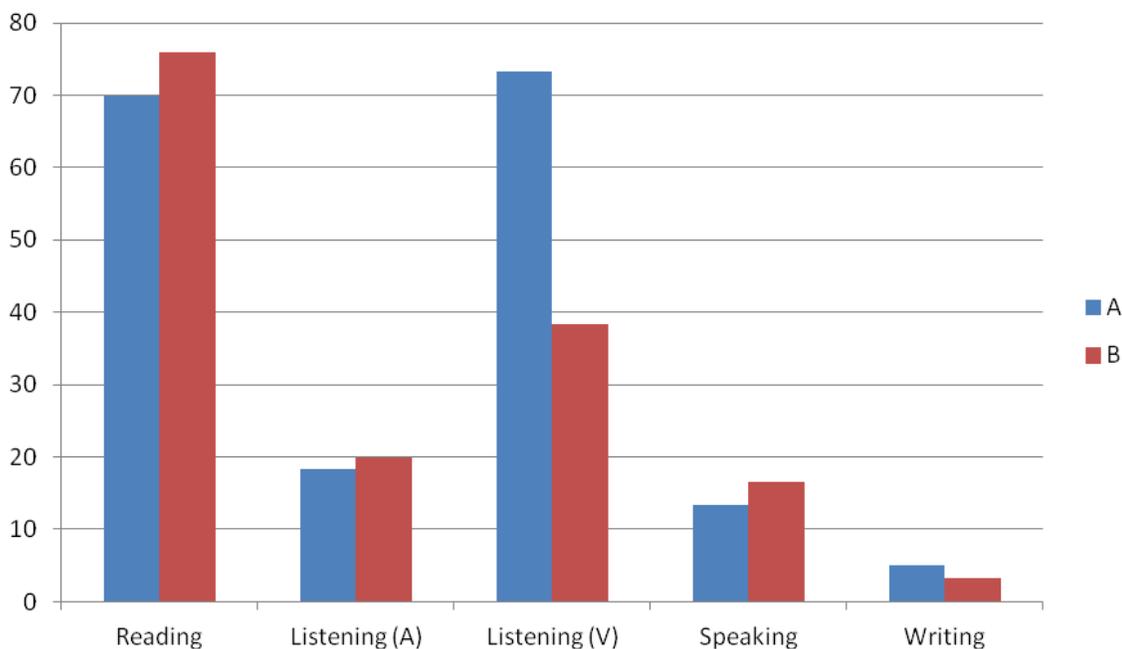


Figure 1. Comparison of Four Skills' Scores.

Table 12. Main studying areas.

Strategies	Group A succesful students (%)	Group B less succesful students (%)
Vocabulary	18.33	56.6
Grammar	5	21.6
Pronunciation	-	3.3
Translation	5	6.6

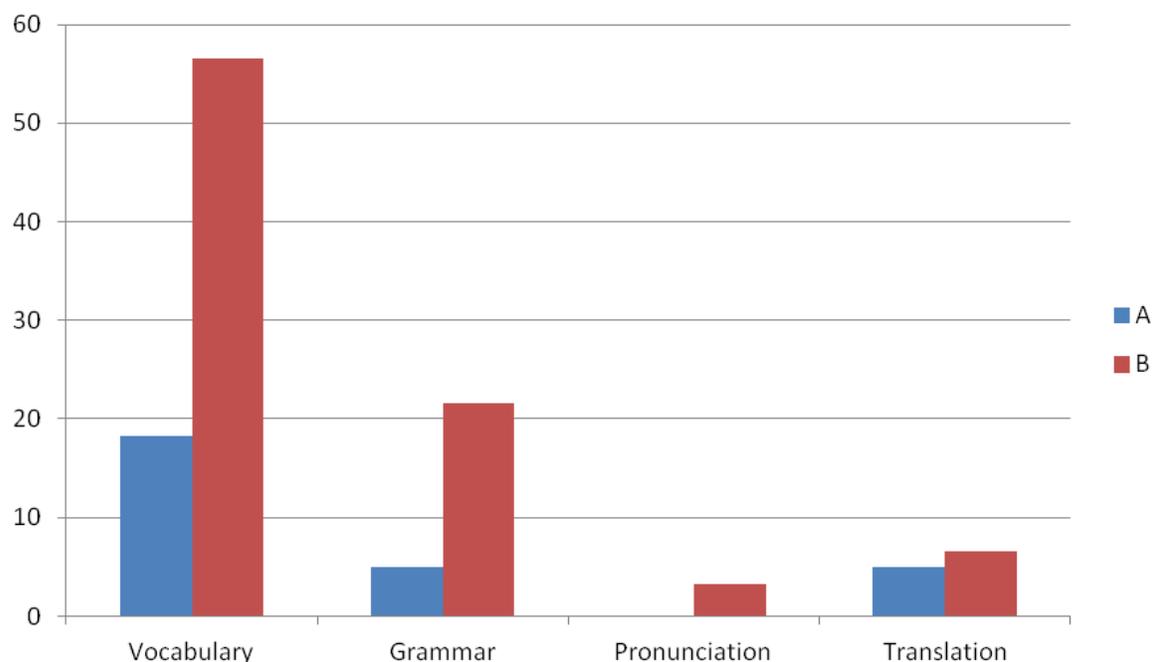


Figure 2. Comparison of main studying areas.

Table 13. Studying techniques.

Strategies	Group A succesful students%	Group B less succesful students (%)
Reading book (more than twice)	-	10
Memorization	1.6	25
Sentence production	1.6	11.6
Film books	5	3.3
Repetition	3.3	5
Exercises	-	15
Only learning in lesson	-	1.6
Reading audio books	-	8.3
Individual study	-	1.6
Vocabulary cards	-	6.6
Reading Loudly	-	10
Testing	-	1.6
Authentic materials (magazines)	28.3	6.6
Game	6.6	18.3
Music, songs, lyrics	16.6	13.3
Exercises	-	15

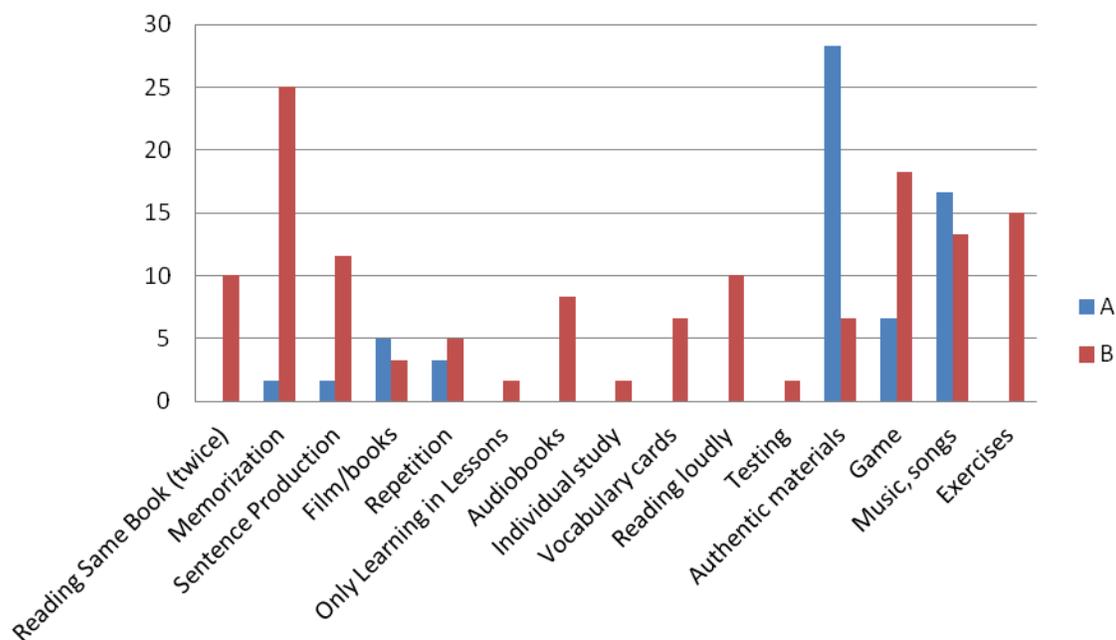


Figure 3. Comparison of studying techniques.

English. The percentages of two groups in Table 13 are demonstrated in Figure 3.

The results reveal that learners who are not very successful in English are exposed to learning environment. These students learn vocabulary and grammar consciously. They try to produce some sentences. Also, they use vocabulary cards. To remember what they learn, they prefer to memorize. They do practices, exercises, pronunciation and translation. In short, these findings reveal that these students generally use learning strategies to be successful in English. However, successful students turn to acquisition more. They use language as a tool. They do not directly try to learn grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. They are not very eager to have an output. They mostly watch, read, and listen. So, they acquire the language subconsciously.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate differences of strategies of language learners in learning and acquisition. In the study, “successful” and “less successful” language learners were compared in terms of their opinions in the interviews and Oxford’s SILL. From the study, it can be said that there are noticeable differences in terms of strategy preferences between successful and less successful students. When all data are scrutinized, it can be said that determining of styles and strategies are essential for all level students in foreign language teaching. The results demonstrate that

the university students use a variety of strategies in learning foreign languages. The findings in Oxford’s SILL above show that successful students proficiency levels have a statistically significant effect on frequency of all strategies in six categories- memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensatory, affective and social. From the results it can be said that, the successful students use all kinds of strategies more than the less successful students.

According to the interview data analysis, the acquisition strategies, which involve reading and listening skills, are generally used by successful students. It is clear from the findings of this study that the more successful students use more acquisition strategies. Through the data, it can be said that acquisition has a very important role in language learning. Successful students spent significantly more time practicing language out of class and use acquisition strategies more than less successful students. When we look at the data as a whole, we conclude that strategies towards language acquisition and learning are the key factor between more successful and less successful students. This results are consistent with some researches in the literature (Wong and Nunan, 2011; Gan, 2004; Norton and Toohy, 2001).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have implications for further research on language acquisition, language learning and strategy choosing (Table 14). Also, this study will be

Table 14. Learning and acquisition strategies.

Skills	Learning	Acquisition
Reading	Reading books; Looking up the new words; Do exercises related with the book; Memorization of the words and their meanings; Trying to understand the grammar of sentences; Trying to translate what is read; Highlighting grammar; Specific activities; Setting up tasks	Reading the books twice and more; Reading comprehensible texts and books; Reading the books and their translations; Predicting the meaning of new words; Listening to audios of the books; Watching the films and series of the books; Reading the books of same writer; Reading different materials on the same subject; Reading authentic materials; Reading the materials which the reader interested in; Using native language to understand the texts; Having background information about what you read; Reading the books based on same subject; Using computers and internet to have rich reading materials
Listening	Listening audio materials and looking up the new words; Memorization of the words and their meanings; Trying to understand the grammar of sentences; Trying to translate what is read; Watching audiovisual materials and doing exercises; Specific activities; Setting up tasks	Listening the books twice and more; Listening the books and their translations; Predicting the meaning of new words; Listening to audios of the books; Watching the films and series of the books; Listening to different audio materials on the same subject; Listening to authentic materials; Listening to the audio materials which the reader interested in; Using native language to understand the texts; Using not only the audio materials but also audiovisual materials; Listening to films with their subtitles; Having background information about what you listen; Listening and watching the materials based on same subject; Using computers and internet to have rich listening materials
Writing	Trying to learn the grammar; Dictation; Translation; Error correction; Highlighting grammar; Self-checking; Specific activities; Setting up tasks; Confirmation and correction	Listening and filling the blanks; Listening and completing the sentences; Listening and writing the summary; Listening and translation; Reading and filling the blanks; Reading and completing the sentences; Reading and writing the summary; Reading and translation; Real writing tasks; Having tasks organized from simple to complex; Discovering, clarifying, organizing ideas; Adopting integrated-skills approach; Developing expressing ideas
Speaking	Repetition; Trying to use correct grammar; Memorization of the new words and using these words in the sentences; Substitution exercises; Correcting mistakes; Having learned competence; Doing speaking activities ; Monitoring; Error correction; Highlighting grammar; Self-checking; Specific activities; Setting up tasks; Confirmation and correction; Communicative activities; Pronunciation; Feedback; Role plays	Having silent period for beginners; Having comprehensible input via listening and speaking; Having acquired competence; Focusing on meaning
Grammar	Learning grammar consciously by doing exercises, explanation and memorization; Doing practices; Correcting mistakes; Testing; Highlighting grammar; Self-checking; Specific activities; Setting up tasks; Confirmation and correction	Acquiring grammar subconsciously; Having silent period for beginners; Getting limited grammar explanations; Trying to increase the comprehensibility of the messages; Acquiring the rules automatically; Having comprehensible input via reading and listening; Focusing on meaning
Vocabulary	Doing vocabulary exercises; Memorization; Repetition; Specific activities; Setting up tasks; Learning multi-meaning of words, Word classes, Word families, collocations	Reading, listening and watching; Having comprehensible input; Focusing on meaning; Predicting the meaning of the words in texts

helpful to choose appropriate strategies for learners, teachers, instructors, and material designers. The results suggest that individual differences may influence

language learning. When we look at the data as a whole, we conclude that attitudes towards language learning and language acquisition are the key differentiating

factors between more successful and less successful learners. Successful students learn language eagerly.

According to them the language is just like a tool for involving in real world activities such as listening, watching, communicating, etc. rather than as an artificial learning atmosphere like classrooms. They enjoy language by different activities. They subconsciously acquire language by reading and listening. They don't care about making mistakes while learning. After having a silent period, they acquire language automatically.

In sum, the findings of this study shows that learners' strategies differ in acquisition and learning. The learning environment does not effect their preferences of strategies. Both in formal and non-formal environment, the learners do not quit their own strategies. Acquisition strategies appear to be frequently used by successful language learners, yet learning strategies are used by less successful learners. The study is important to be aware of the differences of strategies in acquisition and learning. Through this, the learners can notice the distinction between them, and modulate the strategies in language learning. Below, learning and acquisition strategies are submitted and by the help of this chart a person who wants to improve his/her language will be able to compare his/her strategies according to their styles, and choose the most suitable one (Table 14).

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Appendix

Strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)(Oxford, 1990). This form of the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) is for students of English as a second or foreign language. Please read each statement and fill in the bubble of the response (1,2,3,4,5,6) that tells how true of you the statement is.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I don't know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.

Part E

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistakes.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Interview questions

1. Do you read books to learn English?
2. How do you learn vocabulary?
3. Do you spend a lot of time to study grammar?
4. How do you try to remember new information?
5. Do you listen to learn English?
6. Do you watch films in English?
7. Do you play games in computer?
8. Do you try to pronounce the words or the phrases you hear?
9. Do you participate in conversations in English?
10. Do you like to do different exercises in English?
11. Do you learn English only in English classes?
12. Do you spend time to study English by yourself?
13. Do you translate to learn English?
14. Do you test yourself in English?
15. Do you use authentic materials to learn English?
16. Do you do some writing exercises to learn English?