

Identifying Style Awareness, Indirect Strategy Use and Preferences of Turkish Student Teachers of English

Muhlise Cosgun ÖGEYİK, Professor, Faculty of Education, Trakya University, Edirne, Turkey
muhlisecogun@trakya.edu.tr

Abstract

Styles and strategies are among the fundamental issues to be investigated in the language classroom in order to monitor learning process of language learners and to increase their awareness levels. Research on learner style and strategies suggests that a certain degree of awareness on these issues helps both learners and teachers distinguish between the weak and strong aspects of the learning process and take action reasonably. In this sense, in the present study, it was aimed to investigate the learning styles of the student teachers attending Turkish universities and their awareness about indirect strategy use. In the study, survey method was used. To identify style awareness and strategy use of the student teachers, three questionnaires - The Learning Style Checklist, Indirect Strategy Use Questionnaire, and Strategy Instruction Awareness- were administered to the student teachers. Quantitative analyses were used to evaluate the collected data. Undergraduate student teachers –total 226 second year student teachers- participated in the survey. The results indicated that the student teachers used indirect strategies efficiently as consistent with their learning styles. They used metacognitive, affective, and social strategies to defeat the possible problems they faced during language learning process. It was also reported that they felt themselves capable of planning and evaluating their learning process, lowering their anxiety level, taking emotional temperature by encouraging themselves, and cooperating with others.

Keywords: Style awareness, indirect strategies use, strategy preferences, student teachers of English

Introduction

Language classrooms are the settings in which learning/teaching a language can be implemented through various activities, teaching methods and techniques. This is the general picture of language classrooms. Beyond the presented depiction, there are other affective and stimulating factors that should be thought as the keys of success and failure in education process (Brown, 2007; Dörnyei, 2010). Language learning styles and strategies among those factors help learners and educators determine how well learners are at second or foreign language learning (Oxford, 2002). Accordingly, in educational settings, learner differences are said to be mostly stemmed from a variety of learner styles and learning strategies (Brown, 2007, Gass, 2013). Those theoretical assumptions need to be supported with empirical data. In this respect, this study aims to draw attention to the theoretical assumptions about learner styles and learning strategies via the empirical data gathered from the views of the student teachers. Under this general aim, the key intention is to investigate their indirect strategy use, which is not observable, and to examine its relation with learner styles. It is expected that such attention may promote further research in the field to inspect language learners' indirect strategy use and its impacts on success in learning process.

Literature Review

Learners Styles

Styles are the general characteristics of intellectual functioning that differentiate an individual from others and refer to consistent tendencies or preferences of an individual (Brown, 2007). Style of an individual in educational settings shapes the learning behaviour, and learner style is shaped by the personality of the learner. The differences in learner styles are thought to have positive or negative impacts on learners' success and failures as well as on their strategy use. Learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others (Dunn & Griggs, 1988). Learning style can be identified as the preferences of individuals while obtaining and processing the information.

The researchers have defined dozens of different styles: field independent-dependent; sensing vs. intuition; thinking vs. feeling; judging vs. perceiving; left-and right brain dominated; extraverted vs. introverted; risk-taking; ambiguity tolerant; visual, auditory, kinesthetic styles, etc. (Brown, 2002; Ehrman & Leaver, 2003; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Reid, 1995; Stevick, 1982). Field dependence is the tendency to perceive the total field, while field independence is the perception of a particular relevant item in the field; sensing leads to hard systematic work and close attention to details, whereas intuition triggers inferencing and guessing from context; thinking, as a more objective tendency, is open to analysis and self-discipline, but feeling imposes subjective attitudes and prompts good relations which lead to high self-esteem; judging causes learners to be decided, fixed and to make decisions on their own, while perceiving leads to flexible personality that is open to options; left and right brain characteristics of learners are potentially significant in learning process (Brown, 2007). Left brain dominance creates intellectual, objective, analytic, planned, systematic learners; right brain dominance shapes emotional, subjective, synthesizing, fluid, random learners.

Another distinction is made between extraverted and introverted personalities: the former refers to the one who has a sense of wholeness from other people; the latter one describes a learner who has a sense of wholeness apart from other people (Brown, 2002). For example, an extraverted learner is much happier with people than a book; an introverted one is much happier with a book than with other people (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Risk taking refers to a situation where an individual has to make a decision involving choice between alternatives of different desirability; the outcome of the choice is uncertain (Beebe, 1983). Among the mentioned learner styles, the most well-known ones are visual, auditory and kinaesthetic styles. Visual ones prefer getting information visually, but auditory learners prefer getting knowledge via listening; kinaesthetic ones prefer physical activities involving bodily movement.

Despite those dozens of learner styles definitions, the scientific keystones behind them have been criticized and questioned by some educational psychologists and neuroscientists, because of little evidence for the efficacy of learning styles (Coffield et al., 2004; Pashler et al., 2009; Reiner & Willingham, 2010). It is also argued that the literature on learning styles is theoretically incoherent and conceptually confused: endless overlapping and poorly defined dichotomies such as verbal vs. auditory learners, globalists vs. analysts, and left brainers vs. right brainers, for which there is no scientific justification (Coffield, 2013). Such criticisms have led to the argument that by diagnosing various learner styles, how can teachers adjust instruction individually in the classroom for improving learning? The criticism in this sense suggests that each individual learner is not limited to one learning style. They may use different styles in different situations; however, those views do not mean that learner style check can be ignored totally. As Coffield's team (2004, p.132) stated, a reliable and valid instrument which measures

learning styles and approaches could be used as a tool to encourage self-development, not only by diagnosing how people learn, but by showing them how to enhance their learning.” In addition to self-development, learning style research can also assist researchers to make logical guesses while presenting the information through various teaching aids and techniques without being limited to only one style. Since styles are the general characteristics of individuals that shape learning process, they also pertain to strategy type preferences of learners.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are the directive methods while approaching a task for achievement. Oxford (1999) defined learning strategies as specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques that students use to improve their own progress in developing skills in a second or foreign language. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) defined strategies as attempts, thoughts and behaviours used by learners to comprehend, to learn or to retain new information and to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language. In a common sense, learning strategies can be conceived as tactics employed by learners. Cohen (1998) focused on the conscious aspect of learning strategies and stated that strategies are consciously selected techniques by learners to enhance learning or to use a second and foreign language through storage, retention, and recall. Learning strategies that are also presumed as goal oriented, purposeful and controlled behaviours have impacts on learners’ performances in foreign language learning process; they involve internal mental actions as well as physical actions (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Learning strategies emphasize markedly the competence of learners and their actions as a result of their conscious application of appropriate strategies. In this sense, there is a strong relationship between strategy use and good or poor performance. In other words, both strategy awareness and suitable strategy use determine how good or poor the language learner is.

For Rubin and Thompson (1982), good language learners

- find their own way by taking charge of learning, organize information about language,
- are creative while developing a feel for the language by experimenting,
- make their own opportunities for practice in using the language,
- learn to live with uncertainty by not getting flustered,
- use mnemonics and other memory strategies to recall what has been learned,
- make errors work for them,
- use linguistic knowledge by including knowledge of their first language in learning the target language,
- use contextual clues to help them in comprehension, learn to make intelligent guesses,
- learn chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines to help them perform beyond their competence,
- learn certain tricks that help to keep conversation going, learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps in their own competence, and
- learn different styles of speech and writing, and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

In a few words, good learners are self-aware, tolerant, self-critical, realistic, willing to communicate, and actively organized which all refer to different types of learning strategies.

Learning Strategy Types and Strategies-Based Instruction

Learning strategies are grouped under different names. Three main categories of the strategies are: metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategies (Brown, 2007). There are other types of strategies which are namely memory and compensation strategies. Oxford (1993) classified these strategies as direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include memory (creating mental linkages, reviewing well, employing action), cognitive (practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, creating structure for input and output), and compensation strategies (guessing intelligently, overcoming limitations in speaking and writing); indirect strategies are metacognitive (centring one's learning, arranging and planning learning, evaluating learning), affective (lowering anxiety, encouraging oneself, taking emotional temperature), social strategies (asking questions, cooperating with others, empathizing with others).

Direct learning strategies involve the classification, identification, retention, or retrieval of the target language knowledge; on the other hand, indirect strategies are the actions that create an awareness of what one is doing and facilitate the management of learning, include such activities as planning, assessment, and monitoring of activities and evaluation of the outcome (Oxford, 2011). Indirect strategies used by the learner also assist the learner to control emotions, motivation, and attitudes. Thus, the learner can adjust self-encouragement, lessen or diminish anxiety, and develop autonomy (Ellis, 1994; Oxford, 1993; Purpura, 1997; Rubin & Thompson, 1982; Williams & Burden, 2000).

For many years, the explicit teaching of strategies has received a considerable amount of attention in English Language Teaching (ELT) and various models for teaching strategies have been proposed. Some are concerned with teaching strategies separately, while others are concerned with integrating the strategy instruction into language tasks (Oxford, 2011; Williams & Burden, 2000). Strategies-based instruction, in this sense, is assumed to be helpful for raising awareness of second/foreign language learning and prompts suitable strategy use consistent with learning style. Cohen (1998) also emphasized the importance of the productive link between style and strategies as a key for yielding better results in learning process. Accordingly, learners become aware of how to use strategies appropriately by developing a sense of self-efficacy and motivation.

The studies on learning styles which have been conducted in higher education commonly have similar aims and approaches (Biggs, 2001; Cassidy, 2004; Mainemelis et al., 2002; Vermetten, et al., 1999). Those studies focus on the types of learning styles and the relationship between learning style and academic achievement. The results of the studies indicate a strong relationship between learner performance and the learning style. In addition to the studies on learning style, the research on strategy use also indicates that greater suitable strategy use is related to higher level of language proficiency (Cohen 1998; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 2002), and learning strategies can be taught to create positive effects on language proficiency (Chamot et al., 1996; Johnson, 1999; Nunan, 1997). That is, strategies-based instruction is found out to be supportive for poor learners to become good learners.

Strategies used by learners can be assessed in different ways such as through observations, interviews, verbal reports, strategy diaries, strategy questionnaires, think-aloud protocols, portfolios, and so on (Chamot, 2005; Cohen, 2011; Macaro, 2000; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 2002). By checking the preferences of learners through such research tools, awareness about styles and strategies can be increased, and strategy-based instruction can be implemented in language classrooms. Moreover, student teachers also need to be trained for checking strategies use and strategies instruction. Thus, they, as student teachers, may become aware of how

strategies are helpful for themselves to cope with the difficulties in foreign language learning process and how they can use strategies-based instruction to help their future learners. The maxim behind this idea is that strategies make learning easier, faster, enjoyable, self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990; Oxford, 2011). In addition, Oxford (2005) claimed that styles and strategies are among the chief factors shaping language learning process. Similarly, it is also stated that more proficient learners make greater use of strategies than less proficient learners (Davies & Elder, 2006; Griffiths & Oxford, 2014). To sum up, research on style and strategies suggests that a certain degree of awareness on these issues helps learners distinguish between the weak and strong aspects of their style and strategies. In the present study, therefore, it is aimed to investigate style and strategy awareness of student teachers.

Methodology

In this descriptive study, survey method is used. Quantitative analyses were used to evaluate the collected data. It was aimed to verify the existing situation of the student teachers' style preferences. Another reason for conducting the research was to check the student teachers' awareness about strategy use. Depending on the results, a general picture about the issue can be obtained and, if necessary, the required treatment can be offered to the student teachers.

Research Questions

Some answers were sought to the following research questions:

Q1. Are the Turkish student teachers of English aware of their learning styles?

Q2. What types of indirect strategies do the student teachers use in their foreign language learning process?

Q3. How have the student teachers been assisted to become aware of their learning strengths and weaknesses?

Q4. How have the student teachers been directed to cope with their weaknesses?

Q5. Are there any differences between the style awareness and indirect strategy use of the student teachers from different students?

Participants

The research was carried out with the student teachers attending the English Language Teaching Departments at two Turkish universities. Undergraduate students, total 226 second-year student teachers participated in the survey. The aim of conducting the survey on the second year students was that they completed skills-based language courses and attended methodology courses. Accordingly, it was assumed that they could check and reflect their existing situation not only as language learners but also as student teachers. The ages of the participants varied between 20 and 22. Of the participants 184 were female, and 42 were male. While comparing the participants, their gender differences and age differences were not taken into account, because the number of male students, when compared to female ones, was very limited, and they were at approximately at the same age.

The aim of conducting the research on the student teachers from two different universities was that the ELT departments at the faculties of education in Turkey follow a standard curriculum. Although the courses are same in the curriculum, training student teachers may display some diversities due to the training tendencies of the teaching staff at different universities. To check if there exist any differences regarding the students' style awareness and indirect strategy use, the participants from two universities were chosen randomly as samples.

Instruments

In the survey, three questionnaires were administered to the student teachers. Learning styles checklist, which was developed by Brown (2007), asks learners to choose a point between two poles on a continuum that describes them both in positive and negative manners. The aim of using styles checklist was to investigate whether the participants were aware of their styles. Since styles are the general characteristics of individuals that affect learning process and pertain to strategy preferences of learners, a reliable and a valid instrument, as Coffield (2013) stated, could be used for diagnosing how people learn. Learning style research, therefore, was assumed to assist the researcher to make logical guesses while presenting the information through various research instruments without being limited to only one instrument.

For investigating indirect strategies use, a questionnaire consisting of 32 items that describe their strategies while learning English with 5 options- always, often, sometimes, rarely, never- was designed by the researcher. And the third questionnaire about the student teachers' awareness of strategy instruction comprising 20 items with 3 choices -yes, sometimes, no- was also prepared by the researcher to search for whether the student teachers were instructed and directed about strategies use. The items in those three questionnaires were designed in an interrelated and organized way to highlight the issues under discussion and seek out whether the responses were affirmed in a self-assured way.

The Learning Style Checklist includes 10 items which denote such learning styles as: low inhibition (item 1), risk taking (item 2); building self-confidence (item 3); developing intrinsic motivation (item 4); willing to cooperative learning (item 5); right-brain processing (item 6); developing ambiguity tolerance (item 7); practicing intuition (item 8); left-brain processing (item 9); and developing autonomy (item 10).

Indirect Strategy Use Questionnaire was designed in accordance with the items in the checklist. The items focus on three indirect strategy types: affective strategy –items 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 14, 20, and 21; metacognitive strategy –items 5, 6, 7, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32; social strategy –items 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 25, and 26. Those items are also interrelated with the items in Learning Style Checklist.

Each item in Strategy Instruction Awareness questionnaire also has correspondence with the items in Learning Style Checklist: items 1, 15 check whether the learners have been instructed to lower their inhibitions; items 3, 6, 12, 19 search out whether they have been encouraged to take risks; items 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18 investigate how they have been encouraged to build self-confidence; item 11 explores to what extent they have been instructed to develop intrinsic motivation; items 5, 2 seek out whether cooperative learning has been promoted; items 14 and 9 examine whether they have been instructed to evoke awareness about their right brain or left brain processing; item 4 scrutinizes answers if they have been directed to tolerate ambiguities they encounter; item 20 explores to what extent they have been encouraged to practice their intuition; items 13 and 16 inquire into whether they have been assisted to develop autonomous behaviours in the learning environment.

The questionnaires were initially piloted on 30 student teachers to ascertain the reliability values. The reliability values of the questionnaires were determined. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the questionnaires were found out to be .87, .79, and .81 respectively. The questionnaires were administered during the course times. Before responding the questionnaires, the concepts in the items were explained to the student teachers to defeat ambiguity. Actually, the student teachers were familiar with those concepts, because they attended ELT methodology courses in which those concepts were taught to the student teachers.

Data Analysis

In the study, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used for data analysis. Percentage and frequency values of the responses given to the items in the questionnaires were statistically explored and are presented in the separate columns in the tables. In addition, Mann Whitney-U test was used to seek out whether there existed any difference between the responses of the student teachers from two different universities at which the same teacher training curriculum was followed.

Results

Table 1 displays the data gathered about learning styles of the participants from the two universities. The percentage and frequency values represent the choices in the scale. Nearly half of the participants (49%) declared that they got embarrassed when people laughed at them during speaking; and some (41%) declared, in an opposite manner, that they were not overly conscious of themselves while speaking, but some (46%) also concluded, in positive manner, that they monitored themselves very closely and consciously, (item 8). In addition, most of the participants (73 %) felt very confident in their ability to succeed in learning English (item 3). In this positive manner, they declared that they could find ways to continue learning language outside the classroom and in the classroom when faced the abundance of language to master (item 7). Other positive statements (item 9 -using mistakes to learn something-; item 2 –trying out new words and structures that they are not completely sure of-; item 6 –absorbing language and getting the general gist of what is said or written-; and item 5 –getting pleasure from working with other people) generally had high percentage values. Such positive tendencies of the student teachers towards the target language might be due to their eagerness for learning the target language, because they believed they gained personally from the language (item 4). Nearly all participants approved it.

Table 1. Learning Style Checklist

	Learning styles	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Learning styles
1	I don't mind if people laugh at me when I speak	54	21	5	2	1	7	6	3	3	1	I get embarrassed if people laugh at me when I speak
2	I like to try out new words and structures that I am not completely sure of	65	25	5	2	3	1	3	1	4	2	I like to use only language that I am certain is correct
3	I feel very confident in my ability to succeed in learning this language	92	36	7	3	2	9	2	1	1	5	I feel quite uncertain about my ability to succeed in learning this language
4	I want to learn this	162	63	7	4	2	3	1	1	3	1	I am learning this

	language because of what I can personally gain from it		3	3	2			5					language only because someone else is requiring it
5	I really enjoy working with other people in groups	88	3	4	1	3	1	3	1	2	1	1	I would much rather work alone than with other people
6	I like to absorb language and get the general gist of what is said or written	54	2	5	2	3	9	3	1	4	2	2	I like to analyze the many details of language and understand exactly what is said or written
7	If there is an abundance of language to master I just try to take things one step at a time	53	2	7	3	6	2	1	1	1	6	6	I am very annoyed by an abundance of language material presented all at once
8	I am not overly conscious of myself when I speak	34	1	6	2	3	1	5	2	4	2	2	I “monitor” myself very closely and consciously when I speak
9	When I make mistakes, I try to use them to learn something about the language	94	4	6	2	1	8	2	1	3	1	1	When I make a mistake, it annoys me because that’s a symbol of how poor my performance is
10	I find ways to continue learning language outside of the classroom	105	4	6	3	1	5	2	1	1	7	7	I look to the teacher and the classroom activities for everything I need to be successful

In Table 2, the responses about indirect strategy use of the participants are presented. The percentage and frequency values represent the choices in the scale. Nearly half of them declared that they used progressive relaxation and breathed deeply when they faced difficulties while

speaking (items 1, 3). Although less than half of the participants (45%) took risks wisely while interacting with people, more than half (57%) could ask for clarification, 67% could ask for correction while making errors and sought for practice opportunities (53%) by taking proficient language users as models (69%) and by monitoring others while performing language tasks (66%). Items 4, 5, 6, 8, 15, 22, 23, 29, and 32 question the participants' strategy use before, while, and after task implementation as the learners of English. The participants' responses about task preparation and implementation had high percentage values. They declared that they mostly planned a language task, set goals and objectives for the task by identifying the purpose of it, made positive statements and self monitored while implementing the task, and rewarded themselves after finishing the task; however less than half (45%) had hesitations while deciding in advance to attend a task. Items such as 7, 11, 12, 18, 20, 21, 26 searched for the participants' strategy use preferences for tasks. More than half of them stated that they paid attention to other peoples' talk and liked cooperating with others because they believed they did better when cooperating with proficient language users. While doing so, they adjusted the message and did not avoid communication with others. However, they stated they did not frequently interact with the speakers of English through different channels (41%). Some items in the questionnaire searched for how they evaluated themselves. They admitted that they evaluated their language learning process by themselves (53%) and tried to notice others' thoughts and feelings about their own performance (57%). Bu they did not mostly discuss their performance with others (41%). They tried to understand the helpful conditions for themselves (78%) and evaluated the outcomes of their own language learning (65%). While evaluating their performance, they did not use evaluation tools such as checklists or language diaries (items 9, 14). The overall positive manner shared by most of the participants (75%) was that they liked English courses because they believed they personally gained from those courses.

Table 2. *Student Teachers' Indirect Strategy Use*

		always		often		sometimes		rarely			
		never									
Indirect Strategy Use		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	I use progressive relaxation when I speak	21	4	62	40	10	46	36	9	4	1
2	I take risks wisely while interacting with people	30	13	74	32	77	32	33	19	12	4
3	I breathe deeply when I have difficulties	58	21	88	40	58	26	18	12	4	1
4	I try to make positive statements while implementing my tasks	67	28	11	48	39	21	8	2	2	1
5	I set goals and objectives for language tasks	72	30	94	41	43	20	15	8	2	1
6	I plan for a language task	71	32	65	29	49	24	39	14	2	1
7	I pay attention while listening to people	11	53	61	25	43	18	7	3	3	1
8	I reward myself after I have	68	25	55	23	54	24	33	21	16	7

	finished my task										
9	I use checklists to evaluate myself	30	12	38	17	75	40	51	21	32	10
10	I ask for clarification when I do not understand what is said	56	18	85	39	60	32	19	10	6	2
11	I like cooperating with others	64	33	64	33	67	37	22	9	9	3
12	I do better when I cooperate with proficient users of English	78	34	79	34	51	23	15	8	3	1
13	I ask correction when I make errors	53	22	88	44	55	23	17	6	13	5
14	I keep a language diary	12	8	29	12	33	14	52	20	10	46
15	I self monitor while implementing a task	34	15	49	28	79	39	43	14	21	4
16	I evaluate my learning process	44	12	89	41	66	34	16	10	11	3
17	I seek practice opportunities	53	24	82	36	67	28	14	7	10	5
18	I overview and link with already known material	36	12	92	44	76	35	17	7	5	2
19	I notice others' thoughts and feelings about my language performance	51	21	86	40	46	18	30	13	13	8
20	I avoid communication	11	6	34	18	63	27	60	25	58	24
21	I try to adjust the message	31	11	10	48	74	36	11	3	8	2
22	I make positive statements about my performance	34	12	97	45	70	32	23	10	2	1
23	I discuss my feelings with others when I hesitate about language tasks	56	20	83	42	64	30	19	7	4	1
24	I discuss my learning performance with others	37	10	68	31	73	37	28	12	20	10
25	I take proficient language users as models	83	37	74	32	50	23	14	6	5	2
26	I try to interact with the speakers of English through different channels such as the internet	47	18	55	29	68	35	37	12	19	6
27	I monitor others while performing language tasks	72	31	80	34	49	23	23	11	2	1
28	I like English courses because I personally gain from the courses	97	41	81	34	32	18	10	5	6	2
29	I identify the purpose of a language task	64	27	10	49	48	20	5	2	8	2
				1							

30	I understand the conditions that help me learn better	84	34	96	44	40	19	5	2	1	1
31	I evaluate the outcomes of my own language learning	56	25	95	43	54	24	18	7	3	1
32	I decide in advance to attend in general to a learning task	27	8	91	43	88	37	17	11	3	1

Table 3 displays the data gathered about the participants' strategy instruction. The percentage and frequency values represent the choices in the scale. The participants' responses (74%) confirmed that they participated in group works many times, and they were mostly directed to share their knowledge with the others in the classroom (60%). Besides, they stated that they were encouraged to ask their teachers if they had any problem (61%); thus, they might get the possible causes of their failures, but they (52%) claimed they sometimes got that opportunity. The participants stated that they were directed to share their fears in small groups and praised for making sincere efforts (items 1, 3). However, they claimed that they were not mostly encouraged to list their weaknesses and strengths (items 9, 10). On the other hand, they were sometimes encouraged to list what they could accomplish (item 7). For evaluating themselves and reflecting their ideas, they stated they were encouraged to keep journals, diaries, or logs, but not so often (item 16). In addition, they were given outside-of-class assignments and extra tasks to try out the language they learnt (items 6, 19). The responses of the participants demonstrated that they were also encouraged to find solutions to the problems they faced while implementing the tasks and to make errors work for them (items 13, 15). Items 8, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 20 sought answers to what extent they were given feedback about their poor performance, whether they were praised for their good performance. Most of the participants affirmed that they were directed and encouraged in all those issues and got feedback verbally and nonverbally, and most of them admitted that the rewards of learning English were imposed on them.

Table 3. *Student Teachers' Awareness of Strategy Instruction*

Strategy Instruction	yes		no		sometimes	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1 Have you ever been directed to share your fears in small groups?	86	41	90	38	50	21
2 Have you participated in plenty of group work?	186	74	34	24	6	2
3 Have you been praised when make sincere efforts to try out language?	118	45	83	44	25	11
4 Have you been encouraged to ask your teacher when you don't understand something?	154	61	68	37	4	2
5 Have you been directed to share your knowledge with the others in the classroom?	138	60	81	36	9	4
6 Have you been given outside-of-class assignments to try out language?	94	30	81	43	51	27
7 Have you been encouraged to make lists of what you would accomplish?	67	22	84	34	75	44
8 Have you been told verbally or nonverbally that you are believed in?	100	44	83	40	43	16

9	Have you been encouraged to list your weaknesses?	44	15	68	32	114	53
10	Have you been directed to list your strengths?	43	18	82	36	102	46
11	Have you been informed about the rewards for learning English?	95	42	91	41	40	17
12	Have you been praised for your good tasks?	123	51	87	44	16	5
13	Have you been encouraged to find solutions when you face problems while carrying out your tasks?	145	65	67	33	14	2
14	Have you discussed the possible causes of your failures with your teachers?	74	27	106	52	46	21
15	Have you been encouraged to make your errors work for you?	78	30	106	50	42	20
16	Have you been directed to keep journals/diaries/logs to reflect your ideas and evaluate yourself?	62	26	69	32	95	42
17	Have you been instructed about how to plan your learning?	79	33	102	44	45	23
18	Have you been informed about how to use suitable learning strategies for your own learning style?	95	51	64	25	67	24
19	Have you been directed to carry out extra tasks out of the classroom?	92	40	101	46	33	14
20	Have you been encouraged to compensate for your poor performances?	83	31	106	51	37	18

To determine whether there existed any significant difference among the participants' responses from the two Turkish Universities, Mann Whitney U-test was applied. The results of the test are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Mann Whitney-U Test results

Group	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
First Uni.	111	121.90	13531	5450	.058
Second Uni.	115	105.39	12120		
Total	226				

According to the results, no significant difference was found out between the two groups ($U=5450$, $p<.058$). When the mean rank was taken into account, it was seen that the participants' response values from the first university were slightly higher than the second university participants. However, this value did not signify any significant difference between the groups of the two universities.

Discussion

The findings obtained in the study highlighted some issues in terms of learner styles, strategies use, and strategies instruction. The discussion of the findings is initially presented by addressing briefly the research questions of the study. The first research question 'Are the student teachers aware of their learning styles?' can be answered through the findings of learners style checklist. Most of them were aware of their learning styles and used those styles consciously for their benefits in learning process. The brief answer for the second question 'What types of

indirect strategies have the student teachers used in foreign language learning process?’ is that they mostly used metacognitive, affective, and social strategies to defeat the problems they faced during language learning process. Answers to the third and fourth questions ‘How have the student teachers been assisted to become aware of their learning strengths and weaknesses?’, ‘How have the student teachers been directed to cope with their weaknesses?’ were sought through the responses in Strategy Instruction Awareness. The student teachers declared that they were instructed about how to use strategies efficiently in order to cope with the possible difficulties and to overcome their weaknesses. Such an outcome was charming for student teachers, since it is assumed that they became conscious to train their future students about strategies use. The answer for the fifth question was sought through Mann Whitney U-test; the results showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups from two different universities.

To discuss the findings of the study in a detailed way, the responses of the student teachers to three questionnaires are presented here more extensively. As mentioned before, the items in these three questionnaires were designed in an interrelated way to seek out whether the responses were affirmed in a self-assured way. The findings of the three questionnaires displayed consistency with each other in terms of indirect strategy use, learning style, and strategy instruction. The most remarkable declaration made by the participants is that, for lowering their anxiety levels, they used affective strategies such as using progressive relaxation and breathing deeply when they had difficulties during oral interaction. Therefore, they did not mostly avoid communication and, as a substitute, adjusted the message frequently. This point is important for maintaining communication in the target language. Additionally, such awareness for using affective strategies may be the positive impact of strategy instruction, since they declared that they were directed to participate in plenty of group works to share their fears in small groups. Thus, they might have lowered their inhibitions.

The participants also confirmed that they tended to take risks while interacting with people and tried to make positive statements while implementing tasks; this indicates well-organized affective strategy use of the participants by lowering their anxiety level and being encouraged to take risks. Besides, they stated they were mostly praised for the good tasks and extra tasks given as outside- of- class assignments to try out language. Therefore, they felt very confident in succeeding in learning the language. Such constructive results may stem from the strategy instruction for encouraging learners inside and outside the classroom. It is clear that strategy instruction seems to be boosting the level of self-esteem and metacognitive strategy use as well as affective strategy use.

Another striking finding is the participants’ competencies in making plans for language tasks and seeking for practice opportunities. As suggested in the literature, strategy use directs learners to become more able in language learning process (Griffiths & Oxford, 2014; Yıldırım, 2015). The participants stated that they had the habit of evaluating their learning performance and were encouraged to discuss their performance with the others, because they could identify the purpose of a language task and know the conditions which were helpful for them to learn better. All those affirmations about task planning and evaluation give an idea about their potential in metacognitive strategy use.

Although they were not predominantly encouraged to make lists of what they could accomplish, or list their strengths and weaknesses, they built their own self-confidence. This may be due to the fact that they believed they personally gained from the courses. Another reason may be that they were mostly instructed on how to plan their learning and how to choose suitable strategy for their own learning style.

Moreover, it was noticed from the responses that the participants were encouraged to compensate for their poor performance, because they knew how to monitor themselves during task implementation. This may arise from strategy instruction they received. They declared that they were given opportunities to discuss the possible causes of their failures with their instructors and to find solutions to the possible problems. This means they were assisted to develop intrinsic motivation. In this respect, they could be acknowledged as good learners due to efficient metacognitive strategy use.

To promote cooperative learning, it was presumed that the participants were mostly directed to share their knowledge with the others in the classroom; therefore, they stated they liked cooperating with others and with proficient users of English. Thus, most of them took such users as models and monitored themselves. Such an outcome confirms that they enjoyed working with other people. The gain from such interaction may be that they could ask corrections when they made errors. In addition, they became aware of the advantages of asking clarification questions if there existed ambiguities. In this respect, they can be admitted as competent users of social strategy.

One more striking point is that they liked taking things one step at a time; in other words, they were not irritated by an abundance of language material presented all at once. If there appeared any problem, they could get help. This shows that they were instructed to promote ambiguity tolerance. To do this, they mostly tried to overview and link with already known material. Through ambiguity tolerance, they were directed to make their mistakes work for them. They, as a result, learnt through their errors. This gives clues about how they used affective strategies and social strategies proficiently in learning process.

Since they declared they were eager to learn language, they also found ways to continue learning outside the classroom. This may be due to the fact that they were instructed about how to set their goals and objectives for language task. That's why, while implementing the tasks, they could easily understand the conditions that were supportive and encouraging for learning better and evaluating their performances. Those manners and actions also denote how competently they use metacognitive strategies. Such strategy use promotes ambiguity tolerance and helps them to use their intuition.

The overall results show that the students could adjust self-encouragement, lessen anxiety, and had tendency to develop autonomy. Those results are consistent with the arguments of Ellis, 1994; Oxford, 1993; Purpura, 1997; Rubin and Thompson, 1994; Williams and Burden, 2000; Zhussupova and Kazbekova, 2016. Therefore, the student teachers became aware of how to use indirect strategies appropriately by developing a sense of self-efficacy and motivation due to strategy-based instruction. Thus, those students can be accepted as good learners, as they find their own way by taking the charge of learning and finding opportunities for language practice by not getting much flustered while facing problems. If so, such characteristics of good learners can make them be aware of their success and failure, have tolerant ambiguity through self-critical attitudes, and be eager to communicate in an actively organized way. Moreover, as Griffiths (2003) proposed, learners with higher language proficiency expose themselves more frequently to the employment of language learning strategies. Based on such arguments, it can be stated that the appropriate strategy use might contribute to successful and effective language learning. Depending on the data in this study, it can also be inferred that indirect strategies-the classification of Oxford (1993) which are metacognitive, affective, and social strategies cause the learners to plan and evaluate their learning, to lower their anxiety levels, to take emotional temperature by encouraging themselves, and to cooperate with others.

Conclusion

In this study, it was aimed to check the student teachers' awareness about their learning styles, their preferences about indirect strategy use, and responsiveness for strategy instruction through questionnaires. By checking their existing situation, the main aim was to prompt their consciousness about the usefulness of checking such situations. Thus, they might become aware of both their own styles and strategy use and could be directed about how to check such points in their future language classrooms. The results indicated that the student teachers attending the two Turkish universities, who participated in the study as samples, used indirect strategies efficiently as consistent with their learning styles. They were perceived as having been instructed about strategy use. Thus, a certain degree of awareness on strategy use consistent with learning style needs to be prompted in language classrooms to create conscious and good learners.

The key issue here is how to implement learning strategies instruction in learning environment. Since strategy preference is directly related with learning style, it varies from learner to learner. In this study, the participants were Turkish student teachers. Thus, their strategy preferences reflected their learning styles. In this sense, a question may appear: Do learning styles of learners vary from culture to culture? In other words, Do learners from different cultures learn in similar ways? Most probably the answer to these parallel questions could be 'not exactly'. The reason for such answer is that culture is another factor shaping learners' behaviours as well as their styles. Culture may be an affective domain on strategy preferences of learners as well. The results of the present study discussed on the basis of the responses by Turkish student teachers from two different universities show that they had similar characteristics regarding their learning styles and strategy preferences. Before implementing strategy instruction in the classroom environment, learners' existing styles as well as strategy preferences need to be surveyed, by taking the cultural domains into account, through some research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, diaries, verbal protocols; then, students can be provided with necessary feedback for using suitable strategy use.

References

- Beebe, L.(1983). Risk-taking and the language learner: In H. Seliger & M. Long(Eds.).*Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition* (pp:39-65).Rowley, MA: Newbury House
- Biggs, J. (2001). The reflective institution: assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 41, 221-238.
- Brown, H.D. (2002). *Strategies for success: A practical guide to learning English*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- Brown, H.D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. White Plains, New York: Pearson Education.
- Cassidy, S. (2004). Learning styles: an overview of theories, models and measures. *Educational Psychology.*, 24, 420-444.
- Chamot, A.U., Barnhardt, S., El-Dinary, P., & Robbins, J., (1996). Methods for teaching learning strategies in the foreign language classroom. In R. Oxford (Ed.), *Language Learning Strategies Around the World: Cross-cultural Perspectives* (pp. 175-188). Manoa: University of Hawaii Press.
- Chamot, A. (2005). Language learning strategy instruction: Current issues and research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. 25. 112-130.

Coffield, F., Moseley, D., Hall, E., & Ecclestone, K. (2004). *Learning styles and pedagogy in post-16 learning. A systematic and critical review*. London: Learning and Skills Research Centre.

Coffield, F., (2013). Learning styles: time to move on. *Lifelong Learning in Europe*.4 Retrieved from <http://www.lline.fi/en/article/research/342013/learning-styles-time-to-move-on> April, 2014.

Cohen, A.D., (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. Essex, U.K.: Longman.

Cohen, A. (2011). Focus on the language learner: styles, strategies and motivation. In N.Schmitt (Ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics* (pp. 161–178). London: Hodder Education

Davies, A. & C. Elder, (2006). *The Handbook of applied linguistics*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Dörnyei, Z. Ushioda, E. (2010). *Teaching and researching: Motivation*. New York: Routledge.

Dunn, R. & Griggs, S. (1988). *Learning styles: Quiet revolution in American schools*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ehrman, M. & Oxford, R., (1995). Adult language learning styles and strategies in an intensive training setting. *Modern Languages Journal*. 74, 311-326.

Ehrman M. & Leaver, B.L. (2003). Cognitive styles in the service of language learning. *System*. 31. 391-415.

Gass, S. M. (2013). *Second language acquisition. An introductory course*. New York: Routledge.

Gass S. M. & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition*. New York: Routledge.

Griffiths, C.,(2003). Patterns of language learning strategy use. *System*. 31: 367-383.

Griffiths, C., & Oxford, R. L. (2014). The twenty-first century landscape of language learning strategies: Introduction to this special issue. *System*, 43, 1–10.

Johnson, K. (1999). *Understanding language teaching: Reasoning in Action*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Macaro, E. (2000). Learning strategies in foreign language learning. *Tuttitalia*. 22, 9-18.

Mainemelis, C., Boyatzis, R., & Kolb, D. A. (2002). Learning styles and adaptive flexibility: testing experiential learning theory. *Managing Learning*., 33, 5-33.

Nunan, D., (1997). Does learner strategy training make a difference? *Lenguas Modernas*, 24, 123-142.

O'Malley, J & A. Chamot. (1990). *Language learning strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House.

Oxford, R. (1993). Language learning strategies in a nutshell: Update and ESL suggestions. *TESOL J.*, 2(2), 18-22.

Oxford, R. (1999). Learning strategies. In B. Spolsky (Ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Educational Linguistics*. (pp. 518-522). Oxford: Elsevier.

Oxford, R. (2002). Language learning strategies. In Roland Carter and David Nunan (Eds.) *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages*. (pp.166-172). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R.L., (2005). *Language learning strategies: what every teacher should know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Oxford, R. (2011) *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Harlow: Pearson.

Paschler, H., McDaniel, M., Rohrer, D. & Bjork, R. (2010) Learning styles: Concepts and evidence. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 9, pp. 105-119.

Purpura, J., (1997). An analysis of the relationships between test takers' cognitive and metacognitive strategy use and second language test performance. *Language Learning*, 42 (2), 289-325.

Reid, J. (1995). *Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Reiner, C. & Daniel, W. (2010). The myth of learning styles. *Change. The Magazine of Higher Learning*. September-October.

Rubin, J. & Thompson, I. (1982). *How to be a successful language learner*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Stevick, E. (1982). *Teaching and learning languages*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Vermetten, Y. J., Lodewijks, H. G., & Vermunt, J. D. (1999). Consistency and variability of learning strategies in different university courses. *Higher Education*, 37, 1-21.

Williams, M. & Burden, R. (2000). *Psychology of language teachers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yıldırım, R. (2015). Strategy-based English language instruction: the impact on the language proficiency of young gifted learners. *Education* (2):97-114.[http://dx. doi. Org /10.1080/0300479 .2012.759606](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0300479.2012.759606).

Zhussupova, R., & Kazbekova, M. (2016). Metacognitive strategies as points in teaching reading comprehension. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 228, 593–600.