RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Exploration of the Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Strategy Use in a Turkish Context

Sevda BALAMAN UÇAR[*]

Cumhuriyet University, School of Foreign Languages, Sivas, Turkey

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine a) the reported level of self-efficacy that Turkish university EFL students hold, b) preferred language learning strategies, and c) how these concepts are related to each other in the Turkish context. The data were collected at Cumhuriyet University, School of Foreign Languages, with the participation of 150 students by using a questionnaire. In the data analysis part, first, descriptive statistics were used to identify learners' self-efficacy beliefs and their strategy use. As to the relationship between the learners' self-efficacy level and their strategy use, correlation coefficients were used and the findings showed that these two concepts were significantly related to each other. The resulting information may be helpful for language pedagogy in Turkey to explicitly integrate strategy instruction and address the motivational aspect of language learning for the purpose of developing a sense of competence or efficacy.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Strategy Use.

Türkiye Bağlamında Öz-yeterlik ve Strateji Kullanımı Arasındaki İlişkinin Araştırılması

Öz

Bu çalışma, (a) İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk üniversite öğrencilerinin öz-yeterlik düzeylerini, (b) tercih edilen dil öğrenimi stratejilerini ve (c) bu iki kavramın birbiriyle nasıl ilişkili olduğunu belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Veri, Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda 150 öğrencinin katılımıyla bir anket kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Veri analizinde, ilk olarak, öğrencilerin öz-yeterlik algılarını ve strateji kullanımlarını belirlemek amacıyla betimsel istatistikler kullanılmıştır. Öğrencilerin öz-yeterlik algılarını ve strateji kullanımları arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlenmede ise korelasyonlar kullanıldı ve elde edilen bulgular bu iki kavramın istatistiksel olarak ilişkili olduğunu gösterdi. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, strateji eğitimini etkin bir şekilde Türkiye'deki dil öğrenimine entegre etmede ve yeterlik algısı oluşturmak amacıyla dil öğrenimindeki motive edici noktalara değinmede kullanılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öz-yeterlik, Strateji Kullanımı.

*Sorumlu Yazar /
Corresponding Author:
Cumhuriyet University,
School of Foreign
Languages, Sivas, Turkey
sbalaman@cumhuriyet.edu.tr

1.   Introduction

For students in Turkey, the acquisition of English competence is often regarded as the key factor in getting ahead in school in the Turkish society. Given the importance placed on learning English as a foreign language (EFL), it comes as no surprise that a growing attention is attached to the factors which can lead to more achievements in learning English. Two of these factors which enhance language learning can be "strategy use" and "self-efficacy beliefs". It is widely accepted that a heightened level of self-efficacy can be a predictor of success in language learning (Pajares, 2003; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Similarly, some researchers (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Oxford, 1990; Yılmaz, 2010) state that a greater use of language learning strategies can supply more achievements in language learning. In fact, there is a possible relationship between these two foci in that a high level of self-efficacy can be related to more use of strategy use (Wong, 2005). Depending on this, the current study aimed to explore whether these concepts were related to each other in the Turkish EFL context.

2.   Background of the Study

Learning strategies refer to operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information. These strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Oxford (1990; 2001) classifies language learning strategies under two main sub-types, namely *direct* (memory, cognitive and compensation) and *indirect* (meta-cognitive, affective and social) strategies. These strategies a) contribute to the main goal that the learner has for learning a language b) allow learners to become more self-directed, c) expand the role of teachers, d) are problem oriented, e) are specific actions taken by the learner, f) involve several aspects of the learner, not just cognition, g) support learning both directly and indirectly, h) are not always observable, i) are often conscious, j) can be taught, k) flexible, and l) are influenced by a number of factors (Oxford, 1990).

Learning strategies are of utmost importance in the language learning context as well because they help learners to improve and organize their learning by themselves. Learners' success and their improvement in language learning are also dependent on another important dimension, *self-efficacy*, which refers to people's beliefs about their abilities to exercise control over the events that are likely to affect their lives and their beliefs in their capabilities to put together motivation cognitive resources and other action needed to control task demands (Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy is **not about** the skills individuals have to accomplish a task, but judgments of what individuals **can do** with whatever skills they have (Bandura, 1986).

One's beliefs about their efficacy in a specific domain can increase their motivation and lead them to set higher goals for themselves and work hard to reach them (Gahungu, 2007). Moreover, learners also become more autonomous because their efficacy level determines how much effort they will exert for the management of their learning and for continuation of learning outside of the class. The level of interest in an academic work or accomplishment is directly based on learners' efficacy. In addition, high levels of self-efficacy appear to be particularly important in maintaining motivation in the face of difficulties and failure (Bandura, 1995).

According Bandura (1986), self-efficacy beliefs a) influence choice of behavior, b) help determine how much effort people will expend on an activity and how long they will persevere, c) influence human agency by affecting an individual's thought patterns and emotional reactions, and d) influence behavior by recognizing humans as producers rather than simply foretellers of behavior.

Moreover, learners with a high level of self-efficacy may cognitively engage in more frequent use of learning strategies. That is, high level of self-efficacy beliefs may be a predictor of more frequent use of

learning strategies. The development of an individuals' self-efficacy, or level of confidence in successfully completing a task is closely associated with effective use of learning strategies (Zimmerman, 1990). Self-efficacy is at the root of self-esteem, motivation, and self-regulation (Bandura, 1992). Self-efficacious learners feel more confident about solving a problem and they attribute their success mainly to their own efforts and strategies they used. Accordingly, strategies have been linked to motivation and particularly to a sense of self-efficacy leading to expectations of successful learning (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986). Having access to appropriate strategies can enable students to have higher expectations of learning success, a crucial component of motivation (NFLRC, 1996), which can lead to have more self-efficacy. Wenden (1991) states that strategy knowledge and use improve motivation, autonomy, and a sense of self-efficacy because learners know how to deal with difficulties. So, it can be thought that there is a reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and the strategy use.

Gahungu (2007) investigated this relationship between these two constructs in a study with the participation of 37 college students studying French. The results of the study revealed the existence of positive and significant relationship between the two variables. Wang (2004) also explored these two variables in a qualitative study which elementary school children participated in. The researcher found that the concepts of self-efficacy and strategy use were related to each other in the context of second language acquisition. Although these studies confirm the existence of such a link between these two constructs, there is still need for more research in different cultural contexts.

3.   Statement of Problem

Learning strategies have been the focus of a number of studies in the areas of second and foreign language learning (e.g. Bialystok, 1990; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; McDonough, 1995; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). Research has also investigated self-efficacy and academic achievement (e.g. Pajares & Miller, 1994; Pajares & Valiante, 1997; Pape & Wang, 2003; Schunk, 1994) and the relationship between self-efficacy and language abilities (e.g. Templin, 1999). In fact, there is a logical connection between the learners' self-efficacy level and their strategy use in that compared with other students, higher achieving students are found to have higher self-efficacy beliefs and employ more different categories of language learning strategies (Wang, 2004; Zimmerman, 1990); however, this possible link has not yet been adequately confirmed. There are a few studies in the literature exploring the link in the English as a second language (ESL) context (e.g. Chamot, 1987; Ellis, 1989; Oxford, 1989) and in the EFL context (e.g. Gahungu, 2007; Park, 1995; Yang, 1999). However, there is still a need for more research to contribute to the understanding of the role played by these concepts namely "self-efficacy and strategy use" in foreign language learning in different contexts. Thus, this study was undertaken to investigate the existence of the relationship between these two foci, which may add to the literature by confirming or disconfirming the link in the Turkish EFL context.

4.   Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

1.   What is the reported level of self-efficacy that Turkish university EFL students hold?
2.   What language learning strategies do Turkish university EFL students report using?
3.   Is there a relationship between students' self-efficacy level and their strategy use?

5.   Methodology

In this section, the participants and the setting where the study was conducted were presented. Then, the instrument used for data collection was described.

5.1.   Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at Cumhuriyet University, School of Foreign Languages. This school includes two sections, namely the preparatory department and the modern languages department. This current study was carried out at the preparatory department that consists of two main programs, one of which is for the English-major-students and the other of which is for the students from the Faculties of Engineering and Economics. For the English-major-students, one year of intensive preparatory education is compulsory unless they pass the standardized proficiency exam when they enroll the university.

150 EFL English-major-students participated into this this present study. The students, aged between 18 and 23, had been studying English for 9-13 years when the current study was carried out.

5.2.   Instrument

For this study, a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'always' was used with its three sections, including demographic information, self-efficacy, and language learning strategy sections. The questionnaire consists of 88 items with all three sections. Self-efficacy and strategy use scales in the questionnaire had 0.85 and 0.87 reliability coefficients, respectively.

The first section, the demographic information section, aimed to determine learners' age and gender. The language learning strategy use section developed by Oxford (1990) included 50 items. There were six types of language learning strategies in this scale: 1) remembering more effectively (memory strategies), 2) using one's all mental processes (cognitive strategies 3) compensating for missing knowledge (compensation strategies), 4) organizing and evaluating one's learning (meta-cognitive strategies), 5) managing one's emotions (affective strategies), and 6) learning with others (social strategies). These different strategy types formed the subscales of this section.

The self-efficacy scale was adapted from that of Gahungu (2007), who also explored the relationship between self-efficacy and the strategy use. This section had 38 items in total. The original scale in Gahungu's study was prepared to measure learners' self-efficacy beliefs in French. Therefore, for this current study, it was changed in a way that the questionnaire measured learners' self-efficacy beliefs in English. Then, the questionnaire in this study was translated into Turkish not to cause any miscomprehension problems which may hinder the reliability of the instrument.

6.   Results and Discussion

Results of this study were presented for each research question respectively. Then, for each question, the discussion part was included.

6.1.   What is the Reported Level of Self-efficacy that Turkish University EFL Students Hold?

In this study, the mean score of the self-efficacy level scale was found as 4.02 (SD=.40). This result showed that the students in this context had a high level of self-efficacy. This finding may be related to the fact that these students' major is English, so they might have assumed themselves to be competent in English; and accordingly they might have felt efficacious in learning English. Although the mean score gave an idea about the learners' overall efficacy level, in the following section, the most and the least endorsed items were indicated in order to have an in-depth insight into the learners' reported level of self-efficacy. In fact, there was not a sharp difference among the most endorsed items in the self-efficacy scale, that is, many items in the self-efficacy scale obtained very high scores. The items with the highest average scores are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. *The Most Endorsed Items in the Self-Efficacy Scale*

The most endorsed items in the self-efficacy scale	Often+ Always	Mean
37. I am sure that I can learn more English than I know now.	99%	4.77
22. I am sure I can develop more English vocabulary.	92%	4.60
31. I am sure I can conjugate most verbs in English.	92%	4.50
33. I am sure I can tell if my listener understands what I am saying in English.	90%	4.50
10. I know I can understand the gist of what I read in English.	90%	4.46
17. I know I can read a text in English and answer questions about specific information.	90%	4.38
18. I am sure I can learn the meaning of most English words and expressions.	89%	4.38
12. I am sure I can correctly use each English word in a sentence after learning it.	89%	4.04
9. I am confident in my ability to use an English text to accomplish a task in real life (e.g. Find a location by reading English directions).	88%	4.45
36. I am sure I am able to hear or reading sentences with words I have learned and understand the meaning of these sentences.	87%	4.20
6. I am sure I can correctly spell most words.	87%	4.09

As aforementioned and seen in Table 1, the results revealed that there was not a clear cut difference among the average scores of the items in the self-efficacy scale; that is to say, many items in this scale had high average scores. This finding showed that most of the students agreed on that they could learn more in most cases of learning English than what they already had, suggesting that students felt they could improve their knowledge in many skills.

Table 1 also indicated that many students reported having a higher level of self-efficacy in the skills related to vocabulary (items 22, 18, 12, 36), reading (items 9, 17, 10), and grammar (item 31). In fact, this finding makes sense in this context in that the students are largely exposed to reading, vocabulary and grammar teaching while learning English. Thus, they might have improved these skills more than the other skills requiring the use of communicative skills, which affects their expectations of success and in turn their self-efficacy.

Out of 38 items, item 37 (*I am sure that I can learn more English than I know now*) received the highest rating of 4.77. It suggested that the students felt that they could improve knowledge in English. In fact, this item is an important indicator of students' self-efficacy levels because this item is about the learners' overall evaluation of their competence in learning English and their expectation of success. In the light of this item, it can be noted that learners expected to improve themselves in learning English.

Additionally, in Table 2, the least endorsed items in the self-efficacy scale are shown:

Table 2. *The Least Endorsed Items in the Self-Efficacy Scale*

The least endorsed items in the self-efficacy scale	Never+ Rarely	Mean
3. I know I am able to remember the meaning of each word a month later.	26.7%	2.9
7. I am sure I can tell my interlocutor details and explanations if the listener asks for them.	23.6%	3.1
5. While listening to someone speak English, I am sure I can figure out the details of what I hear.	15.4%	3.3
2. I know I can write essays or longer texts in English on a familiar topic.	15.4%	3.5

In Table 2, it was found that although the scores in the self-efficacy scale were still high, a small number of the students felt less confident in using their memory to remember the words that they had learned. It was also noted that some students were less confident in speaking and writing skills (items 7 and 2). This finding is not surprising in the sense that these skills can be a bit challenging for learners of a foreign language since they require learners to **use** the language. Therefore, some of these students may have felt less confident in using these strategies. But these students in general seemed to have a healthy dose of self-efficacy, except in activities which involve memorization, speaking, and writing. This result concurs with the previous study in which Gahungu (2007) found that speaking and writing could lead to having less self-efficacy in learning.

6.2. What Language Learning Strategies Do Turkish University EFL Students Report Using?

In order to find out whether the students in this context frequently use language learning strategies, the mean score of this scale was calculated. Although this score (*M*= 3.55, *SD*=.45) was not as high as that of the self-efficacy scale, the results indicated that learners reported frequently employing strategies in their learning. These findings are consistent with the results of other language learning strategy studies which show that L2 learners from different cultural backgrounds use language learning strategies in an apparent attempt to become effective learners of English language (e.g. Carson and Longhini, 2002; Cohen, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). In addition to the average score of the whole scale, the mean score of each sub-scale in this section was also calculated. The results are as follows:

Table 3. *The Mean Scores in the Strategy Scale*

Strategy sub-scales	Mean	SD
Meta-cognitive	3.85	.55
Compensation	3.74	.54
Social	3.54	.57
Cognitive	3.49	.50
Memory	3.31	.62
Affective	3.09	.57

SD= Standard Deviation

Table 3 showed that most of the students indicated the greatest preference for metacognitive strategies (M=3.85) followed by compensation, social, cognitive and memory. Students' use of these strategy types

ranged from 'sometimes' to 'frequently'. This finding supports the results revealed in the studies by Magogwe and Oliver (2007) and Oxford (1990), who also showed that metacognitive strategies were the most preferred ones.

There was, however, relatively less usage of affective strategies (ranked last) when compared to the scores of other sub-scales in this section. This result supports the previous research (Goh & Kwah, 1997, Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Yılmaz, 2010) which also found that affective strategies were among the least preferred strategy types. The low value for affective strategies could mean that some students lacked the right attitude and determination to work at improving their proficiency in the language since there were lesser reports of efforts to control feelings, motivation and attitude related to learning English.

Overall, these results suggest that the students in this context reported largely using different kinds of language learning strategies in their learning and the emerging picture is that all the students indicated a preference for more metacognitive, compensation and social strategies and fewer cognitive, memory and affective strategies.

As seen, the mean scores gave an idea about the frequency of learners' strategy use, but in the following section the most endorsed and the least endorsed items were indicated in order to have an in-depth understanding of the students' strategy use levels.

Table 4. *The Most Endorsed Items in the Strategy Scale*

The most endorsed items in the strategy scale	Often+ Always	Mean
23. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	93.9%	4.64
1. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	92.4%	4.12
31. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	87.6%	4.34
33. I first skim an English passage (read it quickly) then go back and read carefully.	86.6%	4.28
39. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again.	80.4%	4.15
30. I say or write new English words several times.	76.3%	4.10
43. When I need, I ask for help from my English teacher or friends.	76.3%	4.07
41. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	74.3%	3.91
11. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	73.2%	3.96
12. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand (e.g. Using affixes or roots)	72.2%	3.93

Table 4 indicated that meta-cognitive (items 1, 11, and 23) and cognitive (items 12, 30, and 33) strategies were the most frequently used strategies. However, affective strategies obtained lower scores in the scale (there are no items related to the affective strategy scale among the most endorsed items). This showed that students did not seem to use affective strategies very frequently. It may be that like students in Magogwe's and Oliver's study (2007), the students in this context were largely unaware of the potential of affective strategies because they may not have been exposed to the use of these strategy types.

Moreover, Table 4 revealed that item 23 (*I pay attention when someone is speaking English*) obtained the highest score in the scale and this result supports Gahungu (2007), who also found that this item had the highest score. This result may suggest that students wanted to pay attention and listen carefully in their language class or when being spoken to in their target language; otherwise, they may miss out important information during class. If they are interacting with somebody else and don't pay attention, they might experience a communication breakdown because they were not able to hear or understand what was said. This finding is also consistent with item *39* (*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again*), which also had a high score. Students did not want to have communication problems or miss out any information since they reported that they were using the strategy based on asking the speaker to slow down or repeat his/her statements.

Additionally, using different strategies to deal with vocabulary gained attention in this context. That is, items (12, 30, 31, and 41) based on using different strategies to handle with vocabulary obtained highest scores. This makes sense because the students in this population are largely exposed to the exams based on reading and vocabulary. Thus, they have to deal with unknown words in order to be able to succeed in the program. With this aim, they may have developed some strategies to cope with vocabulary, which may be an indicator of using more strategies in the vocabulary skill.

In addition to the analysis of the most endorsed items in the strategy scale, Table 5 shows the least endorsed items in this scale:

Table 5. *The Least Endorsed Items in the Strategy Scale*

The least endorsed items in the strategy scale	Never+ Rarely	Mean
9. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	71.1%	2.18
22. I give myself a reward when I do well in English.	56.7%	2.46
32. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	40.2%	2.82
19. I use rhymes to remember new English words.	38.1%	2.88
20. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	38.1%	2.89
26. I use flashcards to remember new English words.	28.9%	3.15
34. I memorize new English words by grouping them into categories.	26.8%	2.97
24. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	25.8%	3.38
16. I ask questions for verification and clarification about English.	24.7%	3.23
4. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	24.7%	3.25

Based on the previous findings, it was expected affective and memory strategies to be among the least frequently used strategy types and the findings in Table 5 confirmed this expectation in the sense that students reported less frequently using affective strategies (items 9, 22, 24) and memory strategies (items 19, 26, 34). The results suggested that affective strategies were not regulated by some groups in this context. Its reason can be that these students are of English major and therefore, they can be more confident and accordingly less anxious in learning English when compared to other learners of English. So, these students may not have needed to use these strategies to employ because of less anxiety. Additionally, it was found that some students reported not using memory strategies to remember words. Rather, they stated using different strategies (e.g. cognitive strategies) to deal with unknown words.

Out of the fifty items in the strategy use scale, item *9* (*I write down my feelings in a language learning diary*) received the lowest rating, which is consistent with the finding of Gahungu (2007). The underlying reason for this low rating can be that, to the present researcher's knowledge as a language instructor, students may have never been exposed to using this type of strategy before. Therefore, they can be unaware of this strategy type.

Item *22* (*I give myself a reward when I do well in English)* also obtained low scores. It may be that the students in the Turkish context largely focus on passing exams rather than improving themselves. Therefore, passing exams can already be seen as a reward for themselves.

6.3. Is There a Relationship Between Students' Self-efficacy Level and Their Strategy use?

Students who use language learning strategies may have a heightened level of self-efficacy. Accordingly, students with more efficacy may use more language learning strategies. The primary concern of this section is to determine the extent to which learners' reported use of language learning strategies and their perceived level of self-efficacy relate to each other. The possible correlations between the two foci were analyzed using Pearson correlation matrices. A prediction about the direction of the correlation (i.e. positive or negative) was not made, so correlations were judged significant at the two-tailed level. First of all, the correlation score of the two scales was analyzed as seen in Table 6:

Table 6. *The Correlation Score Between the Self-Efficacy And Strategy Use Scales*

Correlation	Self-efficacy
Strategy use	**.**502**
	.000

p< 0.5

A Pearson correlation revealed the existence of a statistically significant positive correlation (r=.50, p< 0.5) between the two variables. Considering this finding, it can be noted that the use of language learning strategies is linked to the perceptions of self-efficacy among EFL learners. This result is in accord with the findings of the previous research (e.g. Gahungu, 2007; Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Rossiter, 2003; Wong, 2005; Yang, 1999). This means that most of the students hold the tools to manage their learning as well as solutions to solve problems and have developed a degree of autonomous learning.

In addition to the correlation scores of these scales, the relationship between self-efficacy and each sub-scale in the strategy use section was also calculated using correlation tests. Table 7 shows the results:

Table 7. *The Correlation Scores between the Self-Efficacy Scale and Strategy Section Sub-Scales*

	Meta-cognitive	Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Affective	Social
Self-efficacy	.526**	.367**	.529**	.250*	.286**	.352**
	.000	.000	.000	.013	.005	.000

p< 0.5

Table 7 revealed that although almost all correlation scores were found to be statistically significant, some of the correlations had higher scores (*correlation coefficients ranged from .25 to .52, p < .05*). It is seen that the students who had self-efficacy tended to report using more meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies. This finding supports that of the study by Pajares and Schunk (2001). The researchers also found that students who believed they were capable of performing tasks used more cognitive and metacognitive

strategies and persisted longer than those who did not. In fact, these learning strategies are necessary for understanding the process of self-regulation because through the selection, monitoring, and regulation of these cognitive and metacognitive strategies, students are able to actively contribute to their own learning (Wolters, 2003).

Similarly, Pintrich and De Groot (1990) suggest that self-efficacy plays a facilitative role in the process of cognitive engagement, that raising self-efficacy beliefs might lead to increased use of cognitive strategies and, thereby, higher achievement, and that students need to have both the will and the skill to be successful in classrooms.

Additionally, Magogwe and Oliver (2007) reveal that the correlation score of the self-efficacy level and the use of meta-cognitive strategies was higher than other correlation scores. This may occur because students with higher level of efficacy are more independent learners and meta-cognitive strategies best match this characteristic.

The correlation score between the affective strategy use and self-efficacy beliefs appeared to be the lowest one among all the correlations. However, the score was still significant, suggesting that the learners who felt themselves efficacious may have regulated their negative feelings such as stress and anxiety when encountering failures.

In this section, the results of the study were indicated addressing each research question respectively. Depending on this, in the next section, how this resulting information can be applied to the language learning/teaching process was focused on.

7.   Pedagogical Implications

Some important practical implications can be drawn from the findings of this study. The results show that students' use of language learning strategies ranged from 'sometimes' to 'often'. This suggests that some of the students do not put in effort at the use of some of these strategies in their learning. Therefore, learning strategies should be explicitly taught in a methodical, progressive fashion. As it is confirmed, some students enter the classroom using appropriate learning strategies, but the others do not; strategy use should not be left to chance any more than any other type of basic knowledge. Students should be trained to use language learning strategies not only in grammar, vocabulary or reading skills, but also in speaking, listening or writing skills.

Additionally, there appears to be lesser effort by some students in this context to employ memory strategies. Therefore, students should be encouraged to be more diligent in improving storage and retrieval of information during the learning process (Wong, 2005). Especially some students in this study seem to have problems in using memory strategies in vocabulary. So, language teachers can focus on these types of strategies to help learners to deal with unknown words more.

Moreover, it was revealed that the affective strategies obtained the lowest score in this population. So, it is clear that there is need for English lecturers to address this problem, perhaps through affective strategy instruction. In other words, students should be trained to use affective strategies to lower their anxiety and help themselves in this difficult process, which will in turn change their attitudes toward learning English and increase their motivation and self-efficacy.

In the strategy scale, out of 50 items, item *9* (*I write down my feelings in a language learning diary*) received the lowest rating. The reason for this low score can be that students may have never been exposed to using this type of strategy. But as Matsumoto (1996) points out, diary-keeping helps students raise their awareness of their own L2 learning. Therefore, English lecturers should give special attention to training students to keep a language diary in learning.

In this present study, it was also revealed that there was a positive relationship between language self-efficacy and use of language learning strategies. Although the correlational data cannot address causality, it appears that a heightened level of self-efficacy can be an indicator of a greater use of learning strategies and accordingly success in language learning. Therefore, considering the findings of this study, it is recommended that EFL teachers realize the important role of language self-efficacy and take into consideration of principal sources of self-efficacy to help students develop high levels of self-efficacy and this in turn may encourage more use of language learning strategies. With this aim, teachers can try to increase learners' self-efficacy level by (a) introducing learning tasks in a motivating way, (b) providing a supportive and relaxed atmosphere, (c) setting specific, realistic and attainable goals for the learners, (d) promoting motivational feedback, (e) encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, and (f) training students for learning and using strategies (Gahungu, 2007). Thus, students' self-confidence will increase and then they may be more ready to take on challenging learning tasks. In this way, students will become more autonomous learners who will be responsible for their learning by making use different learning strategies. Using learning strategies will in turn help learners become more efficacious.

8.   Conclusion

This study explored a) the reported level of self-efficacy that Turkish university EFL students hold, b) preferred language learning strategies, and c) how these concepts are related to each other in the Turkish context. The findings of the current research showed that Turkish EFL students were highly efficacious about their learning of the English language, which might be related to being students at the English language and literature department. English was the learners' field of study and they might have become competent in English.

The results of the strategy scale also indicated that students reported employing different kinds of language learning strategies even though the affective strategies sub-scale had a bit lower score than the scores of the other sub-scales. Lastly, this study confirmed the link between self-efficacy and strategy use, thus we can note here that students who use language learning strategies also experience a heightened sense of self - efficacy. Therefore, we should encourage our students to use language learning strategies more because it will lead to have more self-efficacy in learning and the heightened level self-efficacy will in turn lead to employing more strategies because of the reciprocal relationship between these two concepts.

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