

The Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Teaching Turkish as a Second Language

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning is the basis of the language learning process in teaching Turkish as a second language. Vocabulary learning strategies need to be used in order for vocabulary learning to take place effectively. The use of vocabulary learning strategies facilitates vocabulary learning and increases student achievement. Each student uses a different strategy in line with their own needs. In this study, it was aimed to determine the vocabulary learning strategies of the students in Gaziosmanpaşa University Turkish Teaching and Application Center (TÖMER). The general screening model was used in the study. Natpassorn Riankamol's 25-item Questionnaire of Vocabulary Learning Strategies was applied to 22 students at level A1. The questionnaire was based on Schmitt's Taxonomy. Schmitt's taxonomy (1997) is a comprehensive inventory of vocabulary learning strategies. He divides the strategies into two groups: the ones to determine the meaning of new words when learners encounter them the first time, and the ones to consolidate meaning when learners encounter words again. The former group contains determination and social strategies and the latter contains cognitive, metacognitive, memory and social strategies. Schmitt includes social strategies in both categories since they can be used for both purposes. The data was analyzed using frequency, percentage and averages. As a result of the research, it was seen that the students' language levels were effective in determining the vocabulary strategies they used. Students used determination strategies the most while using cognitive strategies the least.

Keywords: Teaching Turkish as a Second Language, Vocabulary Learning, Vocabulary Strategies

Introduction

Language, which is the sign of mental development and instrument of understanding, has a very important place in cognitive and social development. Language is intertwined with thought. Thoughts are conveyed to others via language. Words are the basic elements that allow ideas to develop. Different definitions of words are made in different sources. In Turkish Dictionary, word concept (TDK, www.tdk.gov.tr) is explained as "voice or voice unity, word, that has meaning". The word is the shape of the thoughts and attitudes that we want to express (Özbay and Melanlıoğlu, 2008). According to Kantemir (1997), it is a collection of sounds or voices that play an important role in making a sentence. The word is a means of expression which is meaningful or useful for making a sentence (Gencan, 2001). It is a sign of one or more syllabic sounds that have a meaning or a cumulative grammatical task in the sentence (Ediskun, 1999). The word has an important place in language teaching and learning. Vocabulary acquisition is the biggest and most difficult task that language learners face (Swan and Walter, 1984). Korkmaz (1992), "The language unit that consists of one or more phonemes and expresses a concrete or certain feeling or thought that corresponds to a certain concept when used alone in the mind between people speaking the same language, or between abstract and abstract concepts."

Words are indispensable elements of written and verbal communication in daily life. A word is a means of expression. Dreams and emotions are partly based on words, and thoughts are based entirely on words. So the more words a person knows, the more he has developed in thought. Because every word is placed in the human mind as a concept. For this reason, people think with the concepts, i.e. words (Özkırımlı, 1994). Effective use of basic language skills based on understanding and narration depends on rich vocabulary (Karatay, 2007). All the words a person uses are called vocabulary (Vardar, 1998). The vocabulary is stored in the memory as the result of the individual's experience (Güleryüz, 2002), the number of words the individual possesses influences his ability to understand and speak. The width of the vocabulary provides fluency and convenience in speaking. At the same time, it also influences the development of the individual's other language skills. "The ability of the four basic language skills to read, write, speak and listen, and to be able to use these skills actively is closely related to acquired vocabulary" (Karatay, 2004: 21). Researchers argue that vocabulary is at the core of language learning. (Coady and Huckin, 1997; Harley, 1996, Nation, 2001; Read, 2000). It is accepted that the more vocabulary a student learns, the more successful he is to learn the language. But the difference between knowing vocabulary and using vocabulary must be understood. The aim of learning vocabulary is not to memorize the word but to use the word in different contexts where it is needed. Vocabulary learning and vocabulary learning strategies are one of the most fundamental elements in the language learning process. The competences expressed in the Common European Framework for Languages Teaching as follows clearly demonstrate the importance of vocabulary learning strategies (MEB, 2009) :

- ✓ In the area of listening skill at level A1, "I can understand patterns and very frequently used words

- associated with topics that directly concern me".
- ✓ In the area of reading skill at level B1, "I can understand texts that contain the most frequently used vocabulary words on a job or daily basis".
 - ✓ In the area of conversation skill at level C1, "I can express myself in a fluent and natural way without much searching for words to use".
 - ✓ In the area of written expression skill at level C1, "I can choose a suitable style for the target reader set".

So learners need to enrich their vocabulary by identifying the most appropriate learning strategy for them.

In this study, it was aimed to determine the vocabulary learning strategies used by the students in Turkish language teaching as a second language. Previous studies have always been applied to students in the same language level (B1, etc.), but for the first time in this study, the vocabulary learning strategies preferred by students at A1 level were researched.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The learning strategy is defined as thinking and behavior that the learner applies to influence the coding process (Weinstein and Mayer, 1986). It can also be defined as the effort by the learner to learn new words or to make the words they learn permanent (Tok and Yığın, 2013: 266). Language learning strategies are applications preferred by students in order to enhance their target competencies in line with their learning needs (Oxford, 1990; Cohen, 2009). Researchers state that language learning strategies have a crucial role in enabling students to direct their own learning (Oxford, 2011). Language learning strategies are effective in enabling students to create an independent learning environment in accordance with their needs, and the level of proficiency in the target level can easily be achieved with these strategies. Learning a word on a foreign language is not an immediate action, it requires conscious work and constant repetition. These studies and repetitions are continued outside the classroom because there is not enough time in the classroom. This means that the learner tries to learn vocabulary on his own. In this process, students learn vocabulary in the light of their own interests and needs (Apaydın, 2007).

Using the vocabulary learning strategies in teaching Turkish as a foreign language is one of the factors increasing success. For this reason, active participation of learners should be ensured by using effective and efficient strategies in the development of vocabulary knowledge (İlter, 2014). In foreign language teaching, it is very effective to identify students' vocabulary learning strategies, encourage them to use strategies and teach them strategies to improve language success. Factors such as individuals' cultures, past experiences, social and economic situations, intelligence types, relevance, levels of knowledge, learning styles, and learning strategies they use influence learning. So each person has different learning time and strategy (Tok and Yığın, 2014). Learning strategies affect the teaching-learning process. The diversity of learning strategies increases the quality of the process by enriching the learning and teaching process. It makes the student conscious and enhances the productivity of the learner, gives the student the ability to learn independently, helps the student learn by taking pleasure and prepares students for post-school learning (Özer, 2002: 20). Individuals benefit from a variety of strategies while acquiring a language as a foreign or native language. The purpose of the learning strategy is to enable learners to learn on their own, to strengthen their learning, and to choose the way that is most beneficial and easy for them in the learning process.

Students use all the learning strategies they know as they learn vocabulary on foreign languages, and therefore they are involved in the complexity of the strategy. Schmitt (1997), who found that this caused a great deal of time and power loss for the students, has concentrated on a detailed vocabulary learning strategy classification that will facilitate vocabulary learning. Schmitt's strategies are divided into two groups in the form of discovery and consolidation. In discovery strategies; students determine the meaning when they meet new words for the first time, and in reinforcement strategies; students reinforce meaning when they meet words again. Determination strategies and social strategies are in the discovery group; cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, memory strategies and social strategies are in the consolidation group. Since social strategies can be used in both groups, they are included in both.

According to Schmitt (1997), determination strategies are used when students discover the meaning of a new word without using the experience of another person. In this strategy, students try to guess and discover the meaning of the new words with the help of context, structural knowledge and reference material. That means students find the meaning of the words on their own.

Schmitt notes that another way of discovering a new meaning is to ask the unknown words to others by using social strategies. When students discover words, they use various strategies at first. They use social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies to combine their vocabulary knowledge. An example of a social strategy group used to consolidate the word is a collaborative learning group in which students practice the meaning of a new word. Nation (1997: 24) states that group work can also be used to practice words as well as discovering words.

Memory strategies involve correlating the word with previously learned information using some image

or grouping format. It emphasizes that using visual materials is much more useful and effective than using verbal materials. Underwood (1989: 19) also says that pictures will be remembered better than words. In addition, he implies that associating words with pictures is a stronger recollection system. Groupings are an important way of bringing learned knowledge back (Schmitt 2000: 135). According to Decker and Whealey (Schmitt, 1997: 213), cross-typing is more effective than grouping words in a column.

Cognitive strategies are similar to memory strategies but do not focus on mental processing. They include repetition and mechanical methods such as word lists, flash cards, word books to study vocabulary. The basic rule of this strategy is repetition.

Finally, metacognitive strategies are to decide which words are worth learning, plan consciously, and find the most effective learning method. It is the type of strategy that learners use to control and evaluate their own learning. It plays an important role in choosing a learning strategy because it is a positive reinforcement if progress, or a strategy change. Metacognitive strategies include planning, monitoring and evaluation. It provides a conscious overview of the learning process.

Method

Research Model:

The general screening model was used in the study. General screening models; "In a phase consisting of a large number of elements, in order to reach a general judgment on the universe, it is the screening arrangements made on all or part of the universe or on a set of samples or samples taken from it" (Karasar, 2010).

Working group:

The research was carried out in Gaziosmanpaşa University TÖMER in the 2016-2017 academic year with a total of 22 students including 11 girls and 11 boys of foreign nationality at initial level.

Table 1. The Respondents' General Information

Characteristic	F	%
Gender		
Female	11	50
Male	11	50
Total	22	100
Age		
17	1	4,5
18	1	4,5
19	5	22,7
20	2	9,1
21	6	27,3
22	2	9,1
23	4	18,2
25	1	4,5
Total	22	100
Country		
Turkmenistan	7	31,8
Afganistan	6	27,3
Afghanistan	6	27,3
Palestine	1	4,5
Egypt	1	4,5
Iran	1	4,5
Total	22	100
Month of learning Turkish		
1	5	22,7
2	12	54,5
5	1	4,5
12	4	18,2
Total	22	100

As seen in Table 1, the number of female and male participants is equal. 59% of participants are over 20 years old. 86% of the students come from Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Syria and 14% from Palestine, Egypt and Iran. 54% of the students learn Turkish for two months.

Instrument of Data Collection and Gathering Data

Natpassorn Riankamol's (2008) 25-item Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire was used as an instrument. 25 items are about how often learners use vocabulary learning strategies. As the students were at level A1, the items were given both in Turkish and in English.

These items were divided into groups according to Schmitt's classification.

The first three items measure the frequency of usage of determination strategies.

Four, five, six and seventh items measure the frequency of usage of social discovery strategies.

Eight, nine and tenth items measure the frequency of usage of social consolidation strategies.

11, 12, 13 and 14th items measure the frequency of usage of memory strategies.

15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20th items measure the frequency of usage of cognitive strategies.

21, 22, 23, 24, 25th items measure the frequency of usage of metacognitive strategies.

The scale used to indicate the frequency of usage of the strategies is as follows:

0 = never use it

1 = seldom use it

2 = sometimes use it

3 = often use it

4 = always use it

Data Analysis

As the variables in the scale; participants' gender, age, country and duration of study were included. The results obtained in the study were analyzed using SPSS-22 statistical program. Frequency, percentage and t test were used for the opinion analysis.

Findings and Comments

In this part of the research, the findings of the vocabulary learning strategies used by the students in Turkish language teaching as a second language are presented in tables and interpreted.

Table 2. Usage averages of vocabulary learning strategies by gender

Group stats		gender	Number	average	standard deviation	Standard error average
Average usage strategies	of male		11	2,37	,38920	,11735
	female		11	2,13	,73242	,22083

Table 2 shows the relationship between gender and vocabulary strategies. According to the findings in the table, male students are more likely to benefit from strategies for learning vocabulary than girls. Standard deviation indicates consistency in the results of male students. In the answers of female students, the distribution is widespread, so consistency does not appear.

Table 3. Usage frequency of vocabulary learning strategies

	Social (Discovery) Strategies	Social (Consolidation) Strategies	Memory Strategies	Cognitive Strategies	Metacognitive Strategies
Average	2,57	2,32	2,15	2,44	1,98

According to the data in Table 3, the most common type of strategy used by students is determination strategies. That means students try to find out the meaning of the words by guessing or using the dictionary. On the other hand, the least used strategy is cognitive strategies. This finding may be evidence that students are less likely to use written verbal repetitions, notes, wordbooks, word lists, etc.

Table 4. Use of determination strategies

Item	Degree of Frequency										\bar{X}
	Always use it		Often use it		Sometimes use it		Seldom use it		Never use it		
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1. I use a bilingual dictionary to help me translate Turkish words into native language.	7	31,8	9	40,9	3	13,6	2	9,1	1	4,5	2,86
2. I use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meanings.	4	18,2	4	18,2	9	40,9	4	18,2	1	4,5	2,27
3. I learn meaning of words by identifying its part of speech.	5	22,7	10	45,5	3	13,6	1	4,5	3	13,6	2,59

The most used item in determination strategies is " I use a bilingual dictionary to help me translate Turkish words into native language " (\bar{X} : 2.86). The least used item is " I use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meanings " (\bar{X} : 2,27). This finding shows that learners benefit from the dictionaries rather than the pictures in the book while learning vocabulary.

Table 5. Use of social discovery strategies

Item	Degree of frequency										\bar{X}
	Always use it		Often use it		Sometimes use it		Seldom use it		Never use it		
	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	
4. I ask the teacher to translate the words into Turkish.	3	13,6	6	27,3	6	27,3	6	27,3	1	4,5	2,18
5. I ask the teacher to put an unknown word into a sentence to help me understand the word meaning.	5	22,7	8	36,4	2	9,1	3	13,6	4	18,2	2,31
6. I ask my classmate for meaning..	5	22,7	4	18,2	5	22,7	5	22,7	3	13,6	2,13
7. I know some new words when working in group works.	6	27,3	7	31,8	5	22,7	4	18,2	-	-	2,59

When the frequency of use of social discovery strategies is considered, the most preferred strategy by the students is " I know some new words when working in group works" (\bar{X} : 2.59). This result shows that the students' working with groups and cooperating with each other increase the success. The least used strategy is " I ask my classmate for meaning " (\bar{X} : 2,13). This suggests that students have difficulty in communicating individually. Students are more comfortable expressing themselves within the group.

Table 6. Use of social consolidation strategies

Item	Degree of frequency										\bar{X} F
	Always use it		Often use it		Sometimes use it		Seldom use it		Never use it		
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
8. I practice Turkish in group work activities.	3	13,6	6	27,3	6	27,3	3	13,6	4	18,2	2,04
9. I ask native speakers for help.	5	22,7	7	31,8	5	22,7	2	9,1	3	13,6	2,40
10 I learn words about the culture of Turkish-speaking countries.	6	27,3	4	18,2	3	13,6	2	9,1	7	31,8	2

When looking at the table, it is seen that the students prefer the " I ask native speakers for help " most of the social reinforcement strategies (\bar{X} : 2.40). In the light of this finding, it is possible to make an interpretation that students find it easier to get help from their native tongue.

Table 7. Use of memory strategies

Item	Degree of frequency										\bar{X} F
	Always use it		Often use it		Sometimes use it		Seldom use it		Never use it		
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	
11. I write a new word in a sentence so I can remember it.	9	40,9	1	4,5	8	36,4	1	4,5	3	13,6	2,54
12. I study a spelling of new words.	7	31,8	11	50	3	13,6	-	-	1	4,5	3,04
13. I use physical actions when learning words.	2	9,1	4	18,2	6	27,3	6	27,3	4	18,2	1,72
14. I speak words out loud when studying.	4	18,2	8	36,4	6	27,3	2	9,1	2	9,1	2,45

When the frequency of use of memory strategies is considered, it is seen that the most used strategy is "I study a spelling of new words" (\bar{X} : 3.04) . The least preferred one is " I use physical actions when learning words " (\bar{X} : 1.72). According to the results, it is seen that the students take care of the writing of the words, but they are not actively involved in the studies.

Table 8: Use of cognitive strategies

Item	Degree of frequency										\bar{X}
	Always use it		Often use it		Sometimes use it		Seldom use it		Never use it		
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	
15. I repeatedly practice new words.	8	36,4	4	18,2	8	36,4	1	4,5	1	4,5	2,77
16. I write a new word on a flash card so I can remember it.	4	18,2	1	4,5	5	22,7	4	18,2	8	36,4	1,5
17. I learn words by listening to vocabulary CDs.	2	9,1	5	22,7	3	13,6	5	22,7	7	31,8	1,54
18. I record vocabulary from Turkish soundtrack movies in my notebook.	3	13,6	3	13,6	5	22,7	2	9,1	9	40,9	1,5
19. When I try to remember a word, I write or say it repeatedly.	10	45,5	3	13,6	4	18,2	4	18,2	1	4,5	2,77
20. I make vocabulary cards and take them with me wherever I go.	4	18,2	5	22,7	3	13,6	3	13,6	7	31,8	1,81

According to the table 8, the most common cognitive strategies are " I repeatedly practice new words " and " When I try to remember a word, I write or say it repeatedly " (\bar{X} : 2.77). As it is understood from the results, the "repetition", which is the basic rule of cognitive strategies in vocabulary learning, is used by the students more than other cognitive strategies.

Table 9: Use of metacognitive strategies

Item	Degree of frequency										\bar{X}
	Always use it		Often use it		Sometimes use it		Seldom use it		Never use it		
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
21. I listen to Turkish songs and news.	9	40,9	5	22,7	3	13,6	2	9,1	3	13,6	2,68
22. I memorize word from Turkish magazines.	6	27,3	6	27,3	8	36,4	1	4,5	1	4,5	2,68
23. I review my own Turkish vocabulary cards for reviewing before the next lesson starts.	3	13,6	7	31,8	5	22,7	3	13,6	4	18,2	2,09
24. I am not worry very much about the difficult words found when reading or listening, I pass them.	1	4,5	2	9,1	10	45,5	6	27,3	3	13,6	1,63
25. I use on-line exercise to test my vocabulary knowledge.	2	9,1	7	31,8	9	40,9	1	4,5	3	13,6	2,18

According to the table 9, the most used items of metacognitive strategies are " I listen to Turkish songs and news" and " I memorize word from Turkish magazines " (\bar{X} : 2.68). The least used is "I am not worry very much about the difficult words found when reading or listening, I pass them." (\bar{X} : 1,63). Here is the conclusion that students are concerned about the words they meet.

Conclusion, discussion, and recommendations

In this study, it was aimed to determine the most and least used vocabulary learning strategies of foreign students learning Turkish at Gaziosmanpaşa University TÖMER. A questionnaire consisting of 25 items was presented to 22 subjects to collect data. The questionnaire was adapted from the vocabulary learning strategy classification based on Schmitt's Taxonomy (1997). The data was analyzed by SPSS.

According to the survey results, the most used vocabulary strategies are determination strategies. The reason for this is that the students are at level A1. As students have just started learning the language, they use determination strategies. In the determination strategy, there are activities such as guessing the meaning of the word in textual context, using a bilingual or monolingual dictionary, making word lists, using vocabulary cards, analyzing the word's suffixes and roots. Within these strategies, the use of a bilingual dictionary is at the forefront. Students in this period act timidly and study independently. Altan (2003) argues that there is a direct relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and language learning success. So the more students use the strategy, the more successful they become. Strategy use increases student achievement and improves problem solving skills (Gök and Sılay,2008). Students do not know exactly how to use a strategy at this stage as they have just started learning the language.

The type of strategy students use the least is cognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies include activities such as verbal repetition, written repetition, creating a word list, taking notes during the class, listening word lists from tape, etc. Verbal and written repetition were used the most in these strategies. Considering the other cognitive strategies, students are not active in using other materials. Since they are at the beginner level, they learn words by themselves with simple methods without using different sources. As students reach higher levels, they become more social, increasing the use of social strategy. Another study on the use of vocabulary learning strategies was conducted at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkish Language Teaching and Application Center. As a result of research, it was found out that social strategies and metacognitive strategies are used the most, and memory strategies are used the least. Social and metacognitive strategies are seen as the most effective strategies for students. Memory strategies are considered useless for the students. According to Gu and Johnson (1996: 647), students who are successful and aware that they are beginning to learn the language use metacognitive strategies. This study, carried out by Gaziosmanpaşa University, resulted in a different outcome from the study conducted in Çanakkale. This is because the language levels of the students are different. At Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, students are at B2 level while Gaziosmanpaşa University students are at A1 level. As it is understood from here, students' language level influences the determination of the vocabulary strategies they use. Strategies used vary as they progress in the language.

In teaching Turkish as a second language, the following suggestions can be made about the vocabulary learning strategies used by foreign students:

- "Teachers have an important role in making students learn vocabulary" (Thornburr, 2002). For this reason, teachers should encourage students to use strategies and give information about how they should benefit from the strategies.
- All academic studies related to the vocabulary learning strategy should be examined and the content of the course materials and textbooks for teaching Turkish as a second language should be prepared according to these instructions.
- Teaching Turkish as a second language programs should be prepared taking into account vocabulary learning strategies.
- Open-ended questions should be included where students can add their views in future studies.

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