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A COMPARISON OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY BILINGUAL AND MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Linguistic diversity has become a vital issue, since the world is becoming more and more multilingual as a result of globalization (Nayak et al., 1990). Globalization based on the process of exchanging services, goods and information promotes interactions between different nations, which makes people more connected and bound to each other (Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2011). This impacts communication by forcing people to go beyond their borders and learn other languages, which are then used as tools that help them meet their needs (Nayak et al., 1990).

People have a natural ability to learn languages, which enables them to participate in communication with others thus maintain their lives (Ur, 1996). The core of this communication is vocabulary, as Richards and Rodgers (2001) state "the building blocks of language learning and communication are not grammar, function, notions, or some other unit of planning and teaching but lexis, that is, word and word combinations" (p.132). Therefore, vocabulary constitutes the main tool for communication, as it provides the basis of how language learning can be achieved. In the same vein, Harmer (1994) states that "if language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh" (p.153). This leads to the conclusion that vocabulary is central to language development.

Language development requires students to perceive and produce the focal language appropriately in different social settings (Nation, 2001). To put it in different way, it is necessary for students to develop proficiency in receptive skills, which are reading and listening, along

with the productive skills of speaking and writing (Ur,1996). In this respect, vocabulary can be regarded as a bridge among these four skills. As such, building vocabulary knowledge is the precondition for the development of other language abilities (Harmer, 1994).

1.1   Vocabulary

The acquisition of vocabulary is considered as a benchmark of success on the way to becoming a proficient language user (Nunan, 1999). Ur (1996) defines vocabulary as "the words we teach in the foreign language" (p.60). Students should have a good mastery of words in order to gain proficiency in a foreign language, which requires more than just knowing their definitions, since vocabulary knowledge is a rich and multifaceted construct (Yolcu & Mirioglu, 2020). Nation (as cited in Griva et al., 2009) proposes that knowing a word corresponds to mastering:

a) the meaning(s) of the word
b) the written form of the word
c) the spoken form of the word
d) the grammatical behaviour of the word
e) the collocations of the word
f) the register of the word
g) the associations of the word
h) the frequency of the word. (p.22)

It is essential to touch upon the aspects and dimensions of vocabulary knowledge which affect the process of learning a new word. Nation (2001) handles vocabulary knowledge in terms of three aspects: form, meaning and use. As a first step, students should recognize the written and spoken forms of the words, then they need to connect these forms with a specific meaning, while expressing this meaning through speaking or writing the final step (Yolcu & Mirioglu, 2020). In this way, learners will have a command of how and where to use an individual word. Moreover, Henriksen (1999) makes a distinction between two dimensions, which are depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge. Here, the depth of vocabulary knowledge refers to the number of words in students' mental lexicon, whereas, the breadth of vocabulary knowledge deals with how well students know these words (Read, 2000). Vocabulary size plays a big role in the comprehension of texts in a foreign language, and in the same vein, students need to enrich their deep knowledge of words by focusing on many different facets, such as phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics in order to communicate with others effectively (Cieślicka, 2000).

A word exists with its many different features, such as associations, collocations, registers, forms, meanings, and so on which leads to the conclusion that lexical knowledge is complex, as the relationships among these overlapping features not always clear (Nation, 2001). To clarify, a word form can have multiple meanings depending on the different contexts, which in turn, makes the vocabulary learning process a challenging task for students (Schmitt, 1997). Managing this challenging task through the acquisition of all these features in relation a word requires a long time and considerable language experience for students. Keeping all this in mind, vocabulary learning strategies can thus be seen as a vital issue in an educational context, since they can provide more efficient ways to facilitate building a broad knowledge of words along with expanding the vocabulary of students (Oxford, 1990).

1.2   Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs)

A lack of vocabulary is the main obstacle that students need to overcome during their language learning process, inasmuch as without sufficient vocabulary knowledge their ideas and feelings cannot come to life, preventing students from becoming proficient language learners and communicators (Yolcu & Mirioglu, 2020). Since enriching students' vocabulary knowledge is essential if they are to gain competence in a foreign language, it is important to consider how students can learn vocabulary efficiently (Kashani & Shafiee, 2016). Moreover, today there is growing awareness that students need to be taught "how to learn", rather than just being given knowledge directly (Kashani & Shafiee, 2016), with vocabulary learning strategies being central in this context.

Vocabulary learning strategies can be explained as the actions taken by students to consciously organize and acquire knowledge with reference to new words (Nation, 2001). They play a significant role in vocabulary development, in the sense that they facilitate and accelerate the learning process for students by providing them with information about the ways in which words can be learned and retrieved (Yolcu & Mirioglu, 2020). By using these strategies, students can take responsibility for monitoring their own learning, eventually enabling them to become independent language learners (Kashani & Shafiee, 2016).

A wide range of vocabulary learning strategies are employed by learners. Schmitt (1997) puts forward one of the most comprehensive classifications of vocabulary learning strategies in his taxonomy including determination strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, social strategies and metacognitive strategies, as shown in Figure 1.
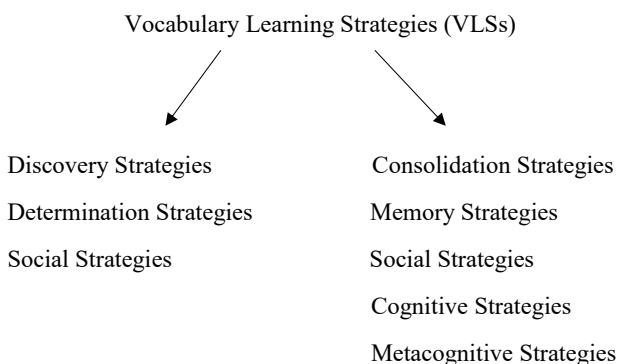
Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs)

Discovery Strategies

Determination Strategies

Social Strategies

Consolidation Strategies

Memory Strategies

Social Strategies

Cognitive Strategies

Metacognitive Strategies

Figure 1. The classification of vocabulary learning strategies (Schmitt, 1997, p.125)

Broadly, Schmitt (1997) divides vocabulary learning strategies into two groups: discovery strategies used by learners to find out the meaning of a new word they face for the first time, and consolidation strategies applied by learners to internalize the meaning of a new word over time. Discovery strategies consist of determination and social strategies, while consolidation strategies include memory, cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies (Kashani & Shafiee, 2016).Social strategies, which are based on interactions with other people, can be employed to both discover and consolidate the meanings of new words (Oxford, 1990).

Determination strategies come into play when learners try to explore the meanings of new words with the help of dictionaries and context (Yolcu & Mirioglu, 2020). These strategies include guessing from textual context, analysing pictures or gestures in relation to words, using bilingual or monolingual dictionaries and studying the parts of the words such as roots and affixes (Schmitt, 1997). Furthermore, learners can find out the definitions of new words through group work activity, cooperation with native speakers, asking their teacher for help or an L1 translation, which are all classified as social strategies (Oxford, 1990). Moreover, working with classmates to recall, study and practice new words are all part of the social aspect of language learning (Nation, 2001).

The memory strategies which are deployed by learners to store and recall words are based on the principles of mental processing (Schmitt, 1997). Learners make use of grouping words together, using semantic maps, and associating words with their own experiences or images to facilitate retrieval from long-term memory (Oxford, 1990). Similarly, cognitive strategies are of significance for vocabulary retention, but they differ from memory strategies in that they are predicated on repetition rather than mental processing (Schmitt, 1997).The use of flash cards, verbal and written repetitions, taking notes in class, using the vocabulary section in textbooks, and keeping a vocabulary notebook are counted as cognitive strategies (Kashani & Shafiee, 2016).

Lastly, metacognitive strategies give students the opportunity "to regulate their own cognition and to focus, plan, and evaluate their progress as they move toward communicative competence" (Oxford, 1990, p.8). Students can evaluate their vocabulary knowledge by using word tests, and thus determine their needs in order to better direct and monitor their own learning process (Yolcu & Mirioglu, 2020). Students can also choose to continue to study words over time, and use English-language media to develop their vocabulary (Griva et al., 2009).

1.3   Bilingualism and Multilingualism

In today's globalized world there are more people who are bilingual or multilingual more than monolingual, and thus there is growing interest in how individuals learn multiple languages (Nayak et al., 1990). Before touching upon their language learning processes, it is essential to gain insights into who bilinguals and multilinguals are. In this respect, bilinguals can be classified as people who have knowledge of two languages (Cieślicka 2000), and they may also identify "themselves as having acquired a language and are in the process of gaining competence in the second one" (Arslan, 2014, p.58). In broad terms, bilingual individuals can be classified in terms of age, context and the manner in which they acquired their languages as early/late bilinguals, simultaneous/successive bilinguals and formal/informal bilinguals (Jessner, 2010). Early bilingualism, the acquisition of more than one language during the pre-adolescent period, whereas late bilingualism takes place when a child starts acquiring an additional language after the age of eight (Hamers & Balanc, 1989). Simultaneous bilingualism occurs when a child learns two languages at the same time, while successive bilingualism refers to when a child learns a second language after they have partially acquired their first (Cieślicka, 2000). Lastly, formal bilingualism happens when a child learns a second language in a formal setting, like school, while informal bilingualism occurs naturally and in ways that are similar to those seen with the acquisition of a mother tongue outside formal settings (Hamers & Balanc, 1989).

In contrast to bilinguals, multilingual individuals are people with an ability to communicate in more than two languages (Cieślicka, 2000). Multilinguals can also be considered as individuals who have acquired two languages and are in the process of learning subsequent languages. At this point, Jessner (2008) makes a comparison between second language acquisition (SLA) and third language acquisition (TLA), and states that although second language acquisition is characterized by two acquisition orders, which are successive and simultaneous bilingualism, third language acquisition can be explained with four orders, as seen in Figure 2 below.

SLA   versus   TLA
1   L1 → L2   1   L1 → L2 → L3
2   Lx/Ly   2   Lx/Ly/Lz
                             3   Lx/Ly → L3
                             4   L1 → Lx/Ly

Figure 2. A comparison between second language acquisition and third language acquisition in terms of acquisition orders (Jessner, 2008, p.271)

It can be inferred from Figure 2 that the three languages can be learned consecutively as in the first rank (Jessner, 2008), while the second rank shows they can be learned simultaneously. The third rank indicates that LI and L2 are learned simultaneously before learning L3, and the fourth rank that L2 and L3 are learned simultaneously after the acquisition of L1 (Jessner, 2010). Additionally, Cenoz (2013) draws attention to another two dimensions of multilingualism, which are individual or social, by stating that "at the societal level, multilingualism can often be found at different levels: in the family, at work, and in education" (p.14).

It is noteworthy that the number of languages acquired by learners might change their learning process and needs, since prior lexical knowledge has an impact on the acquisition of an additional language (Schmitt, 1997). Every student has a unique style of learning a new language and improving their vocabulary knowledge depending on their learning needs (Kashani & Shafiee, 2016). In a broad sense, students' needs determine their choice of a strategy, in that the choice of a more suitable strategy will increase the chances of their learning being successful. Therefore, the choice of a specific vocabulary learning strategy will vary from one learner to another (Oxford, 1990).

The number of acquired languages plays a great role in the use of vocabulary learning strategies, which can be supported by the claim that multiple language skills are associated with the use of a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies with a higher frequency (Griva et al., 2009). On this point, Nayak et al. (1990) investigated the hypothesis that people who can speak multiple languages have different language acquisition strategies than those who can only speak one. They found that multilingual individuals deploy a greater variety of vocabulary strategies, and use them more frequently, than monolinguals, and that they can better adjust the strategies used in accordance with the task requirements when compared with monolinguals. This can be attributed to the fact that multilinguals have a deeper understanding of how languages are learned and used, giving them more flexibility in switching strategies.

There is a common belief that an awareness of vocabulary strategy use is closely related to successful language learning (Nation, 2001). Through a higher awareness of vocabulary strategies, learners gain a better control and a deeper understanding of new words (Yolcu & Mirioglu, 2020). Similarly, the ability to match vocabulary strategies with one's language learning needs has an impact on the success of such efforts, so it can be said that multilinguals and bilinguals have the edge on the use of vocabulary learning strategies in comparison with monolingual learners (Cieślicka, 2000). In this respect, Sazvar and Varmaziyar (2017) investigated the differences between Iranian EFL monolinguals and bilinguals in terms of vocabulary language learning strategies. Their findings showed that bilinguals had, to some extent, an advantage over monolinguals and also used more metacognitive and cognitive strategies, which are considered more important and effective when learning another language. However, they stressed the significant dissimilarities between bilinguals' and monolinguals' usage of determination, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Persian-monolingual learners used determination strategies most frequently followed by social, metacognitive, memory, and cognitive strategies. Arabic-Persian bilingual learners used cognitive strategies most frequently followed by metacognitive, social, determination, and memory strategies. Similarly, Seifi and Abdolmanafi Rokni (2013) investigated the differences between the strategy use of Iranian monolingual and bilingual language learners with an intermediate level of language proficiency, and found that bilinguals and monolinguals had slightly different preferences. The bilingual learners used metacognitive, social, cognitive, and memory strategies, in that order, while the monolinguals used metacognitive, cognitive, social, and memory strategies.

When it comes to bilingual and multilingual learners' vocabulary learning strategies, it is clear that they are different from each other with respect to the amount of language learning experience (Cieślicka, 2000). This is because multilinguals have the knowledge gained from their first, second and additional languages, whereas bilinguals are limited to what they have learned from their two languages. Language learning experience is directly related to language learning success, and it has been shown that as the number of languages learners know increases, they become better at learning additional languages (Brohy, 2001; Kemp, 2007). Similarly, the frequency with which learning strategies are employed by learners gradually increases as they learn additional languages (Sabeki & Karimzadeh, 2020; Yayla, Kozikoglu, & Celik, 2016). It is thus expected that there will be differences in bilinguals' and multilinguals' use of vocabulary learning strategies. In this respect, Arslan (2014) investigated the strategy use of bilingual and multilingual preparatory students. The findings showed that the multilingual learners used such strategies much more often than the bilingual learners. The results also showed that the memory and cognitive strategies were less frequently used by the bilingual rather than multilingual learners. However, Otwinowska-Kasztelanic (2011) explored the vocabulary learning strategies of Polish multilingual and bilingual advanced learners of English, and that there were no statistically

significant differences in the choice of strategies between the groups. The five most valued vocabulary learning strategies were note-taking, use of imagery, translation, inferencing and repetition in both groups of learners. Moreover, transfer including looking for L1 similarities was one of the least commonly employed strategies.

It is commonly accepted that the number of languages learners know differentiates them from each other in terms of strategy choice and use in learning new words in the target language. Nevertheless, the research findings yield mixed results in this regard. While some research (Arslan, 2014) points to differences between bilingual and multilingual learners with respect to vocabulary strategies, other studies (Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2011; Sazvar & Varmaziyar, 2017) stress their similarities in the choice and use of these strategies. Since this issue remains unresolved and in order to gain a better insight into this topic, the present study investigates whether bilingual and multilingual primary school students differ significantly in using vocabulary learning strategies. More specifically, this study is an attempt to answer the following five questions

1. What are the types of English vocabulary learning strategies used by bilingual and multilingual primary school students?
2. Is there a significant difference between bilingual and multilingual primary school students in terms of the use of English vocabulary learning strategies?
3. Is there a significant difference between bilingual and multilingual students' vocabulary achievement scores?
4. Is there a correlation between bilingual primary school students' English vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary achievement?
5. Is there a correlation between multilingual primary school students' English vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary achievement?

2   METHODOLOGY

2.1   Participants

As the participants of the present study, 30 students who are 3rd graders aged nine at an eastern state primary school in Turkey were selected via convenience sampling, since they were the students of one of the researchers. This study was conducted with 15 bilingual and 15 multilingual learners of English, and the language backgrounds of the participants are shown in Table 1. Accordingly, bilingual students speak Turkish as their mother tongue and they are in the process of learning English as a second language in the school setting. They are beginners whose proficiency level is A1 in English. Hence, they are classified as successive bilinguals. They can be also regarded as late bilinguals because of their age. Table 1 also shows that six students know Turkish-Kurdish while nine

students know Turkish-Arabic, and they are simultaneous bilinguals in the process of learning English as a third language. Their proficiency level in English is A1. Therefore, six students have learned Turkish and Kurdish simultaneously at home from their parents before starting to learn their third language, English, at school in a formal way. Similarly, nine students have learned Turkish and Arabic simultaneously at home before learning English in a formal setting. It can be said that these students can be grouped under societal multilingualism, because they are learning their third language through education via interactions with their teachers and classmates.

Table 1: Language backgrounds of the participants

Groups	N	Mother Tongue	Language at school
Bilinguals	15	Turkish	English
Multilinguals	15	Turkish and Kurdish (6) Turkish and Arabic (9)	English

2.2   Instrument

The main aim of this study was to investigate whether bilingual and multilingual 3rd grade students differ from each other in their use of English vocabulary strategies. Data were obtained using the "Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire" by Schmitt (1997), which was adapted to make it compatible with the very young participants' competence level and translated into Turkish to ensure accurate responses on the part of students. The model proposed by Bristlin et al (1973) is used. First, the questionnaire was independently translated and simplified into Turkish by having the subject and verb in the sentence checked by three experts who negotiated and decided on the simple syntactic lexical translation. Then the agreed Turkish translation was retranslated to English by another English lecturer. The backward translation was reviewed by a group who consisted of the two researchers of this study and another English lecturer. This process focused on the conceptual equivalence with the questionnaire, and this was confirmed and the questionnaire then administered to 30 students in another school. The correlation between the original questionnaire and back-translated questionnaire was found to be .81. The translated and simplified questionnaire was then adopted for the present study. This questionnaire includes 32 items and five sub-dimensions, which are determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive vocabulary learning strategies. For each item the students were given three options to choose from 'always, sometimes, or never', measuring their use and choice of these strategies. Cronbach's lpha was used in calculating the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire, with an overall result of .85, and the reliability scores for each subdimension are .87 for determination, 0.88 for social, .88 for memory, .80 for cognitive and .80 for metacognitive strategies.

The correlation between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary achievement levels was also examined with the use of an English vocabulary achievement test based on ten English words taught by one of the researchers during the lesson. The reliability coefficient of the achievement test was calculated as 0.76. Students' scores on the English vocabulary test were used as the data to see whether there was a relation between the students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary achievement scores.

2.3   Procedures

All of the students and their parents were informed about the aim of this study. Since the 3rd graders were very young, consent forms were obtained from their parents. Secondly, the students were asked to complete the English vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire that was presented in Turkish, so that they could easily understand the items. The items regarded as complicated were simplified in the form of a subject and verb. The students were told that they should answer the items in the questionnaire freely, without any pressure, and to write the languages they know on the questionnaire. Then English vocabulary achievement test was administered to the 3rd graders during their English lesson.

2.4   Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. In this program, the descriptive statistics showing the mean scores and standard deviations of the various English vocabulary learning strategies, namely the determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, were run to discover those used by both the bilingual and multilingual participants in the present study.

Secondly, the independent samples t-test which compares the mean scores of two groups for a variable was employed to reveal whether there is a significant difference in the use of English vocabulary learning strategies by the multilingual and bilingual primary school students. In the same manner, bilingual and multilingual participants' scores on the vocabulary achievement test were compared using an independent samples t-test to find any differences between their success in learning the vocabulary. Lastly, the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was run to determine whether there was a correlation between students' English vocabulary strategies and their vocabulary achievement scores.

2.5   Results

The data were gathered using the vocabulary language learning strategies questionnaire adapted from Schmitt (1997) to compare the bilingual and multilingual primary school

students in terms of vocabulary learning strategies, including determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The students' scores on the vocabulary achievement test were also used as data. The data were then analysed to assess whether there is a correlation between students' strategy use and their success in learning vocabulary. The findings are presented below in relation to the five questions examined in this study.

1. **What are the types of English vocabulary learning strategies used by bilingual and multilingual primary school students?**

The descriptive statistics shown in Table 2 show that "Asking the teacher for the meaning of a new word" is the most preferred strategy used by bilingual primary school students to learn the meaning of a new word in English, as it has the highest mean score (2.53). Other popular strategies are "Using a new word in a sentence", "Guessing the meaning of new words by analysing affixes and roots" and "Trying to find the meanings of new words with a group through games in English", which all have mean scores of 2.46. "Skipping or passing new word" (1.53) i the least preferred strategy category by the bilingual participants.

On the other hand, the most frequently used vocabulary learning strategy for multilingual primary school students is "Studying new words by grouping them together", with a mean of 2.73. This is followed by five strategies that all have mean scores of 2.60, namely "Testing oneself with word tests","Studying words through written repetitions", "Putting English labels on physical objects", "Using physical action when learning a word" and "Checking whether a new word in English is similar to a word in Turkish". In contrast, "Imagining a word's meaning" and "Asking the teacher for a sentence including the new word" were found to be the least popular strategies utilized by the multilingual learners, with mean scores of 2.20, as seen in Table 2, below.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for English vocabulary learning strategies employed by bilingual and multilingual primary school students

Vocabulary Learning Strategies[1]	Bilingual Mean	Students Std. Deviation	Multilingual Mean	Students Std. Deviation
Checking whether a new word in English is similar to a word in Turkish	2.20	0.67	2.60	0.50
Using a dictionary to discover the meaning of new words	2.26	0.45	2.46	0.63
Analysing pictures or gestures in relation to words	2.20	0.77	2.46	0.51

Vocabulary Learning Strategies[1]	Bilingual Mean	Students Std. Deviation	Multilingual Mean	Students Std. Deviation
Guessing the meaning of a new word from textual context	1.93	0.70	2.26	0.59
Guessing the meaning of new words from aural features such as pronunciation and intonation	2.26	0.70	2.40	0.63
Guessing the meaning of new words by analysing affixes and roots	2.40	0.73	2.53	0.63
Asking the teacher for the meaning of a new word	2.53	0.63	2.46	0.63
Asking the teacher for a sentence including the new word	2.20	0.77	2.20	0.67
Asking classmates for the meaning of new words	2.20	0.56	2.53	0.51
Interacting with native speakers	1.93	0.70	2.40	0.73
Practicing new words in a group	2.26	0.79	2.26	0.59
Trying to find the meanings of new words with a group through games in English	2.46	0.63	2.33	0.61
Imagining a new word's meaning	2.40	0.73	2.20	0.77
Associating a new word with their personal experiences	2.13	0.63	2.40	0.50
Using a new word in a sentence	2.46	0.63	2.26	0.70
Placing a new word in a rectangle, circle, etc. by drawing lines around it	2.13	0.63	2.46	0.51
Using physical actions when learning a word	2.20	0.86	2.60	0.50
Studying words by grouping them together	2.13	0.63	2.73	0.45
Practicing words through verbal repetitions	2.06	0.88	2.53	0.51
Putting English labels on physical objects	1.86	0.35	2.60	0.50
Studying words through written repetitions	2.00	0.75	2.60	0.63

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1   The items were given in simplified Turkish to the students. For the sake of the clarity of the study, the table shows the exact sentences of Schmitt.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies[1]	Bilingual Mean	Students Std. Deviation	Multilingual Mean	Students Std. Deviation
Practicing new words with flash cards	1.66	0.72	2.53	0.51
Listening to a recording of word lists	1.73	0.70	2.53	0.51
Taking notes in class to learn new words	1.73	0.79	2.26	0.59
Keeping a vocabulary notebook	2.00	0.84	2.53	0.51
Studying words through English-language newscasts, movies, etc.	1.46	0.63	2.26	0.70
Testing oneself with word tests	1.86	0.63	2.60	0.63
Learning new words by reading newspapers, magazines and brochures in English	1.60	0.63	2.46	0.51
Improving lexical knowledge by listening to English songs	1.73	0.70	2.53	0.74
Relating newlylearned words with previously learned ones	1.80	0.56	2.46	0.63
Continuing to study words over time	1.73	0.79	2.53	0.63
Skipping or passing new words	1.53	0.51	2.26	0.70

2. Is there a significant difference between bilingual and multilingual primary school students in terms of the use of English vocabulary learning strategies?

Whether bilingual and multilingual primary school students differ in their use of English vocabulary learning strategies was investigated. In this respect, the mean of overall strategy use for bilingual students was found to be 2.03, whereas, the mean of overall strategy use for multilingual students was found to be 2.44. This suggests that multilingual students employ vocabulary strategies more frequently than bilingual students to learn and retrieve new words in English. As such, the results of the t-test showed that there is a statistically significant difference between bilingual and multilingual students' mean scores in terms of the use of English vocabulary strategies (t= 5.34, p=0.00 <0.05), as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of independent samples t-test for vocabulary learning strategies used by participants

Group	N	X	S	Df	T	P
Bilingual Students	15	2.03	.25	28	5.34	.00
Multilingual Students	15	2.44	.16			

*P<.05

The bilingual and multilingual primary school students were compared in their use of English vocabulary learning strategies, and specifically the use of determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The results showed that there is not a statistically significant difference between bilingual and multilingual students' mean scores in relation to the use of determination strategies (t=1.78, p=0.85 >0.05) as seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Results of independent samples t-test for determination strategies used by the participants

Group	N	X	S	Df	T	P
Bilingual Students	15	2.21	0.42	28	1.78	0.85
Multilingual Students	15	2.45	0.32			

*P>.05

Similarly, the comparison between bilingual and multilingual students' use of social strategies indicated that there is not a statistically significant difference between their scores (t=0.60, p=0.55>0.05), as seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of independent samples t-test for social strategies used by the participants

Group	N	X	S	Df	T	P
Bilingual Students	15	2.26	0.48	28	0.60	0.55
Multilingual Students	15	2.36	0.42			

*P>.05

The findings also revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between bilingual and multilingual students in using memory strategies (t=1.41, p=0.16>0.05), as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Results of independent samples t-test for memory strategies used by the participants

Group	N	X	S	Df	T	P
Bilingual Students	15	2.24	0.44	28	1.41	0.16
Multilingual Students	15	2.44	0.32			

*P>.05

However, a statistically significant difference was found between bilingual and multilingual students with regard to the use of cognitive strategies (t=5.12, p=0.00<0.05), as seen in Table 7, which indicates that multilingual learners might have a higher tendency to use cognitive strategies than bilingual learners.

Table 7: Results of independent samples t-test for cognitive strategies used by the participants

Group	N	X	S	Df	T	P
Bilingual Students	15	1.86	0.47	15.35	5.12	0.00
Multilingual Students	15	2.51	0.10			

*P<.05

The results of the independent samples t-test for metacognitive strategies showed that the multilingual participants used these more frequently, and this is a statistically significant difference between the two groups (t=5.80, p=0.00<0.05), as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Results of independent samples t-test for metacognitive strategies used by the participants

Group	N	X	S	Df	T	P
Bilingual Students	15	1.67	0.34	28	5.80	0.00
Multilingual Students	15	2.44	0.40			

*P<.05

3. Is there a significant difference between bilingual and multilingual students' vocabulary achievement scores?

The analysis of whether there is a difference between the bilingual and multilingual students' success in terms of learning vocabulary showed that the two groups do not differ significantly in their mean scores (t=1.20, p=0.24 >0.05), as shown in Table 9. Nevertheless, it is notable that the scores of the multilingual learners on the vocabulary achievement test score slightly higher than those of the bilingual learners.

Table 9: Results of independent samples t-test for the success of the participants in the vocabulary achievement test

Group	N	X	S	Df	T	P
Bilingual Students	15	0.68	0.28	23.6	1.20	0.24
Multilingual Students	15	0.79	0.18			

*P>.05

4. Is there a correlation between bilingual primary school students' English vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary achievement?

This study also examined the correlation of each category of vocabulary learning strategy – namely the determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies with the students' success in learning vocabulary.

The results of this analysis show it is clear that there is a poor correlation (r =.31) between bilingual students' success and their use of determination strategies, as shown in Table 10. Moreover, the results indicate a moderate correlation (r=.59) of cognitive strategies with bilingual students' vocabulary achievement.

As seen in Table 10, there is no significant correlation (r=.04) between social strategies and bilingual students' success in vocabulary learning. However, there appears to be a high correlation of memory strategies (r=.81) and metacognitive strategies (r=.92) with the bilingual students' vocabulary achievement. That is to say, it can be inferred that the more frequently such students use memory and metacognitive strategies, the higher scores they get in the vocabulary achievement test.

Table 10: The correlation between bilingual students' vocabulary learning strategies and their success in vocabulary learning

Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Pearson Correlation (r)
Social Strategies	0.04
Determination Strategies	0.31
Cognitive Strategies	0.59
Memory Strategies	0.81
Metacognitive Strategies	-.92

5. Is there a correlation between multilingual primary school students' English vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary achievement?

It can be stated that the use of memory and metacognitive strategies can be a good predictor of multilingual students' vocabulary achievement as Table 11 shows a high correlation between the students' success in the vocabulary test and their use of memory (r=.74) and metacognitive strategies (r=.62). It was also revealed that there is a moderate

correlation (r =.54) between multilingual students' use of social strategies and their level of vocabulary achievement.

Nevertheless, there is little evidence of a link (r= .15) between determination strategies and the multilingual students' vocabulary achievement levels. Similarly, Table 11 shows that there is not a significant correlation (r=.02) between these students' use of cognitive strategies and their success in the vocabulary test. Since it is difficult to say that the multilingual students employing determination and cognitive strategies achieved a high score in the English vocabulary achievement test, so the students' use of these strategies is not likely to be a determinant of their success in learning vocabulary.

Table 11: The correlation between multilingual students' vocabulary learning strategies and their success in the vocabulary test

Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Pearson Correlation (r)
Cognitive Strategies	0.02
Determination Strategies	0.15
Social Strategies	0.54
Metacognitive Strategies	0.62
Memory Strategies	.74

3   DISCUSSION

The current study aims to examine the differences between bilingual and multilingual primary school students in terms of the use of English vocabulary learning strategies. To achieve this, the students were given a questionnaire designed to discover the strategies they use to learn and retrieve English vocabulary items. The students' scores on an English vocabulary achievement test were also used to compare their success in relation to the strategies they use.

The findings obtained from the questionnaire and vocabulary achievement test were discussed in detail by analysing all of the vocabulary learning strategies the bilingual and multilingual primary school students use in order to gain a deeper insight into any differences between them.

1.   English vocabulary learning strategies used by bilingual and multilingual primary school students

The findings of this study indicated that the strategies preferred by the bilingual primary school students to learn new English vocabulary are "Asking the teacher for the meaning of a new word", and "Trying to find the meanings of new words with a group through games in English". In this respect, Purdie and Oliver (1999) examined the language learning

strategies employed by 58 bilingual primary school-aged children, and found that they used social strategies enabling them to exchange and build new knowledge through cooperation with their teachers and classmates, which indicates that socialization was an important part of their language learning process. Furthermore, "Using a new word in a sentence" and "Guessing the meaning of new words by analysing affixes and roots" are the other two strategies that the bilingual students often use. This is in line with the findings of Sazvar and Varmaziyar (2017), who highlighted the production of new words after examining their constituent parts as a strategy used by some students to learn and practice vocabulary.

On the other hand, the most popular strategies utilized by the multilingual primary school students are "Studying new words by grouping them together", "Testing one-self with word tests", "Studying words through written repetitions", "Putting English labels on physical objects", "Using physical action when learning a word" and "Checking whether a new word in English is similar to a word in Turkish", which corroborates other studies (Celik-Korkmaz, 2013; Arslan, 2014; Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2011; Pawlak & Kiermasz, 2018) pointing out that multilingual learners have a tendency to look for cross-linguistic similarities between languages, as they have already developed a high level of linguistic awareness with the help of their previous language learning experience. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that multilingual learners develop a relatively degree of autonomy, allowing them to create their own ways to learn new words.

2. Differences between bilingual and multilingual primary school students in terms of the use of English vocabulary learning strategies

In the present study, the mean score of overall strategy use was found to be higher for multilingual students than for bilingual students, implying that there is a statistically significant difference between bilingual and multilingual students' use of English vocabulary strategies. Multilingual students make use of these strategies with a higher frequency as compared with bilingual students to learn and retrieve new words, which is in line with other studies carried out in this research area (Kemp, 2007; Nayak et al., 1990; Arslan, 2014; Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou, 2009; Seifi & Abdolmanafi Rokni, 2013). This difference can be attributed to the amount of language learning experience, which increases the multilingual learners' flexibility in switching between strategies (Rivers, 2001). In contrast, bilingual students might have a lower awareness of vocabulary learning strategies, and so they use them less when learning new words (Jessner, 2010).

The detailed comparison of bilingual and multilingual primary school students' use of English vocabulary learning strategies found that there is not a statistically significant difference between the two groups' mean scores in relation to the use of the determination, social and memory strategies, but there is a statistically significant difference in their use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In this context, Otwinowska-Kasztelanic (2011) investigated the vocabulary learning strategies of Polish bilingual and multilingual

learners of English, and reported that they differ in terms of the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Moreover, Arslan (2014) examined the effects of multilingualism on the strategy use of the preparatory class students, and found that bilingual and multilingual students show differences in their use of cognitive strategies, with the multilingual learners using these more often. Another study conducted by Sung (2011), who examined the use of strategies by bilingual and multilingual learners enrolled in Chinese language classrooms in the US revealed that bilingual learners make less frequent use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, as also found in other studies conducted in this field (Jessner, 2010; Möhle, 1989; Seifi & Abdolmanafi Rokni, 2013). This might be due to multilingual learners' activation of prior linguistic knowledge, which provides them with metalinguistic knowledge of how language systems work (Rivers, 2001). Multilinguals then use this knowledge to restructure their linguistic system based on their learning needs (Jessner, 2010). It is thus proposed that over time multilinguals become autonomous learners by taking control of their own learning, which directs them to use metacognitive and cognitive strategies (Graham, 2003).

3.   Difference between bilingual and multilingual students' success in vocabulary achievement

The results of the students' vocabulary achievement test do not differentiate bilingual and multilingual students from each other significantly, which indicates that prior language experience is not likely to have an impact on the learners' language proficiency. This is in line with the results of Sazvar and Varmaziyar (2017), which examined the differences between Iranian EFL monolinguals and bilinguals in terms of vocabulary language learning strategies, and found that both groups were the same in terms of their proficiency, so there was no significant variation between their success in terms of vocabulary learning.

Nevertheless, it is essential to underline the fact that the scores of the multilingual learners on the vocabulary achievement test were slightly higher than those of the bilingual learners in this study, similar to in earlier research (Festman, 2018; Keshavarz & Astaneh, 2010; Möhle, 1989; Arslan, 2014). This can be attributed to multilingual learners' more frequent use of vocabulary language learning strategies compared to those of bilingual learners, which had a positive impact on their learning results. Moreover, cognitive and metacognitive strategies are considered to be more effective due to their facilitative roles in activating students' prior linguistic knowledge, thus enabling such students to learn languages more easily (Rivers, 2001). As such, multilingual students can be expected to be good at learning additional languages, as reported in the study by Ramsay (1980), which discovered that multilinguals tended to perform far better than monolinguals on an achievement test due to their tendency to use more cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

4.   **The correlation between bilingual primary school students' English vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary achievement**

The analysis of the correlation between bilingual learners' success in the vocabulary test and their use of vocabulary learning strategies revealed that there is not a significant correlation between the use of social strategies and vocabulary achievement. Similarly, a poor correlation was detected between bilingual students' success and their use of determination strategies, in line with other studies carried out in this research area (Al-Shuwairekh, 2001; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Kafipour & Naveh, 2011). Moreover, the findings indicate a moderate relationship between the use of cognitive strategies and the bilingual students' vocabulary achievement levels, similar to the finding of conducted by Ehrman and Oxford (1995), which examined the variables impacting students' English proficiency. They found that among the various learning strategies only cognitive ones had a significant relationship with learners' language proficiency. In other words, cognitive strategies are predictors of success in language learning for bilingual students.

The results of the current study also show a significant relationship between the use of memory/metacognitive strategies and bilingual students' vocabulary achievement levels. Kafipour and Naveh (2011) investigated the English vocabulary learning strategies deployed by Iranian EFL students, and found that memory strategies had the highest contribution to students' overall vocabulary learning, whereas social strategies demonstrated a weak correlation with success in this context. Other studies (Graham, 2003; Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou, 2009; Seifi & Abdolmanafi Rokni, 2013) investigating the relation between learners' use of vocabulary learning strategies and their success in acquiring new words also show that the use of metacognitive strategies is associated with a higher proficiency level.

5.   **The correlation between multilingual primary school students' English vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary achievement**

The current study highlighted a close relationship between multilingual learners' success in learning vocabulary and their use of both memory and metacognitive strategies. This corroborates the studies of Arslan (2014) and Celik-Korkmaz (2013), who reported that memory and metacognitive strategies are in high correlation with multilingual students' language proficiency. In this regard, it can be said that multilingual students, who have already acquired at least two other languages, are aware of both linguistic systems and the role of memorization in vocabulary learning, which leads them to be more successful language learners. It was also shown in earlier research that there is a moderate correlation between multilingual students' use of social strategies and their vocabulary achievement levels, as reported in Sung (2011), which noted that learners who acquired two or more languages use metacognitive and social strategies that contribute to their success when learning subsequent languages.

Nevertheless, a strong link between the multilingual students' success in learning vocabulary and their use of determination and cognitive strategies could not be found in the present work, in contrast to the results reported in the related literature and studies (Cook, 2003; Graham, 2003; Ehrman &Oxford, 1995; Jessner, 2010; Ramsay, 1980), in which the use of cognitive strategies in particular is regarded as a good predictor of language learning success, since these provide learners with a chance to manipulate new linguistic items through repetition, association and summarization, so helping them become better language learners.

4   CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to examine the differences between bilingual and multilingual primary school students with regard to their use of English vocabulary learning strategies, including determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The examination of these differences was carried out using a questionnaire, with the responses showing a higher level of overall strategy use by the multilingual students in comparison with the bilingual ones. The more frequent use of learning strategies by multilinguals to acquire and practice new words might be due to both their greater awareness of how they can learn an additional language, and their utilization of these strategies in a flexible and appropriate manner (Graham, 2003). The findings also revealed that the only significant differences between the bilingual and multilingual learners in the current study are those for the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, which are deployed more often by the latter group, which also indicates that multilinguals' language learning experience may contribute to their greater autonomy with regard to planning and controlling their own learning, which is closely associated with the use of such strategies.

The present study also compared bilingual and multilingual learners with respect to their success in learning vocabulary by using a vocabulary achievement test, with the results showing no significant differences between the two groups. Nevertheless, the multilingual students scored slightly higher than the bilingual students, and it can be assumed that the frequent use of vocabulary learning strategies by the multilingual students, and especially cognitive and metacognitive strategies enabled them to activate their metacognition and thus rebuild their linguistic systems and learn more effectively (Ramsay, 1980). A detailed examination of each vocabulary learning strategy employed by the participants in relation to their success in the vocabulary test gave two important results. Firstly, for the bilingual participants there was a significant correlation between their vocabulary achievement and their use of memory and metacognitive strategies. Secondly, for the multilingual participants the use of memory and metacognitive strategies was found to have a high correlation with their vocabulary achievement. Broadly, these results suggest that the use of memory strategies can help students to remember and

retrieve information, which are the key factors in successful learning. Specifically, cognitive strategies can be seen as good predictors of a high level of success among the bilingual participants in this study, while the use of metacognitive strategies is more closely associated with the higher achievement of the multilingual participants.

In the light of these findings, and the fact that the frequent use of learning strategies contributes to language learning success, a greater awareness of vocabulary learning strategies should be created among students. Students should also be encouraged to choose the most appropriate strategies in line with their learning needs and aims, and thus gain more control over their own learning. For this, it is essential that students are made more aware of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies in this context. Above all, the differences between learners with regard to the number of languages they know and thus the strategies they might apply when learning vocabulary should be taken into consideration in the educational context, and each strategy that may lead to the success of an individual learner should be given an important place in language learning practices.

5   LIMITATIONS

Although the present study has yielded invaluable insights into the vocabulary learning strategies employed by bilingual and multilingual students, it has some weaknesses. First of all, the sample size is limited, which decreases the generalizability of the findings to large populations. In fact, the collection of data from primary school students was a difficult process, since their parents were not eager to allow their children to participate in the study, even if they were sure that there was no possibility of harm or adverse outcomes. In particular, Syrian families abstained from being involved in formal procedures requiring their signature. Furthermore, the school board did not support the scientific research underlying this study because of the strict procedures needed to get consent forms from the Ministry of National Education. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the Syrian students were studying in orientation classes and the Kurdish students were not in the same classes, so when collecting the data, all of the students were chosen from different classes, which created a challenge for the researchers with regard to the accessibility of all the potential participants.

Secondly, even if the instrument "Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire" by Schmitt (1997) was translated into Turkish and simplified in accordance with the young children' level of understanding abstract processes, it was difficult to reach exact and absolute conclusions because children's self-reports might not reflect the reality. However, one of the researchers took time to deal with the participants individually, and she was with each student while he or she was busy with completing the form.

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POVZETEK

PRIMERJAVA STRATEGIJ UČENJA ANGLEŠKEGA BESEDIŠČA PRI DVOJEZIČNIH IN VEČJEZIČNIH UČENCIH

Vprašanju jezikovne raznolikosti, ki zaradi globalizacije vse bolj zaznamuje sodobne družbe, dandanes posvečamo veliko pozornosti. Jezikovna raznolikost vpliva na načine sporazumevanja, saj so posamezniki prisiljeni k preseganju lastnih jezikovnih meja in učenju tujih jezikov, na katere gledajo kot na orodja za zadovoljevanje svojih potreb. Raziskovalci že dolgo časa intenzivno iščejo odgovor na vprašanje, ali dvo- oz. večjezični ljudje bolje razumejo proces učenja jezikov. V raziskavi smo zato skušali ugotoviti, ali dvojezični osnovnošolci pri učenju besedišča uporabljajo bistveno drugačne strategije kot njihovi večjezični vrstniki. Podlaga za našo raziskavo je bil Schmittov vprašalnik *Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire* iz leta 1997, ki smo ga prilagodili tako, da je bil ustrezen za zelo mlade učence, prav tako smo ga tudi prevedli v turščino, da bi učencem olajšali sodelovanje. Analiza rezultatov je pokazala, da večjezični učenci pri učenju besedišča na splošno pogosteje rabijo različne učne strategije kot dvojezični učenci. Pogostost rabe strategij učenja in utrjevanja novega besedišča pri večjezičnih učencih pripisujemo poznavanju strategij učenja novih jezikov, pa tudi njihovi prožni in ustrezni rabi. Rezultati raziskave so pokazali tudi bistveno večjo pogostost rabe kognitivnih in metakognitivnih strategij pri večjezičnih učencih. Izkušnje večjezičnih učencev pri učenju jezika prispevajo k njihovi avtonomiji pri načrtovanju in nadzoru lastnega učnega procesa, ta pa je tesno povezana s kognitivnimi in metakognitivnimi strategijami in jim zagotavlja tudi večji uspeh.

Ključne besede: dvojezičnost, večjezičnost, osnovnošolci

ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY BILINGUAL AND MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS

Linguistic diversity has become an issue of some importance as societies are becoming more and more multilingual as a result of globalization. This forces people to go beyond their borders and learn other languages in order to help them meet their needs. The question of whether multilinguals or bilinguals have a deeper understanding of how languages are learned has long been studied by various scholars. Hence, this study is an attempt to investigate whether bilingual and multilingual primary school students differ significantly in using vocabulary learning strategies or not. The present study was carried out using a questionnaire, "Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire" by Schmitt (1997), which was adapted to make it compatible with the very young participants' proficiency level and translated into Turkish to ensure accurate responses on the part of students.

which showed a higher level of overall strategy use for multilingual students in comparison with bilingual students. The results revealed that multilinguals are better at utilizing more strategies and that the more frequent use of strategies by multilinguals to learn and practice new words might arise from both their awareness of how they can learn an additional language, and their utilization of these strategies in a flexible and appropriate manner. The findings also revealed that there are significant differences between bilingual and multilingual learners only in terms of the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, which are deployed more often by the latter group, which paves the way for the notion that suggests that multilinguals' language learning experience might contribute to their greater sense of autonomy by enabling them to plan and control their own learning process, which leads to a higher success rate for multilingual primary schoolers.

Keywords: bilingualism, multilingualism, primary schoolers