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**CHALLENGES FACED BY FOURTH
GRADERS ON VOCABULARY LEARNING
IN EFL CLASSES AND THE VOCABULARY
LEARNING STRATEGIES THEY USE**

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Tezin Adı: Dördüncü Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Derslerinde Kelime Öğreniminde Karşılaştığı Zorluklar ve Kullandıkları Kelime Öğrenme Stratejileri

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma İstanbul'daki bir ilkokulda dördüncü sınıf İngilizce yabancı dil öğrencisi olan 150 öğrencinin kullandığı kelime öğrenme stratejilerini belirlemeyi ve kelime öğreniminde karşılaştığı zorlukları araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Betimsel karma yöntem araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Schmitt'in (1997) Kelime Öğrenme Stratejileri Anketi en çok ve en az tercih edilen stratejileri nicel olarak keşfetmek için kullanıldı. Nitel veriler, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla 25 katılımcıdan toplandı. Bulgular, en sık kullanılan stratejilerin "bellek stratejileri" olduğunu, "sosyal stratejilerin" ise en az tercih edilenler arasında yer aldığını ortaya koymuştur. Kelime öğrenme stratejilerinin kullanımında, öğrencilerin İngilizce dersine yönelik algıları, derslerden zevk almaları, sözlük kullanımı, İngilizce öğrenmede algılanan zorluk düzeyi gibi faktörlere dayalı olarak önemli farklılıklar bulunmuştur. Buna rağmen, kelime öğrenme stratejileri ile cinsiyet, kardeş sayısı, ebeveynlerin eğitim durumu ve meslekleri, İngilizce konuşabilen bir aile üyesinin olup olmaması ve destekleyici dersler alma gibi değişkenler arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. Görüşmelerden alınan yanıtlar, katılımcıların kelime anlamı, telaffuz, yazma, heceleme ve kelime uzunluğu gibi kelime ile ilgili zorluklarla karşılaştıklarını gösterdi. Kaygı ve özerklik eksikliğinden kaynaklanan zorlukları da ifade ettiler.

Anahtar kelimeler: genç öğrenenler, kelime öğrenimi, kelime öğrenimi stratejileri, kelime öğreniminde zorluklar

Name of Thesis: Challenges Faced By Fourth Graders on Vocabulary Learning in EFL Classes and the Vocabulary Learning Strategies They Use

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the vocabulary learning strategies used by 150 fourth-grade English foreign language students in a primary school in İstanbul and to investigate the challenges they face in vocabulary learning. A descriptive mixed-methods research design was employed. Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire was utilized to explore the most and least preferred strategies quantitatively. Qualitative data was gathered from 25 participants through semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that the most frequently used strategies were "memory strategies" while "social strategies" were the least favored. Significant differences in the use of vocabulary learning strategies were found based on factors such as students' perceptions towards the English lesson, their enjoyment of the lessons, dictionary use, perceived difficulty level in learning English. However, no significant difference was found between vocabulary learning strategies and variables such as gender, number of siblings, educational background of parents and occupations, having a family member who could speak English and taking supportive lessons. Responses from the interviews indicated that participants encountered challenges related to vocabulary including word meaning, pronunciation, writing, spelling, and word length. They also expressed the challenges stemming from anxiety and a lack of autonomy.

Key words: young learners, vocabulary learning, vocabulary learning strategies, challenges in vocabulary learning

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA:	Analysis of Variance
CEFR:	Common European Framework of Reference
COG:	Cognitive
DET:	Determination
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ELT:	English Language Teaching
LLS:	Language Learning Strategy
LLSs:	Language Learning Strategies
MEM:	Memory
MET:	Metacognitive
MoNE:	Ministry of National Education
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
VLS:	Vocabulary Learning Strategy
VLSQ:	Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire
VLSs:	Vocabulary Learning Strategies
YL:	Young Learner
YLS:	Young Learners

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background information, problem statement, and purpose of the study. It presents a concise description of vocabulary learning in the scope of English as a foreign language specifically focusing on young learners. Followingly, it addresses the research questions, the significance of the study, the limitations, and the definition of key terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

English has become a universal language in a wide range of fields including international business, security, media, advertisements, education, films, music, and communication (Crystal, 1997). The global rise in communication and the growing demand for a common language have positioned English as a significant medium for universal language. As a lingua franca, English provides people with different backgrounds to communicate effectively worldwide. As an international medium of communication, this requires mastery of language skills in English. Alongside the four skills, vocabulary knowledge is crucial for language learning as insufficient vocabulary may pose a barrier to effective communication (Sedighi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2016). Researchers have noted that language proficiency is associated with vocabulary knowledge (Laufer, 1998; Meara, 2002).

In the context of English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) learning, acquiring an adequate amount of vocabulary is pivotal for language learning (Folse, 2004). However, foreign language learning generally takes place in classroom settings and vocabulary knowledge is heavily influenced by the artificial environment, limited time, and restricted exposure to language use. To illustrate, Wallace (1982) highlighted that one of the formidable challenges in learning a new language is finding the right words to express oneself. Therefore, it is important to grasp that EFL learners can feel overwhelmed by the amount of known and unknown vocabulary items regardless of their proficiency levels. This indicates that EFL learners may encounter challenges in understanding vocabulary and researchers attempt to identify these issues to facilitate

the learning process. In light of Wenden and Rubin's (1987) affirmation, recognizing successful language learners in the teaching and learning of second and foreign languages has received a high degree of attention. In this regard, scholars investigated the impact of English language education policies and planning in countries where it has been accepted to be a second or foreign language (Swale, 1990). One salient contribution is that scholars have introduced vocabulary learning strategies (henceforth VLSs) to reduce the burden on EFL learners. Thus, numerous attempts have been incorporated into education programs to identify effective ways of teaching and learning vocabulary, specifically in the framework of second and foreign language learning.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Vocabulary fulfills an essential role in foreign language learning as it is often viewed as the heart of language acquisition (Laufer, 1986). However, as stated by Ghalebi et al. (2020), students may find new vocabulary items challenging to learn since they are generally left unguided in the realm of vocabulary. In accordance with Sökmen's (1997) argument, it seems that learning all vocabulary in the classroom is unrealistic for language learners. Despite the considerable importance of teaching EFL in Türkiye, the intended proficiency in foreign language education has not been attained yet (Anşın, 2006). Besides, it is believed that the majority of learners confront challenges in language learning throughout the process (Gidey, 2008). In that sense, some researchers have contributed significantly to reducing the workload for language learners. For instance, Oxford (1990) and Schmitt (1997) focused on the language learning strategies (henceforth LLSs) to promote language learning. Moreover, Nation (2001) inferred that students at all levels can profit considerably from VLS use to enhance their vocabulary knowledge.

In particular, young learners (henceforth YLs) lack experience and background in foreign language learning as well as vocabulary learning. In this manner, determining long-term engagement with language learning from the initial

exposure is crucial. Furthermore, educators and parents believe that early exposure to a foreign language may be beneficial for language learners in terms of cognitive and socio-cultural development as a strategic investment (Brumfit, 1991). Therefore, the notion “younger equals better” leads YLs to encounter English in the first years of schooling universally refers to elementary school years (Yıldırım & Şeker, 2004).

English instruction at the primary level in Türkiye was introduced around 1985 (Mersinligil, 2002). From that moment, the curriculum has undergone wide-ranging reforms such as incorporating a new lesson for prospective teachers in teaching English programs in 1998 and lowering the age of compulsory English lessons with the laws (Tebliğler Dergisi, 1997). Nevertheless, these reforms have led to some issues related to the curriculum for YLs since language learning is a complicated task that demands both cognitive and psychological readiness. Remarkably, it is important to note that language learning cannot be fixed through a quick decision. The intended level was not acquired (Acat & Demiral, 2002; Arslan & Akbarov, 2010) although English has been taught to students for years. Regarding EFL learners, the problems encountered reveal that the language is structurally more complex (Demirel, 1999). Additionally, foreign language learning may possess several problems on the condition that children do not know explicitly how to learn a new language. What is more, the traditional approaches and methods may cause learners to get bored since they may find vocabulary learning tedious. Furthermore, EFL learners mostly depend on teachers (Sancar, 2001) and this can lead to exhaustion and burnout for both teachers and learners. Likewise, Ölmez (2014) stated that learning and teaching vocabulary items takes a lot of time. Hence, it is essential to detect the obstacles in vocabulary learning to accomplish language learning goals. For instance, teachers may cope with the overloaded task by empowering learners with responsibility for their learning (Richardson, 1992). In other words, VLSs may aid learners to become independent and autonomous learners in the event of facing problems. Notably, “the younger, the better” belief is one of the primary concerns during the English language learning process. However, the research studies on YLs have been still insufficient (Asmalı, 2017) and there have been ongoing debates

considering how to teach and learn vocabulary. In this regard, this study aims to determine the anticipated problems that fourth graders as YLs face in the vocabulary learning in EFL classes through semi-structured interviews. With regard to participants' responses, it is expected that this study may shed light on the challenges YLs encounter in English vocabulary learning. Additionally, it intends to identify VLS preferences of the fourth grade students using Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ). This study is intended to explore the VLSs that learners use the most and least frequently to facilitate their vocabulary learning process. Uncovering strategy preferences may enhance insights into the use of VLSs among YLs. Consequently, it is expected that both instructors and learners will become more conscious of their application of strategies and preferred strategies. In this manner, language learners can gain autonomy and instructors may effectively guide the process. In the long run, this study may assist stakeholders in addressing the needs of YLs related to vocabulary learning. Besides, it may promote strategy training in language learning.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This present study aims to explore difficulties that YLs have encountered in the English language vocabulary learning process and determine their preferences for VLSs to overcome these challenges. This research intends to contribute to the field by addressing the concerns to what extent VLSs may enhance vocabulary language learning as well as reflecting on learners' contribution in the process as they face several problems in vocabulary learning. It is asserted that experienced foreign language learners employ more VLSs than less proficient ones (Borer, 2007; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Fan, 2003; Schmitt, 1997). Therefore, this research study aims to contribute to the field by investigating numerous VLSs to boost English language learning. In addition, it is anticipated that learners may take responsibility for their own learning by employing VLSs to alleviate the potential problems related to the vocabulary. Moreover, the findings are expected to assist EFL instructors in providing vocabulary strategy training that aligns with the requirements of their students in the process. Since vocabulary learning poses some concerns, VLSs may elicit invaluable

contributions for teachers to promote vocabulary learning more effectively. Notwithstanding the mentioned benefits above, researchers have suggested that studies on VLSs often yield positive results albeit they have been validated on a regular basis (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). On the whole, this study intends to raise awareness about YLs' VLS choices and the need for instructors' vocabulary strategy instruction. It proposes that these strategies can aid learners to increase their motivation on the condition that they may experience a failure in their language learning education program (Nunan, 1997).

1.4. Research Questions

This research investigates the challenges that YLs encounter in vocabulary learning and the prevalence of the VLS use of YLs listed in descending order of the most to the least. The following research questions are guided:

1. What vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) are employed by fourth-grade students in EFL classes?
 - a. What are the determination strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - b. What are the social (discovery) strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - c. What are the social (consolidation) strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - d. What are the memory strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - e. What are the cognitive strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - f. What are the metacognitive strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
2. Which vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) are the most and the least frequently used by fourth grade students in EFL classes?

3. Is there a meaningful difference between the participants' VLS use and
 - a. gender?
 - b. parents' educational levels and their jobs?
 - c. number of siblings?
 - d. knowing English in the family?
 - e. perceptions towards the English lessons?
 - f. enjoyment of the lesson?
 - g. taking supportive lessons?
 - h. their dictionary use?
 - i. perceived difficulty level in English learning?
4. What challenges do fourth graders encounter in learning vocabulary?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Regarding the previous studies on VLSs, it reveals that some research studies have focused on specific VLS use and the relationship among a few variables in foreign language education. It has been found that VLSs are interconnected with language proficiency and academic success in other research studies. Upon reviewing the relevant literature on VLSs, a significant research gap exists regarding YLs' VLS use and facing problems about English vocabulary learning. This gap may have an unfavorable impact on long-term vocabulary learning for YLs in case they are unfamiliar with VLSs. Specifically, many research studies focus on determining VLS use by secondary and high school, and chiefly university students. Given that advanced-level students are supposed to be cognitively mature enough, many scholars found their VLS preferences remarkable. At this point, Gürsoy (2010) indicated that YLs' LLSs have received little attention in Türkiye. Subsequently, there is a limited number of research studies on VLS use among YLs studying in Turkish elementary schools (Doğan, 2021; Gök, 2017; Kütük, 2007; Mandıralı, 2022). Mandıralı's (2022) research emphasizes the fourth-grade students at a primary school in Kocaeli whereas the other research studies focus on the third-grade learners. Overall, this research intends to have practical implications for broadening the perspectives of both learners and teachers considering the teaching and learning English vocabulary area.

Regarding the context of foreign language classroom, language learning often becomes an individual attempt for learners. Beyond this, even learners are familiar with VLSs, it is significant for them to be conscious about making sensible choices. This study focuses on the difficulties that YLs encounter in vocabulary learning and their VLS use in foreign language learning keeping in mind that the process is more unpredictable and nonlinear than adults. For instance, learners may struggle with vocabulary learning when trying to memorize all vocabulary items and this may result in losing motivation. Aligning with this, recalling the words is often attributed to a deficiency in previous learning. Correspondingly, these circumstances may highlight the demands on VLSs. This study is expected to contribute to existing literature by unveiling YLs' thoughts about concealed problems in vocabulary learning as well as their strategy choices to overcome these difficulties in foreign language learning. VLSs may promote awareness of vocabulary learning methods for both teachers and learners. As Oxford (1990) specified, the process becomes easier, faster, and more effective with the help of LLSs. Besides, being aware of the hindrances in vocabulary learning and dealing with these obstacles through proper VLS use may have led to extend learners' motivation by promoting learner autonomy.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

This present research study has some drawbacks. To begin with, the study comprises two types of data collection from a primary state school in İstanbul during the 2023-2024 academic year. Second, it consists of a convenience sample of limited to 150 fourth-grade EFL students from this school. The sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. Also, the study was conducted exclusively by fourth grade students at this primary school. Third, the data collection instruments are limited to a questionnaire (VLSQ) and a semi-structured interview. Lastly, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 participants.

1.7. Definitions of Terms

The definitions and explanations are provided to clarify the terms used in the study below.

English as a foreign language (EFL): *“the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English”* (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary).

Young learner: *“Children between the ages of five or six years old to 11 or 12 years of age”* (Phillips, 1993, p.3).

Vocabulary: *“All the words that present a specific language or field”* (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary).

Vocabulary learning strategy: *“Any set of approaches or learning practices which language learners reported using to seek for the meaning, to recall previously learned words and to extend one's knowledge of vocabulary”* (Intaraprasert, 2004, p. 9).

1.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the outline of the issues related to vocabulary learning, vocabulary learning strategies and the challenges young learners may confront during the vocabulary learning process. As mentioned earlier, vocabulary learning is a demanded task and YLs need to develop learner autonomy to succeed in their individual attempts for learning new vocabulary items. Besides, VLSs may assist teachers in customizing the learning process. Likewise, these strategies may help learners overcome the vocabulary challenges to enhance their learning experiences when they are struggling with the vocabulary items.

The following chapter consists of an overview of the relevant literature on vocabulary learning and potential problems that YLs may encounter, language learning strategies (LLSs), and vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs).

The third chapter exemplifies the methodology by presenting the research design, methods, participants, and data collection process.

Chapter 4 outlines the analysis of the findings both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Chapter 5 presents the discussions related to the study's findings embedded in three research questions.

The last chapter (Chapter 6) summarizes the implications of the findings including the limitations and recommendations for upcoming research studies.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a theoretical basis for understanding vocabulary. It begins with a definition of vocabulary and highlights the significance of vocabulary, word knowledge, and approaches to teaching and learning vocabulary. It also explores the association between age and vocabulary learning. Accordingly, it summarizes relevant studies on young learners and vocabulary learning. Following this, this chapter delves into the challenges young learners encounter in vocabulary learning specifically in the context of English foreign language. Then, it discusses language learning strategies and vocabulary learning strategies that can help overcome these obstacles. Finally, it provides a review of vocabulary learning strategies including the taxonomies of vocabulary learning strategies in depth.

2.1. Vocabulary

The definition of vocabulary has been provided by many researchers. Hornby et al. (1984) describe vocabulary as the whole lexicon that we can use and comprehend. Oxford (1990) expands its definition: “By far the largest and uncontrollable component in learning any language, regardless of foreign language or mother tongue due to thousands of different meanings” (p. 120). Aligning with this affirmation, Hornby (1995) describes vocabulary in three aspects “(1) the total number of words in the language, (2) all the words known to a person or used in a particular book, subject, and (3) a word list includes their meaning that combines with a textbook in a foreign language” (p. 1331).

From another viewpoint, a few researchers (Hornby, 1995; Richards et al., 1992) claimed that vocabulary and words can be used comparatively. To illustrate, Richard and Schmitt (2010) describe words as “the smallest of the linguistic units” (p. 636) whereas Richards et al. (1992) define vocabulary as “a collection of lexemes containing single letters, a combination of words, also idioms” (p. 400). Ur (1998) prefers using the term “vocabulary items” rather than “words.” He broadens this idea

by indicating that vocabulary is referred to the items taught in the language but newly learned words may include compilation of words like ‘post-office’ or ‘mother-in-law’ that are composed of more than single word while referring to still a single idea.

In accordance with some researchers (Bowen et al., 1985; Read, 2000; Trask, 1995), a word might seem simple to understand but defining can be quite difficult. Trask (1995) elaborates on the difficulty of a word by stating words do not exist separately; rather, the meanings are interconnected with other words that may be simple or intricate. Concisely, vocabulary consists of a set of lexicons or vocabulary items including both simple and more complex words. It can be inferred that vocabulary learning includes learning both a set of words and strategies for interpreting known and unknown terms.

2.2. Knowing a Word

At first glance, second or foreign language learning may seem deceptively straightforward (Ekmekçi, 1999). However, vocabulary learning is a gradual process that does not happen at all once (Chamot, 2005; Tezgiden, 2006). Knowing a word in a second language goes beyond merely recognition in spoken or written form. Vocabulary knowledge assists learners in connecting grammatical structures for meaning associations (Nation, 1990). Nation (2005) categorizes vocabulary knowledge into three elements: its form, its meaning, and its use. On the contrary, Folse (2004) expands these items as part of speech, word usage, frequency, collocation, denotation, connotation, polysemy, spelling, and pronunciation. Richard (1976) provides principles that learners should follow to fully comprehend second language terms as knowing a word entails both receptive and productive knowledge.

1. Native speakers continue to develop their vocabulary knowledge through their lives.
2. Knowing a word involves knowing the degree of probability of meeting that word in spoken or written texts.

3. Knowing a word involves knowing the limitations on the use of that word according to variation of function and situation.
4. Knowing a word involves knowing the syntactic behavior associated with the word.
5. Knowing a word involves knowing the underlying form of a word and the derivations that can be made from it.
6. Knowing a word requires knowing the network of associations between that word and other words in the language.
7. Knowing a word involves knowing its semantic value and
8. Knowing a word involves knowing many of different meanings associated with it. (Richard, 1976, p. 83)

Similar to grammar, vocabulary has great value in communication but both grammar and vocabulary may not be helpful in isolation. Without proper context, vocabulary terms are simplified into a compilation of knowledge to be memorized (Anadol, 2015). On the other hand, knowing all words from memorization lists in the foreign language may be unrealistic. It is estimated that even a native speaker may be unfamiliar with all vocabulary items in their native language. According to Nation (2001) and Schmitt (2000), native speakers are assumed to know about 20,000 vocabulary items. In response, Schmitt (2000) indicates that second language learners need approximately 2000 words to interact with the target language, 300 word families for reading real-life texts and also 10,000 words to acquire academic texts.

Cook (2001) claims that the most frequent vocabulary lists might be the starting point for vocabulary exposure in English advocating against rote memorization. Gu and Johnson (1996) believe that vocabulary could suffer from the belief in memorization depending on the correlation between visual repetition and vocabulary size. In a similar vein, some research in the context of Spanish as a foreign language (Barcroft, 2009; Sagarra & Alba, 2006; Waldvogel, 2011) emphasize that memorization of the words is not prioritized in vocabulary learning. Contrary to this, some scholars (Folse, 2004; Lawson & Hogben, 1996; Meara, 1995; Read, 2000;

Schmitt, 2000) agree that memorization may be in favor of beginners. They claim that YLs may depend on more cognitive skills in language learning. From another perspective, Ellis (1994) exemplified that some research studies imply that elementary-level students tend to learn words separately rather than learning them in context.

Hatch and Brown (1995) outline five key steps for learners in vocabulary learning that students must accomplish: “(1) searching for new vocabulary in sources, (2) understanding the structure of new vocabulary through pictures and sounds, (3) reading the definitions of the words, (4) having a strong association between definitions and structures, and (5) using the new vocabulary in context” (p. 373).

According to Wallace (1988), knowing a word necessitates identifying a spoken or written word, recalling it, associating the meaning of the word, using the correct form grammatically, saying it with a recognizable pronunciation in speech, writing the spelling of the word correctly, associating the word with the appropriate words, and knowing the formality level appropriately, knowing the related connotations of the word.

In a similar vein, Nation (2001) presents a comprehensive list of understanding word knowledge with its form, meaning and use. His framework focuses on salient features of knowing a word such as grammatical use, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics as given in Table 1. According to Nation (2001), language learners need to express both receptive and productive knowledge incorporating spoken and written forms of associations, collocations, registers, and referents to fully understand a word. Nation (2001) asserted that simply understanding the dictionary definition of a word does not ensure that learners can use it effectively.

Table 1. *What is Involved in Knowing a Word?*

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	What does the word look like?
Meaning	Word parts	P	How is the word written and spelled?
		R	What parts are recognizable in this word?
	Form and meaning	P	What word parts are needed to express meaning?
		R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
Use	Associations	R	What other words does this word make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
	Grammatical functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
	Collocations	R	What words or types of words occur with this one?
		P	What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	Constraints on use (register, frequency, ...)	R	Where, when, and how often would we meet this word?
		P	Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

R= receptive knowledge; P= productive knowledge

(Nation, 2001, p.27)

2.3. Importance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a significant element of language proficiency that reveals the efficacy of communication in the target language (Teng, 2015). In a similar vein, Umarova (2018) indicates the major association between the communicative competence of language learners and their vocabulary size. Nation (2001) put emphasis on the significance of vocabulary learning since vocabulary does not stand for itself, rather, it promotes learners' abilities to listen, read, write, and talk effectively. It can be inferred that learners' vocabulary repertoire facilitates the development of all language skills. Harmer (1991) exemplifies that vocabulary has an indispensable role in language learning by saying, "If language structures are the skeleton of language, then vocabulary provides the vital organs and flesh" (p. 153). Similarly, Hunt and Beglar (2005) view vocabulary as "the heart of language comprehension and use" (p. 2). Flower (2000) notes the essence of vocabulary as follows: "Words are the most important things students must learn. Grammar is important, but vocabulary is much more important" (p. 5). Following Vermeer's idea

(1992), only mastering grammar is insufficient to become competent in a language. Likewise, Thornbury (2002) illustrates the importance of vocabulary, referencing David Wilkins' advice from the book (Dellar H. & Hocking D., *Innovations, LTP*): "If you invest most of the time studying grammar, your English will not improve extensively but you will notice the mastery if you explore more words and expressions. You can say very little in grammar, but you can almost anything with words!" (p.13). As noted by Harmer (1991), using the right word in certain circumstances is prioritized rather than the correct use of grammatical forms. Scrivener (1994) views the function of vocabulary as a "powerful carrier of meaning" (p. 73). A statement by Kitajima (2001) highlights that a speaker is not able to convey their intended words without the accurate usage of vocabulary items. To exemplify, Scrivener (1994) elaborates on the incomplete sentence, "I wonder if you could lend me your..." (p. 73). This sentence demonstrates the function of vocabulary knowledge since one missing word can disrupt communication or a single word may alter the entire conversation. In line with Sinclair's (1996) statement, "A lexical mistake often causes misunderstandings while a grammar mistake rarely does" (p. 179-196), it may be possible to convey ideas and thoughts in the circumstances of having an ungrammatically structured sentence. Similarly, McCarthy (1990) states the essence of word knowledge, "No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the phonics of second language are acquired, communication in a second language simply cannot happen in a meaningful way" (p. 8). In a broad sense, Vermeer (1992) asserts the value of vocabulary learning: "Knowing words is the key to understanding and being understood. Children acquire words first, and next the grammar of the language. Most of learning a new language includes learning new words: grammatical understanding does not provide for high competency in a language" (p. 147).

McCarthy (1990) highlights the role of vocabulary stating that the ideal communication is determined by integrated writing and speaking words rather than grammatical features or phonological aspects. It is feasible that effective communication depends on a certain degree of knowing vocabulary items regardless of mastery in grammar and pronunciation (McCarthy, 1990). Anderson and Freebody

(1982) indicate that many scholars have experienced that learners with low literacy typically exhibit insufficient word knowledge. Krashen indicates that “When students travel, they don’t carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries” (as cited in Lewis, 1993, p. 25). Accordingly, McCarthy (1990) reports that vocabulary enables the integration of language skills. It can be stated that proper grammar use may support language development but inadequate vocabulary repertoire may impede learners’ engagement with language.

2.4. Teaching and Learning Vocabulary

Vocabulary had been overlooked and insufficiently emphasized in language learning in the past (Allen, 1983; Coady & Huckin, 1997; Hedge, 2001; Meara, 1980; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997; Thornbury, 2000; Zimmerman, 1997). According to Brown (2001), vocabulary was regarded as the least prominent aspect of language compared to other receptive and productive skills at those times. Swain and Carol (1987) asserted that learning vocabulary item was gradual, possibly endless, and largely influenced by learners’ views and experiences.

During the 1950s, people started to realize that vocabulary learning involves more than just matching the word from a target language to one’s native language. As vocabulary learning can be extremely difficult and overloaded, some teachers could choose to limit the amount of vocabulary they taught. In that sense, vocabulary instruction was often disregarded during this period. As specified by Brown (2001), “In the zeal for natural, authentic classroom tasks and activities vocabulary focus was swept under the rug” (p. 376). Still, grammar played a larger part than other language skills despite considerable improvements in language teaching theories such as Chomsky’s (1957) study on generative linguistics or Hymes’ (1972) communicative competence. It should be taken for granted that Chomsky and Hymes proposed profound changes in language learning but it can be inferred that vocabulary would deal with itself (Schmitt, 2000).

Before the 1970s, vocabulary was inadequately prioritized in language learning on the assumption that syntax and grammar were attributed to language acquisition (Coady & Huckin, 1997). In fact, vocabulary was seen as secondary to grammar. In evidence, Laufer (1986) referred to vocabulary as having “stepchild status in language acquisition” (p.73). Moreover, before the mid-1980s, vocabulary instruction received little emphasis on language education (Richards & Renandya, 2002). For this reason, researchers held different views on the function of vocabulary in language learning (Coady & Huckin, 1997). As vocabulary was considered a substitute for language components (O'Dell, 1997), there were ongoing debates about what to teach, and how to effectively teach vocabulary items (Coady & Huckin, 1977). Although there was a general consensus on its significance in the EFL is widely acknowledged, the most efficient method to teach vocabulary remained unclear. Accordingly, Schmitt reported (1997) that there has been no single best or worst approach for vocabulary learning.

Choosing between direct or indirect vocabulary instruction is one of the complicated tasks of vocabulary teaching. Educators have discussed additional terms related to this framework such as incidental or explicit (intentional) vocabulary learning. For instance, Hulstijn (2001) advocated that incidental and intentional vocabulary learning activities need to be combined. On the other hand, many scholars (Gu, 2002; Schmitt, 1997; Sökmen, 1997) argued the ways of inferring meanings from context versus learning in isolation for vocabulary learning

The growing interest in vocabulary learning paved the way for several approaches and methods to teach and learn vocabulary effectively (Balci, 2006). According to Carter (1987), research on vocabulary learning in second or foreign languages has increased since the 1970s (Channel, 1981; Gairns & Redman, 1986). Hatch and Brown (1995) noted that several approaches, methods, and techniques have been generated to facilitate vocabulary learning. While some methodologies follow a conscious, systematic, and structured approach, others support the idea that vocabulary is acquired through exposure to language without deliberate effort. Since learners

cannot master every single word in a classroom setting (Sökmen, 1997), various theories about vocabulary learning have emerged. For instance, Schmitt (2000) argued that foreign language learners receive some vocabulary items unconsciously as it was impractical for them to intentionally understand all vocabulary. Topkaraoğlu and Dilman (2014) believed that second language learners need to know more phrases than just a few isolated words to become proficient in that language.

Hunt and Beglar (1998) stated three main approaches to vocabulary teaching and learning: individual strategy development, explicit learning, and learning incidentally. One of the conflicts in this field was whether vocabulary learning should focus more on explicit or implicit methods. Incidental learning is described as unintentional acquisition without the aim of retention (Hulstijn et al., 1996). Hunt and Beglar (1998) indicated that vocabulary items are unconsciously acquired through reading and listening skills for all proficiency levels. Besides, Huckin and Coady (1999) scrutinized that incidental learning is not completely incidental way as it often depended on paying attention to individual words.

Nation (1990) classified vocabulary learning into two basic groups: direct vocabulary learning approaches and indirect vocabulary learning approaches. The direct vocabulary learning approach focuses on intentional, explicit vocabulary learning. Nation (1990) asserted that this approach enables students particularly at the basic level to engage with daily language use. He pointed out that explicit learning is pivotal in the initial stages of vocabulary acquisition while implicit learning may become more relevant at higher levels of vocabulary learning. Nonetheless, Coady (1997) argued how beginners can pick up related words through extensive reading without an adequate reading background. For this reason, Coady (1997) suggested using the frequency words with the help of sight vocabulary lists. Furthermore, Bialystok (1994) elaborated on explicit knowledge noting that it can be learned at any age but he reminded that learning deficiencies may not become apparent until older ages.

With regard to this controversial issue, Hunt and Beglar (2005) underlined the necessity of explicit vocabulary development. This debate led to the revision of approaches to this field. Hence, as a third approach to vocabulary learning, independent strategy development focused on teaching learners how to acquire and advance in their language learning process (Zhang, 2008).

Nunan (1998) expressed the background of vocabulary learning: “Grammar-translation approaches to the teaching of language encompasses a balanced diet of grammar and vocabulary, audiolingual focuses primarily on the acquisition of the basic grammatical patterns of the language” (p. 117). As the prominence in the 19th century, the Grammar Translation Method placed grammar at the center of language teaching. Translation of written works from the target language into the learners’ native language was prioritized. However, vocabulary was overshadowed by memorization, word lists, and translation (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Besides, vocabulary was required for reading and writing skills as this approach disregarded oral language (Zimmerman, 1997). Historically, grammar and vocabulary were regarded as two different subjects. Richard (1976) emphasized that vocabulary could grow constantly whereas grammar could remain more stable. Flower (2000) asserted that grammar was also important but vocabulary was a must to learn.

As for the Direct Method, vocabulary was considered as simple and daily language use including visuals such as pictures, charts, or realia (Richards & Rogers, 2001). In contrast, the Audiolingual Method influenced by structuralism and undermined vocabulary learning as habit formation through drills. There was an intensive demand for alternative approaches in language learning during the 1970s and 1980s. This led to a variety of new methods as well as different methodological assumptions. As stated clearly, Total Physical Response, Silent Way, Suggestopedia, and Community Language Learning made invaluable contributions to the concepts of language learning.

The Lexical Approach has been accepted as an important attempt for improving language learning by expanding words into lexical chunks, phrases, and prefabricated language use (Zimmerman, 1997). Prior to the recognition of lexical value, many instructors avoided explicitly teaching vocabulary in language classes (Oxford et al., 1990). Even though some scholars undervalued its essence until the 1980s, Kitajima (2001) underlined its crucial function in the language learning process. Laufer (1997) confirmed its significance with these statements:

Vocabulary is no longer a victim of discrimination in second language learning research or language teaching. After decades of neglect, lexis is now recognized as central to any language acquisition process, native or non-native. What many language teachers might have intuitively known for a long time, that a solid vocabulary is necessary in every stage of language learning, is now being openly stated by some language researchers. (Laufer, 1997, p. 147)

The Communicative Approach reflects language as a cohesive system rather than individual components. In this regard, vocabulary serves as a crucial role for contextualizing language exposure (Zimmerman, 1997). This approach received great attention after vocabulary was undervalued for a long time. Read (2004) identified the period between the 1990s and 2000s as “boom effect” on vocabulary learning. Followingly, various methods emerged such as Cooperative Language Learning, the Natural Approach, and Content-based Language Learning.

2.5. Age and Vocabulary Learning

Bilir (2022) affirmed that age is one of the salient features in the field of foreign language learning since different age groups have unique needs, levels, and abilities. Accordingly, research studies on second language or foreign language acquisition have been investigated how age influences learning another language. The primary focus of the research has been the correlation between learners’ age and their competencies during the language learning process. In that sense, encapsulating the characteristics of young learners in the scope of learning vocabulary is significant.

To begin with, the concept of “young learners” (YLS) may be interpreted in different ways. According to Nikolov and Djigunovic (2011), members of the European Union define YLS as pupils at the ages of seven and 12. Similarly, Slattery and Willis (2001) stated that YLS are individuals within this age range. Yule (2010) acknowledged that children typically begin acquiring their first language at a very young age, when they are five. As Philipps (1993) noted that formal schooling starts at the age of six and children aged six to 12 are classified as YLS. Ersöz (2007) particularly describes YLS as being between seven and nine years old. Piaget (1955) stated that children in primary schools are typically in the concrete operational stage of their cognitive development at these years. Primary schools often serve as the first official setting in which children learn English. As specified by Torun (2008), YLS go through a period when they experience constant cognitive and physical growth since they start elementary school. In the realm of foreign language learning, it has been noted that EFL learners have limited exposure to the target language in classroom settings. Nikolov (2000) differentiated between second language and foreign language learning underlining the importance of target language use in social interaction and classroom settings.

As compared to adults, YLS do not verbalize their thoughts about language and its use since they are still constructing the structures of their first language at the same time learning English (Coltrane, 2003). Brumfit (1991) provided the characteristics of young learners to contribute to better understanding of this age group.

YLS are only just beginning their schooling. As a group, they are potentially more differentiated than secondary or adult learners, for they are closer to their varied home cultures and new to the conformity increasingly imposed across cultural groupings by the scope. They tend to be keen and enthusiastic learners, without the inhibitions which older children sometimes bring to their schooling. Their learning can be closely linked with their development of ideas and concepts because it is so close to their initial experience of formal schooling. They need physical movement and activity as much as stimulation for their thinking, and the closer together these can be better. (Brumfit, 1991, p.5)

Researchers have long been searching for theories to understand how children think, learn a foreign language and how they perceive the world around them. Scholars made considerable effort into advocating for early foreign language instruction and some perspectives have gained popularity and remained valuable for years such as those from Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner regarding language learning theories. Notably, Piaget focused on some stages that each child goes through individually as an active learner whereas Vygotsky and Bruner supported communication and language instruction more. Vygotsky presented the term “Zone of Proximal Development”, which refers to tasks a child can accomplish with expert assistance. According to Bruner, language was seen as the most crucial tool for cognitive development. These theories have profound implications for understanding the characteristics of YLs.

As stated by Karahan (2007), it remained uncertain what learning system children use to learn a foreign language, how they respond to the process, and how they continue to develop their language skills. Nunan (2005) highlighted that a YL’s English vocabulary development is not identical to their first language vocabulary. That is to say, regarding the first language development, a child’s word knowledge expands dramatically between the ages of two and five. On the other hand, it is often assumed that children start learning phrases such as greetings, idioms, and collocations together basic words like ‘dog’, ‘desk’, and ‘classroom’ in the EFL context. Learning concrete words can be incorporated into visuals, flashcards, gestures, mimes, or drawing. With inference to teaching vocabulary to YLs, various approaches and methods can be used. To illustrate, the Direct Method and Communicative Language Teaching Approach may encourage the use of the target language while Audiolingual Method utilizes drills and word chunks. Total Physical Response incorporates physical movement in learning. The lexical Approach focuses on lexemes and Suggestopedia uses music and sounds to enhance understanding the meaning of the word but abstract words can still be challenging for language learners to comprehend. At the basic level, YLs acquire the meaning of the words and forms bearing in mind that a single word may have multiple meanings that they need to differentiate.

Therefore, word knowledge cannot be confined to dictionary meaning, instead, learners need to know more than the definitions of the words. According to Linse (2005), learners at elementary school should know about 500 words to speak properly in the target language.

The Companion Volume of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) expands the existing descriptors for YLs that were not previously addressed (Council of Europe, 2001). This framework focuses on two age groups: children aged seven to ten and those aged 11 to 15. For beginners, two levels may be illustrated as A1 (Breakthrough) and A2 (Waystage) level. The A1 level represents the most basic tier of generative language proficiency. At this stage, learners can perform particular activities using a limited range of words. In terms of vocabulary range, YLs can use simple words and formulaic expressions that relate to specific concrete situations. With regard to receptive skills, YLs are able to recognize basic expressions and short sentences spoken at a slow pace. They can recognize familiar words with the daily use structures. If a word resembles one in their mother tongue, they can often predict its possible meaning. As for productive skills, YLs focus on vocabulary building through simple and basic phrases. According to CEFR descriptors for A1 level, it is hard to expect these learners to participate in spontaneous conversation or debates. Instead, they can use short, prepared texts that they have rehearsed. Through mediation activities, they can utilize basic words and non-verbal symbols to convey information. Also, they can combine the words through basic connectors such as ‘and’, or ‘then.’

Halliwell (1992) claimed that children enter the classroom with their unique abilities, skills, and sensations that facilitate language learning contrary to the common sense that children have no knowledge in the first phase of learning at all. Halliwell (1992) expressed that YLs possess incredible imaginations and are willing to talk about everything. They have the ability to interpret meaning without understanding all the words. They typically have short attention spans, limited motor skills and require a great amount of input through engaging activities such as games, fantasy, and crafts

like drawing, coloring, singing or dancing. All aforementioned reasons above indicate that YLs demand a variety of classroom activities since they need to burn off their energy and engage in physical activity (Brewster et al., 2002).

According to Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1979), YLs have low affective filters and can learn a foreign language fast. This makes them good candidates for language learning at a young age. There are several grounds for the belief that “the earlier, the better.” Uysal and Yavuz (2015) reviewed the literature on teaching foreign languages to YLs and they reached the view that beginning language instruction at an earlier age is beneficial. Early language acquisition may be advantageous granted that children are exposed to the target language effectively by their competent teachers (Moon, 2005). Kızıltan and Atlı (2013) stated YLs exhibit a strong curiosity about grasping the meaning of new words. Moreover, Stakanhova and Tolstikhina (2014) noted the reasons for introducing a new language at an earlier age: learning a language is a never-ending task, the earlier learners begin, the more time they can spend.

Freudenstein (1990) suggested that it is more appealing for children to develop language awareness and positive attitudes towards the language from the initial stages of language learning. Ellis (2008) highlighted that an early start may foster intellectual and cultural aspects of YLs. This early exposure may enable learners to develop tolerance and empathy in the realm of another language. Likewise, Dendrinos (2010) stated early exposure to a foreign language can promote social and cognitive development by supporting high levels of language competency.

Many researchers agree on the notion “the earlier is the better” as YLs became more familiar with the target language. On the other hand, a recent study on the critical period by Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow (2000) suggested that adolescents may have better results than YLs in terms of language learning efficiency. These results may stem from learning the mother tongue, highlighting biological distinctions and a readiness to learn a new language. Although there are still constant arguments about

the critical period for starting a foreign language, the advantages in the long run have become noteworthy (Karahana, 2007; Moyer, 2004).

It has been noted that the quantity of exposure and word knowledge are positively correlated (Zdorenko & Paradis, 2012). In particular, Neuman and Wright (2014) emphasized that long-term exposure to a range of meaningful contexts may enhance vocabulary learning. In this regard, learning vocabulary items at a younger age may offer considerable benefits. Some researchers (Gürsoy, 2004; Krashen, 1982; Nunan, 2010; Pinter, 2006; Lenneberg, 1967) recommended early age exposure to the language. Reviewing the language acquisition theories related to age, Penfield and Roberts (1959) proposed the Brain Plasticity Hypothesis that suggests the brain is like a sponge and keeps its flexibility until the age of 10. Another relevant theory, the Critical Period Hypothesis (Dörnyei, 2009; Nikolov, 2004) argues that language learning competencies begin to lessen when language acquisition occurs later in life. It is evident that Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2003) referenced Lenneberg's (1967) belief that the earlier one learns a foreign language, the more accurately it may be pronounced.

Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2003) indicated that YLs and adults differ significantly on the basis of the age factor. Since the brain is more flexible before puberty, Brumfit (1991) claimed that language learning can occur more naturally at an early age. Unlike adults, YLs tend to exhibit fewer negative opinions about language and cultures depending on having limited experience and bias in that language. According to the Critical Period Hypothesis, YLs can acquire another language more effectively before puberty regarding the idea that their brains are still capable of using the mechanism involved in first language acquisition (Cameron, 2001). Specifically, YLs are eager to learn and often want to impress their teachers. They tend to be more sensitive to their surroundings and generally display a more positive attitude toward the language learning process than adults (Brewster et al., 2003). In contrast, they seem to have more impulsive emotional actions while adults can manage their mental and emotional demands more effectively. On the grounds that YLs have not developed

abstract notions yet, understanding how they comprehend and learn another language is essential. From another point of view, Mihaljevic Dijgunovic (2009) focused on the initial interaction with the foreign language that can lead to misleading interpretations about the attitude and motivation of YLs. As they have less judgment related to the language and culture, they can be more willing to take risks in vocabulary use. Conversely, they can be easily distracted and may lose motivation in the process. In addition, they do not have a deliberate intention to learn a foreign language as compared to adults. YLs are unable to speak about language items but adults might have extended vocabulary size.

Another important distinction between YLs and adults is the duration of periods spent learning a language, particularly for communicative purposes. It is anticipated that YLs spend more time than adults as they start their learning journey earlier. Despite YLs' limited experience and knowledge, they enjoy exploring new things through explanations and actions (Pinter, 2011). They understand knowledge through first-hand experiences that foster their curiosity about language itself. On the other hand, adults have better cognitive skills for learning and recalling words thanks to their prior experience and background. This suggests that adults may be capable of purposefully monitoring their learning process. Likewise, Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis advocates that adults are more conscious about language rules and structures. Similarly, Hardi (2014) claimed that learning vocabulary at a young age demands a longer time as compared to the process of adults.

The demand and interest in teaching and learning English vocabulary to YLs has notably increased in recent years. Correspondingly, instructors and professionals have been increasingly concerned with this notion. İzci and Sucu (2013) emphasized that primary school students have recently become the focus of research studies conducted by scholars following many research studies on adult learners. Some researchers (Demircioğlu, 2010; Şevik, 2011) aimed to identify the best approaches to teaching English vocabulary to YLs. Furthermore, some studies (Cameron, 2003; Moon, 2005) investigated the discrepancy between theories and practices in different

scenarios to uncover potential benefits and concerns of the early language learners' programs. However, Yuca (2018) conveyed the idea that YLs have been overlooked in vocabulary research although there were plenty of studies related to the high school students and university students. In addition, this researcher (2018) noted that the studies on vocabulary and age in Türkiye are still inadequate adding that only a few studies focused on vocabulary for YLs.

2.6. Overview of Relevant Studies on Vocabulary and Young Learners

Research suggests that learners go through different paths in vocabulary learning. In a broad sense, vocabulary development of young learners differs from adult learners. These differences can be observed in areas such as vocabulary learning, retention, contextual guessing, overloaded vocabulary size, and familiarity with a new language.

To begin with, Brumfit (1991) indicated that teaching a foreign language to YLs aroused many different thoughts in the past. Then, teaching English to young learners has received significant attention worldwide. Thanks to lowering the age for English language learning, it has become increasingly prevalent. Rixon (1999) presumed the role of countries to lower the age have been impacted primarily two factors: the characteristics of children and the benefits associated with the value of the English language. According to Butler (2004) and Nunan (2003), countries like Korea, Taiwan, and Japan have decided to revise their policies and practices due to the significant impact on the communicative needs of the English language. Nunan (1990) reported that early foreign language instruction in elementary schools was introduced in the 1960s in the majority of European nations and the USA. Johnstone (2009) underlined that this adaptation was one of the most invaluable policy advancements in educational settings.

In the EFL context in Türkiye, Doğançay-Aktuna (1998) indicated that English was first introduced into the curriculum in the 1950s owing to government policy and educational needs. English had a presence in secondary and high school education in Türkiye. However, there were no attempts aimed at YLs' language learning during that time. Mersinligil (2002) pointed out that UNESCO provided the initial phase of YLs' English language instruction in elementary schools in the 1960s. Teaching English to YLs has gained its popularity regarding some reforms and adaptations in English courses and corresponding levels (Tebliğler Dergisi, 2014). To the widespread belief "the younger is the better" has led to English lessons being taught in primary schools all over the world (Yıldırım & Şeker, 2004). Some researchers explored the advantages of using different approaches in vocabulary learning. For instance, Yıldırım and Şahin (2016) examined how authentic language input provided vocabulary enrichment. Öztürk (2018) found that explicit vocabulary instruction resulted in better vocabulary retention among YLs. Recent studies attempted to make sense of vocabulary learning through technological aspects of education, computer-based learning, or gamified learning platforms for YLs (Gözalan, 2013; Öztürk, 2018; Tuan, 2012; Yavuz & Kurt, 2019; Y. Özdemir & Yılmaz, 2020). Briefly, vocabulary learning in the context of EFL has been on the agenda of many stakeholders highlighting the need to explore various ideas related to vocabulary learning.

2.7. Problems Faced in Vocabulary Learning

Studies have demonstrated that vocabulary knowledge is essential for second and foreign language learners. Shen (2003) reported that learners believe in the importance of vocabulary in their language development as well as admitting its challenges. It is widely accepted that language proficiency largely depends on the acquisition of vocabulary (Rivers, 1983). Vocabulary learning is considered a prerequisite for acquiring basic language skills and building extended knowledge. Language learners must work extremely hard to learn vocabulary since it necessitates extraordinary efforts (Büyükhiska, 2018) not only in learning but also in grasping, using, recalling, and retrieving the vocabulary items. As Nation (1990) stated, the difficulty level in vocabulary learning is determined by the effort required to learn a

word. Additionally, Nation (2001) emphasized that “The more a word reflects patterns and structures that learners are already familiar with, the less its learning burden” (p. 23).

Grenfell and Harris (1999) expressed that vocabulary learning is a complicated task. They (1999) exemplified that understanding the process in the human brain was sophisticated. Expanding vocabulary is considered as one of the main challenges in foreign language learning. Ghazal (2007) pointed out that one of the biggest obstacles to foreign language learning for learners is vocabulary. Mongkol (2008) articulated that vocabulary learning is a really demanding endeavor. Similarly, McCarthy (2001) argued that vocabulary cannot be effortless and learners often admit challenges in vocabulary learning. Therefore, detecting these problems is fundamental. Wallace (1982) identified the rationale behind the inadequate vocabulary in the process: “(1) incompetence for recalling previously learned vocabulary; (2) use of incorrect vocabulary in certain circumstances; (3) use of wrong terminology in terms of formality; (4) having the incorrect type of vocabulary; (5) using words that is not unidiomatic; (6) using vocabulary without meaning; (7) misusing dictionaries; (8) using improper grammar, spelling, pronunciation or stress” (pp. 9-13).

Every language learner employs their own techniques and methods for selecting vocabulary but only utilizing the right methods might help them succeed (Prihandoko et al., 2022). It becomes apparent that the learning process depends on the efforts of the learners more than how teachers use methodologies (Ali & Zaki, 2019). Some researchers (Garton, Copland & Burns, 2011; Pajares, 2012) claimed that one of the biggest challenges stems from the belief systems of learners owing to not completely understanding authentic language use. In parallel to difficulty in comprehension, foreign language learners may lose their motivation. It is valuable to infer that psychological aspects may have an impact on vocabulary learning considering the process is often long and complicated. From this perspective, the bulk of language learners reported their concerns about the difficulties related to expanding their vocabulary and how to accomplish the demanding work of learning thousands of

vocabulary items (Hulstijn, 2001). Aydoğan and Gönen (2020) indicated that EFL learners did not have the same reflection with native speakers of that language and this situation includes a specific barrier to learning English. Likewise, Khan (2011) asserted that learners may fear making mistakes that can hinder the vocabulary learning process. Additionally, Oxford (1990) highlighted that vocabulary does not follow strict rules like grammar does and this makes vocabulary learning unpredictable. Specifically, Almusharraf (2018) noted that relying too much on teachers and lacking proficiency in the English language learning can impede vocabulary learning.

Huckin (1995) believed that insufficient vocabulary is the biggest challenge faced by second language readers. Supporting this belief, Huy's study (2015) revealed that a lack of vocabulary makes writing skills hard. Similarly, Tahmina (2023) noticed that EFL learners might feel anxious due to inadequate vocabulary building. In these circumstances, individuals often become hesitant to continue learning words as they may feel distracted by the nonlinear progression of vocabulary. In a similar vein, second language learners may experience frustration due to the extensive amount of vocabulary they need to understand (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Sanaoui, 1995). Thornbury (2002) exemplified how learners feel frustrated when learning English vocabulary via their sample sentences:

"Oral is my weakness and I can't speak a fluent sentence in English. Sometimes I lack useful vocabulary to express my opinions."

"My problem is that I forget the words soon after I have looked in the dictionary. For example, when I read an English book."

"I would like to improve my vocabulary. I have the feeling that I always use the same idiomatic expressions to express different sorts of things."

"I'd like to enlarge my vocabulary (this word I also had to find in the dictionary). Too often my speaking is hard caused by missing words." (Thornbury, 2002, p.13)

Additionally, language learners may be disappointed with their word choice when trying to produce words. Struggling to extend and broaden their vocabulary size may result in losing interest and motivation. Hence, Burton (1992) clarified that guidance is a significant process for language learners to improve their competency in using and recalling the vocabulary items effectively.

Higa (1965) explained five aspects for the difficulty level in vocabulary learning from a psycholinguistic perspective: (1) inherent difficulty in learning a word, (2) the interaction between previously learned words and a new word being learned, (3) the association with different words to be learned simultaneously, (4) the connection between the words being learned in an order, and (5) the effect of repeated presentation of words to be learned. The researcher (1965) affirmed that a word in a foreign language can pose inherent difficulty if the meaning of this word is not linguistically encoded in the learners' native language. In a similar vein, Karakaş (2020) reported that different codes may impede the learning process and make it more challenging. For instance, English speakers may struggle to express the meaning of 'uncle' as this word consists of different meanings in Turkish 'dayı' and 'amca'. Besides, Turkish learners may interfere with some words such as 'take' and 'get' since the translation of these words corresponds to 'almak' in Turkish meaning. It can be deduced that learners can become successful in using the right word in a sentence. This may occur when they have an extensive amount of information and exposure to that language. Allen (1983) highlighted the importance of using proper words since inappropriate vocabulary may confine communication. As mentioned previously, knowing a word is required to retrieve the words and reuse them in various contexts. Owing to the nature of YLs, forgetting a word is inevitable without adequate background knowledge. Yıldız and Mirioğlu (2019) reported from their semi-structured interviews that six out of ten participants were dissatisfied with their ability to retain vocabulary. For this reason, those participants attempted to address this challenge by writing the words multiple times. Moreover, fifty percent of respondents admitted to experiencing challenges with pronunciation both in writing and also in finding the correct usage in the sentences. Since YLs may find vocabulary learning

tedious, they may be incapable of spelling or writing the words properly. Remarkably, vocabulary learning mostly depends on individual attempts and efforts to overcome challenges and vocabulary may hold foremost challenges for foreign language learners (Baskin et al., 2017).

Copland et al. (2014) conducted a comprehensive study involving 4459 teachers to identify possible difficulties faced by YLs. The findings revealed that YLs primarily struggle with building vocabulary in writing. According to Rohmatillah (2017), learners encountered problems in pronunciation, writing and spelling, grammatical structure, the appropriate use of vocabulary, and idiomatic phrases that may lead to uncertainty. Thornbury (2002) emphasized the misconception related to vocabulary length since it can lead to misunderstanding on the grounds that short words are simple and long words are complicated. Given that ‘advice’ and ‘advise’ words are quite short and may seem simple but they present challenges in understanding their proper usage. Thus, Thornbury (2002) demonstrated that pronunciation, grammar, spelling, idiomatic expressions, word length, and overall complexity could determine the difficulty level in vocabulary learning. Similarly, Salam and Nurnisa (2021) indicated that pronunciation, meaning, word length, and spelling possibly lead to difficulty in language learning (cited in Rosyada-AS and Apoko, 2023, p. 490). Supporting this idea, Reskiawan et al. (2020) highlighted that language learners found pronunciation, spelling and meaning of the words difficult.

Türkiye placed 34th out of 35 European nations and 64th out of 111 countries worldwide according to the English Proficiency Index data (EF EPI, 2022). This possesses our country in the low proficiency category (Soner, 2007). Çelebi (2006) claimed that the curriculum is overloaded with grammatical structures and the methodological changes in language learning may remain obscure. Consequently, language learners often struggle with language use and comprehension due to limited vocabulary experience. Textbooks usually provide unknown words with visual aids or the list with their equivalents in the learners’ native language. On the other hand, learners are often constrained by limited vocabulary learning experiences and reading

through contextual clues (Hague, 1987). More specifically, Özmat's (2017) study illustrated that seventh and eleventh-grade students do not enjoy reading texts with excessive number of unfamiliar words. Those participants reported the necessity of scaffolding for learning and remembering vocabulary items easily. Aparı (2016) elaborated on the challenges in vocabulary instruction for Turkish EFL pupils and it was found that students tend to learn vocabulary items passively and they generally memorize the words through rote learning and spoken words through repetition. Delimasari et al. (2023) commented that this passive involvement in language learning prevents students from becoming effective language learners. In this regard, Keysan (2020) focused on the difficulties posed by the discrepancies between languages. To illustrate, English consists of a great number of letters and sounds (Khalilzadeh, 2014). More precisely, as Sipra (2013) mentioned that English has 26 letters but it includes more distinct sounds. Furthermore, Mandıralı (2022) indicated that many respondents admitted their struggle with English vocabulary citing that they were incapable of reading and understanding the words. Additionally, the researcher (2022) noted that learners forgot the words since they did not study efficiently and were unaware of effective strategy use. Regarding the cognitive process of YLs in vocabulary learning, they expressed challenges in comprehending the structures of assignments or studying autonomously at home. Mandıralı (2022) identified a wide range of challenges experienced by students including their personal beliefs, financial difficulties, and difficulties in accessing the Internet. Additionally, Keskin (2019) focused on several barriers encountered by YLs in the English lessons specifically in public elementary school levels. These obstacles depend on institutions, instructors, teachers, learners, and the social community in the learning process. In this regard, Keskin (2019) noted the challenges related to learners themselves: they have short attention spans, they are impatient for learning, they may not have developed their first language skills, they can easily forget the words, and they are deprived of motivational issues.

Cobb and Horst (2004) argued that vocabulary learning can be intimidating. They focused on identifying the most essential words to learn first by gaining insight into new vocabulary items. In this respect, Uslu (1996) exemplified some challenges

faced with vocabulary practices noting that it is an endless and exhausting process. According to Ölmez (2014), vocabulary instruction is often exhausting and demanding that may pose difficulties for both learners and instructors. From a different perspective, Khan (2011) indicated that Saudi EFL learners have difficulty in spelling, pronunciation, and differentiating some sounds in English. Undoubtedly, not only similarities but also differences between languages may hinder vocabulary learning. Rogers (1995) expressed that the similarities between learners' first language and new vocabulary items can affect perceived difficulty level. Beyond the word knowledge, language learners may encounter issues with retrieval of the words. Wahyuningsih et al. (2023) acknowledged that many learners faced obstacles related to remembering the words. In particular, Arochman et al. (2023) noted that learners experienced difficulties in expressing their ideas due to limited vocabulary knowledge and encountered problems related to memorization. Ay (2006) believed that forgetting vocabulary is inevitable unless continual works are maintained. For this reason, strategy instruction is also crucial for instructors to alleviate the complexity of language learning and practice. Akın and Seferoğlu (2004) argued that explaining vocabulary consumes time claiming that there is no affordable time for students to practice vocabulary in classroom settings. In addition to that, some researchers (İnceçay, 2012; Kızıldağ, 2009; Tılfaroğlu & Öztürk, 2007) indicated that crowded classrooms can interfere with vocabulary practices during the feedback and assistance for students. In Türkiye, the curriculum of YLs includes only two lessons per week and vocabulary is generally taught through traditional methods such as isolated lists of words or visuals, songs and memorization. Yolcu (2019) inferred that some teachers preferred giving a wordlist or writing the words on the board before starting a unit. Their preference stemmed from the limited weekly lessons and a demanding curriculum affecting both learners and teachers. Hence, those teachers confirmed that they had to use the quickest and easiest methods to present vocabulary items. Moreover, they added their concerns about potentially falling behind the curriculum. Since teaching and learning vocabulary is an endeavor task, there has been an increased demand for boosting vocabulary learning from the initial exposure to the proficiency level.

2.8. Language learning strategies (LLSs)

Brown (2007) reported that “Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information” (p. 119). In recent years, there has been a major shift from a teacher-oriented approach to a learner-centered approach as stated by Lessard-Clouston (1997). This change underscores the essence of individuals taking responsibility for their learning processes. To determine the effectiveness of vocabulary learning, many experts have focused on language learning strategies (LLSs). Since the 1970s, researchers have been interested in exploring how successful second language learners employ these strategies. There were some attempts for identifying good language learners and low proficient learners by means of their LLS use. According to Bialystok (1983), LLSs are defined as “activities in which the learner may engage to improve target language competence” (p. 101). Rubin (1987) explained that these strategies are related to getting, keeping, retrieving, and reusing knowledge. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) identified LLSs as “the special ideas or actions use to help them comprehend, acquire or retain new information” (p. 1). Oxford (1990) highlighted the significance of LLSs stating that they are “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations” (p. 8).

Table 2. *Features of Language Learning Strategies*

1. Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence
2. Allow learners to become more self-directed
3. Expand the role of teachers
4. Are problem- oriented
5. Are specific actions taken by the learner
6. Involve many aspects of the learner, not just cognitive
7. Support learning both directly and indirectly
8. Are not always observable
9. Are often conscious
10. Can be taught
11. Are flexible
12. Are influenced by a variety of factors

(Oxford,1990, p.9)

As seen in Table 2, Oxford (1990) provided the core aspects of LLSs. Language learners have unique learning styles in the EFL environment. As indicated by Robinson (2002), some language learners may learn fast while others advance more slowly. It is believed that the language learning process can be affected by LLSs. Thus, it is important to shed light on how the use of LLSs can affect learners' engagement with the learning process.

In accordance with Schmitt's (1997) view, language proficiency is largely determined by individuals' efforts. It is expected that the more responsibility learners embrace for their learning process, the more successful they might be. This has led to a rising interest in the LLSs utilized by good language learners. Rubin (1975) acknowledged that the characteristics of good language learners including their willingness to guess, eagerness to communicate, comfort with making mistakes, focus on structure and meaning, using all practice possibilities, and monitoring their speech as well as others.

Nation (1990) expressed the growing demand for LLSs "Because of the large number of low-frequency words and because of their infrequent occurrence and narrow range, it is best to teach learners strategies for dealing with these words rather than to teach the words themselves" (p.159). Additionally, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) reported that LLSs are "readily teachable" (p.291). From another perspective, Tseng et al. (2006) favored the use of the term "self-regulation" instead of "LLSs" but this term did not become widely popular.

O'Malley et al. (1985) alleged that definition of LLSs was ambiguous, and varying opinions on them created confusion in the classification. For this reason, it became apparent that some researchers made a big effort to develop an extensive taxonomy of LLSs.

2.8.1. Rubin's Classification of LLS

Rubin (1987) highlighted the significance of LLSs by focusing on the role of independent and autonomous learners in the process. In Rubin's (1987) earlier work, various learning strategies have been identified such as observations in the classroom and tutorial situations, videotapes, self-reported student diaries, and strip stories. Rubin (1981) divided LLSs into two broad terms: direct strategies and indirect strategies.

As explained by Hişmanoğlu (2000), learning strategies can be categorized into subcategories incorporating communication strategies and social strategies. According to Rubin (1981), LLSs may directly aid instruction through methods such as observing, memorization, prediction, inductive or deductive reasoning and practice while also indirectly enhancing the language learning process.

Following Rubin's classification, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990) developed their own taxonomies. Accordingly, Oxford (1990) extended this classification providing a more comprehensive taxonomy of LLSs.

2.8.2. O'Malley and Chamot's Classification of LLS

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) divided LLSs into three groups: cognitive strategies (rehearsal, organization, inferencing, summarizing, reducing, imagery, transfer, elaboration), metacognitive strategies (selective attention, planning, monitoring, evaluating), and social/ affective strategies (self- talk, cooperation and questioning for classification).

Table 3. *O'Malley and Chamot's Classification of LLS*

Metacognitive Strategies	Cognitive Strategies	Social/affective Strategies
1. Planning: • advance organizers, • directed attention, • functional planning, • selective attention, • delayed production	• Resourcing, repetition, reduction • Grouping, imagery, note-taking • Auditory representation and inferencing • Keyword method, elaboration, transfer • Summarizing, recombination, and translation	• Cooperation • Questioning for clarification • Self-task
2. monitoring: self-monitoring		
3. Evaluation: Self-evaluation		

(O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.119-120)

2.8.3. Oxford's Classification of LLS

Oxford (1990) expanded on the taxonomies of LLSs by dividing them into two broad classifications: direct strategies and indirect strategies. In light of her classification, direct strategies are typically unconscious, yet indirect strategies depend on conscious procedural knowledge. Direct strategies include memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. By contrast, indirect strategies encompass metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. Oxford provided "The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning" to gather data on second language learners. This tool has been widely adopted by many researchers in the field (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989).

Table 4. *Oxford's Classification of LLS*

1. Direct Strategies	2. Indirect Strategies
a. Memory strategies: Creating mental linkages, applying images, reviewing well, employing actions	a. Metacognitive Strategies: centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning, evaluating your learning
b. Cognitive Strategies: Practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, creating structure for input and output	b. Affective Strategies: lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself, taking your emotional temperature.
c. Compensation Strategies: guessing intelligently, overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	c. Social Strategies: asking questions, cooperating with others, emphasizing with others

(Oxford, 1990, p.17)

2.8.4. Stern's Classification of LLS

Stern (1992) divided LLSs into five main categories including management and planning, cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and communicative-experiential strategies. Learners employ these strategies to take charge of their own learning. Learners are encouraged to employ appropriate strategies with the support of teachers.

2.8.5. Cohen's Classification of LLS

Cohen (1988) emphasized the importance of language use strategies and LLSs. He (1988) categorized LLSs into four sections: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. It is important to note that social and affective strategies differ from the taxonomies of O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

2.9. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs)

Maiguashca (1993) contributed that vocabulary was formerly considered a “poor relation” of language teaching but then it has become a “guest of honor.” VLSs have paved the way for a key topic among linguists, psychologists, and language teachers over the past two decades (Levenston, 1979). Therefore, many researchers have focused on the challenges related to expanding a large vocabulary repertoire for effective communication in a range of events.

Cameron (2001) indicated the significance of strategies as crucial tools that may help learners retrieve vocabulary. Catalan (2003) described VLSs as “second language learners’ comprehension of the methods used to learn vocabulary, (a) to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words, (b) to recall them in for a long time, (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use in oral or written skills” (p. 56). Intaraprasert (2004) also described VLSs saying that “any set of techniques or learning behaviors, which language learners reported using to find the meaning of a new word, to recall the

knowledge of previously learned words, and to extend one's knowledge of vocabulary” (p. 9).

As opposed to the large quantity of lexical items that learners must grasp, EFL teachers are assigned very little class time for vocabulary emphasis (Scharle & Szabo, 2000). Furthermore, Catalan (2003) and Read (2000) asserted that vocabulary learning is a perplexing endeavor. Given these circumstances, VLSs became increasingly valuable as the aphorism confirmed, “Give a man a fish, and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he eats for a lifetime.”

Rivers (1983) commented on vocabulary learning procedures by saying “Vocabulary cannot be taught. It can be presented, explained, included in all kinds of activities, and expressed in all manner of associations (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory if one wishes), but ultimately it is learned by the individual” (pp. 127-128).

Nation (2001) indicated that VLSs promote learning of a great quantity number of words for all language levels from beginners to advanced learners. As a subset of LLSs, VLSs are expected to fulfill learners’ needs by facilitating both receptive and productive vocabulary learning (Nation, 2001). Since each individual has a unique learning style and strategy, determining effective VLSs can help learners take responsibility for their progress as indicated by Tok and Yığın (2014). Moreover, learners can be guided in their vocabulary development without any constraints thanks to VLSs (Sökmen, 1997). Cengizhan (2011) asserted that learners were motivated and confident in vocabulary learning on the condition that they were aware of effective strategy use. Besides, Nation (1990) believed that language learners need to commit to learning new words to become successful autonomous learners. Hence, language learners need to experience how vocabulary is comprehended, retained, recalled, used, and expanded in that language.

2.10. Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

It became clear that a major movement in the history of LLSs research occurred between the 1980s and 1990s. This has led many researchers (Cohen, 1990; Decarrico, 2001; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Intaraprasert, 2004; Lawson & Hogben, 1996; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 1997; Stoffer, 1995) to report VLSs quite noteworthy.

Oxford (1990) confirmed that “There is no agreement on exactly what strategies are, how many strategies exist, how they should be defined, demarcated, and categorized, and whether it is- or ever will be- possible to create a real, scientifically validated hierarchy of strategies” (p. 17).

2.10.1. Stoffer’s (1995) Classification of VLS

Stoffer (1995) developed a questionnaire consisting of nine categories based on analysis of a self-composed 53 items. The findings illustrated that the use of VLSs was linked to some factors including language learning background, language experiences, age, gender, prior VLS training, and course levels. In Table 5, Stoffer’s classification of VLSs was provided.

Table 5. *Stoffer’s Classification of VLS*

1. Strategies involving authentic language use
2. Strategies involving creative activities
3. Strategies used for self-motivation
4. Strategies used to create mental linkages
5. Memory strategies
6. Visual/auditory strategies
7. Strategies involving physical action
8. Strategies used to overcome anxiety
9. Strategies used to organize words

(Stoffer, 1995, as cited in Kudo, 1999, p.6)

2.10.2. Gu and Johnson's Classification of VLS

Gu and Johnson (1996) developed a framework for VLSs based on responses from 850 advanced-level Chinese learners. The researchers classified 91 items into two groups: metacognitive regulation and cognitive strategies. Within metacognitive regulation, selective attention and self-initiation were identified as specific subsets. The study revealed that learners did not extensively utilize each strategy, instead, they consistently used the same VLSs.

Table 6. *Gu and Johnson's Classification of VLS*

STRATEGIES	Metacognitive	• Selective attention: identifying essential words for comprehension • Self-initiation: using a variety of means to make the meaning of words clear
	Cognitive	• Guessing • Dictionary use • Note-taking
	Memory	• Rehearsal: repetition, word lists • Encoding: association (imagery, visual, auditory)
	Activation	• Using new words in different context

(Gu and Johnson, 1996, pp. 650-651)

2.10.3. Lawson and Hogben's Classification of VLS

Table 7. *Lawson and Hogben's Classification of VLS*

Repetition	Word feature analysis	Simple elaboration	Complex elaboration
• Reading of related words • Simple rehearsal • Writing of word and meaning • Cumulative rehearsal • testing	• spelling • word classification • suffix	• sentence translation • Simple use of context • Appearance similarity • Sound link	• Complex use of context • Paraphrase, • mnemonic

(Lawson and Hogben, 1996, p.118-119)

15 Italian female learners at the university were included in a think-aloud procedure to examine VLSs. Lawson and Hogben (1996) defined four categories including naming repetition, word features, and simple and complex elaboration.

2.10.4. Schmitt's Classification of VLS

Schmitt (1997) combined Oxford's (1990) LLSs with an extensive taxonomy of VLSs and it is considered the most comprehensive classification among available taxonomies (Çelik & Toptaş, 2010; Takac, 2008). This classification provides information from various sources and is applicable to all levels (Rabadi, 2016; Alqarni, 2018). It also focuses on simplicity in use, allowing for proper comparisons with other research findings (Catalan, 2003).

Schmitt (1997) developed a taxonomy that consists of 58 items into two distinctive classifications: discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Consolidation strategies rely on organizing words for efficient recall, while discovery strategies focus on grasping new terms and the meaning. In particular, discovery strategies encourage learners to define unfamiliar words. Within this category, Schmitt (1997) identified determination strategies that consist of guessing from the context, using a dictionary, and social need to ask someone to recognize unfamiliar words.

Consolidation strategies encompass cognitive, social, memory, and metacognitive strategies. Among these strategies, consolidation and social strategies (CONS-SOC) involve interaction with others such as group or peer collaboration. In turn, Schmitt (1997) describes cognitive strategies (CONS-COG) as “manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner” (p. 205). Consolidation- Memory strategies (CONS-MEM) enable learners to depict words that may relate new associations to previous knowledge. Schmitt (1997) stated that memory strategies also called “mnemonics” are linked to new and previous knowledge.

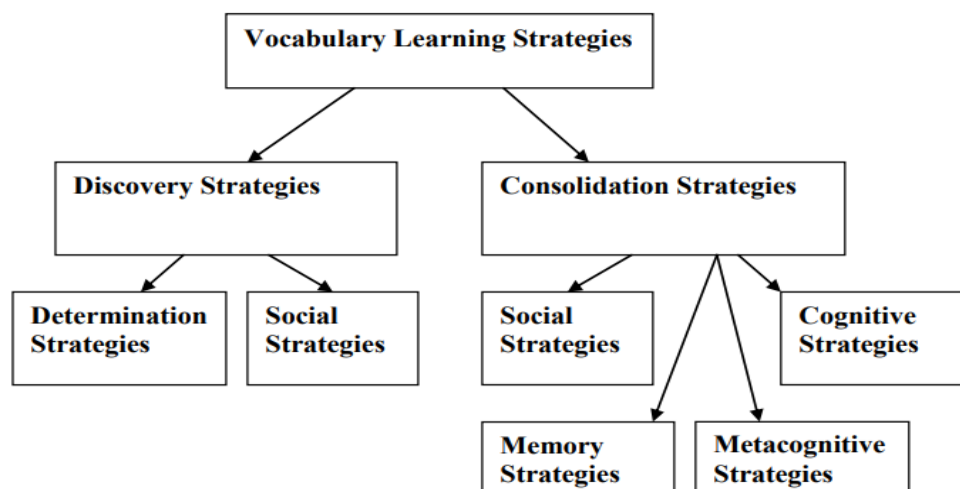


Figure 1. *Schmitt's (1997) vocabulary learning strategies taxonomy (pp. 205-210)*

2.10.4.1. Discovery Strategies

In accordance with Schmitt's (1997) VLS classification, discovery strategies are elicited by learners when they encounter unfamiliar words for the first time. As illustrated in Figure 1 above, these discovery strategies are generated through determination strategies or social strategies. Determination strategies are activated when learners encounter unknown words such as guessing their meaning from contextual clues provided in the text (Schmitt, 1997). Besides, learners analyze linguistic aspects of a word including its affixes, roots and parts of speech to discover its meaning through the use of determination strategies. Another determination strategy item is to use dictionaries to refer to the meaning of the word, visual pictures, facial expressions, and first language cognates. Briefly, determination strategies encompass seven strategy items related to VLSs.

Social strategies are a subcategory of discovery strategies used by language learners when they attempt to learn a word through social interaction with people such as their teachers, friends, and family. These strategies include asking teachers or classmates for the meaning of the words and asking for help to find synonyms, translations, and paraphrases. Learners can strengthen their comprehension of word

meanings by engaging in conversations with others (Schmitt, 1997). Social strategies are classified as part of discovery strategies.

2.10.4.2. Consolidation Strategies

Schmitt (1997) elicited consolidation strategies including memory, social, metacognitive, and cognitive strategies. As illustrated in Figure 1, most strategies fall under the category of consolidation strategies with the exception of social (discovery) strategies and determination strategies. Learners are expected to use these strategies when they consolidate a word that has been encountered before. In this regard, learners may use consolidation strategies to remember the meaning of the word, retrieve it easily, and recall it during the learning process. Social strategies (CONS-SOC) are a subset of consolidation strategies that focus on interaction with native speakers and studying the first language translation of the words in groups (Schmitt, 1997). According to Schmitt (1997), interacting with native speakers is an excellent resource for learning vocabulary. In this regard, Ghazal (2007) supported the idea that recalling a word can be enhanced through collaborative work.

Another subset of consolidation strategies are memory strategies, also known as mnemonics. This strategy involves remembering the associations with the words. According to Schmitt's (1997) classification, memory strategies enable language learners to use linguistic aspects such as semantic maps, keywords, physical movement, connections between synonyms and antonyms, and saying the words aloud. Schmitt (2000) emphasized that memory strategies can assist learners in retrieving words for a long time. In short, memory strategies consist of eleven items related to VLSs.

Cognitive strategies focus on mental abilities as they require verbal and written repetitions, the use of vocabulary notebooks and word lists to retrieve a word. Schmitt (1997) underlined that many countries often utilize the verbal repetition strategy to improve language proficiency. Metacognitive strategies consist of various

techniques such as using English language media, spaced word practice, testing oneself, and studying the word outside of school. In Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire (VLSQ), metacognitive strategies encompass the last five items.

Table 8. *Schmitt's Classification of VLS*

Strategy group	Strategy
<u>Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning</u>	
DET	Analyze part of speech
DET	Analyze affixes and roots
DET	Check for L1 cognate
DET	Analyze any available pictures or gestures
DET	Guess meaning from textual context
DET	Use a dictionary (bilingual or monolingual)
SOC	Ask teacher for a synonym, paraphrase or L1 translations of a new word
SOC	Ask classmates for meaning
<u>Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered</u>	
SOC	Study and practice meaning in a group
SOC	Interact with native speakers
MEM	Connect word to a previous personal experience
MEM	Associate the word with its coordinates
MEM	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms
MEM	Use semantic maps
MEM	Image word form
MEM	Image word's meaning
MEM	Use keyword method
MEM	Group words together to study them
MEM	Study the spelling of a word
MEM	Say the word aloud when studying
MEM	Use physical action when learning a word
COG	Verbal repetition
COG	Written repetition
COG	Word list
COG	Put English labels on physical objects
COG	Keep a vocabulary notebook
MET	Use English language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)
MET	Use spaced word practice (expanding rehearsal)
MET	Test oneself with word tests
MET	Skip or pass new word
MET	Continue to study over time

(Schmitt, 1997, pp. 205-206)

2.10.5. Cook's Classification of VLS

Cook (2001) recommended strategies for understanding meaning and acquiring vocabulary. In accordance with Cook's (2001) taxonomy, language learners can decode interpretations by predicting contextual references, using a dictionary, and connecting vocabulary to cognates.

Table 9. *Cook's Classification of VLS*

Category 1: Strategies for getting meaning
• Guessing from situation or context • Using a dictionary • Making deductions from the word-form • Link to cognates
Category 2: Strategies for acquiring words
• Repetition and rote learning • Organizing words in the mind • Linking to existing knowledge

(Cook, 2001, pp. 66-73).

2.10.6. Nation's Classification of VLS

Nation (2001) developed a VLS taxonomy but it differs from previous classifications in that it was not based on research findings. In light of this theory, VLSs can be divided into three categories as follows: planning, source, and processes. The first category, planning includes decisions about where, how, and how often to focus on vocabulary. This section deals with word knowledge selection, strategy selection, and planning repetition as described by Apari (2016). The second category encompasses various elements of understanding a word such as looking up the dictionary whether in one's first or second language, utilizing context, analyzing the word itself, and making analogies with the native language and other languages. The final category includes methods for developing vocabulary knowledge like noticing, retrieving, and generating strategies for effective learning.

2.10.7. Intaraprasert's Classification of VLS

Intaraprasert (2004) identified the use of VLSs among 133 EST learners including “(1) strategies for discovering the meaning of new vocabulary items (DMV), (2) strategies to recall newly acquired vocabulary (RKV), and (3) strategies to expand the knowledge of vocabulary items (EKV)” (Sedighi, 2016, p. 38).

Table 10. *Intaraprasert's Classification Of VLS*

Category 1: Strategies to Discover the Meaning of New Vocabulary Items (DMV)

DMV1: use a Thai-English dictionary

DMV2: use an English-Thai dictionary

DMV3: use an English-English dictionary

DMV4: guess the meaning from the context

DMV5: ask one's classmate or friends

DMV6: ask one's teacher

DMV7: ask someone other than one's teacher, classmate or friends

DMV8: look at the word roots, prefixes or suffixes

DMV9: use an on-line dictionary

DMV10: use an electronic dictionary

Category 2: Strategies to Retain the Knowledge of Newly learned Vocabulary Items (RKV)

RKV1: Memorize with or without a word list

RKV2: keep a vocabulary notebook

RKV3: group words based on the synonymity or antonymity

RKV4: associate new words with the already learned ones

RKV5: use new words in writing

RKV6: use new words to converse with peers

RKV7: speak Thai with English loan-words

RKV8: keep words as the computer background

RKV9: keep word cards or word charts in one's bedroom

RKV10: keep words as rhymes or songs

RKV11: use pictures

Category 3: Strategies to Expand the Knowledge of Vocabulary Items (EKV)

EKV1: listen to a radio program in English especially the one for language learning

EKV2: Watch a television program in English especially the one for language learning

EKV3: surf the Internet especially the websites for language learning

EKV4: read different types of different English printed materials, e.g. leaflets, brochures, textbooks or newspapers

EKV5: play games in English, e.g. crossword, or hangman

EKV6: practice translating from Thai into English and vice versa

EKV7: watch an English-speaking film with Thai-narrated scripts

EKV8: attend classes of every module regularly

EKV9: listen to English songs

EKV10: do extra vocabulary exercises from different sources, e.g. book, newspapers or the Internet.

(Intraprasert,2004, pp.55-56)

2.10.8. Dalton and Grisham's Classification of eVoc

Strategies

Dalton and Grisham (2011) exemplified ten strategies that represent electronic strategies used for vocabulary learning. This term “eVoc Strategies” highlights the strategies’ reliance on digital tools and resources as well as the learning potential offered by media and technology.

Regarding the ten strategies, the first five eVoc strategies emphasize autonomous learners and explicit vocabulary teaching. The sixth and seventh strategies provide two online resources as immediate reading assistance. The eighth and ninth strategies focus on enhancing learners’ vocabulary learning. The last strategy is associated with increasing engagement with words through online word games.

Table 11. *Dalton and Grisham's Classification of eVoc Strategies*

1. Acquire the lexical items from the word relationship describing pictures through the text
2. Have a technology integrated word knowledge field trip
3. Integrate joy and word knowledge through digital games
4. Make learners to utilize media to state knowledge of word
5. Use the benefits of teaching tools which are digital lexical reference tools
6. Help reading and immediate vocabulary learning by the means of word reference help
7. The usage of translators helps English learners as immediate support
8. The reading enhancement by reading online passages
9. Rising the reading level through the usage of audiobooks and digital passage listening activities
10. Have a mix of lexical item knowledge and social services

(Dalton and Grisham, 2011, pp.308-315)

As mentioned earlier, the various taxonomies outlined specific VLSs that may differ from or somehow resemble one another. Scholars attempted to considerably enhance VLS classifications through adaptations over the years. Notably, Nation (2001) argued that only defining VLS classification and expecting learners to use all of them was insufficient. Therefore, some researchers have continued to elicit VLS taxonomies including slight modifications.

2.11. Related Studies on Vocabulary Learning Strategies in the World

Research studies on VLSs have focused on a variety of aspects including their overall effectiveness, their usefulness for different groups and proficiency levels and how they can be compared to other strategies. Researchers have also investigated how frequently these strategies are used, how they are associated with other relevant variables, how useful they are in relation to achievement and outcomes as well as strategy instruction and training. Since the late 1980s, many studies have addressed various concerns related to the use of VLSs including factors such as proficiency (Porte, 1988), age and gender (Catalan, 2003; Gu, 2002), and specific learning tasks (Brown & Perry, 1991).

Ahmed (1989) investigated VLS preferences among 300 Sudanese participants, focusing on the success and challenges among EFL learners. Through

self-report and interviews, it was granted that the good and the poor learners employed different VLSs. Competent learners tended to use monolingual or bilingual dictionaries whereas less proficient learners were keen on taking notes and ignoring some unknown words. In terms of the strategy preferences, Porte (1988) noted that unsuccessful learners had a narrow-down approach to vocabulary learning strategies.

Sanaoui (1995) interviewed adult English and French English learners in Canada to explore vocabulary learning practices. These participants were categorized as structured and unstructured language learners.

Another comprehensive study on VLSs was conducted by Gu and Johnson (1996) to investigate the association between strategy use of learners and their vocabulary learning outcomes. This study consisted of 850 Chinese undergraduate second language learners from 27 different classes. The findings of the questionnaire indicated that learners employed several VLSs such as note-taking, guessing, using dictionaries, word formation, and contextual learning. In contrast, memory strategies were unfavorable among Chinese students. Additionally, Gu (2018) altered this questionnaire by reducing some items and updating it after years. Notably, the results were consistent with the previous study. This demonstrates that many participants believed vocabulary plays a major role in second and foreign language learning (Gu, 2018). Specifically, the memorization strategy was the least used whereas learners tended to use guessing and note-taking strategies (Gu, 2018).

One of the groundbreaking types of research was introduced by Schmitt (1997) which adapted from Oxford's (1990) "Strategy Inventory for Language Learning". In this study, 600 ESL learners ranging in age in the Japanese context participated to share their preferences about VLSs. The use of VLSs varied according to the participants' age since some of the strategies were more advantageous at particular ages than others (Schmitt, 1997). To illustrate this, university students stated that bilingual dictionary use and guessing from context were popular. In turn, less

advanced learners tended to use more straightforward strategies. The major findings illustrated that participants found ‘bilingual dictionary use’ ‘verbal repetition’, and ‘written repetition’ strategies more practical than others. Schmitt (1997) noted that these findings depend solely on the Japanese context. In this regard, it is feasible that different social backgrounds and age groups could lead to varying interpretations (Schmitt et al., 1997). Therefore, it can be inferred that cultural aspects and specific variations between the learners’ native language and other languages may influence their strategy preferences. Reasonably, research studies may include different findings and implications regarding participants’ strategy preferences. In a similar vein, Gu (2003) underlined that “Strategies that work in one educational, cultural and linguistic context might not work in another” (p. 18).

Kojik-Sabo and Lightbown (1999) studied the use of VLSs among learners and their correlation with second language competency. This study included two groups of learners: 47 ESL and 43 EFL learners. It was found that ESL learners were better able to apply language in real-life circumstances, while EFL learners tended to seek out reasons to use the language.

In a study conducted by Park (2001), the usage of VLSs among Korean students was investigated through an adapted version of Schmitt’s VLSQ (1997). Those participants encompass different grade levels, age and genders. The findings demonstrated that Korean EFL learners often utilized social and determination strategies. Additionally, this study uncovered that as learners aged, they preferred using more cognitive and difficult strategies for vocabulary learning.

Zarafshan (2002) investigated the general use of VLSs among Iranian students. The findings indicated that the curriculum did not incorporate social strategies within the traditional approach. Memory strategies and cognitive strategies were commonly utilized whereas social strategies and metacognitive strategies were rarely used.

In another study, Catalan (2003) scrutinized the impact of gender on VLS use with a sample of 581 participants. The results revealed disparities in how females and males used VLSs. In particular, females were more likely to employ formal rules and input elicitation strategies whereas males tended to use visual VLSs.

Mizumoto and Takeuchi (2009) studied the effectiveness of VLSs among 146 female university learners in Japan. After ten weeks of strategy instruction, they found an increase in the frequency of some specific strategies which positively influenced language proficiency. In another study, Mizumoto (2012) scrutinized the association between self-efficacy and vocabulary size noting that VLSs had a positive impact on self-efficacy.

In the Iranian context, Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) explored VLS choices of 74 EFL learners. The researchers identified that determination strategies were the most frequently employed whereas learners rarely utilized social strategies. Kafipour (2006) supported this finding that EFL learners in Iran do not typically select social strategies due to a lack of sufficient social interaction opportunities in the EFL context. In a broad sense, these findings were consistent with Schmitt's (1997) idea related to the different aspects between countries and cultures.

Kulikova (2015) worked with 97 participants who began studying Russian at an American university to analyze VLSs and beliefs about vocabulary learning. This descriptive analysis highlighted that the participants were highly motivated. They favored strategies such as dictionary use, guessing, and note-taking strategies but they generally did not tend to use repetition strategies. Likewise, Wu (2005) underpinned that EFL learners favored the use of dictionaries and digital dictionary use based on the data from Schmitt's classification of VLSs (1997).

Astika G. (2015) conducted a study to find out the language strategy variations among 706 secondary school students regarding their levels, gender, and

abilities. The findings illustrated that students preferred using dictionaries to learn unknown words.

Noprianto and Purnawarman (2019) investigated 116 first-grade high school students' VLSs use and their knowledge of affixes to determine the frequency of VLSs used by Indonesian high school students. The primary preferred strategy was related to determination strategies 'using a bilingual dictionary', while the second frequently used strategy was 'asking their classmates for the meaning of unknown words' in social strategies. The study concluded that knowledge of affixes was influenced by the use of VLSs.

Ghalebi et al. (2020) studied 218 university students from the English Language Teaching (ELT) department with various degrees (BA, MA, and PhD) to determine whether the level of education influenced the use of VLSs. Through an open-ended and closed-ended questionnaire, the study found no significant difference between MA and PhD levels. However, a significant variation was found in the use of VLSs between undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Another study by Duong (2022) investigated the use of VLSs of 270 Vietnamese learners studying for English Specific Purpose. In mixed methods research, the study indicated that learners' psychological factors and their opportunities for word formation affected their strategy preferences. Additionally, metacognitive strategies were the most commonly used whereas strategy was social strategies were the least prevalent.

2.12. Related Studies on VLS in Türkiye

Many studies have focused on investigating learners' VLSs (Fan, 2003; Schmitt, 1997). A review of the literature on VLSs in Türkiye indicates that most research studies have concentrated on higher levels of learners such as university

students (Aparı, 2016; Barbaros, 2018; Bora, 2013; Bozatlı, 1988; Bozgeyik, 2011; Büyükyenerel, 1999; Ekmekçi, 1999; Geçkil, 2014; Gürbüz, 2016; Kadioğlu, 2005; Karakoç, 2011; Kesmez, 2020; Kheder, 2022; Özeroğlu, 2023; Özkul-Karagöl, 2023; Serçe, 2013; Şener, 2003; Tataroğlu, 2001; Tezgiden, 2006; Torun, 2010; Tunç-Aslan, 2020; Üster, 2008; Yılmaz, 2020; Yılmaz, 2021; Zabardast-Alamdari, 2010). In turn, some research has explored high school learners (Acar, 2016; Ay, 2006; Aydemir, 2007; Baykul, 2010; Bilican, 2012; Derici, 2019; Güneş, 2023; Hancıoğlu, 2004; Öğmen, 2011; Ölmez, 2014; Yıldız, 2019).

Notably, several researchers (Bilir, 2022; Çelebi, 2012; Çınar, 2019; Fındık, 2020; Kocaman, 2015; Saltuk, 2001; Sarıkaya, 2021; Şerebatır, 2008; Şimşek, 2022; Ünkür, 2019; Yolcu, 2019) have focused on the use of VLSs among secondary school students. On the other hand, studies on the use of VLSs among YLs at primary schools remains scarce (Doğan, 2021; Gök, 2017; Karahan, 2007; Kütük, 2007; Mandıralı, 2022).

Karahan (2007) expressed that elementary-level students have been excluded from vocabulary research due to their age and lack of prior exposure to foreign language. Karahan (2007) also emphasized the difficulties associated with gathering data on VLSs. In this manner, Mandıralı (2022) reported that existing literature contains significant studies on how adults, adolescents, and children learn languages. Similarly, İzci and Sucu (2013) noted that most studies on LLSs have investigated primarily adult learners (Deneme & Ada, 2010; Gürsoy, 2010). However, primary school students have been included in recent studies related to the use of VLSs (Doğan, 2021; Gürsoy, 2014; Mandıralı, 2022).

One of the first attempts to examine the use of VLSs among EFL learners in Türkiye was held by Bozatlı (1998) with 15 freshman university students at Middle East Technical University. The results demonstrated that proficient learners were capable of using more strategies compared to their less proficient classmates.

Likewise, Ekmekçi (1999) was among the first researchers to discover VLS use among Turkish students at Eskişehir Anadolu University. In a descriptive study, the responses demonstrated that learners prefer using various strategies during their learning process. From another point of view, the study found that visual restatement had a negative impact on the TOEFL scores.

Şener (2003) explored the associations between VLS preferences and vocabulary size utilizing Schmitt's VLSQ. Participants were in favor of using memory strategies and determination strategies. More specifically, the most frequently used strategies included note taking, guessing from the context, and social interaction between native speakers while strategies such as keeping a diary and using semantic feature grids were less favored. Overall, the researcher suggested that VLSs might be beneficial for learners in enhancing their vocabulary repertoire.

Şahin (2003) investigated how teaching discovery strategies affect learners' ideas and their use of shared approach use. The study involved 58 university students at Uludağ University and the strategy instruction was provided for six weeks. The research focused on interpreting contexts and using sources such as dictionaries. The findings depicted a positive impact on strategy training although learners' beliefs remained the same. Similarly, Tezgiden (2006) focused on the effects of VLS training on both 24 EFL learners and instructors' participation. After three weeks of instruction through contextual guessing, recording strategies, and dictionary use, the results demonstrated a positive effect on reported strategy use. Nevertheless, it was observed that the three-week instructions did not significantly alter learners' viewpoints of effectiveness of VLSs. In another study, Evcim (2008) scrutinized how the LLSs of students in a preparation class affect vocabulary recall. The findings indicated that a six-week instructional training slightly increased awareness in the experimental group. Likewise, Aktekin and Güven (2007) reported from their experimental study that vocabulary instruction was essential for grasping vocabulary. These researchers aimed to increase awareness of strategy use not only among students but also teachers of English. In a similar vein, Atay and Ozbulgan (2007) conducted an experimental study

that yielded results consistent with those of earlier studies. The study indicates that participants were good at retaining words after undergoing the training. Likewise, Ünal (2006) noted that using an interactive vocabulary strategy may be beneficial for learners. Torun (2010) conducted a study on strategy instruction to investigate learners' vocabulary proficiency after eight weeks of training. The vocabulary proficiency test demonstrated that the experimental group had higher scores than the learners who did not take strategy training in the process. Moreover, Nalkesen (2011) investigated learner autonomy to determine the effectiveness of strategy instruction. Nonetheless, following three weeks of instruction, 20 participants did not demonstrate significant improvements in their ability to become autonomous learners. These findings support Oxford's (1990) suggestion that strategy instruction should consist of at least three different times as follows: an initial training session to raise awareness, a follow-up session and long-term strategy instruction. In 2012, Tılfarlıoğlu and Torun made a good contribution to the field with their experimental research study that supported the VLS training as it made a big difference between the participants. In this regard, participants in the experimental group performed better in using VLSs after completing the test compared to the control group. The scholars concluded that there was an association between strategy use and vocabulary improvement.

Another study indicated by Sahbazian (2004) investigated the VLSs of 934 Turkish university students including some factors such as gender, proficiency level, educational background, school type, and enrollment status of the learners. The findings illustrated that female students employed VLSs more frequently than their male counterparts.

Hancıoğlu (2004) examined the use of VLS among 90 high school students through a questionnaire and thinking-aloud process. The results implied that participants were incapable of utilizing the VLSs that learners were expected to know.

A study conducted by Ay (2006) aimed at finding the VLSs used by ninth-grade students exploring their VLS preferences in relation to some demographic factors. The study focused on whether preferences for VLSs differ substantially based on gender, family income, number of siblings, their parents' educational background and jobs, English proficiency level, and availability of computers and rooms at home. The findings demonstrated that there were meaningful variations in VLS use among learners concerning their mothers' occupation. The researcher suggested that mothers may have a fundamental role in the effective use of VLSs since they may spend more time caring for their children than fathers do at home. This could explain why no significant differences were found in VLS use based on fathers' occupation. Indeed, mothers were either housewives or had more available time to support their children's learning in that study. Additionally, this research did not find a significant correlation between family income, the availability of rooms and computers and the use of VLSs among high school students.

Şerebatır (2008) investigated the use of VLSs among sixth and seventh-grade students based on various factors such as gender, classroom attendance, private lessons, academic accomplishments, attitudes toward English lessons, and the educational level of parents. The study found that girls employed VLSs more than boys. In particular, social strategies were popular among them. Additionally, participants who took private classes employed more social strategies than those who did not. In addition, it was seen that high-level students utilized more social strategies. However, there was no significant difference in the use of VLSs related to the occupation of fathers.

In a cross-sectional study carried out by Tanyer and Öztürk (2014), it was found that VLS preferences were associated with vocabulary size. In another experimental study, Ciftci and Üster (2009) discussed vocabulary teaching and the effects of different contexts. The findings of the study indicated that there were no meaningful variations in outcomes between the applied techniques.

Similar to Şener's (2003) study, Çelik and Toptaş (2010) utilized Schmitt's (1997) VLSQ to investigate the relationship between participants' language level and frequency of VLS use at Ankara University. As one key distinction in their scale, the researchers include five categories of questionnaires rather than six categories. The findings showed that Turkish EFL learners predominantly used determination categories, while metacognitive strategies were the least used. This study highlighted that the less proficient learners tended to use social strategies more than their more advanced counterparts.

In a study carried out by Bozgeyik (2011), vocabulary use and vocabulary size of 252 EFL learners at Gaziantep University were assessed to detect their use of VLS. Bozgeyik (2011) reported that learners enjoyed writing down new words as well as speaking and reading aloud which helped them recall vocabulary more effectively.

Cengizhan (2011) also utilized Schmitt's (1997) VLSQ to explore the most and least prevalent VLSs among high school students in Edirne. The researcher also emphasized differences in strategy use based on gender among 10th and 11th grade students. The findings revealed that females tended to use determination strategies whereas male students mainly employed metacognitive strategies. On the other hand, male students utilized cognitive strategies the least.

Kocaman and Kızılkaya Cumaoğlu (2014) elicited a VLS questionnaire titled "Vocabulary Learning Strategies Scale" to analyze the use of VLSs among sixth and seventh-grade students at secondary school. The researchers presented six VLS groups: cognitive, metacognitive, memory, social, affective, and compensation strategies. Using the same data collection tool, Kılınç (2015) conducted a study with 628 middle school students to examine their VLS usage. The obtained findings revealed that the use of VLSs was higher in schools with better socio-economic status whereas it was low in schools with lower socio-economic status. Similarly, Büyükhıska and Çebi Kozallık (2018) investigated VLSs used by 363 students

enrolled in foreign language programs specifically in ELT and German Language Teaching Departments. The researchers utilized Kocaman and Kızılkaya Cumaoğlu's (2014) questionnaire. The study discovered no significant association between students' classes and their VLS use. However, it was noted that cognitive strategy use differed based on gender. In a related study, Memiş (2018) investigated the VLS preferences of 82 EFL learners (49 females, 33 males) in Türkiye through the same questionnaire developed by Kocaman and Kızılkaya-Cumaoğlu (2014). Memiş (2018) stated that gender did not affect participants' VLS use. Another study by Hişmanoğlu and Turan (2019) aimed at identifying 85 Turkish university English preparation students' VLS use employing the same questionnaire (2014). The results demonstrated a moderate overall use of strategies. Specifically, social strategies were the least frequently employed by the participants. This research underlined a positive correlation between gender, success, and achievement in relation to VLSs. Accordingly, the study conducted by Çevik et al. (2018) employed the aforementioned questionnaire by Kocaman and Kızılkaya Cumaoğlu (2014), to investigate 368 secondary school graders' VLS use based on their proficiency, gender, parents, and storybook reading. The findings indicated that there were no substantial variations in VLS use based on gender aside from cognitive strategies. Females were more likely to use cognitive strategies than males. Proficiency level and parental factors did not show any significant differences in the use of VLSs. Notably, this research displayed that students who read more books tended to use VLSs more frequently.

Ballıdede and Lokmacioğlu (2014) carried out a study on 143 EFL learners (79 elementary level, 64 intermediate level) to investigate the correlations between language learning proficiency and VLSs. The results confirmed that elementary school learners benefited from cognitive strategies such as taking vocabulary notes. On the other hand, they neglected memory strategies such as physical action use. Researchers put forward the view that higher percentage of VLS use is associated with greater proficiency levels as reflected by the intermediate levels. To specify, intermediate-level learners tended to use more complex VLSs compared to beginners including metacognitive strategies.

In a study conducted by Kırmızı and Topçu (2014) explored the VLSs used by 158 EFL learners at Karabük University. The findings showed that learners did not prioritize note-taking strategies. Another study with Karabük University students from three different departments was conducted by Kheder (2022) to detect the frequency of VLS use. The researcher marked ‘flashcards’ as the lowest level of determination strategies whereas learners cited using VLSs to a moderate extent.

A mixed-methods research study by Aparı (2016) consisted of 350 preparatory class students from different departments. Through Schmitt’s (1997) VLSQ and interviews with ten participants, the researcher aimed at identifying the frequency of VLS use among the preparatory class students. The results indicated that learners tended to use social discovery strategies but they did not prefer using memory strategies.

Baskın et al. (2017) scrutinized learners’ VLSs at the Turkish Teaching and Application Center (TÖMER) at Gaziosmanpaşa University. The findings indicated that learners primarily utilized determination strategies whereas they were not inclined to use cognitive strategies. On the basis of learners’ proficiency level (A1), the researchers indicated that learners utilized only simple tasks and materials.

A study carried out by Derici (2019) aimed to explore the VLS preferences of 556 high school students, ranging from most to least favored. The researcher enlarged her study to investigate the correlation between gender, age, school profiles, class level, and the use of VLSs. The data revealed that female students preferred discovery and consolidation strategies more frequently than their male counterparts. In addition, it was reported that students at private schools preferred discovery strategies whereas in science high school students employed consolidation strategies. In a similar vein, Yıldız (2019) investigated VLS use among high school students to identify their preferences ranking them from most to least used. The findings demonstrated that the most popular VLSs involved determination and social discovery

strategies. More specifically, 172 high school students responded that they favored using dictionaries, seeking help from teachers, using visuals, repetition of vocabulary items, and asking peers for assistance. In another study was presented by Aslan-Tunç (2020) to determine the VLSs used by 138 preparatory class learners at a private university. The mixed methods study explored the impact on age, language mastery, and gender on VLS use. Although no significant differences were found among these variables, the scholar (2020) pinpointed major achievements of VLSs such as retrieving words, communicating with others, achieving better scores in exams, and becoming global citizens.

Okyar (2021) elaborated on VLS use among 209 EFL learners (101 females, 108 males) in the Turkish context. The findings indicated that participants used VLSs at a moderate level overall with the exception of metacognitive and affective strategies. Moreover, the data demonstrated that female learners performed better results than male learners in the use of VLSs.

Yılmaz (2020) carried out a study with 169 university learners from different departments to identify the frequency of VLS use and the relationship between learners' gender and age. Participants confirmed that rehearsal strategies received minimal attention while cognitive strategies were employed the most. Although there were no significant changes among the variables, the study indicated that females were more likely to utilize VLSs than their male counterparts.

In a correlational study, Demir (2022) found that secondary school learners did not favor using social strategies. However, it was found that they preferred using metacognitive strategies. Demir (2022) explored the relationship between VLSs and learner autonomy, providing a positive correlation between the two variables. In addition, the findings of the study indicated that male learners exhibited lower levels of learner autonomy compared to their female counterparts.

Bilir (2022) investigated 1015 middle school students' VLS preferences and some variables such as age, gender, location of school, type of the school, and language proficiency. The participants reported that they preferred using a dictionary and note-taking strategies. In terms of gender, females were found to be more proficient than males in utilizing VLSs. Contrary to existing literature, this study did not demonstrate a meaningful difference between different age groups. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the difference in VLS preferences based on school types. In particular, students in public schools commonly used note-taking strategies, repetition orally, and rehearsal strategies. In turn, learners in private schools often employed out-of-school strategies especially using media for English songs and watching and listening to English videos. The researcher affirmed the difference in relation to the socio-economic backgrounds of the learners.

A recent study by Karagöl-Özkul (2023) aimed at investigating the relationship between VLS use and anxiety levels in EFL reading with the participation of 202 preparatory learners. The study revealed that learners used strategies at a medium level. Similar to Demir's study (2022), social strategies were infrequently used among the participants. In addition, the learners exhibited a moderate level of foreign language reading anxiety which was interconnected with the frequency of VLS use.

Concisely, there has been extensive research on the use of VLSs across various educational levels including university, high school, secondary school, and a limited number of primary schools. VLSs are generally associated with various factors such as gender, language proficiency, success, achievement, vocabulary retention, and learner autonomy. According to Schmitt's (1997), it can be deduced that each study on VLSs is influenced by its specific cultural identity and context.

2.13. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of what vocabulary is and how to understand it. This section addressed the importance of vocabulary and explored effective approaches, methods and techniques for vocabulary learning and teaching in the field of EFL. This part includes the impact of age on vocabulary acquisition, followed by a review of studies focused on young learners and age-related issues. Next, the chapter outlines the encountered challenges in learning English vocabulary for young learners. Then, it was followed by examples of language learning strategies (LLSs) and vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) including the taxonomies. Finally, an in-depth review of the relevant literature on VLS research from around the world as well as studies from Türkiye was presented.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures used within the theoretical framework of the study. It presents the research design, research questions, research context and participants. Next, it provides a detailed description of the instruments used for data collection. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods.

3.1. Research Design

This study was designed as a descriptive study which seeks to outline the characteristics of individuals, situations or groups through coherent data collection. According to Kim et al. (2017), a descriptive study focuses on understanding “who, what, and where the events or experiences are and on gaining insights from informants regarding a poorly understood phenomenon” (p. 23).

A mixed-methods research design was used incorporating both quantitative and qualitative descriptions to provide a pragmatic view and have a better comprehension of the research problems (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As indicating by Creswell (2007), mixed-methods research comprises the collection, analysis, and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data for a single inquiry or long-term study. This approach is particularly favored in the social sciences since it allows for the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data sources (Creswell et al., 2003). Notably, this triangulation enhances the validity and reliability of the results (Greene et al., 1989). By integrating various data sources, mixed methods can yield more valid and reliable outcomes and provide deeper insights into the study.

This study employed convergent parallel mixed methods research through qualitative and quantitative datasets (Creswell, 2011). Prior to being integrated into the analysis, Schmitt’s (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)

was administered to investigate participants' preferences for VLSs. To thoroughly analyze the results and provide extensive outcomes, the interviews and the questionnaire were conducted as a part of a single study (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Briefly, this descriptive research study utilized a mixed-methods research design incorporating Schmitt's VLSQ (1997) and semi-structured interviews. The following figure depicts the schema for the research design.

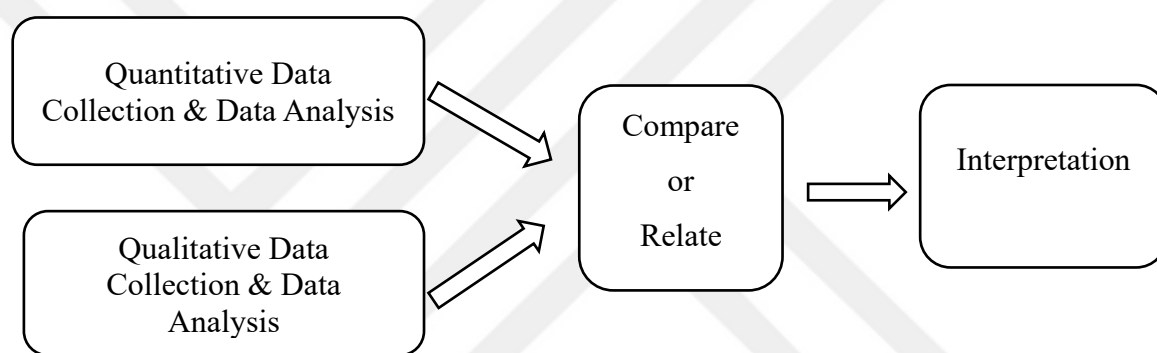


Figure 2. *The Convergent Design* (Creswell, 2011, p.541).

3.2. Research Questions

This study aimed to identify the challenges that fourth-grade students face during the vocabulary learning process and to explore the vocabulary learning strategies they prefer. Four research questions were formulated for the study:

1. What vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) are employed by fourth-grade students in EFL classes overall?
 - a) What are the determination strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - b) What are the social (discovery) strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?

- c) What are the social (consolidation) strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - d) What are the memory strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - e) What are the cognitive strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
 - f) What are the metacognitive strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students?
2. Which vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) are the most and least frequently used by fourth-grade students in EFL classes?
 3. Is there a meaningful difference between the participants' VLS use and
 - a. gender?
 - b. parents' educational levels and their jobs?
 - c. number of siblings?
 - d. knowing English in the family?
 - e. perceptions towards the English lessons?
 - f. enjoyment of the lesson?
 - g. taking supportive lessons?
 - h. their dictionary use?
 - i. perceived difficulty level in English learning?
 4. What challenges do fourth graders encounter in learning vocabulary?

3.3. Setting and Participants

This study involved 150 EFL young learners comprising 74 female and 76 male fourth-grade students at a public primary school in Istanbul, Türkiye during the 2023-2024 academic year. The participants were involved in the study through convenience (opportunity) sampling that is often used in educational research to identify individuals who are easily accessible and readily available to the researcher (Fraenkel et al., 2006). This approach enables researchers to save time and effort in educational contexts (Mujis, 2004).

Table 12. *Gender Distribution of the Participants*

Gender	n	f %
Female	74	49.3
Male	76	50.7

150 fourth-grade students (74 females and 76 males) were involved in the quantitative part of the study. Followingly, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with 25 participants which included 19 female and 6 male students. Participants were chosen voluntarily for the interviews.

All participants in this study were between the ages of 10 and 11 and were primary school students in a state school. Regarding foreign language instruction begins in the second grade in Turkish public schools, the participants had three years of experience learning English. Their proficiency level was A1 (Breakthrough) according to CEFR descriptors. They had two English lessons each week and each class had approximately 35 students.

3.4. The Instruments

This study utilized mixed-methods research design including both quantitative and qualitative research methods. First, a demographic information form was provided with quantitative data. For the quantitative part, a survey method was used. This method deals with producing numerical data and mainly analyzing these quantitative figures (Dörnyei, 2007). For this purpose, Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ) was utilized to identify the participants' use of vocabulary learning strategy.

The qualitative section involved semi-structured interviews aimed to unveil the difficulties learners confront in learning English vocabulary. All data were collected through face-to-face interactions with participants who provided their attendance voluntarily. Before conducting the interviews, a pilot study was performed to determine any potential obstacles in the conversations between the researcher and

the participants. The researcher recorded interviews with 25 participants involved in the study and three additional students who participated in the pilot phase.

3.4.1. The Questionnaire

The quantitative data was collected from 150 EFL fourth grade students to address the first, second and third research questions of the study. The initial aim was to collect personal information related to participants' lives and perceptions of English language lessons using a demographic information form. This form consisted of the participants' gender, the education levels of their mothers and fathers, the number of siblings, the presence of someone in the family who knows English, attitudes toward English lessons, the prevalence of supportive lessons, dictionary usage, perceived difficulty level in learning English. Following that, Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ) developed by Schmitt (1997) was administered to 150 fourth-grade students to investigate their preferences for VLSs. This questionnaire consists of 58 questions formatted on a five-point Likert scale (see Appendix B and C). The questionnaire consisted of two main categories: discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Discovery strategies encompass determination strategies (9 items), and social strategies (5 items). The second category, consolidation strategies include four dimensions: social strategies (3 items), memory strategies (27 items), cognitive strategies (9 items), and metacognitive strategies (5 items). To gather quantitative data, participants were asked to complete the questionnaire with responses ranging from "(1) never" to "(5) always".

Table 13. *Schmitt's VLSs*

Determination strategies	1-9
Social strategies	10-17
Memory strategies	18-44
Cognitive strategies	45-53
Metacognitive strategies	54-58
(Schmitt, 1997, pp.205-210)	

Schmitt's (1997) questionnaire with 58 items was used in this study on the basis of its incorporation in several research studies on VLSs among EFL learners of different age groups worldwide (Amirian & Heshmatifar, 2013). Segler, Pain and Sorace (2002) highlighted that Schmitt's (1997) questionnaire is notable for its comprehensive structure and reliance on extensive research results. Likewise, this questionnaire has been used by several Turkish researchers in their remarkable research studies (Aparı, 2016; Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Baskın et al., 2017; Derici, 2019; Kheder, 2022; Ölmez, 2014; Yolcu, 2019). Derici (2019) translated English version of the questionnaire into Turkish for her master's thesis and this translation was assessed by a native English speaker.

The total score from the questionnaire reflects the participants' preferences for the use of VLSs. Overall scores were assessed based on the scoring systems provided by Oxford (1990) and Schmitt's (1997) to identify levels of VLS use (low: 1.00-2.39; moderate: 2.40-3.49; high: 3.50-5.00).

3.4.2. The Interview

The qualitative data for this study was collected through oral interviews with participants. To address the fourth research question, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 25 participants (see Appendix D). As Kvale suggested (1996), the ideal number of respondents ranges from 5 to 25 indicating the importance of data quality over quantity (p. 102). Semi-structured interviews enable researchers to combine open-ended and closed-ended questions to deepen the study through further inquiries (Bryman, 2016). Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured interviews may accelerate participants' responses as they allow open-ended responses and a more flexible flow in the dialogues. This approach also provides the flexibility to reflect on the respondents' situation at the time (Merriam, 1998), and gives them confidence in the conversation (Nunan, 1992).

The researcher developed semi-structured interview questions by overviewing the relevant studies (Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Demir, 2022; Güneş, 2019; Yıldız, 2019; Yolcu, 2019). Prior to conducting the interviews, a pilot study was carried out with three students to ensure that the research questions were practical and to create a suitable atmosphere in the school. Based on the insights from the pilot study, the interview questions and the flow of the conversations were reviewed. Additionally, the researcher decided to include extra open-ended questions and gather more detailed information to allow participants to express their ideas when needed. As stated by Nunan (1992), semi-structured interviews offer interviewees a sense of authority and an incredible amount of flexibility. The semi-structured interviews were utilized with YLs to provide a flexible framework for them.

The interview responses were compiled to address the fourth research question, “What challenges do fourth graders encounter in learning vocabulary?”. Since the participants were under 18 years old, audio recording was granted with the consent forms that were assigned by their parents. The researcher used her mobile phone to record the audio and took additional notes during the interviews. Each interview lasted approximately five to ten minutes and was conducted individually. In alignment with Graue and Walsh’s (1998) statement “The typical sit-down research interview is difficult to conduct with children” (p. 112), the researcher paid close attention to the YLs’ energetic involvement. As a result, the information was presented explicitly and repeatedly with oral instructions for them. Due to their limited language mastery in English, the interviews were conducted in their native language, in Turkish. To address concerns related to cognitive skills and prevent misunderstandings about language, Turkish sentences were also simplified according to the participants’ cognitive abilities and age. Each interview was recorded and transcribed separately. The researcher kept the audio recordings anonymously labeling them with identifiers such as S1, S2, S3,...S25. Then, the documents were archived in Microsoft Word Program and the transcripts were translated into English. Two selected English teachers reviewed the raw data before finalizing the data description. The transcriptions were duplicated for the purpose of coding and identifying topics. The

interview questions comprised participants' perceptions regarding the English learning process and the challenges faced in vocabulary learning within the EFL context as outlined below:

1. What do you think about vocabulary learning in English?
2. How do you learn English vocabulary and what do you do?
3. Please tell me about the feelings you have when you encounter a word for the first time.
4. What strategies do you apply to discover the meaning of a new word in or outside the classroom environment? Please explain in detail.
5. Please tell me about the feelings you have when you encounter a previously learned word.
6. What are the difficulties when you have encountered unknown words or previously learned words to reinforce?

3.5. Data Collection Process

Before the data collection phase, formal approval was granted from the Trakya University Ethics Committee (see Appendix G) and the İstanbul Ministry of National Education (see Appendix H). Regarding the participants under 18 years of age, consent forms were administered to their parents. Data was collected from 150 fourth-grade EFL students during the 2023-2024 academic year after the required permission was obtained. All participants were informed about the research and its procedures. Before distributing the questionnaires, oral instructions were provided by the researcher. The researcher clarified that this was not an exam and there would be no assessment scores linked to the questionnaire responses. For quantitative data collection, Schmitt's (1997) VLSQ was administered in 40+40 minutes (two class sessions) for each group. Participants were expected to respond honestly to the questionnaire. Similarly, they were also given instructions about the procedures prior to the interviews. The researcher scheduled all appointments in alignment with the school program. Each interview was recorded using the researcher's mobile phone and

the audio files were later transcribed into text format. The written transcripts were translated into English and reviewed by two other teachers for accuracy. In total, the data yielded 42 pages.

3.6. Data Analysis

In this mixed-methods research design, data was collected using two different tools. To address the study's research questions, quantitative data were obtained from 150 fourth grade EFL learners through Schmitt's VLSQ (1997). Before the data analysis in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the normality distribution was checked. Normality assumption has been processed to ascertain whether the collected data would necessitate parametric or non-parametric tests analysis. The probability (p) values were assessed in relation to the threshold of .05. The results of the normality tests are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. *The Normality Test Results*

Subscale	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Skewness	Kurtosis
DET	28,08	28,0	6,91	,200*	-,044	-,543
SOC	23,22	23,00	6,49	,200*	,069	-,441
MEM	81,65	81,00	19,80	,005	,110	,279
COG	27,99	28,00	7,53	,058*	-,043	-,385
MET	15,33	15,00	3,72	,008	-,224	-,186

As shown in Table 14, the normality tests were checked using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Accordingly, the values for skewness and kurtosis were evaluated to decide whether the subcategories of the questionnaire were normally distributed. Also, Q-Q plots and histograms were checked for the assumptions. According to the Kolmogorov Smirnov test, three subscales demonstrated a normal distribution, yet the metacognitive and memory strategies did not have a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$). The analysis revealed that the skewness and kurtosis values ranged between -1 and +1, while the mode, median and arithmetic mean values were

closely aligned. In this respect, the data were found to meet the normality assumption criteria stated by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), who stated values for skewness and kurtosis should be acceptable when it is between - 1 and +1. As a result, this indicates that the subdimensions of the questionnaire exhibited a normal distribution. Consequently, parametric tests were performed to search for differences between groups of the questionnaire.

Next, Cronbach's Alpha value for reliability was measured at 0.80. According to Büyüköztürk (2012), a Cronbach Alpha coefficient is considered sufficient when the reliability factor is 0.70 or higher. Derici (2019) reported Cronbach's Alpha to be 0.92 indicating a high level of reliability. A recent study by Karagöl-Özkul (2023) reported Cronbach's Alpha of 0.93.

Descriptive statistics were presented to measure frequency, mean scores, standard deviations, averages, and percentages on the IBM SPSS 20. The percentages of strategy use were calculated to compare the most and least commonly used strategies based on the participants' preferences. For statistical data, the significance level was taken as a 0.05 value. In addition, the demographic form was incorporated into the statistical analysis to measure whether the students' VLSs differed according to some variables such as gender, the education level of parents, occupation of their parents, the number of siblings, whether someone in the family speaks English, how they perceive English lessons, their enjoyment of the lessons, the use of dictionaries, whether they took supportive English lessons, the difficulties they experience in English lessons.

T-test was employed for the analysis of some variables such as gender, parents' jobs, having someone in the family knowing English, perception towards English lessons, enjoyment of lesson, taking supportive English lessons, dictionary use. ANOVA test was utilized for the analysis of these variables including educational background of parents, the number of siblings, perceived difficulty level in English.

In the current study, the qualitative data was collected from semi-structured interviews. After recording the audio, the responses were transcribed into a text file. To ensure accuracy, the transcripts were translated into English and then reviewed by two qualified English teachers. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis which is a qualitative research method for discovering patterns or themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is highly adaptable and provides great advantages for promoting diversity in learning and teaching. In accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, the first phase involved thoroughly reading the data to become familiar with it. In the second step, codes were assigned to the transcripts to help organize the information properly. To maintain participant confidentiality, individuals were referred to as S1, S2, S3, and so on up to S25. This anonymity was used for preventing any data manipulation. During the third phase, data was searched for identifying themes. These themes were reviewed twice at different times when seeking assistance from two other professionals to ensure the reliability of the findings in the fourth phase. In light of Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines, the themes were organized based on coherence and consistency. The fifth phase involves defining the themes that encompass the elimination, reordering and combination of sub-themes. In this step, the findings were analyzed to provide evidence, detailed information and relevant extracts. The researcher explored the associations behind the participants' response to uncover both the surface and deeper meanings of their words. Finally, the data was digitized to enhance clarity and facilitate the identification of common themes for the study.

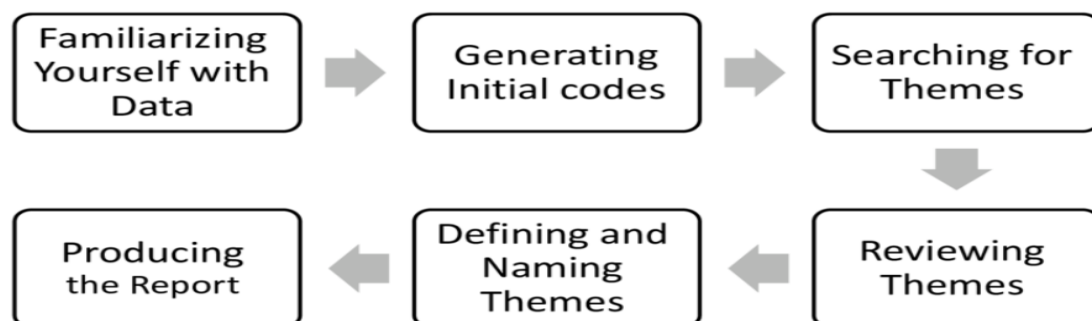


Figure 3: *Braun and Clarke's (2006) Phases of the Thematic Analysis*

In sum, this present study aimed to reveal difficulties encountered during vocabulary learning in the EFL context. To achieve this, semi-structured interviews were conducted. To determine the use of VLSs in descending order, a questionnaire by Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ) was utilized. A mixed method research design was employed from a pragmatic perspective to obtain more concrete results. The data was collected ethically and on a voluntary basis. Data analysis was presented in statistical and explanatory formats.

3.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter encapsulated a summary of methodology employed in the study. As previously indicated, this descriptive study utilized a mixed-methods approach. In this section, the research design, the participants, instruments, and procedures of research were outlined. 150 EFL fourth grade students took part in quantitative research, while 25 participants were involved in the qualitative research design. The researcher exemplified both quantitative and qualitative data collection phases and data analyses. The following part, Chapter 4 discusses the findings obtained from the participants through questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1. Overview

This chapter focuses on the overview of statistical data analysis and the interpretations of the findings. The data was gathered through two data collection instruments: Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Initially, the first, second and third research questions are provided using descriptive statistics. The descriptive analysis findings include some demographic variables. Then, the frequency and variations in the use of VLSs are reported. This study aims to determine the VLS use of the fourth graders and detect the highest and the lowest frequency of VLS use. Then, the data from semi-structured interviews is used to describe the challenges encountered by the fourth graders in vocabulary learning regarding the fourth research question.

4.2. Quantitative Findings of the Research

Through Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire, the quantitative data was elicited from 150 EFL learners as young learners studying in fourth grade in the 2023-2024 academic year. First, participants' preferences on VLSs were elicited and then the most frequently used and the least frequently used VLSs were presented. Followingly, the demographic variables were given.

4.2.1. Findings Related to the First Research Questions

The first research question addresses VLSs used by fourth-grade students "What are the VLSs employed by fourth-grade students in EFL classes overall?". Table 15 illustrates the descriptive data statistics including the mean scores, standard deviation, the ranked order and level of VLS use.

Table 15. *Descriptive Statistics for VLS Employed by Fourth-Grade EFL Students*

Strategy Category	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd	Rank	Usage
Determination	150	28.08	6.91	2	Medium
Social (Discovery)	150	14.60	4.12	5	Medium
Social (Consolidation)	150	8.61	3.20	6	Low
Memory	150	81.65	19.80	1	High
Cognitive	150	27.99	7.53	3	Medium
Metacognitive	150	15.33	3.72	4	Medium

As indicated in Table 15, the highest mean score was found to be memory strategies ($\bar{x}$ =81.65). Subsequently, determination strategies ($\bar{x}$ =28.08), and cognitive strategies were revealed ($\bar{x}$ =27.99). Then, metacognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 15.33) and social discovery strategies ($\bar{x}$ =14.60) were followed. Lastly, social consolidation strategies had the lowest mean score ($\bar{x}$ =8.61).

As demonstrated in Table 15 above, participants use memory strategies at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 81.65). The findings revealed that participants employ four VLSs incorporating determination strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 28.08), cognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 27.99), metacognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 15.33), and social (discovery) strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 14.60) at a medium degree. However, as seen in Table 15, social (consolidation) strategy use ($\bar{x}$ = 8.61) was at a low level.

4.2.1.1. Determination Strategies Employed by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 16 presents determination strategies used by fourth-grade EFL students below. It demonstrates participants' VLS preferences for the determination strategy. As demonstrated in Table 16, it is found that 'check for L1 cognate' was the highest mean score among determination strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55). Then, it has been preferred to 'guess from contextual context' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.39), then 'analyze part of speech' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.30), and 'analyze any available pictures or gestures' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.30) with the same mean scores. These have been followed by 'analyze affixes and roots' ($\bar{x}$ = 3.12) and word list ($\bar{x}$ = 3.08). Following these items, 'flashcard' ($\bar{x}$ = 2.99) and 'bilingual dictionary' ($\bar{x}$ = 2.95) are preferred by the fourth graders.

Table 16. *Determination Strategies Used by Fourth Grade EFL Students*

Determination Strategy Items	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd
1. Analyze part of the speech	150	3.30	1.15
2. Analyze affixes and roots	150	3.12	1.31
3. Check for L1 cognate	150	3.55	1.30
4. Analyze any available pictures or gestures	150	3.30	1.42
5. Guess from textual context	150	3.39	1.23
6. Bilingual dictionary	150	2.95	1.41
7. Monolingual dictionary	150	2.41	1.44
8. Word lists	150	3.08	1.40
9. Flashcards	150	2.99	1.36

Summing up, the least frequently preferred determination strategy is given ‘monolingual dictionary’ ($\bar{x}$ = 2.41) whereas the most preferred determination strategy is ‘check for L1 cognate’ ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55).

4.2.1.2. Social (Discovery) Strategies Employed by Fourth-Grade EFL Students

Table 17 reveals the social (discovery) strategies used by fourth-grade EFL students.

Table 17. *Social (discovery) strategies used by fourth-grade EFL students*

Social (Discovery) Strategy Items	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd
10. Ask the teacher for an L1 translation	150	3.12	1.41
11. Ask the teacher for a paraphrase or synonym of a new word	150	2.63	1.32
12. Ask the teacher for a sentence including the new word	150	2.78	1.38
13. Ask classmates for meaning	150	2.73	1.24
14. Discover new meaning through group work activity	150	3.12	1.41

In Table 17, the most commonly used social (discovery) strategies involve ‘asking teachers for L1 translations’ and ‘discovering new meaning through group work activity’ with the same mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 3.12). Subsequently, ‘asking the teacher for a statement including the new word’ ($\bar{x}$ = 2.78) and ‘ask classmates for meaning’ ($\bar{x}$ = 2.73) are preferred by participants. It is found that ‘ask the teacher for paraphrase

or synonym of new word' ($\bar{x}=2.63$) has the lowest mean score among social (discovery) strategies.

4.2.1.3. Social (Consolidation) Strategies Employed by Fourth-Grade EFL Students

Table 18 illustrates the participants' preferences for social (consolidation) strategies. Item 17 'interact with native speakers' is found to be the highest score by the fourth graders. ($\bar{x}=3.07$). Sequentially, 'teachers check students' flash cards or word lists for accuracy' ($\bar{x}=2.82$) and 'study and practice meaning in a group' ($\bar{x}=2.72$) are provided in social (consolidation) strategies.

Table 18. *Social (Consolidation) Strategies Used by Fourth-Grade EFL Students*

Social (Consolidation) Strategy Items	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd
15. Study and practice meaning in a group	150	2.72	1.44
16. Teacher checks students' flash cards or word lists for accuracy	150	2.82	1.41
17. Interact with native speakers	150	3.07	1.42

4.2.1.4. Memory Strategies Employed by Fourth-Grade EFL Students

Table 19 shows the results of the memory strategies employed by fourth-grade EFL students. The highest mean score among memory strategies is 'studying the spelling of a word' ($\bar{x}=4.01$). Following Item 31, 'study the sound of a word' ($\bar{x}=3.97$), 'use cognates in the study' ($\bar{x}=3.57$) and 'loci method' ($\bar{x}=3.45$) have been used by respondents. In line with Table 19, participants employ 'use semantic feature grids' ($\bar{x}=3.33$), 'use the new word in sentences' ($\bar{x}=3.29$), and 'study words with a pictorial representation of its meaning' ($\bar{x}=3.17$) respectively. Afterwards, 'learn the words of an idiom together' ($\bar{x}=3.12$), and 'associate the word with its coordinates' ($\bar{x}=3.12$) have the same scores. The 10th strategy is found to be 'peg method' ($\bar{x}=3.11$). 'Grouping words within a storyline' ($\bar{x}=3.07$) ranks 11th strategy whereas 'using the keyword method' ($\bar{x}=3.06$) follows this item. Sequentially, 'configuration' ($\bar{x}=3.04$),

and 'say the new word aloud when studying' have the same mean score ($\bar{x}=3.04$). As seen in Table 19, participants declare the use of items 'part of speech (remembering)' ($\bar{x}=2.99$), 'group words together to study them' ($\bar{x}=2.98$), and 'imagine word's meaning' ($\bar{x}=2.97$). Also, they state the use of 'affixes and roots (remembering)' ($\bar{x}=2.93$), 'imagine word form' ($\bar{x}=2.81$), and 'group words together spatially on a page' ($\bar{x}=2.81$).

Table 19. *Memory Strategies Used By Fourth Grade EFL Students*

Memory Strategy Items	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd
18. Study a word with a pictorial representation of its meaning	150	3.17	1.36
19. Imagine the word's meaning	150	2.97	1.28
20. Connect words to a personal experience	150	2.77	1.38
21. Associate the word with its coordinates	150	3.12	1.33
22. Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms	150	2.67	1.33
23. Use semantic maps	150	2.41	1.25
24. Use scales for gradable adjectives	150	2.41	1.28
25. Peg method	150	3.11	1.45
26. Loci method	150	3.45	1.33
27. Group words together to study them	150	2.98	1.27
28. Group words together spatially on a page	150	2.81	1.48
29. Use new words in sentences	150	3.29	1.21
30. Group words together within a storyline	150	3.07	1.33
31. Study the spelling of a word	150	4.01	1.16
32. Study the sound of a word	150	3.97	1.07
33. Say new words aloud when studying	150	3.04	1.38
34. Imagine word form	150	2.81	1.48
35. Underline the initial letter	150	2.31	1.36
36. Configuration	150	3.04	1.38
37. Use the keyword method	150	3.06	1.33
38. Affixes and roots (remembering)	150	2.93	1.28
39. Part of speech (remembering)	150	2.99	1.36
40. Paraphrase the words meaning	150	2.59	1.33
41. Use cognates in the study	150	3.57	1.28
42. Learn the words of an idiom together	150	3.12	1.31
43. Use physical action when learning a new word	150	2.67	1.41
44. Use semantic feature grids	150	3.33	1.33

For the other strategy items, participants employ 'connect the word to a personal experience' ($\bar{x}=2.77$), 'use physical action when learning a new word' ($\bar{x}=2.67$), 'connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms' ($\bar{x}=2.67$) and 'paraphrase the words meaning'. The results show that participants use 'paraphrase the words

meaning' ($\bar{x}$ =2.59), 'use scales for gradable adjectives' ($\bar{x}$ =2.41), and 'use semantic maps' ($\bar{x}$ =2.41) at a low degree. On the other hand, the lowest score among memory strategies is Item 35 'underlining the initial letter'($\bar{x}$ =2.31).

4.2.1.5. Cognitive Strategies Employed by Fourth-Grade EFL Students

Table 20 illustrates the findings of cognitive strategies used by participants.

Table 20. *Cognitive Strategies Used by Fourth Grade EFL Students*

Cognitive Strategy Items	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd
45. Verbal repetition	150	3.42	1.32
46. Written repetition	150	3.30	1.42
47. Word lists	150	3.13	1.37
48. Flashcards	150	3.12	1.31
49. Take notes in class	150	2.99	1.28
50. Use the vocabulary section in your textbook	150	3.42	1.25
51. Listen to a tape of word lists	150	2.63	1.32
52. Label physical objects	150	2.74	1.45
53. Keep a vocabulary notebook	150	3.24	1.45

As seen in Table 20, the highest mean score in cognitive strategy is 'verbal repetition' ($\bar{x}$ =3.42). 'Use the vocabulary section in your textbook' has the same mean score with different standard deviation ($\bar{x}$ =3.42) and then follows the "written repetition" strategy ($\bar{x}$ =3.30). 'Keeping a vocabulary notebook' ($\bar{x}$ =3.24) ranks the third cognitive strategy and 'word lists' ($\bar{x}$ =3.13) ranks the fourth cognitive strategy. Then, 'flash cards' has been preferred ($\bar{x}$ =3.12), and 'taking notes in class' follows this order ($\bar{x}$ =2.99). Item 52 'labeling physical objects' ($\bar{x}$ =2.74) and Item 51 'listening to a tape of word list' ($\bar{x}$ =2.63) were among the lowest cognitive strategy items.

4.2.1.6. Metacognitive Strategies Employed by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 21 demonstrates the findings related to metacognitive strategies used by fourth graders in the study. The highest mean score is reflected in Item 58 'continue to study words over time' ($\bar{x}$ =3.70) among metacognitive strategy items. It is followed

by ‘use spaced word practice’ ($\bar{x}=3.45$), ‘use English-language media (songs, movies, new casts, etc.)’ ($\bar{x}=3.35$), and ‘testing oneself with word tests’ ($\bar{x}=3.04$). Table 21 represents the lowest mean score Item 57 ‘skip or pass the word’ among metacognitive strategies ($\bar{x}=1.80$).

Table 21. *Metacognitive Strategies Used By Fourth Grade EFL Students*

Metacognitive Strategy Items	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd
54. Use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)	150	3.35	1.42
55. Testing oneself with word tests	150	3.04	1.32
56. Use spaced word practice	150	3.45	1.30
57. Skip or pass the new word	150	1.80	1.23
58. Continue to study words over time	150	3.70	1.19

4.2.2. Findings Regarding Second Research Question

For the quantitative research paradigm, the second research question addresses “What are the most and the least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies by fourth-grade EFL learners?” In Table 22, the descriptive statistics for the most commonly used VLSs are presented.

Table 22. *Descriptive statistics for the most used VLSs*

Strategy Items	Category	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd
31. Study the spelling of a Word	Memory	4.01	1.16
32. Study the sound of a Word	Memory	3.97	1.07
58. Continue to study words over time	Metacognitive	3.70	1.19
41. Use cognates in the study	Memory	3.57	1.28
3. check for L1 cognate	Determination	3.55	1.30
56. Use spaced word practice	Metacognitive	3.45	1.30
26. Loci method	Memory	3.45	1.33

Overall, Table 22 displays the most preferred strategy is Item 31 ‘study the spelling of a word’ ($\bar{x}=4.01$) from the memory strategy dimension. In this regard, the most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies by fourth-grade EFL learners were found to be memory strategies.

Considering all categories of strategy items, the most commonly used strategies include memory strategies Item 31 'study the spelling of a word' ($\bar{x}=4.01$) and Item 32 'study the sound of a word' ($\bar{x}=3.97$). The most used VLSs as third, metacognitive strategy is stated in Item 58 'continue to study over time' ($\bar{x}=3.70$). Once again, the fourth preferred strategy is among memory strategies Item 41 'use cognates in the study' ($\bar{x}=3.57$). Participants utilize Item 3 'check L1 cognate' from determination strategies with the mean score ($\bar{x}=3.55$). Lastly, it is found that they employ 'use spaced word practice' from metacognitive strategies ($\bar{x}=3.45$) and 'loci method' ($\bar{x}=3.45$). Regarding the second research question, Table 23 presents the least frequently employed VLSs by the participants.

Table 23. *Descriptive Statistics For The Least Used VLSs*

Strategy Items	Category	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Sd
57. Skip or pass the new Word	Metacognitive	1.80	1.23
35. Underline the initial letter	Memory	2.31	1.36
7. Monolingual dictionary	Determination	2.41	1.44
23. Use semantic maps	Memory	2.41	1.25
24. Use scales for gradable adjectives	Memory	2.41	1.28
40. Paraphrase the words meaning	Memory	2.59	1.33
11. Ask the teacher for a paraphrase or synonym of a new word	Social Discovery	2.63	1.32

As can be seen in Table 23, Item 57 'skip or pass the new word' in the metacognitive category is found to be the least preferred strategy item ($\bar{x}=1.80$). The second least frequently used strategy was found to be 'underlined the initial letter' among memory strategies ($\bar{x}=2.31$). The third least frequently preferred strategy had the same mean scores ($\bar{x}=2.41$), including 'monolingual dictionary' from determination strategy items, 'use semantic maps', and 'use scales for gradable adjectives' ($\bar{x}=2.41$) from memory strategies. Likewise, in the same category, memory strategy Item 40 'paraphrase the words meaning' represented one of the least employed strategy types ($\bar{x}=2.59$). From the social discovery category, Item 11 'ask the teacher for paraphrase or synonyms of a new word' was found to be one of the least preferred strategies by the participants ($\bar{x}=2.63$).

4.2.3. Findings Regarding the Third Research Question

In this present study, it is anticipated to find out whether there is any significant impact between VLSs employed by fourth-grade EFL and participants' gender, educational level of parents, occupation of mothers and fathers, the number of siblings, presence of someone knowing English in the family, the perception toward the English lesson, enjoyment from English lessons, the dictionary use, the perceived difficulty level in English, taking supportive English lessons or not. The associations between the questionnaire and the demographic form were provided under the third research question.

4.2.3.1. Gender and VLS use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 24. Results of T-Test Regarding Gender and VLS Use by Fourth Grade EFL Learners

	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Sd	t	p
Determination Strategies	female	74	28.05	6.62	148	.05	.955
	male	76	28.11	7.22			
Social Discovery Strategies	female	74	14.75	3.98	148	.43	.662
	male	76	14.46	4.27			
Social Consolidation	female	74	8.60	3.05	148	.02	.984
	male	76	8.61	3.37			
Memory Strategies	female	74	82.75	18.13	148	.67	.503
	male	76	80.57	21.37			
Cognitive Strategies	female	74	28.91	7.00	148	1.49	.138
	male	76	27.09	7.95			
Metacognitive Strategies	female	74	15.28	3.75	148	.16	.873
	male	76	15.38	3.72			

*p< 0.05

Table 24 demonstrates T-test results related to gender and VLS use of learners. In the current study, 49.3 % of the participants were female students and male students were 50.7 %. As shown in Table 24, gender does not significantly affect vocabulary learning strategy use ($p_{det} = .955$; $p_{socdis} = .662$; $p_{soccon} = .984$; $p_{mem} = .503$; $p_{cog} = .138$; $p_{met} = .873$, $p > 0.05$). As seen the mean scores of female and male students in each type of strategy, they have slightly similar results.

4.2.3.2. Mothers' Education Level and VLS Use by Fourth-Grade EFL Students

Table 25. Results of Anova Test Regarding Education Level of Mothers And Participants' VLS Use

	The education level of mothers	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	p	Meaningful dif.
Determination Strategies	Primary	32	28.28	7.12	.107	.956	
	Secondary	32	27.62	6.67			
	High School	48	27.93	7.22			
	University	38	28.50	6.78			
Social Discovery Strategies	Primary	32	13.71	4.31	.840	.474	
	Secondary	32	15.34	3.19			
	High School	48	14.62	4.19			
	University	38	14.71	4.57			
Social Consolidation Strategies	Primary	32	9.00	3.28	2.251	.085	
	Secondary	32	9.40	3.22			
	High School	48	8.66	2.93			
	University	38	7.55	3.31			
Memory Strategies	Primary	32	78.53	15.33	2.549	.058	
	Secondary	32	89.65	19.70			
	High School	48	81.39	19.20			
	University	38	77.86	22.58			
Cognitive Strategies	Primary	32	26.87	5.11	2.062	.108	
	Secondary	32	30.81	7.37			
	High School	48	27.72	8.09			
	University	38	26.89	8.26			
Metacognitive Strategies	Primary	32	15.90	3.08	1.866	.138	
	Secondary	32	16.12	3.62			
	High School	48	15.29	3.38			
	University	38	14.23	4.50			

*p < 0.05

Table 25 presents the relationship between VLS use of fourth grade students and their mothers' educational background. The educational background was structured into four categories: primary school, secondary school, high school and university degree. In accordance with the results obtained from the demographic forms, it was found that 21.3% of mothers graduated from primary school, 21.3 % of them completed secondary school, 32 % of them graduated from high school and 25.3 % of mothers had a university diploma. To examine meaningful differences between two variables, the ANOVA test was used.

As can be seen in Table 25, the results of ANOVA test reveal that the mother's education level does not have an impact on VLS use. No significant difference has been detected between the two variables ($p_{det} = .956$; $p_{socdis} = .474$; $p_{soccon} = .085$; $p_{mem} = .058$; $p_{cog} = .108$; $p_{met} = .138$, $p > 0.05$).

4.2.3.3. Father's Educational Level and VLS Use by Fourth-Grade EFL Students

Regarding the fathers' education level, it was stated that 18 % of fathers completed primary school, 10 % of them had a secondary school diploma, 37.3 % graduated from high school and 34.7 % of fathers had a university diploma. Table 26 illustrates the results related to the educational background of fathers and participants' VLS preferences through the ANOVA test.

As shown in Table 26, the fathers' education level does not have a significant effect on the students' VLS choice. No significant difference has been detected between groups and VLS use by participants ($p_{det} = .848$; $p_{socdis} = .724$; $p_{soccon} = .126$; $p_{mem} = .818$; $p_{cog} = .861$; $p_{met} = .418$, $p > 0.05$). The mean scores of fathers' diploma status and participants' VLS use are slightly the same.

Table 26. *Results of ANOVA Test Regarding Education Level of Fathers and Participants' VLS Use*

	The education level of fathers	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	p
Determination Strategies	Primary	27	27.22	7.49	.268	.848
	Secondary	15	29.00	7.48		
	High School	56	28.39	6.48		
	University	52	27.94	7.03		
Social Discovery Strategies	Primary	27	14.29	4.23	.441	.724
	Secondary	15	15.26	4.41		
	High School	56	14.25	4.15		
	University	52	14.96	4.02		
Social Consolidation Strategies	Primary	27	8.74	3.27	1.941	.126
	Secondary	15	10.33	3.08		
	High School	56	8.57	3.06		
	University	52	8.09	3.26		
Memory Strategies	Primary	27	80.55	18.59	.310	.818
	Secondary	15	82.06	15.92		
	High School	56	83.55	17.65		
	University	52	80.05	23.59		
Cognitive Strategies	Primary	27	27.29	7.61	.250	.861
	Secondary	15	27.66	6.95		
	High School	56	28.66	6.69		
	University	52	27.73	8.57		
Metacognitive Strategies	Primary	27	14.92	3.04	.951	.418
	Secondary	15	16.40	4.76		
	High School	56	15.67	3.00		
	University	52	14.86	4.36		

*p < 0.05

4.2.3.4. Mothers' Job about VLS use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 27 presents mothers' jobs of participants in a relation to VLS use of them. As described below, 65.3 % of mothers did not have a job whereas 34.7 % of them were working. In Table 27, the T-test was applied to find out whether there is a meaningful difference between the use of VLS of learners and their mothers' jobs that refers to working or not.

Table 27. *Results of The T-Test Regarding the Mother's Job and Participants' VLS Use*

	Moms' Job	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Sd	t	p
Determination	Not working	98	27.82	6.85	147	.83	.407
Strategies	Working	52	28.80	6.91			
Social	Not working	98	14.64	4.10	147	.02	.983
Discovery	Working	52	14.63	4.17			
Social	Not working	98	8.73	3.20	147	.45	.649
Consolidation	Working	52	8.48	3.20			
Memory	Not working	98	82.18	17.95	147	.18	.856
Strategies	Working	52	81.57	22.23			
Cognitive	Not working	98	27.79	6.92	147	.67	.504
Strategies	Working	52	28.65	8.39			
Metacognitive	Not working	98	15.20	3.64	147	.69	.486
Strategies	Working	52	15.65	3.87			

*p<0.05

Table 27 reveals that there is no meaningful difference between the VLS use of participants whose mothers work and whose mothers do not work ($p_{det} = .407$; $p_{socdis} = .983$; $p_{soccon} = .649$; $p_{mem} = .856$; $p_{cog} = .504$; $p_{met} = .486$, $p > 0.05$).

4.2.3.5. Fathers' Job in relation to VLS use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 28. *Results of T-test Regarding Father's Job and Participants' VLS Use*

	Fathers' Job	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Sd	t	p
Determination	Working	139	28.28	6.95	148	1.22	.223
	Not working	11	25.63	6.18			
Social	Working	139	14.66	4.10	148	.65	.512
Discovery	Not working	11	13.81	4.51			
Social	Working	139	8.63	3.18	148	.26	.790
Consolidation	Not working	11	8.36	3.69			
Memory	Working	139	82.05	19.78	148	.87	.385
Strategies	Not working	11	76.63	20.26			
Cognitive	Working	139	28.15	7.51	148	.91	.364
Strategies	Not working	11	26.00	7.83			
Metacognitive	Working	139	15.28	3.75	148	.61	.539
Strategies	Not working	11	16.00	3.37			

Table 28 demonstrates VLS use of learners in relation to their fathers' job through the T-test. On the basis of descriptive findings, 92.7 % of participants' fathers were working whereas 7.3 % of them did not have a job.

As can be seen in Table 28, fathers' jobs do not have a meaningful difference in students' VLS use. Students whose fathers work and whose fathers do not work do not show any significant difference in terms of fathers' jobs ($p_{det}=.223$; $p_{socdis}=.512$; $p_{soccon}=.790$; $p_{mem}=.385$; $p_{cog}=.364$; $p_{met}=.539$, $p > 0.05$).

4.2.3.6. Number of Siblings in relation to VLS Use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 29 demonstrates the results related to the number of siblings and students' VLS use through ANOVA test.

Table 29. Results Of ANOVA Test Regarding the Number of Siblings and Participants' VLS Use

	Number of siblings	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	p
Determination Strategies	0	11	26.27	5.81	.331	.803
	1	3	29.00	4.58		
	2	77	28.41	7.24		
	3 and more	59	27.94	6.83		
Social Discovery Strategies	0	11	12.72	2.72	1.471	.225
	1	3	17.66	2.51		
	2	77	14.88	4.22		
	3 and more	95	14.44	4.19		
Social Consolidation Strategies	0	11	7.81	2.92	1.690	.172
	1	3	6.66	2.51		
	2	77	8.29	4.22		
	3 and more	95	9.27	4.19		
Memory Strategies	0	11	79.54	18.19	.269	.847
	1	3	84.66	22.23		
	2	77	80.58	21.24		
	3 and more	95	83.28	18.33		
Cognitive Strategies	0	11	28.18	8.93	.526	.665
	1	3	25.33	7.37		
	2	77	27.41	7.75		
	3 and more	95	28.84	7.05		
Metacognitive Strategies	0	11	16.45	3.23	.503	.681
	1	3	14.00	5.00		
	2	77	15.36	3.99		
	3 and more	95	15.15	3.41		

In Table 29, the number of siblings does not show a significant impact on students' VLS use. Among the four groups, no meaningful differences were found in terms of strategy use ($p_{\text{det}} = .803$; $p_{\text{socdis}} = .225$; $p_{\text{soccons}} = .172$; $p_{\text{mem}} = .847$; $p_{\text{cog}} = .665$; $p_{\text{met}} = .681$, $p > 0.05$).

4.2.3.7. Knowing English in the family in relation to VLS use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 30 indicates whether there is a significant difference between the use of VLSs and presence of somebody who knows English in the family or not. 58.7 % of parents did not know English whereas 41.3 of them reported that they knew English.

Table 30. Results of the T-test Regarding Knowing English in the Family or not and Participants' VLS Use

	Knowing English in the Family	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Sd	t	p
Determination Strategies	Yes	88	28.35	6.93	148	.55	.577
	No	62	27.70	6.92			
Social Discovery Strategies	Yes	88	14.48	4.47	148	.41	.678
	No	62	14.77	3.60			
Social Consolidation Strategies	Yes	88	8.64	3.35	148	.15	.876
	No	62	8.56	3.01			
Memory Strategies	Yes	88	81.28	20.78	148	.27	.787
	No	62	82.17	18.48			
Cognitive Strategies	Yes	88	28.217	8.17	148	.43	.668
	No	62	27.6	6.56			
Metacognitive Strategies	Yes	88	15.30	3.93	148	.10	.918
	No	62	15.37	3.43			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 30 reveals no significant difference in the use of VLSs and presence of someone who knows English in the family ($p_{\text{det}} = .577$; $p_{\text{socdis}} = .678$; $p_{\text{soccon}} = .876$; $p_{\text{mem}} = .787$; $p_{\text{cog}} = .668$; $p_{\text{met}} = .918$, $p > 0.05$).

4.2.3.8. Perceptions Towards The Lesson in relation to VLS use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 31 illustrates results of ANOVA test in relation to VLS use of learners and perceptions towards the English lessons. As stated in Table 29, the perceptions of English lessons are classified into three categories: easy, moderate and hard. 23.3 % of the participants found English easy, 64.7 of them assessed the lesson at a moderate level whereas 12 % of participants reported that the lesson was hard.

Table 31. Results of ANOVA Test Regarding Students' Perceptions Toward The Lesson And Participants' VLS Use

	English Lesson	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	p	Meaningful Diff.
Determination Strategies	Easy	35	30.11	7.81	4.014	.020*	Between easy and hard
	Moderate	97	28.01	6.40			
	Hard	18	24.55	6.57			
Social Strategies (Discovery)	Easy	35	15.74	3.85	1.936	.148	
	Moderate	97	14.36	4.20			
	Hard	18	13.72	4.01			
Social Strategies (Consolidation)	Easy	35	9.82	3.12	3.399	.036*	Between easy and moderate
	Moderate	97	8.26	3.26			
	Hard	18	8.11	2.56			
Memory Strategies	Easy	35	91.62	21.73	6.809	.001*	Between easy and hard- Between easy and moderate
	Moderate	97	79.43	18.44			
	Hard	18	74.22	16.72			
Cognitive Strategies	Easy	35	30.88	8.32	5.085	.007*	Between easy and hard
	Moderate	97	27.62	6.94			
	Hard	18	24.33	7.31			
Metacognitive Strategies	Easy	35	16.57	3.80	3.326	.039*	Between easy and hard
	Moderate	97	15.13	3.63			
	Hard	18	14.00	3.56			

* $p < 0.05$

In light of the findings aforementioned above, there was no meaningful difference between VLS use and perceptions of the lessons in social (discovery) strategies. However, except for social (discovery) strategies, all other strategies vary significantly. As can be seen in Table 31, for determination strategies ($p_{\text{det}} = .020$),

there is a meaningful difference between students who reported the lessons as easy ($\bar{X}$ = 30.11) and those who reported it as hard ($\bar{X}$ = 24.55). It is in favor of students who said easy. Among consolidation strategies ($p_{\text{soccon}} = .036$), there is a meaningful difference between students who reported the lesson was easy ($\bar{X}$ = 9.82) and those who said medium ($\bar{X}$ = 8.26). It is in favor of students who find the lessons easy.

For memory strategies ($p_{\text{mem}} = .001$), it is found that there is a significant difference between students who reported lessons easy ($\bar{X}$ =91.62) and at a moderate level ($\bar{X}$ =79.43). It is in favor of students who find lessons easy. Additionally, it is found that there is a significant difference between students who said it is easy ($\bar{X}$ =91.62) and hard ($\bar{X}$ =74.22). It is in favor of students who reported the lessons easily.

For cognitive strategies ($p_{\text{cog}} = .007$), there is a meaningful difference between those who said the lesson is easy ($\bar{X}$ =30.88) and those who said it is hard ($\bar{X}$ =24.33). It is in favor of those who report it is easy.

For metacognitive strategies ($p_{\text{met}} = .039$), it is observed that there is a meaningful difference between those who reported the lesson is easy ($\bar{X}$ =16.57) and saying it is hard ($\bar{X}$ =14). It is in favor of those who report it is easy.

4.2.3.9. Enjoyment of English Lessons in relation to VLS use by Fourth grade EFL students

The ANOVA test was applied to determine the associations between the participants' VLS use and their enjoyment of English lessons. 74.7 of respondents said they liked the lesson, 7.3 % of them said they disliked English lessons and 18 % of participants stated that they were less likely to enjoy the lesson.

Table 32 illustrates that participants' VLS use is affected by their feelings toward English, whether they like it, dislike it, or have a mild preference for it. It has been discovered that the VLS use of the students varied markedly from each other. Regarding the significant differences among three groups with ANOVA test, Tukey test was employed to identify which groups have this difference.

Table 32. Results of ANOVA Test Regarding Enjoyment Of English Lesson And Participants' VLS Use

	Like/Dislike	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	p	Meaningful diff.
Determination Strategies	Yes	112	28.61	7.25	2.534	.083	
	No	11	23.81	5.72			
	Little	27	27.62	5.23			
Social Discovery Strategies	Yes	112	14.93	4.14	3.905	.022*	Between like and do not like
	No	11	11.36	3.20			
	Little	27	14.55	3.92			
Social Consolidation Strategies	Yes	112	8.67	3.31	.093	.911	
	No	11	8.36	2.97			
	Little	27	8.44	2.93			
Memory Strategies	Yes	112	83.39	20.36	4.052	.019*	Between like and do not like
	No	11	66.00	21.40			
	Little	27	80.81	13.51			
Cognitive Strategies	Yes	112	28.54	7.40	4.182	.017*	Between like and do not like, Between do not like and little like
	No	11	21.81	6.79			
	Little	27	28.22	7.46			
Metacognitive Strategies	Yes	112	15.60	3.62	1.213	.300	
	No	11	14.36	3.80			
	Little	27	14.59	4.06			

*p < 0.05

Table 32 illustrates no significant differences in determination strategies, social (consolidation) strategies, and metacognitive strategies. In a relation to the use of VLS and social (discovery) strategies, a meaningful difference ($p_{\text{soccon}} = .022$) between those who like the course ($\bar{X} = 14.93$) and those do not like it ($\bar{X} = 11.36$) has been identified. For memory strategies, it has been observed a meaningful difference ($p_{\text{mem}} = .019$) between students who like English ($\bar{X} = 83.39$) and students who do not like English ($\bar{X} = 66.00$) in terms of the use of VLS. For the correlation between the use of cognitive strategies and VLS use, there is a significant difference ($p_{\text{cog}} = .017$)

between those who like English ($\bar{X}$ =28.54) and dislike it ($\bar{X}$ =21.81). As seen in Table 32, students who dislike English ($\bar{X}$ =21.81) and students who like a little bit ($\bar{X}$ =28.22) include a significant difference in terms of VLS use.

4.2.3.10. Taking Supportive English Lessons in relation to VLS use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 33 depicts the relations between VLS use and taking supportive English lessons through the T-test. Participants were found to take supportive lessons with 25.7 % whereas 71.3 of respondents did not take any supportive English lessons.

Table 33. *Results of T-Test Regarding Taking Supportive Lessons And Participants' VLS Use*

	Taking supportive lessons	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Sd	t	p
Determination Strategies	Yes	42	27.38	7.46	146	.85	.395
	No	107	28.45	6.65			
Social Discovery Strategies	Yes	42	14.88	4.12	146	.43	.668
	No	107	14.55	4.14			
Social Consolidation Strategies	Yes	42	8.64	3.00	146	.04	.963
	No	107	8.66	3.28			
Memory Strategies	Yes	42	82.42	21.37	146	.17	.863
	No	107	81.81	18.87			
Cognitive Strategies	Yes	42	28.07	7.49	146	.01	.987
	No	107	28.09	7.51			
Metacognitive Strategies	Yes	42	15.23	3.79	146	.28	.774
	No	107	15.43	3.71			

*p < 0.05

Table 33 reveals that there is no significant difference in the use of VLS depending on whether students take private lessons or not. For all strategy categories, no meaningful difference is detected between students who take private English lessons and those who do not (p_{det} = .395; p_{soccon} = .668; p_{socdis} = .963; p_{mem} = .863; p_{cog} = .987; p_{met} = .774, $p > 0.05$).

4.2.3.11. Dictionary Use in relation to VLS use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 34 demonstrates whether VLS use differs significantly in terms of using dictionaries as given below. 38.7 of participants indicated that they use dictionaries whereas 71.3 of them did not use a dictionary.

Table 34. Results of T-Test on Dictionary Use And Participants' VLS Use

	Dictionary use	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Sd	t	p
Determination Strategies	Yes	58	30.05	6.46	148	2.82	.005*
	No	92	26.84	6.93			
Social Discovery Strategies	Yes	58	15.79	3.75	148	2.86	.005*
	No	92	13.85	4.19			
Social Consolidation Strategies	Yes	58	9.32	3.21	148	2.19	.030*
	No	92	8.16	3.13			
Memory Strategies	Yes	58	86.36	20.57	148	2.34	.020*
	No	92	78.68	18.81			
Cognitive Strategies	Yes	58	29.46	6.96	148	1.91	.057
	No	92	27.06	7.75			
Metacognitive Strategies	Yes	58	15.74	3.80	148	1.06	.288
	No	92	15.07	3.66			

*p< 0.05

As shown in Table 34, it is found that there is a significant difference between students who use the dictionary and students who do not use it in the categories of determination strategies ($p_{det} = .005$), social (discovery) strategies ($p_{socdis} = .005$), social (consolidation) strategies ($p_{soccon} = .030$) and ($p_{mem} = .020$, $p < .05$) memory strategies ($\bar{X}_{determination} = 30.05$; $\bar{X}_{discovery} = 15.79$; $\bar{X}_{consolidation} = 9.32$; $\bar{X}_{memory} = 86.36$; $p < 0.05$). This difference contributes to students who use dictionaries. On the other hand, there is no significant difference in metacognitive and cognitive strategies on behalf of students using dictionaries or not.

4.2.3.12. Difficulty in English in relation to VLS use by Fourth Grade EFL Students

Table 35 presents whether there is an association between VLS preferences of participants and encountering difficulty in English. 13,3 of participants accepted the difficulty in English, 22 % of participants expressed that they did not experience any difficulty in English vocabulary. 64.7 of respondents reported that they had a little difficulty in English. As seen in Table 35, the ANOVA test was applied to determine the difficulty level of English (yes, no, little).

Table 35. Results of ANOVA Test Regarding Difficulty Level in English and Participants' VLS Use

	Difficulty	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	p	Meaningful Diff.
Determination Strategies	Yes	20	25.45	6.41	1.921	.150	
	No	33	29.18	7.88			
	Little	97	28.25	6.59			
Social Discovery Strategies	Yes	20	13.40	4.18	.988	.375	
	No	33	14.75	3.96			
	Little	97	14.80	4.16			
Social Consolidation Strategies	Yes	20	8.65	3.16	.235	.791	
	No	33	8.93	3.57			
	Little	97	8.49	3.11			
Memory Strategies	Yes	20	75.30	20.27	2.640	.075	
	No	33	87.60	21.48			
	Little	97	80.93	18.77			
Cognitive Strategies	Yes	20	24.30	7.48	4.216	.017*	Between saying yes and no
	No	33	30.36	7.34			
	Little	97	27.94	7.36			
Metacognitive Strategies	Yes	20	14.10	3.69	2.806	.064	
	No	33	16.48	3.66			
	Little	97	15.19	3.68			

*p< 0.05

As stated in Table 35, facing difficulties affects the students' VLS preferences. In this regard, it has been found that there is a significant difference between students who admit having difficulty or not in terms of VLS use. Tukey test is conducted to distinguish which groups have meaningful differences. To illustrate, determination strategies, social (discovery) strategies, social (consolidation) strategies, memory strategies, and metacognitive strategies do not show any meaningful differences in terms of difficulty in English. However, in accordance with Table 35, there is a significant difference between participants' VLS use and those who respond

no ($\bar{X}=30.36$) and those who say yes ($\bar{X}=24.30$) for cognitive strategies ($p_{\text{cog}}=.017$, $p < 0.05$). The significant difference has been found in favor of those who do not have difficulty in English compared to those who admit that they find English hard.

4.3. Qualitative Findings of the Research

The qualitative part of the research aims to determine the challenges that fourth grade EFL learners encounter during vocabulary learning. Regarding the last research question “What are the challenges fourth graders encounter in learning vocabulary?”, the qualitative data collection was carried out individually by the researcher. Following a pilot study with three students who did not take part in the main study, 25 participants participated in qualitative research incorporating semi-structured interviews with six questions. As for the thematic analysis, the six steps were followed as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006). In this regard, the aim is to explore the vocabulary learning process, as well as understand participants’ feelings and ideas about both newly learned and previously learned vocabulary items. In addition, participants were asked about how they cope with vocabulary difficulties mainly referring to their use of VLSs in the process.

The first question of the semi-structured interview was addressed to the feelings of the participants about vocabulary learning in English. Based on their responses, it was noticed that most of the participants responded positively and were eager to share their thoughts about vocabulary learning. The positive adjectives were referred to as “good, fine, happy, curious, excited, positive, and nice”.

S3: *I feel good. English is an easy course.*

S4: *I feel fine. I am learning new things let's say.*

S5: *Vocabulary learning is really good. That is to say, we cannot use sentences if the word does not exist. Nothing will happen without words.*

S6: *Nice feeling I love English.*

S7: *Learning let's say it is good.*

S10: *I feel good. I already know the words.*

S15: *I feel good. English is an easy lesson.*

S16: *Teacher, I learn well.*

S18: *Teaching English is really good. Especially I love it very much. Namely, I do not know if I am good at English.*

S21: *I am thinking positive things*

S22: *Mostly positive feelings*

S8: *I feel excited a little bit (let's say) since I am going to learn vocabulary but in general I feel excited.*

S11: *I am getting excited.*

S19: *I became happy and excited because we need to learn something.*

S24: *I am curious about the words we will learn. I wonder where we use them.*

On the other hand, it was noticed that one of the participants indicated that s/he found vocabulary learning a little hard.

S20: *Vocabulary learning is a little bit difficult but when you understand its logic or if it has passwords it becomes easier to learn.*

In brief, most of the participants were satisfied with the English vocabulary learning (n:15) whereas one participant accepted its difficulty.

In response to the second question of the interview, "How do you learn English vocabulary?", participants provided six common themes including 'writing', 'memorizing', 'repetition', 'reading', 'asking someone for help' and individual effort' in Table 36.

Table 36. Findings Regarding How Participants Learn English Vocabulary

Category	Sample emerged themes
How do you learn English vocabulary?	Writing, reading, memorizing, repetition, asking for help, individual effort

Table 36 depicts the emerging themes for the ways of learning vocabulary in English. A large number of participants frequently mentioned writing as a strategy

within definitions of words in their native language or analysis of word forms in the second language. Notably, they reported writing the words several times worked better. Chiefly, the participants reported that they employed note-taking strategies to learn vocabulary. Another view of the point, their responses demonstrated that memorizing, repeating, and reading skills were quite useful for vocabulary learning. Besides, they anticipated guidance and support from the teacher or their family members in learning English. However, a few participants preferred to learn independently through activities such as games and assignments.

Theme 1 ‘writing’

14 participants out of 25 (%56) believed that one of the ways of learning English vocabulary is writing.

S1: Either writing the word or repeating it. While repeating it, I either write it down or take the book into my hand and read it over and over again.

S6: Sometimes by writing. I ask my teacher about words I do not know.

S11: I am listening to the teacher. If I forget the word, I go work on it, take a look at it and write it down on a piece of paper. And memorize. That would make it easier.

S14: I repeat. I am writing it down then reading it without looking, trying to memorize it in English like that.

S17: I memorize by writing, taking notes, and watching videos.

S24: I keep going by repeating and writing down, trying to understand the meaning of the word from the book.

Four participants reported that they use their notebooks or notepads for writing.

S5: Sometimes I look at my vocabulary notebook for that. When there are new words, I write them in the notebook, let's say I memorize them

S19: I am either taking notes in my notebook or keeping them in my mind.

S22: I try to learn by writing more words. I usually write it in my notebook but I can also write it in my notepad.

S21: I write the words in my notebook if I do not know them. Sometimes I take notes and when I get back home I try to learn them by putting in some effort.

Three participants indicated that they write the meaning of words either in Turkish or English. Indeed, it may lead learners to transfer ideas from one language to another as a way of learning.

S2: I mostly memorize and write it. I am writing in English; I am repeating it in Turkish.

S8: First, I am writing them in Turkish, then I ask my brother since he knows English very well.

S13: Sometimes my mother writes word lists. For instance, on paper like an exam, I write their Turkish or English equivalents.

S20: I generally focus more on writing. I work also on pronunciation, but spelling is more important for me since it is crucial not to make mistakes in spelling in exams.

Theme 2 ‘memorizing’

With inference to Table 36, eight participants (%32) referred to the memorization technique for English vocabulary learning. In accordance with respondents' thoughts, some participants shared his/her memorization technique by mentioning it multiple times.

S5: Sometimes I look at my vocabulary notebook for that. When there are new words, I write them in the notebook let's say I repeat them about five to ten times.

S10: My memorization becomes better. I read it first, then I read it without looking at the word.

From another point of view, one of the respondents claimed that s/he memorizes on the condition that vocabulary is hard to learn. Besides, in general, s/he implied that there was no need for memorization.

S15: Sometimes I memorize words if it is difficult but most of the time I don't need to memorize them.

Theme 3 ‘repetition’

It was discovered that the participants' responses included three common themes: writing, memorization, and repetition. Specifically, 20 % of the participants

agreed that repeating the words helped them. One respondent mentioned that repeating letters contributes to understanding new sentences.

Theme 4 ‘reading’

More specifically, three of the participants (%12) referred to reading the word several times as stated below.

S1: Either writing the word or repeating it. While repeating it, I either write it down or take the book into my hand and read it over and over again.

S4: I read it then I translate it into Turkish. I read it three to five times at home.

S22: I try to learn by writing words. I usually write it in my notebook but I can also write it in my notepad. I read it at least twice like that. I write the words on paper and repeat them aloud five to ten times and also writing them down again.

Theme 5 ‘asking for help’

Only 4 participants (%16) mentioned the need for guidance from someone so that they could learn the words efficiently.

S6: I sometimes ask my teacher about words I do not know. I try to learn them by writing.

S7: First, I try to understand it.. When I do not understand, I ask my teachers.

S13: I keep thinking that I need to work. I need to repeat. I listen to the lessons initially, then I review them with my mother at home. I also look at my vocabulary notebook. Sometimes my mother writes the word lists for instance on paper like an exam, I write their Turkish or English equivalents.

S18: while I am learning new words, I sometimes consult my sister, of course, sometimes I ask the teacher as well. Sometimes, I learn new vocabulary items from advertisements English advertisements.

Theme 6 ‘Individual effort’

Based on the participants’ responses, three participants (%12) reported that they attempted to learn words through individual efforts.

S9: I am learning with the teacher at school. When I go home, I play games alone.

S16: For instance, I made a little cube like dice. I write words on it such as blonde hair, and dark hair and when I translate them, I say both English and Turkish.

S21: When something happens, such as, I write it down in my notebook if I do not know it. Sometimes I take notes and when I get back home I try to learn them by putting in some effort.

It is evident that some participants tried to employ different techniques such as learning through commercials and watching videos.

S17: I memorize by writing, taking notes, and watching videos. After that, I look up English words in a dictionary.

S18: While learning new words, I sometimes consult my sister, of course, sometimes I ask the teacher as well. Sometimes, I learn new vocabulary items from advertisements English advertisements.

In summary, the findings revealed that the bulk of learners believed that they could learn vocabulary through writing and there were many attempts for vocabulary development.

The third interview question explored how participants felt when they encountered a word for the first time. In light of responses from the participants, it was observed that participants expressed both their positive and negative feelings. Correspondingly, seven participants pointed out their positive thoughts regarding learning new words. For instance, a few participants expressed their happiness in the process while some participants mentioned their excitement and curiosity. On the other hand, most of the participants expressed their worries when they saw new words.

S1: I am surprised because I did not know it.

S3: I sometimes find it interesting

S9: I am surprised when it is a word I have never seen before

S13: It is getting a little weird.

S15: I find it a little bit weird.

S16: I am surprised. I am saying this is the first time I have heard such a word. I am saying, I have never heard such a word, or I have heard it recently.

S17: I am surprised. Yeah, but I can forget, if I do not memorize I forget.

S20: I think it will be a little bit difficult especially if there is an exam, I think it will be difficult but it gets easy when I study. If I practice it again in class, sometimes it gets easier if I practice it with my friends in class.

S8: Actually, namely I do not know I am a little bit scared but then I think whether we learned it in the units. After that, I try to write if I remember.

S10: Yeah I never understand it. It is very complicated because I cannot understand the rest of the sentences.

In Table 37, the fourth interview question "What strategies do you apply to discover the meaning of a new word in or outside the classroom environment?" was scrutinized. Regarding participants' responses, eight themes emerged as preferred VLSs among learners as follows: guessing, asking for help, note-taking, written repetition, verbal repetition, reading, Internet use and other specific strategy use. Mainly, it was found that participants utilized different kinds of VLSs to discover the meaning of the words.

Table 37. Findings Regarding Participants' VLS Preferences

Category	Sample emerged themes	Respondents
The vocabulary learning strategies used by the participants	Guessing	S2, S12,14
	Asking for help	S1, S3, S8, S12, S18, S21, S23, S24, S25
	Note-taking	S13, S17, S20,
	Written repetition	S3, S6, S7, S11, S13, S15, S21, S23
	Verbal repetition	S3, S13, S15,
	Internet use	S1, S12, S19, S23,
	reading	S10, S19,
	Other strategies: Highlight and underline, circle and associate words	S13, S16, S19, S20, S21, S22

Many participants agreed that they need guidance and support from their teachers, classmates, or family members while learning English vocabulary.

S1: I can either get help from Google or ask my mother for help with my lesson at home.

S3: If my teacher was there I would ask him/her or I get a bit of help from friends or I refer to a book. Sometimes I write the same word for 15 lines or try to memorize it by saying it out loud. It can be worked with the family.

S8: First ask parents then learn their English form and write down the English-Turkish equivalents.

S12: I ask for help from my parents and study a lot.

S18: Sometimes I consult my friends and sometimes I just consult my sister at home because she knows better so I ask her.

S21: I sometimes ask my brother. Either I get help from you or my friends. When I am at home, sometimes I ask my brother. When I cannot find it, I circle that part to ask the teacher something.

S23: If we forget, we can ask our teachers. If we do not have a teacher, let's say we are at home, we can still ask our mother or family or we can search on the Internet.

S24: sometimes I ask my friends when we are at school.

S25: I ask someone about it.

The second frequently used vocabulary learning strategy was identified as written repetition among the respondents.

S6: I learn new words by listening well and writing. Also, I use my notebooks and books.

S7: First I read. I read it carefully three times, then I write it three times, complete it and try to remember it.

S11: If I write down on paper, then memorize the Turkish versions follow by their English translations and check them on a piece of paper it would be great.

S13: Then I translate the word and write it down if I have any mistakes..

S21: I recommend writing in notebooks five times and reading them five times as well. I sometimes study like that.

S23: After finding the meaning, I try to write it down in a book to keep it in my mind.

Two participants (%8) continued to write the word several times to learn and memorize the words.

S3: Sometimes I write the same word for 15 lines or try to memorize it by saying it out loud.

S15: sometimes I write the same word for ten lines or try to memorize it by saying it out loud.

Similar to written repetition strategy use, some of the participants advocated notetaking as well. Four participants (16%) confirmed the importance of employing a note-taking strategy for vocabulary building.

S13: Sometimes I take notes down in my notebook. Then I translate and write down my mistakes. For example, I never throw away my notebooks, I keep them in my bookcase.

S14: I take notes somewhere in fact I have an old phone where I created an album called "English notes." I opened something there and wrote down the Turkish translations of some words.

S17: For example, I can easily remember the words after watching the video. Taking notes, writing them down, and practicing the spelling in the Turkish translation help me learn better.

S20: I learn more precisely from books; from the notes that I take in my notebook or by watching videos.

In addition to the written repetition strategy, some participants mentioned that they needed to say the word aloud instead of writing it down. In other words, three participants expressed that they use their voice to repeat the words.

S3: Sometimes I write the same word for 15 lines or try to memorize it by saying it out loud.

S13: I turn the paper over and look at the back by repeating it alone then I try to say it.

S15: Sometimes I write the same word for ten lines or try to memorize it by saying it aloud.

Apart from repetition strategy either written or verbal, some participants reported that they sometimes use 'reading aloud' strategy.

S7: First I am reading. I read it carefully three times, I write it three times, three times out loud, and three times in my mind.

S10: I read aloud by closing it.

S21: I recommend writing in notebooks five times and pronouncing them five times as well. I sometimes study like that.

In pursuit of other strategies, it was found that three participants (12%) preferred using the guessing strategy to discover the meaning of the words.

S2: I am trying to guess the word.

S12: I make predictions using words and seek help from Internet sites.

S14: I try to remember; I try to make predictions otherwise I search it or ask the teacher.

From a different perspective, some participants focused on making associations between known and unknown words while predicting the meaning.

S16: For instance, the word “beard”, I remember it from the snap of the fingers. We have a neighbor whose uncle has a moustache and I remember it from there.

S19: For instance, when somebody says “go”, “gitmek” in Turkish meaning immediately comes to my mind. (by waving hand).

S22: I try to create a word by combining some words that are for example included in that word in English but later I check whether it is true or not.

Some participants exemplified that they use Google and other websites to get the meaning of the word properly.

S1: I can either get help from Google or ask my mother for help with my lesson at home.

S12: I make predictions using words and seek help from the Internet sites.

S19: For example, if I am at home I either check Google or check my notebook.

S23: I search for the meaning on the Internet. We can still ask our mother or family or we can search on the Internet. We can learn by searching and we can memorize.

Along with the strategies previously mentioned by participants, it was discovered that a few participants specified the use of VLSs suggesting that highlighting, underlining, or circling could be best approach to comprehend words. Besides, one of the respondents (S20) noted that using colorful pencils while studying English motivated him/ her to engage more with English works.

S13: When I get home, I may underline these words. I sometimes forget to do it when it comes up again for instance, I underline the words that I do not know

S19: If we are at school, a word that I do not know comes up I write it down in my notebook. I highlight it.

S20: I feel motivated when I write the words with colorful pencils. Writing in a notebook carefully makes me feel more motivated to study.

S21: When I cannot solve it, I circle that part to ask you something.

The fifth question of the semi-structured interview addressed the participants' feelings when encountering the previously learned vocabulary. To begin with, participants shared their feelings in the event of remembering, forgetting, and not remembering. First of all, some participants were satisfied with the previously learned vocabulary as provided below.

S2: I am not surprised as I encountered before.

S5: It awakens good feelings. It would be better if I worked a lot.

S7: I am looking at the book sometimes I try to remember because I am aware that I know.

S18: Let's say... I say it is easy. I should learn this.

S20: I become happy when it is familiar to me because I can know that as if it is familiar. I try to think. If I find it, it becomes better but if I am not able to, I repeat this word.

S24: I feel as if reading is easier.

S25: I say these words either in my inner voice or I learned them.

From another perspective, it is possible to say that nine participants were not content with already learned words.

S3: I am upset that I did not repeat it when I learned it.

S4: That is to say, I am surprised. I sometimes forget. When I forget, it causes bad feelings.

S11: When I am not able to remember, I am scared. I am looking at the book and I will try to memorize it.

S15: Sometimes these words are difficult. That's why I am sometimes keen on memorizing.

S17: Namely I am sorry for forgetting.

S19: I am sometimes surprised to have forgotten.

S21: Sometimes I cannot remember them and it happens unfortunately.

S23: I am surprised because it was left behind from the previous lessons.

In particular, S9 expressed his/her regret in case of forgetting the words.

S9: When I cannot remember I feel as if I did not listen to the lesson.

As compared to other participants' views, S13 commented that feelings depend on the conditions that s/he encountered and it may alter in accordance with the situations.

S13: My feelings change when I forget the words. When I do not repeat them, they are forgotten. When repeated, it becomes easier and more exciting than before.

Last but not least, the final question of the semi-structured interview focuses on the challenges participants faced in learning English vocabulary. Thereby, when asked question about these difficulties they approved that they had difficulties in English vocabulary learning.

Three basic themes emerged from the respondents' responses considering the difficulties encountered by fourth grade EFL learners as shown in Table 38. These themes were divided into subthemes accordingly.

Table 38. *Findings Regarding the Challenges Faced by Participants in Vocabulary Learning*

Interview question	Sample themes emerged	Subthemes
Challenges faced by 4 th graders in vocabulary learning		
Theme 1	Related to words	The length of the words, the meaning, spelling, pronunciation, writing, forming sentences reading,
Theme 2	Related to students themselves	Anxiety, Lack of autonomy
Theme 3	Related to languages	Similarities, differences

More than half of the participants (16 of 25) believed that one of the biggest challenges in vocabulary learning was related to the 'word itself'. That is to say,

participants found the English words a little bit difficult. To illustrate, some views are presented below.

S3: Sometimes I find it hard, then sometimes the meaning is difficult (I struggle more in Turkish meanings) sometimes it feels challenging since I always need to focus on memorization

S4: I find the meaning of the word difficult.

S9: There can be many words that I learned like that but sometimes forget. Difficult words are really challenging for me. I struggle a lot with things like hair color and eye color.

S10: Sometimes I cannot remember because there are complicated words. The sentences are very complex. Turkish and English vocabulary items are not same in writing.

S14: Sometimes I can forget, for example when there is a catchy word I forget. For instance, long and very long words can be a bit hard. to pronounce, and if there are too many new words it becomes difficult to memorize. Apart from this, it is okay.

S15: Sometimes I have difficulty in translating the words into Turkish especially when I cannot find them when the meaning is really hard to understand.

S16: I struggle when the new words appear

S20: That is to say, I cannot give many examples but very long words are really difficult. Short words are more learnable.

S22: Yes, long words are challenging for me to recall. Sometimes writing is much more challenging.

Participants believed that the length of the word was an important in learning English vocabulary. As mentioned earlier, long words were considered a barrier to learning vocabulary among many respondents. Furthermore, as S22 stated above, this can make the writing process more complicated than it was supposed. Similarly, S24 indicated that both the length of the words and the place of letters affected the difficulty level of learning specific vocabulary items like ‘ambulance’, ‘beautiful’, ‘congratulations’ as well as words including clusters of vowels and consonants like ‘aunt’, ‘uncle’, ‘ugly.’

S24: The place of letters makes me nervous because I have trouble when the letters become doubled in vowels or consonants, it becomes more difficult. I sometimes write just one or three without understanding (such as beautiful, it includes a lot of vowels).

Besides, S5 mentioned that decoding letters and reading words is difficult for them. S7 pointed out that some words are difficult to pronounce and write since they face obstacles in the pronunciation of certain words.

S5: I have difficulty in its pronunciation.

S7: I have trouble with long and complex sentences; I can sometimes write incorrect parts at the end of the words. Sometimes my tongue gets tied while reading aloud. That's why I have a bit of difficulty with some words.

Some participants faced challenges related to the differences between the two languages. In particular, S2 demonstrated that they were unfamiliar with studying English indicating that they were not autonomous learners.

S1: I find sentences very hard because they are in English, I forgot some words that I did not know.

S2: The words may seem different since we just learned them. For example, we realize that we did not learn and we do not know how to do it.

S21 and S22 participants mentioned that the alphabet is not the same and they were not able to pronounce and speak easily.

S21: My native language is Turkish so I cannot speak much since I do not really know much about it. The most difficult part is pronunciation for me.

S22: The different alphabets are really problem, namely, in Turkish words are pronounced exactly as they are written but in English sometimes they are not pronounced like that and this makes me struggle a lot.

S17's statement underlines that background knowledge and language awareness are significant factors in language learning. S19 asserted that translation from Turkish into English or English into Turkish made differences in terms of complexity.

S17: We try to learn a new language that we have never heard before. While learning in class, I think about the spelling of the words. I struggle to translate from Turkish into English. I do not have any connection with countries and I do not know much about them. I do not know if it's Turkish or English either.

S19: For example, I sometimes mismatch the meaning of the words like “go means ‘ileri’”. I did not realize this was incorrect for a while so I cannot make the right connections between the meaning of the words. I am confused about the associations of words. For me, it is harder to translate from Turkish into English because when we write in Turkish it sticks in my mind that way.

From a different perspective, two participants (%8) noted that similarities between the two languages made English vocabulary difficult. They claimed that these similarities created confusion about the learning process.

S25: Some words are very similar to each other. Sometimes I get confused so it becomes a bit difficult. Sometimes I can make mistakes while writing. For example, I can spell words such as ‘notbuk’ rather than ‘notebook’, or ‘telefon’ rather than ‘telephone’.

S23: The Turkish equivalent comes to my mind but I still cannot understand it. The complexity of the words, like museums and mosques, makes me nervous as their English terms are quite similar. That's why it can be confusing in our mind.

Considering productive skills, four respondents (%16) acknowledged that they struggled to form sentences. Additionally, S20 discussed the difference in structures in terms of complexity of two languages.

S6: It is a bit difficult to form a sentence.

S8: Forming sentences is usually a bit difficult since we cannot quite fit the words together when we are learning the meaning of the words we often struggle a bit with writing in English.

S10: I cannot form sentences. I have a lot of difficulty in forming sentences.

S11: Lately I have been struggling with forming a sentence. Sometimes I forget, and then I do it by memorizing.

S20: I have difficulty in forming sentences. It can be complex in writing and ordering the words so I find it a little bit difficult to form sentences.

One participant admitted that they were left unguided and did not learn how to deal with vocabulary either newly learned or previously learned.

S2: The words seem to be the same. I have just learned the words but the teacher should teach me how to handle this process because I cannot do it alone.

Eventually, S13 mentioned his/her psychological manner on the condition that s/he was not capable of doing it. In other words, difficulties made her/him anxious.

S13: I can be very happy when I can do it but when I have a feeling that I cannot do it, it causes anxiety. I have difficulty with some actions. I also struggled with clothes. Sometimes, yes, I mispronounce such a letter.

4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the current study in detail. The first, second and third research questions focused on exploring the use of VLSs among participants as well as determining the strategies they used most and least frequently and the impact of some variables. The first research question examines the VLSs employed by fourth grade EFL learners. Subsequently, the descriptive statistics revealed that participants most frequently utilized memory strategies, followed by determination strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social (discovery) strategies, and the least used strategies were social (consolidation) strategies overall.

Participants tended to use specific strategies more frequently than others. For instance, the most frequently used memory strategies ‘studying the spelling of a word’, ‘studying spelling of the word’ and ‘using cognates’ were defined by participants. For determination strategies, ‘checking for L1 cognate’, ‘guessing from contextual context’ and ‘analyzing any available pictures or gestures’ were preferred. ‘Verbal and written repetition’, ‘using vocabulary section in your notebook’ and ‘keeping vocabulary notebooks’ were prioritized among cognitive strategies. Regarding metacognitive strategy preferences, ‘continuing to study overtime’ was the most prevalent strategy use. Subsequently, ‘using English language media’ was favored. Specifically, ‘skipping or passing the word’ was the least commonly utilized strategy

by participants overall. Considering social (discovery) strategies, participants favored benefited from ‘asking the teacher for an L1 translation’ whereas they did not focus on ‘paraphrasing or synonym use.’ The other strategy type, social (consolidation) strategy items demonstrated that this strategy was implemented on a limited basis by the participants. In general, participants employed social strategies such as ‘interacting with native speakers’, ‘teachers check students’ flashcards or word list for accuracy’ and ‘studying and practicing meaning in a group’ on a regular basis.

By means of Schmitt’s VLSQ, the second research question focused on the most and the least used strategies used by fourth graders. The most frequently used strategies were found to be memory strategies whereas the least used strategy was interconnected with the metacognitive strategies.

Regarding the third research question, it was found that the use of VLSs has been influenced by some variables. It was seen that some external factors such as participants’ gender, educational background of their parents, parents’ jobs, the number of siblings, taking supportive lessons, having someone in the family knowing English did not have a significant difference in the use of VLSs. On the other hand, it was found that some internal factors such as perceived difficulty level in the lesson, dictionary use, enjoyment of the lesson, perceptions towards the lesson held a meaningful difference in the use of VLSs by the participants.

As for the fourth research question, semi-structured interviews with 25 participants aimed to gain a better understanding of the reasons for the difficulties that participants had in vocabulary learning. The six questions were addressed to indicate their viewpoints about English vocabulary learning. It has been reported that the bulk of participants were content with English vocabulary learning process. With response to the second interview question, the way of learning English vocabulary was investigated and participants responded that they utilized ‘writing’, ‘memorizing’, ‘repetition’, ‘reading’, ‘asking for help’ and ‘individually work.’ The third interview

question dealt with the reaction to the words that they encountered for the first time. Only seven participants declared that they had positive perspectives. The fourth question was based on the VLSs that they chose. It demonstrated that they adopted different types of strategies even though they were unaware that they utilized a strategy intentionally. Eight themes regarding VLS use were identified comprising written repetition, asking for help, using the Internet, other strategy uses as highlighting, underlining and circling, guessing, note-taking, associations of words, verbal repetition and reading in descending rank. The fifth interview question reflected participants' feelings related to previously learned vocabulary items. Seven participants expressed positive feelings whereas nine participants expressed discomfort about forgetting the word.

Last but not least, regarding the last research question, the sixth interview question demonstrated responses about obstacles faced by fourth grade EFL learners in vocabulary learning. It was observed that three themes emerged: difficulties related to vocabulary, based on students' own feelings and related to languages. They exemplified they had problems regarding writing, word length, meaning, spelling, pronunciation of the words. Furthermore, they stated they sometimes felt anxious and lacked autonomy. Additionally, participants were concerned about the similarities and differences between the first language and English language in terms of lexical difficulties.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate challenges that fourth-grade EFL learners encountered in vocabulary learning and the vocabulary learning strategies they tended to use. A mixed- method research design was employed incorporating two data collection tools to maximize data production. For the quantitative part, 150 EFL learners' vocabulary learning strategy preferences were identified through Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire. Subsequently, the most and the least prevalent vocabulary learning strategies were elicited for the second research question. Afterward, the third research question explored whether there were significant differences in the use of VLSs based on various demographic variables such as gender, the educational background of parents, parents' occupations, dictionary use, taking supportive lessons, having a family member who knows English, enjoyment of English lessons, perceptions towards the English lessons, difficulties experienced in English lessons. This analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS 20 to evaluate the qualitative data.

To gather qualitative data, semi-structured interviews with 25 participants who were involved in the first part of the research. Prior to the interviews, a pilot study was performed with three students who did not take part in the study. Students were asked to answer six interview questions related to their English learning processes.

This chapter encapsulates the findings of the current study by comparing and contrasting the results of the relevant literature. It offers pedagogical implications and recommendations for researchers, instructors and upcoming research studies.

5.1. Discussion of the Quantitative Findings

This research study aimed to identify possible vocabulary learning challenges encountered by fourth graders and the vocabulary learning strategies they prefer using.

It begins with the discussion of first and second research questions' results along with the findings of the questionnaire and the demographic information data.

5.1.1. Discussion of the Findings of the First Research Question

Considering the first research question based on the use of VLSs by fourth graders in EFL classes, the overall mean value in descriptive statistics for VLS use by fourth-grade EFL learners assessed through Schmitt (1997) and Oxford's (1990) scoring system (low: 1.00- 2.39; moderate: 2.40 to 3.49; high: 3.50 to 5.00) The results obtained from the questionnaire and the demographic forms revealed that participants employed memory strategies the most with a high degree. Participants were found to be medium users of determination strategies, social (discovery) strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. This current study is consistent with the literature suggesting that EFL learners utilized VLSs at a medium level (Derici, 2019; Karagöl- Özkul, 2023; Rabadi, 2016). As proposed by Oxford (1990), using a strategy at a medium level confirms that students are aware of the strategies, yet learners may be uncertain about how to apply them. Therefore, Oxford (1990) suggested that learners need guidance to utilize the strategies more frequently in their language learning process. Aside from the five previously identified strategy types, social (consolidation) strategies have been identified to be employed infrequently.

In parallel to the existing literature (Abbasnejad & Kamali, 2019; Çevik et al., 2018; Demirtaş, 2014; Şener, 2015; Yılmaz, 2020; Yolcu, 2019; Zabardast-Alamdari, 2010), memory strategies were the most frequently employed by the participants. This result supports Teng's (2015) argument that EFL students deliberately memorize words for prolonged periods (p. 5). Likewise, Gu's (2005) finding validated this affirmation as Chinese learners mostly focused on memory strategies in English language learning. To put it differently, Akbay-Şimşek (2022) mentioned that participants' grade levels had a significant impact on utilizing memory strategies. More specifically, there was an apparent increase in the use of memory strategies among fifth and sixth graders whereas upper levels such as seventh and

eighth-grade learners were less likely to use memory strategies. In a similar vein, Çınar's (2019) study affirmed a rise in the average use of strategies among lower graders and a decrease by the time learners got to the eighth grade. Additionally, Albousaif's (2011) study demonstrated that there were noteworthy differences between these educational levels as lower levels and upper levels. To illustrate, young learners were more likely to utilize 'using the pictures in the textbook', 'repetition by writing', 'using mnemonics', 'repetition verbally', 'guessing the meaning through part of speech'. However, it has been discovered that upper levels tended to use different strategies such as guessing the meaning of a word through grammatical and morphological aspects, using dictionaries both bilingual and monolingual, and mapping the words, associated with the new words to personal experiences. Gorgoz and Tican (2000) advocated these results since they supported that seventh grade students employed less strategies than fifth and sixth grade students.

In this current study, memory strategy items showed that participants utilized 'studying the spelling of the word', 'studying the sound of a word', and 'using cognates' to a high degree. Similarly, Aslan-Tunç (2020) identified that the most common memory strategies as 'studying the sound of a word', 'studying the spelling of a word'. Regarding the strategy 'saying the words aloud', it had greater attention among respondents in the research of Karagöl- Özkul's (2023). Conversely, Yıldız (2019) expressed that the spelling of new words was unfavored by the participants. As the existing literature suggests, different assumptions about word exposure in memory storage have been presented. That is to say, Albouisaif (2011) claimed that learners must expose a word five to 16 times whereas Rott (1999) claimed that six repetitions for learning a word were efficient. What is more, Waring and Takaci (2003) accepted that eight exposures for becoming familiar with the words may result in fifty percent.

The majority of the memory strategy items were employed at a medium level. To illustrate, it has been noted from the participants' responses that they sometimes employed these memory strategies: 'loci method', 'using semantic feature grids', 'using new word in sentences', 'study word with a pictorial representation of its

meaning', 'learning the words of an idiom together', 'associating the word with its coordinates', 'peg method', 'grouping words together within a storyline', 'using keyword method', 'configuration' 'saying new word aloud when studying', 'part of speech', 'grouping words together to study them', 'imagining word's meaning', 'affixes and roots', 'connecting word to a personal experience', 'connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms', 'paraphrase the words meaning.' In compliance with Yolcu's (2019) findings, it has been noticed that some learners occasionally preferred 'loci method', 'key word technique', and 'connecting the words' reporting that they were aware of these dissimilar strategies.

In the current study, the strategies 'grouping words together spatially on a page' and 'imaging word form' strategies were highlighted at a medium level. However, Aslan-Tunç (2020) presented that those strategies as less prevalent. Furthermore, inconsistent with Yıldız's (2019) findings, which demonstrated that 'using physical action when learning a new word' was the most commonly used strategy, this memory strategy item was presented to a moderate level in the present study. Conversely, Ballıdede and Lokmacioğlu (2014) highlighted that their participants disregarded physical action involvement for language learning.

'Using scales for gradable adjectives', 'using semantic maps' were considered as the less favored strategies than other mnemonics. Likewise, Aslan-Tunç's (2020) study revealed that participants' usage of semantic map was rare. As for the least favorable strategy of the participants in this current study, 'underlining the initial letter', aligned with the findings of the research studies (Aparı, 2016; Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Yolcu, 2019). In this regard, those researchers reported that their participants utilized the 'underlining the initial letter of the word' strategy the least frequently. Furthermore, Aslan-Tunç (2020) stated that the great majority of the participants (71%) had never experienced marking the initial letter of a word to help them recall the words and phrases.

With regard to determination strategies, they were described as the second most frequently utilized by participants. This finding was congruent with Kaymakamoğlu and Hassan's (2015) study as they supported that participants at Salahaddin University ranked determination strategy use as the second most common strategy. Another study by Hamzah, Kafipour, and Abdullah (2009) noted the same result as Iranian EFL learners preferred using determination strategies to find the meaning of the new words. Kaymakamoğlu and Hassan (2015) proved that EFL learners might rely more on determination strategies to get the meaning of the words by analyzing parts of speech and word forms. Furthermore, these scholars (2015) proposed that participants may be inclined to utilize the determination strategy items due to the position of the grammar approach in the countries based on English language education programs. Contrary to these findings, some researchers (Amirian & Heshmatifar, 2013; Astika, 2016; Barbaros, 2018; Baskın et al., 2017; Bozgeyik, 2011; Çelik & Toptaş, 2010; Yılmaz, 2021) found that determination strategies were the most preferred strategy by the participants.

In this study, participants preferred using the determination strategy 'checking for L1 cognate' to a high degree. To specify, 'checking for L1 cognate' was the most preferred determination strategy item. Similarly, some researchers (Acar, 2016; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023) expressed that their participants favored this strategy item. Karagöl-Özkul's (2023) study involving fourth-grade students at a primary school in Kocaeli reached the same conclusion with this study, indicating 'guessing from contextual context', and 'analyzing any available pictures or gestures' as the most widely utilized determination strategies. By contrast, Yıldız (2019) explained that his respondents disliked the 'using pictures and gestures' strategy whereas the respondents in that research preferred using pictures and gestures occasionally.

Correspondingly, other determination strategies such as 'analyzing part of speech', 'analyzing affixes and roots', 'word list', 'flashcard', and 'bilingual dictionary' strategies were employed at a moderate level by the participants. Nonetheless, Aslan-Tunç (2020) exemplified that participants were unconcerned with flashcard use in

vocabulary learning. The researcher (2020) believed that technological advances and the lack of flashcard utilization as a learning tool may be related to this infrequency.

As for ‘dictionary use’ strategy, Aparı (2016) held the view that bilingual dictionaries were highly used by the participants. Aligning with Aparı’s (2016) result, Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) stated that bilingual dictionary use was highly preferred by the participants. In a similar vein, the current study reflected that bilingual dictionaries were superior to monolingual dictionaries and participants remarkably did not choose monolingual dictionaries.

On the basis of cognitive strategies, it was seen that participants utilized them at a moderate level. On the other hand, there were some researchers (Bozatlı, 1988; Kadioğlu, 2005; Yılmaz, 2020) who reported cognitive strategies the most frequently used in overall strategy use. More specifically, participants tended to use ‘verbal repetition’, ‘written repetition’, and ‘using the vocabulary section in your textbook’ in the research. Aligning with Nation’s (2001) affirmation, verbal repetition was believed to be essential for properly learning lexical components. Similarly, Aparı’s (2016) study emphasized the frequent use of verbal repetition among participants. This result was congruent with Karagöl-Özkul’s (2023) research since participants favored benefited from verbal repetition. In addition to the strategies mentioned before, ‘keeping a vocabulary notebook’ strategy was also highlighted. In this respect, Yolcu (2019) expressed that the bulk of learners recommended keeping vocabulary notebooks. Besides, some scholars (Aslan- Tunç, 2020; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023) held the view that having vocabulary notebooks was strongly favored by the participants.

In descending rank, the other cognitive strategies such as using ‘word list’ and ‘flash cards’ were preferred at a medium level by the participants. As opposed to this finding, Cengizhan (2011) illustrated the most frequently used strategies as ‘word list, flash card uses and maintaining vocabulary notebook.’ Another point of view, Yıldız (2020) identified that his participants rarely used vocabulary cards.

The infrequently utilized cognitive strategies were identified as ‘taking notes in class’, ‘labeling physical objects’ in the present study. Likewise, Aslan-Tunç (2020) observed that her participants had little or no experience with tagging tangible items in vocabulary learning. Hence, the least commonly utilized cognitive strategy was referred to ‘listening to tape of word lists.’ This was in line with Yolcu’s (2019) findings that indicated the least commonly used strategy was ‘listening to the recordings and CD of the word’. Regarding the learning environment of EFL learners in Türkiye, it is likely that participants were unfamiliar with CDs, DVDs, and tapes containing word lists thanks to the technological advancement. As a consequence, the reason for less demand for ‘listening to tape of word lists’ may stem from being unfamiliar with these learning resources.

As for metacognitive strategies, participants identified the most frequently used metacognitive strategy as (Item 58) ‘continuing to study over time’. Consistent with some studies in this field (Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023), this strategy was one of the most commonly employed overall. It can be deduced that Turkish EFL learners at different stage are interested in keeping progress to English learning.

The current study demonstrated that the metacognitive strategy ‘using English language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)’ was preferred at a medium level. On the other hand, some researchers (Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Demir, 2022; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023) indicated that it was among the most prevalent strategy items. In compliance with Aslan-Tunç’s (2020) findings, Demir (2022) indicated that ‘listening to English songs’ received the highest mean score of metacognitive strategies to study a new vocabulary item. Demir (2022) exemplified that this could stem from the students’ adolescence. Additionally, Yıldız’s (2020) study supported the rationale for frequent media use as 9th grade students mainly selected listening to English songs and news. Another study by Cengizhan (2011) confirmed that using media for listening and watching English was favored by high school students in Edirne. Hence, it may be convenient to say that teenagers are more likely to use technology in learning

vocabulary such as through listening to English songs compared to young learners. Thus, the discrepancies in results could be attributed to age differences.

Except for the strategy 'skipping or passing the word', participants employed metacognitive strategies at a medium level. This aligned with some research in the field (Aparı, 2016; Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Yolcu, 2019) since they also reported that participants used this strategy to a low degree. Consistent with the findings (Aparı, 2016; Yolcu, 2019), this strategy item was found to be the least preferred by the participants among metacognitive strategies. Overall, metacognitive strategies were determined as the fourth most commonly used strategies by the participants in the present study. In contrast, some researchers (Amirian & Heshmatifar, 2013; Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Cengizhan, 2011; Demir, 2022; Duong, 2022; Saltuk, 2001; Sherwani, 2017; Tokçalar, 2013; Sarıkaya, 2021) revealed that their participants utilized metacognitive strategies the most.

It was discovered that the social (discovery) strategy items were employed at a moderate level. Chiefly, participants focused on 'asking the teacher for an L1 translation'. In parallel to existing literature (Aparı, 2016; Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023; Ünkür, 2019; Yolcu, 2019), 'asking the teacher for an L1 translation of the new word' was very popular among the participants. Contrary to some researchers (Kheder, 2022; Yıldız, 2019), participants were more likely to consult their classmates for the definition of the word. Similarly, Demir (2022) observed that participants often use 'asking peers for help' highlighting that learners were inclined to socialize and feel at ease speaking with peers.

The 'group work' from social (discovery) strategy was ranked as one of the favorite strategies to discover the definition of unknown words. Similarly, some scholars (Aparı, 2016; Yıldız, 2019; Zabardast- Alamdarı, 2010) clarified that participants employed group work to discover the definition of the words frequently.

In contrast, Asyiah (2017) proposed another idea that group work had the lowest priority for understanding word meaning.

More specifically, participants preferred asking the teacher for a new word in a sentence. Thus, it can be inferred that teachers were considered as the primary source for participants in exploring the meaning of the words and sentences. Although Schmitt (1997) claimed that young learners rely more on their peers than the teachers for the meaning of words, the findings of the current study indicated the opposite. Obtained from the participants' responses in the study demonstrated that participants depended on the teacher rather than their classmates. From another point of view, a few scholars (Aslan-Tunç, 2019; Yıldız, 2019) reflected that 'asking the teacher for a sentence' was not prioritized by the participants. To illustrate, Aslan-Tunç (2020) stated participants preferred asking the teacher for the translation from the first language, paraphrasing and synonyms of the words but they rarely consulted their teachers for the sentence level. Unlike the results mentioned above, the participants of this research preferred asking their teachers and classmates for sentence level assistance by adding the Turkish equivalents of the words. On the other hand, participants were less likely to ask their teachers for assistance with paraphrasing or finding synonyms for the words. In turn, Aparı (2016) held the view that her participants favored consulting the teacher for paraphrasing or synonyms. Since the learners' grade level varied in the previous studies, these findings illustrated that the profile of the learners may influence the guidance they received for the requirements of the activities.

It was seen that social (consolidation) strategies are used at a low level. 'Interacting with native speakers', 'checking students' flashcards or word list for accuracy' and 'studying and practicing meaning in a group' strategies were preferred by the participants in descending order. These results showed that participants were capable of using new vocabulary items in social contexts mostly engaging with native speakers. This may be related to foreign language context since foreign language learners lack opportunities to enhance their productive skills. As a result, they may feel

shy about using that language and they may tend to focus on mistakes. From another point of view, Aslan-Tunç (2020) noted that the most commonly utilized strategy was interacting with native speakers. Contrary to these findings, Yıldız (2019) underlined that his participants unfavored asking native speakers for help. The other social strategy item of this study, ‘flashcards and word list’ was less frequently used by the participants to consolidate the meaning of the words. On the other hand, Aslan-Tunç (2020) noted a different finding that ‘flashcards and word lists’ strategy was employed to a low degree. Additionally, Aparı (2016) mentioned that keeping flashcards and wordlists was rarely used by their participants.

In this current study, the least frequently used social (consolidation) strategy was associated with group work for practicing the meaning of the words. Nevertheless, there were contradictory results from some research studies (Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023; Yıldız, 2019).

5.1.2. Discussion of the Findings of the Second Research Question

With regard to the second research question, the descriptive statistics illustrated that the most frequently used strategies by fourth-grade EFL students were memory strategies whereas the least frequently used strategies were found to be social (consolidation strategies). This result was congruent with Şener’s (2003) study as the researcher indicated that memory strategies were the most favored items and social strategies were the least favored group by Turkish EFL students at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. Similarly, extensive research studies (Abbasnejad & Kamali, 2009; Demirtaş, 2014) reported the same ranking order for the most and the least strategy preferences.

Aligning with the findings of this study, the most frequently employed strategy was provided with memory strategies by several researchers (Abbasnejad &

Kamali, 2019; Çınar, 2019; Demirtaş, 2014; Şener, 2015). Since the memory strategy preferences were highly favored, Atkinson (1972) held the view that vocabulary learning was primarily linked with mnemonics that serve as invaluable contributions for word recall. Moreover, Schmitt (1997) advocated that learners with lower competence levels may utilize their memory storage to generate better results. As specified by Schmitt (1997), students tended to utilize mechanical strategy items such as 'memorization', 'note-taking', and 'repetition' more often than sophisticated strategies such as 'guessing', 'imagery' and 'keyword technique'.

Specifically, Item 31 'studying the spelling of a word' was the most frequently used among memory strategy items. Likewise, Mahmood (2017) reached the same result as spelling of the word, sound of the word and saying the new words aloud were favored by participants. Two researchers (Aslan- Tunç, 2020; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023) confirmed that participants highly used sounds of the words, spelling and saying aloud words strategies. It was feasible to extend that Zabardast-Alamdari (2010) emphasized strategies associated with word forms, pronunciation and spelling that were highly favored by participants. Moreover, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) claimed that learners became accustomed to these strategies and they may be less willing to adopt other strategy types. As a consequence, language learners might tend to rely on repetition of the same methods instead of dealing with various strategies.

Four memory strategies 'studying the spelling of a word', 'studying the sound of a word', 'using cognates' and 'loci method' were among the most frequently utilized strategies. Participants particularly focused on two metacognitive strategy items: 'continuing to study over time' and 'using spaced word practice'. The participants mainly preferred a determination strategy, 'checking for L1 cognate' for frequent use of VLSs.

In the current study, it has been discovered that participants rarely used social (consolidation) strategies. In that vein, the existing literature reflected the same results

that social (consolidation) strategies were the least frequently used strategies (Amirian & Heshmatifar, 2013; Demir, 2022; Hişmanoglu & Turan, 2019; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023; Mahmood, 2017; Şener, 2003; Yılmaz, 2021). According to Kafipour (2006), this was rational since EFL learners do not have to debate the meaning of a word they do not understand in an EFL context. Mahmood (2017) exemplified that this could be attributed to the teacher-centered methods, crowded classrooms and inactive learners.

Despite the low usage of social (consolidation) strategies, the least frequently used strategy was identified as the metacognitive strategy (item 57) 'skipping or passing the new word'. Consistent with the literature (Aparı, 2016; Yolcu, 2019), these studies revealed that Turkish EFL learners did not disregard unfamiliar English words. Among the least commonly used strategies overall, participants did not seem to favor benefiting from four specific memory strategy items. To illustrate, 'underlining the initial letter', 'using semantic maps' 'using scales for gradable adjectives', and 'paraphrasing the words meaning' were infrequently used despite the high frequency of memory strategy use. In compliance with this finding, Aslan-Tunç (2020) reported that her participants did not give priority in underlining the first letter of the words. The researcher (2020) extended that her participants rarely used word trees. The present study was also consistent with the findings of Schmitt's (1997) study that provided semantic map use was the least popular among memory strategy items.

Additionally, it was noted that strategies such as 'monolingual dictionary' and 'asking teachers for paraphrases or synonyms of new word' were among the least prioritized strategies by the participants. Based on monolingual dictionary use, some researchers (Amirian & Heshmatifar, 2013; Mahmood, 2017) came to a different result that using a monolingual dictionary was among the most frequent strategies. Conversely, Schmitt (1997) contributed that foreign language learners were inclined to prefer bilingual dictionaries rather than monolingual ones. Mahmood's (2017) study aligned with the current study's finding that guidance from the teacher for paraphrasing or synonyms was infrequently utilized by respondents. These findings

contradicted some studies (Aparı, 2016; Aslan-Tunç, 2020) reflected that participants need support from the teacher about paraphrasing or finding synonyms of the words.

Contrary to the aforementioned results, some researchers reported diverse results regarding participants' VLS use. To illustrate, Şerebatır (2008) stated that participants utilize social strategies more frequently than metacognitive strategies. Likewise, Aparı (2016) found that participants at Ufuk University preferred using social (discovery) strategies most commonly whereas they did not favor the use of memory strategies. Yıldız (2019) reported the same result as Aparı's (2016) study by indicating social (discovery) strategies and determination strategies were preferred the most.

Moreover, it has been investigated the use of VLS in relation to some variables such as gender, the educational background of mothers and fathers, the mother's and the father's job, number of siblings, presence of somebody who knows English in the family, perceptions of the English lessons, enjoyment of English, English dictionary use, taking supportive English lessons, having difficulty in English.

5.1.3. Discussion of the Findings of the Third Research Question

With inference to third research question, this study aimed at exploring the impact of some variables. As one of the variables, gender was found to have no significant impact on participants' VLS use. This corresponded with several research studies (Arsal & Özen, 2006; Astika, 2016; Ay, 2006; Balcı & Uğuten, 2018; Karahan-Üzülmez, 2015; Manuel, 2007; Park, 2001; Yaprak, Hayta & Yaprak, 2013; Yılmaz, 2020) that specified no differences between gender and VLS preferences.

Unlike the results of this current study, many researchers (Akday-Şimşek, 2022; Bilir, 2022; Büyükhıska & Kozallık, 2018; Çınar, 2019; Deneme & Ada, 2010;

Derici, 2019; Gorgoz & Tican, 2020; Gu, 2002; Güneş, 2023; Karagöl-Özkul, 2023; Kocaman & Kızılkaya-Cumaoğlu, 2014; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Özeroğlu, 2023; Sahbazian, 2004; Sarıkaya, 2021; Şerebatır, 2008; Üster, 2008) reported that female students were more competent in the use of VLSs than male students. Precisely, Üster (2008) added that males and females tended to use different strategies based on their gender. For instance, females were more successful in applying determination strategies, social strategies and cognitive strategies whereas males were inclined to use memory strategies more frequently. Aligning with that, Young and Oxford (1997) reflected that females favored using various strategy types though there was no significant difference in VLS use and gender. Likewise, Özeroğlu (2023) emphasized that female students were more capable of using note-taking strategies and repetition as compared to male students. Additionally, Çevik et al. (2018) noticed a meaningful difference only between cognitive strategy use and gender of the participants. In a similar vein, Büyükhıskı and Kozallık (2018) explained that females were more successful than male students in terms of cognitive strategy use. Another finding by Demir (2022) stated that females emphasized cognitive strategies more frequently than males. As specified by Al-Khresheh and Al-Ruwaili (2020), only memory strategies created a substantial difference between the gender of the participants and the VLS use. According to their results, it was reported that females were more competent than males in applying memory strategies despite the fact that no difference was detected in other strategies. Similarly, Karagöl-Özkul's (2023) study revealed that females were better than males in applying only memory strategies.

Inconsistent with the current study's finding, there were some research studies in the field (Baskın et al., 2017; Kheder, 2022; Tercanlıoğlu, 2004; Tokçalar, 2013; Tran, 1988) depicted that male students were more successful than females in utilizing VLSs.

Correspondingly, the association between participants' VLS use and the educational background of mothers and fathers was investigated. In this regard, it was noted that there was no significant difference in the participants' VLS use regarding

their parents' education levels. Consistent with this finding, some researchers (Aslan-Tunç, 2020; Ay, 2006; Çevik et. al., 2018; Çınar, 2019; Kocaman & Kızılkaya-Cumaoğlu, 2014; Mandıralı, 2022) concluded there was no difference between participants' VLS use and the educational level of parents. Besides, in research studies by Şerebatır (2008) and Özeroğlu (2023), there was no statistically significant difference in terms of fathers' degree of education and VLS usage.

Contrary to the current study's findings, a meaningful difference between mothers' education levels and the use of VLSs by participants was detected in some research studies in this field (Akbat-Şimşek, 2022; Karahan-Üzölmez, 2015; Özeroğlu, 2023; Sarıkaya, 2021; Şerebatır, 2008). According to Özeroğlu (2023), participants whose mothers had a graduate degree used more metacognitive and organization strategies than participants whose mothers did not obtain a diploma. Similarly, Şerebatır (2008) identified that participants with university-educated mothers utilized social strategies more frequently than others. Therefore, Şerebatır (2008) noticed the disparities between mothers with university diplomas and those with primary school education. In a similar vein, Somuncuoğlu and Yıldırım's (2000) study highlighted the same results that respondents with higher education levels of parents utilized more strategies than those with lower education background of families. According to Akbat-Şimşek (2022), the mothers' proficiency in English was the major parameter affecting the implementation of memory strategies among fifth and sixth graders. It was discovered that respondents with English-speaking mothers utilized more memory strategies than those whose mothers were incapable of speaking English. The key distinction in utilizing memory strategies was highlighted by the mother's active engagement with the student during assigned tasks. In a study by Karahan-Üzölmez (2015), the notable variance in the implementation of the VLS social strategies subcategories was affected by the mother's educational background. The difference was in favor of respondents with high school graduate mothers compared to those with illiterate mothers.

Similar to the results of the parents' education levels, it was found that the mother's and father's jobs did not have an impact on the respondents' VLS use. Aligning with the findings based on fathers' jobs, Ay (2006) found that participants' VLS use did not differ. Besides, the researcher (2006) stated that the economic background of families did not create a meaningful difference in participants' VLS choice. On the contrary, Ay (2006) identified a significant variation in participants' VLS use and their mothers' occupations. Ay (2006) concluded that participants' mothers may have more free time for parental involvement in education as compared to their fathers.

In terms of the number of siblings, it became apparent that the number of siblings did not make a statistically noteworthy distinction in the participants' VLS use. Aligning with this result, Ay (2006) indicated that there was no association between the number of siblings and participants' VLS preferences. More specifically, Mandıralı (2022) reported that there was no correlation between the number of siblings and strategy utilization except for one strategy item. More explicitly, one item of Mandıralı's study (2022) revealed that students with more than three siblings were more likely to assess their English achievement.

In the event that having a family member who knows English or not, no significant differences were found between participants' VLS preferences and the presence of someone speaking English in the family. In contrast, Çınar (2020) indicated that substantial variations in all subcategories of strategy items were noticed among sixth, seventh and eighth graders with English-speaking families. According to his findings (2020), learners with English-speaking family members tended to employ more memory strategies, social strategies and affective strategies than learners who indicated that no one in their families could speak English.

In the scope of the perceptions towards English lessons, all the strategy types showed statistical variations apart from social (discovery) strategies. More explicitly,

it was discovered that there was a substantial distinction between learners who believed English lesson was easy and those who stated that it was difficult for determination strategies. With reference to the determination strategies, it was in favor of those indicating English lessons were easy. For social (consolidation) strategies, there was a considerable difference between learners who found English lesson easy and those who replied it was moderate level. Similarly, the results favored those responding English lessons were perceived as easy. The same variation in memory strategies was detected, that is to say, learners reporting the lessons were easy surpassed those reporting English lessons at a moderate level. In terms of cognitive strategies, it was revealed that learners who believed English lessons were easy outperformed those who indicated that English lessons were difficult. For metacognitive strategies, there was a meaningful difference between learners who believed English lessons were easy and those who reported the lessons were hard. Similarly, Somuncuoğlu and Yıldırım (2000) mentioned that learners who were fond of English lessons were more likely to employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In a broad sense, as the relevant literature suggested that there was a consensus among scholars (Bilir, 2022; Demir, 2022; Gömleksiz, 2010; Kesmez, 2010; Şerebatır, 2008) that positive attitudes towards English promote strategy use. In other words, if language learners have positive perspective towards the English lessons, they may be more eager to learn and use the strategies to be successful in the target language (Brown, 1994). As stated by Easterbrook (2013), learners' views on language learning were highly related to their VLS preferences. Additionally, Boonkongaen (2012) held the view that negative perspective towards the target language hinders the use of various strategies.

As for enjoyment of English lessons, this study revealed that there were statistical differences between participants' VLSs and the degree of enjoying English lessons. Except for the metacognitive, determination and social (consolidation) strategies, the other strategies held statistical variations in light of the Tukey test. To illustrate, a significant variation was found between enjoying the English classes and disliking them in social (discovery) strategies. It was in favor of learners who reported

that they enjoyed the lessons. For cognitive strategies, it was in favor of learners displaying their enjoyment. In addition, another variation was detected between learners who disliked the course and those who had little enjoyment of the lesson. It was in favor of learners who had little enjoyment of the lesson. Besides, a meaningful difference was detected between learners who had enjoyment of the lesson and those who did not like the English lessons. It was highly noticed that learners who liked the lessons surpassed the learners who reported that they did not like it. Likewise, in Çınar's (2019) study, it was observed that students who showed enthusiasm in English classes were more inclined to apply memory strategies than learners who did not like the English lessons.

With regard to dictionary use, it was revealed that there were meaningful differences between participants' VLS use and dictionary use or not. To illustrate, learners who confirmed that they were using dictionaries outnumbered the learners who admitted that they did not use dictionaries regarding determination strategies, social (consolidation) strategies, social (discovery) strategies and memory strategies. Neither cognitive strategies nor metacognitive strategies created a substantial difference in terms of using dictionary or not. These findings contradicted the study by Gu and Johnson's (1996) since they reported that learners who were using dictionary had better scores.

In the context of taking supportive courses or not, it was discovered that it did not have an impact on the participants' VLS choice despite the majority of learners took supportive lessons. As opposed to this result, some research studies in the field (Mandıralı, 2022; Şerebatır, 2008) provided the benefits of supportive lessons. Mandıralı's study (2022) indicated that learners in supportive classes were more likely to share notes, collaborate with peers and read and listen to English language content. Subsequently, this might imply that learners who attended extra lessons spend increasingly more time with their friends in the classroom setting and this might provide group socializing and boost their confidence while speaking English. Besides, Mandıralı (2022) reported that learners who took supportive courses were interested

in correcting their mistakes in English speaking exercises. Another finding by Şerebatır (2008) revealed that taking private lessons made a significant difference in social strategies of sixth and seventh grade students who worked in person with their tutor. Conversely, learners who did not take supportive lessons may struggle to use social strategies owing to being deprived of peers and speaking opportunities.

On the basis of having difficulty level in English, no significant variation was detected between the use of VLS by participants and difficulty perception in terms of determination, social (discovery), social (consolidation), memory and metacognitive strategies. Contrary to these results, there was a considerable variation between participants' cognitive strategy use and difficulty aspect. Learners who granted that they did not find English difficult outnumbered those who found English hard. As expressed by Mahmood (2017), vocabulary poses a remarkable challenge for both students and teachers. It has been emphasized that successful learners in vocabulary learning were those who could perform better thanks to the communicative approaches in EFL context.

5.2. Discussion of the Qualitative Findings

The last research question deals with the semi-structured interview results that were collected from 25 EFL learners. The six interview questions were addressed to learners for having a better understanding of possible difficulties in English vocabulary items, incorporating into learners' feelings, ideas and perspectives through thematic analysis. Prior to the vocabulary challenges, learners were asked to the feelings regarding English vocabulary learning. In light of the thematic analysis, obtained responses from the first interview question revealed that a vast majority of participants had positive feelings in vocabulary learning by giving key words such as 'good, happy, fine, curious, nice, positive, excited'. Consistent with the current study's findings, Aslan- Tunç (2020) underlined students unearthed positive feelings such as relief and thrill despite some of them experienced anxiety and disappointment in the learning process.

The second interview question addressed to how participants learn English vocabulary. They articulated six common themes incorporated into ‘writing’, ‘memorizing’, ‘repetition’, ‘reading’, ‘asking someone for help’ and ‘individual effort’. A great deal number of respondents reported that they preferred writing English vocabulary words. Aksungur (2000) held the same view that the most widely used VLS was ‘memorizing’ which usually entails writing the words several times. In accordance with Nation’s (2008) idea, the highest level of vocabulary proficiency was the ability to effectively use language in writing.

The third interview question depended on the feelings of the participants when they encountered a vocabulary item that they had never seen before. It demonstrated that the majority of participants shared their worries and unpleasant feelings in that condition whereas a small number of learners indicated their satisfaction.

The fourth question emphasized the vocabulary learning strategies that learners preferred using in the realm of vocabulary. Eight themes, ‘guessing’, ‘asking for help’, ‘notetaking’, ‘written and verbal repetition’, ‘reading’, ‘Internet use’, and other strategy types as ‘associating words’, ‘highlighting, underlining and circling of the word’. was elicited. In a broad sense, learners were capable of asking for help in case they required help. From a different point of view, Akbari (2015) stated that language learners were uncertain about how and what kind of learning strategies they should use while studying English. As noted by Allen (1983) language learners need to comprehend how the words in English work together.

The fifth interview question illustrated the participants’ feelings in previously learned vocabulary items. Although some participants were content with the learning process, there were some imperfect conditions that bothered the students since they were unable to remember the words. In the same sense, Wahyuningsih et al. (2023) mentioned that the vast majority of language learners struggled remembering

vocabulary items. Alqahtani (2009) extended the idea that numerous students particularly at lower levels struggled to use the previously learned vocabulary items and they were incapable of learning them without teacher's guidance.

The last interview question included the challenges faced by fourth graders in English vocabulary learning. In light of the specified four themes, it was seen that the reasons behind the obstacles became more concrete. Learners provided the reasons related to difficulty in vocabulary, language and their own feelings. For instance, the responses illustrated that one of the biggest challenges was related to the "vocabulary itself." More than half of the participants held the view that they had difficulty in meaning, spelling, writing, reading, the length of the words, pronunciation. This was aligned with the research conducted by Salam and Nurnisa (2021) since the researchers pinpointed four aspects of vocabulary learning challenges: pronunciation, spelling, phrase length and the concept of meaning of a vocabulary item. In a similar vein, Khan (2011) put emphasis on the challenges in meaning and spelling of the English words. Another study by Reskiawan et al. (2020) held that language learners faced shortcomings when pronouncing and spelling the word form. Yıldız (2019) indicated that some participants experienced challenges in pronunciation which could lead to more difficulty in memorizing and spelling the vocabulary items. As stated by Rohmatillah (2017), when the written and spoken forms did not always correspond, pronunciation and spelling might be challenging owing to the English sound system. Moreover, in the current study, participants noted that the similarities and differences between the languages might impede vocabulary learning. To specify, Güreş (2019) stated that similar spelling and the sound of a word may discourage learners from properly and constantly mastering these words. For instance, the findings from Schmitt (2000) illustrated that language learners struggled with pronunciation particularly with identical sounds such as 'pool, polo, pollen, pole, pall and pill.' Likewise, Yıldız's (2019) study demonstrated that some participants could not differentiate the words presuming the English written words were so similar in writing. Additionally, Özmat (2016) expressed that some language learners could not develop listening and speaking skills due to the challenges in pronunciation of the words.

Correspondingly, it was stated that some participants of the current study had trouble in forming sentences in English. In a similar vein, Karahan-Üzülmez (2015) acknowledged that eight grade learners encountered challenges in using the new word in a sentence. Alqahtani (2015) believed that insufficient vocabulary repertoire may prevent language learners from using productive skills effectively.

Furthermore, the fourth-grade EFL students who took part in this study clarified that they may experience a lack of autonomy in their vocabulary learning process. Along with having a fear of learning that may result in discomfort with some specific words. Similarly, Rosyada AS and Apoko (2023) touched upon the difficulties in discriminating English and Indonesian alphabet as the learners experienced spelling errors, difficulty in recognition of spelling mostly ones with more than two syllables and unfamiliar expressions. Also, Rosyada AS and Apoko (2023) noted that participants did not have the opportunity to interact with their peers primarily leading to poor confidence. As a consequence, they were unable to remember the words they had previously learned.

5.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the discussion of findings of the research questions. Initially, the quantitative data was provided with the first, second and third research questions. Obtained results from Schmitt's (1997) VLSs and the demographic forms, participants' VLS preferences were provided for the first and second research questions. As for the third research question, some extended variables such as gender, the educational level of family, the mothers and fathers' jobs, number of the siblings, having someone in the family who knows English, perception towards English lesson, enjoyment of the lesson, having supportive English lessons, using English dictionary, and the difficulty level in English were incorporated into VLS use by participants. Followingly, the qualitative data results related to the semi-structured interviews were discussed respectively.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter outlines a concise summary of the research. It offers recommendations for stakeholders including the teachers, learners, and curriculum designers. It expands the suggestions for further research and presents the pedagogical implications along with the limitations of the study.

6.1. Conclusion

Vocabulary is considered one of the fundamental components in language learning. At the same time, a lack of vocabulary may pose one of the major hindrances for EFL learners. Although vocabulary significantly impacts other language skills, there is ongoing debate on how to teach or learn vocabulary. Hence, some researchers have attempted to introduce VLSs to facilitate the vocabulary learning process. It is believed that these strategies can assist both teachers and students in becoming more autonomous and effectively addressing their challenges.

This current study investigated the use of VLSs among 150 fourth grade EFL participants in the 2023-2024 academic year in İstanbul. It also identified the challenges they experienced in vocabulary learning. In light of the quantitative data analysis from Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire, it was displayed that participants employed memory strategies, determination strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social (discovery) strategies and social (consolidation) strategies respectively. Overall, data analyses revealed that participants employed VLSs at a moderate level indicating that they were familiar with the different strategy use. However, it does not guarantee that participants could use various strategies in different contexts. In other words, they might not be capable of understanding which strategies are suitable for specific situations. At this point, Schmitt (2000) noted that language learners generally tend to utilize basic and mechanical strategies and they are reluctant to try new or complex ones. In depth

analysis, it was seen that memory strategies were used to a significant extent. In addition to this, participants were medium users of determination, social (discovery), cognitive and metacognitive strategies whereas social (consolidation) strategies were used the least. It was revealed that ‘studying the spelling of a word’ strategy was the most prevalent among the strategy types. On the contrary, the least prevalent strategy was ‘skipping or passing the new word.’ The participants dealt with the spelling of the words and they had great interest in understanding the meanings of the new word.

Restating the second research question, the most frequently used strategies were memory strategies while the least frequently used strategies were social (consolidation) strategies.

In light of the findings of the third research question, significant differences were observed between the use of VLSs and various factors such as participants’ perceptions towards English lessons, their enjoyment of the lessons, dictionary use and their perceived difficulty level in English. Regarding perceptions towards English lessons, all strategy types held significant variations apart from social (discovery) strategies. The significant differences were detected between the use of strategies and enjoyment of lessons except for metacognitive and determination strategies. Determination, social (discovery), social (consolidation) and memory strategies notably influenced dictionary use of the participants. Furthermore, the perceived difficulty level in English merely differed in the use of cognitive strategies. On the other hand, no significant variation was found between participants’ VLS use and their gender, parents’ jobs or educational backgrounds, the number of siblings they had, whether they took additional lessons or not, or if they had a family member who could speak English.

To elicit the fourth research question related to the vocabulary challenges faced by the participants, the researcher conducted semi structured interviews with 25 participants. The interviews included participants’ feelings when they see a vocabulary

item for the first time or previously encountered it. The responses demonstrated that the participants generally had positive feelings about newly learned vocabulary items. Conversely, some participants were dissatisfied with the previously learned items as they often forgot them. In terms of the difficulties related to English vocabulary learning, the participants expressed that they encountered obstacles including spelling of the words, writing of the words, pronunciation, meaning of the words, and the length of the words. Additionally, the responses demonstrated that some participants were worried about the similarities and differences between two languages. Furthermore, they noted their anxiety in an attempt to learn vocabulary due to a perceived lack of autonomy in the process.

6.2. Pedagogical Implications

The present study provides several pedagogical implications for English language instructors, EFL learners, curriculum designers and material developers. First, vocabulary learning strategies, as a subset of language learning strategies, offer a pathway for overcoming challenges and making the process easier and more pleasant (Cohen, 2014). Taking the moderate level of VLSs into account, Turkish EFL students need to incorporate various strategies in language classes. It is noteworthy that YLs need guidance for being conscious and efficient users of these strategies since they often rely heavily on their teachers. Since vocabulary learning demands time and effort (Ölmez, 2014), both instructors and language learners should be encouraged to adopt various strategies to address vocabulary learning difficulties. In particular, Turkish EFL learners should be familiar with the use of social strategies in language learning since many studies in Türkiye state that the use of social strategies was infrequent. With regard to the traditional teacher-centered approach, students may tend to learn passively. Hence, language instructors should integrate more student participation and involvement in the classroom for social engagement. It is noteworthy mentioning that the participants tended to favor certain VLSs specifically memory strategies for this study. It has been noticed that the participants spend a considerable amount of time on repetition of the words through spelling, writing and memory strategy use. In light of this finding, learners require exposure to diverse vocabulary learning strategies in the

classroom settings. Specifically, the strategy training program should be incorporated into the language learning environment and social strategy use can be encouraged to use in that classroom.

The study underscores the influence of some factors such as participants' perceptions of the English lessons, their enjoyment of lessons, the use of dictionaries and the perceived difficulty level. These findings imply that individual efforts and perspectives significantly impact the use of VLSs in language learning. It can be inferred that these results offer insight into the preferences of language learners in language learning. In terms of educational outcomes, language users' preferences, attitudes, opinions and viewpoints should be considered.

Another significant concern addressed in the study is the challenges the participants faced in vocabulary learning. The interview responses revealed that they have experienced difficulties in learning vocabulary items including its length, spelling, pronunciation, meaning, writing and reading. It can be deduced that vocabulary learning should not be underestimated and the reasons for these difficulties should be explored. To fully engage with vocabulary, learners need to incorporate a variety of tasks. For instance, vocabulary learning can be integrated with other skills such as listening and speaking skills to improve pronunciation and reading of the words. Likewise, writing and reading activities may be blended into exercises for practicing the spelling and meaning of the words. Since anxiety and a lack of autonomy can impede vocabulary learning as mentioned in the interview responses, learners should be encouraged to utilize VLSs to gain independence and foster their abilities in their learning process. To ease these difficulties and reduce their anxiety levels, they may enhance their competence through the use of VLSs.

6.3. Recommendations for Teachers

Language teachers particularly those focusing on YLs can include activities that facilitate students' performance to use VLSs. Since social strategies were the least prevalent strategies, teachers should have the opportunity to implement social strategies into classroom settings via group work, collaborative tasks, and peer interactions. This may enable students to develop their strategic competencies in English vocabulary learning.

The findings of the current study indicated that the use of VLSs may vary based on learners' perceptions of English, enjoyment, their dictionary use and perceived difficulty level. In light of these results, educators should consider adjusting their lessons and activities to reflect the associations between the use of VLSs and these factors. They may scaffold strategy use by promoting more concrete understanding of the VLSs in the language learning journey.

Strategy training programs for instructors and strategy instruction for learners should be integrated into the language learning curriculum. Hence, teachers should provide opportunities for learners to engage with speaking and writing skills alongside vocabulary development. Comprehensive VLS instruction may enhance both assistance and the amount of time devoted to language learning. According to Nation (2001), simply introducing a strategy to learners and expecting them to manage the remaining components on their own is insufficient. Thus, it is important to encourage learners to effectively apply various strategies through VLS instruction and training to achieve better outcomes. Language teachers may place greater emphasis on VLSs to capture YLs' attention from the initial exposure to the language. Moreover, it is crucial for educators to stay updated on the seminars and in-service training related to the use of VLSs.

6.4. Recommendations for Curriculum Designers

Curriculum designers as key contributors to framework of the language learning, should consider individual differences of learners such as vocabulary learning strategy preferences. In particular, primary- level textbooks should require numerous activities that integrate social strategies to promote the application of these strategies within the classroom environment. Considering the difficulties faced by students, curriculum designers and material developers should take these challenges into account. As Afzal (2019) indicated, many institutions currently do not have any lessons related to the teaching of VLSs in schools. To improve this, they can make an effort to integrate VLSs into the curricula and the textbook designs. The curriculum designers may provide course contexts related to vocabulary strategy preferences for both language learners and preservice teachers to provide practical choices for VLSs in the EFL context.

6.5. Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of the current study may be useful for language stakeholders by providing a framework to comprehend the VLS preferences of YLs. This study focuses on a public primary school in İstanbul and it is recommended that this study be replicated in different settings to assess the effectiveness of VLSs employed by Turkish EFL learners. Further research could involve a larger sample of participants to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Since the study focused exclusively on the fourth-grade students, the study could be expanded to include all elementary levels, such as second and third-grade students. Additionally, the type of schools, public or private could vary in further studies. Conducting a longitudinal study may be beneficial for comparing and contrasting the findings over time. Besides, experimental design or action research could be implemented, including explicit or implicit strategy training for both teachers and learners. In terms of data collection, upcoming research studies could adopt different data collection tools such as observations, diaries, and focus group interviews with students and teachers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A- Demographic Information Form

Değerli öğrenci,

Bu çalışma ilköğrencilerinin İngilizce kelime öğrenmede yaşadıkları zorlukları belirlemek ve bu zorluklara yönelik çözümler üretmek amacı ile hazırlanmıştır. Soruları içtenlikle cevaplamanızı önemle rica ederim. Katkılarınız için teşekkürler.

Ezgi BALKAN

Doç. Dr. Selma DENEME GENÇOĞLU

Aşağıdaki bilgileri kendinize uygun şekilde doldurunuz. (X)

Cinsiyetiniz: () kız () erkek

Yaşınız:

Sınıfınız:

Annenizin öğrenim durumu: () ilköğretim () Ortaokul () Lise () Üniversite

Babanızın öğrenim durumu: () ilköğretim () Ortaokul () Lise () Üniversite

Annenizin mesleği:

Babanızın mesleği:

Kaç kardeşiniz?

Ailenizde sizden başka İngilizce bilen var mı? Var () Yok ()

İngilizce dersi nasıldır? Kolay () Orta () Zor ()

İngilizce dersini sever misiniz? Evet () Hayır () Biraz ()

İngilizce dersinden özel ders aldınız mı? Evet () Hayır ()

İngilizce kelime sözlüğü kullanıyor musunuz? Evet () Hayır ()

İngilizce öğrenirken zorlanıyor musunuz? Evet () Hayır () Biraz ()



Appendix B- Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (English)

Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire (1: never, 2: rarely, 3: sometimes, 4: usually, 5: always)

Strategies for the discovery of the meaning of a new word						
1	I analyze the part of speech of the new word to guess its meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I analyze the affixes and the root of the new word when guessing its meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I check for the L1 cognate of the new word.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I analyze any available pictures and gestures accompanying the word.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I try to guess the meaning of the unknown word from the textual context in which the word appears.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I use a bilingual dictionary to find out the meaning of the new word.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I use a monolingual dictionary to find out the meaning of the new word.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I learn the word through English-L1 wordlists.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I infer the meaning of the word from the flash cards shown by the teacher in class.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I ask the teacher for the L1 translation of the new word.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I ask the teacher for a paraphrase or synonym of the new word.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I ask the teacher for a sentence including the new word.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I ask classmates for the meaning of the word.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I discover the meaning of a new word through group work activity.	1	2	3	4	5
Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered.						
15	I study and practice the meaning of a word in a group in class or outside class.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I keep wordlists/flashcards and my teacher checks students' flash cards or wordlists for accuracy.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I try to use the new word in interactions with native speakers.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I study the new word with a pictorial representation of its meaning: through photographs, images, or drawings.	1	2	3	4	5

19	I study the word by forming an image of its meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I connect the meaning of a word to personal experience.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I associate the word with its coordinates (related words)	1	2	3	4	5
22	I connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I use semantic maps (word trees) to consolidate the meaning of a word.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I use 'scales' for gradable adjectives.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I use some memory enhancement techniques such as the Peg Method to learn words. In other words, I associate the words with nouns that rhyme with the numbers.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I use some memory techniques such as the Loci Method which uses visualization to organize and recall information. For example, I remember the words by visualizing their locations or place.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I group the words together to study them, i.e. I relate the new word to other words from the same class, same meaning, or same family.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I group the words together spatially on a page or notebook by forming geometrical patterns like columns, squares, triangles, circles...etc.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I use new words in sentences to consolidate their meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I group words together within a storyline, i.e., "cats", "like", "fish".	1	2	3	4	5
31	I study the spelling of words carefully.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I study the sound of a word carefully.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I say the new word aloud when studying.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I image the word form to learn it thoroughly, i.e., the word "zoo" looks like the number "200".	1	2	3	4	5
35	I underline the initial letter of the word.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I note the form of a word and make the configuration of it. For example, "I like watermelon."	1	2	3	4	5
37	I think of a L1 word that sounds like the new word and then think of a visual image combining the meaning of the new word and the meaning of the L1 word.	1	2	3	4	5
38	I analyze the affixes and the root of the word to remember it.	1	2	3	4	5

39	I analyze the part of speech of the word (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, linker, etc.) to remember it.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I paraphrase the meaning of a word to consolidate the word.	1	2	3	4	5
41	I connect English words of similar form and meaning in my first language.	1	2	3	4	5
42	I learn a new word together with an idiom associated with it.	1	2	3	4	5
43	I use physical action to enhance memorization of a new word.	1	2	3	4	5
44	I use semantic feature grids; for instance: <i>car, train, plane=transportation; cat, dog, bird=pets</i>	1	2	3	4	5
45	I repeat the word verbally	1	2	3	4	5
46	I write the word several times.	1	2	3	4	5
47	I use wordlists and revise them to consolidate their meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
48	I use flash cards with the representation of the word to consolidate meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
49	I take notes about the word in class.	1	2	3	4	5
50	I revise the vocabulary section in my textbook.	1	2	3	4	5
51	I listen to tapes of word lists.	1	2	3	4	5
52	I put English labels on physical objects to enhance memory of a word.	1	2	3	4	5
53	I keep a vocabulary notebook.	1	2	3	4	5
54	I use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
55	I test myself with word tests.	1	2	3	4	5
56	I review the words that I've learned in regular intervals to enhance memorization.	1	2	3	4	5
57	I skip or pass the new word.	1	2	3	4	5
58	I continue to study the word over time	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C- Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (Turkish)

Kelime Öğrenme Stratejileri Anketi, Schmitt (1997)

	Her ifadenin yanında 1'den 5'e kadar numaralandırmalar yapılmıştır. Size en yakın gelen seçeneği yuvarlak içine alınız. Doğru ya da yanlış olan bir cevap yoktur.	1= Hiç kullanmam	2= Nadiren kullanırım	3= Bazen kullanırım	4= Genellikle kullanırım	5= Her zaman kullanırım
	Yeni bir kelimenin anlamını öğrenmek için ne yaparsınız?					
1	Kelimenin türüne bakarım (isim, sıfat,vb.)	1	2	3	4	5
2	Anlamını çözebilmek için kelimenin kökünü ve aldığı ekleri analiz ederim. (unhappy)	1	2	3	4	5
3	Bilmediğim kelimenin ana dildeki eş kökünü araştırırım. Örneğin, doctor-doktor; train tren... vb	1	2	3	4	5
4	Kelimenin yanındaki resimleri ve kelime söylenirken yapılan jest ve mimikleri analiz ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Bilmediğim kelimenin anlamını bulunduğu parça bütünlüğüne bakarak tahmin etmeye çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Kelimenin anlamını bulmak için Türkçe- İngilizce veya İngilizce-Türkçe bir sözlük kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5

7	Kelimenin anlamını bulmak için İngilizce-İngilizce bir sözlük kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Kelimeyi İngilizce'den Türkçe'ye kelime listeleri oluşturarak öğrenirim.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Kelimenin anlamını öğretmenin sınıfta gösterdiği resimli kartlardan çıkarırım.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Öğretmenime yeni kelimenin Türkçe karşılığını sorarım.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Öğretmenime yeni kelimenin açıklamasını veya eşanlamını sorarım.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Öğretmenimden öğrendiğim yeni kelimeyle ilgili örnek cümle vermesini isterim.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Kelimenin anlamını sınıf arkadaşlarıma sorarım.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Kelimenin anlamını sınıfta yapılan grup etkinlikleriyle öğrenirim.	1	2	3	4	5
Öğrenilen kelimeyi pekiştirmek için kullanılan stratejiler						
15	Kelimenin anlamını sınıf içinde veya sınıf dışında bir grupla beraber çalışır ve pratiğini yaparım.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Kelime listesi veya resimli kartlar kullanırım,öğretmenim bunların doğruluğunu kontrol eder.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Öğrendiğim kelimeyi anadili İngilizce olan kişilerle iletişim kurarken kullanmaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5

18	Yeni öğrendiğim kelimeyi çalışırken kelimenin anlamını betimleyen fotoğraflar, resimler ve çizimlerden yararlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Kelimeyi, onun anlamını yansıtan resimler aracılığıyla çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Kelimeyi yaşamış bir olayla ilişkilendiririm.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Kelimeyi onunla bağlantılı olan diğer kelimelerle ilişkilendiririm.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Kelimeyi eş ve zıt anlamlılarıyla beraber çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Kelimenin anlamını pekiştirmek için kelime ağaçları kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Derecelendirilebilir sıfatlar için ölçek kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Kelimeleri sırasıyla öğrenmek için hafıza artırıcı teknikler kullanırım. Örneğin, kelimeleri sayılarla kafiyeli olan isimlerle ilişkilendiririm.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Bilgileri hatırlamak ve düzenlemek için görselleştirme teknikleri kullanırım. Örneğin, kelimeleri, bulundukları yeri gözümde canlandırarak hatırlarım.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Kelimeleri çalışırken gruplara ayırırım. Örneğin, yeni öğrendiğim kelimeyi onunla aynı kelime ailesinden gelen veya aynı anlamlı kelimelerle ilişkilendiririm.	1	2	3	4	5

28	Kelimeleri sayfaya veya defterime geometrik şekiller (kare, üçgen, daire) yardımıyla gruplandırırım.	1	2	3	4	5
29	Anlamalarını pekiştirmek için yeni kelimeleri cümle içinde kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Bazı kelimeleri hikâye yazar gibi veya anlamlı bir bütün oluşturacak biçimde beraber gruplarım. Örneğin, “cats”, “like”, “fish”	1	2	3	4	5
31	Kelimenin yazılışını dikkatlice çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
32	Kelimenin söylenişini dikkatlice çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
33	Kelimayı yüksek sesle söyleyerek çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
34	Kelimenin yazılışını iyice öğrenmek için imgelerle bağdaştırırım. Örneğin, “zoo” kelimesi “200” sayısına benzemektedir.	1	2	3	4	5
35	Kelimenin baş harfinin altını çizerim.	1	2	3	4	5
36	Kelimayı farklı biçimlerde yazarak çalışırım. Örneğin, “watermelon” kelimesini çalışırken şu şekilde yazarım: “I like watermelon.”	1	2	3	4	5
37	Anahtar kelimeleri öğrenmek için bazı hafıza teknikleri kullanırım. İngilizce kelimenin okunuşunu Türkçe’deki başka kelimelerle ilişkilendiririm. Örneğin, “children” kelimesini Türkçe’deki “çıldırma” kelimesi ile bağdaştırırım.	1	2	3	4	5

38	Kelimeyi hatırlamak için kelimenin aldığı ekleri ve kökünü incelerim.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Kelimeyi hatırlamak için kelimenin türünü (isim, fiil, sıfat, zarf) analiz ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
40	Kelimeyi pekiştirmek için anlamını farklı kelimelerle açıklarım. Örneğin, “aunt” kelimesini “my mother’s sister” olarak açıklarım.	1	2	3	4	5
41	Çalışırken kelimeyi ana dildeki kökteşiyle bağdaştırırım (Taxi-taksi, cousin-kuzen, cactus-kaktüs... vb.)	1	2	3	4	5
42	Bir kelimeyi öğrenirken onunla beraber kullanılan ifadelerle birlikte öğrenirim. Örneğin, “afternoon” kelimesini “in the afternoon” olarak öğrenirim.	1	2	3	4	5
43	Yeni bir kelimeyi öğrenmek için fiziksel hareketlerden yararlanırım. Örneğin, “cry” kelimesini öğrenirken ağlama hareketi yaparım.	1	2	3	4	5
44	Kelimeleri anlamlarına göre gruplandırırım veya ortak özelliklerine göre sınıflandırırım. Örneğin,cat, dog, bird:pets(hepsi evcil hayvan)	1	2	3	4	5
45	Kelimeyi sözlü olarak tekrarlarım.	1	2	3	4	5
46	Kelimeyi birçok kez yazarım.	1	2	3	4	5
47	Kelimelerin anlamlarını pekiştirmek için kelime	1	2	3	4	5

	listeleri hazırlar ve bunları tekrar ederim.					
48	Kelimelerin anlamlarını pekiştirmek için üzerinde kelimeyi anlatan resimlerin olduğu kartlardan faydalanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
49	Sınıfta kelimeyle ilgili notlar alırım.	1	2	3	4	5
50	Kitabımdaki kelime bölümünü tekrar ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
51	Kelime listelerini kayıttan dinlerim.	1	2	3	4	5
52	Bir kelimeyi daha iyi aklımda tutabilmek için nesnelerin İngilizce anlamlarını yazıp üzerlerine yapıştırırım. Örneğin, kapının üzerine “door” etiketini asarım.	1	2	3	4	5
53	Kelime defteri tutarım.	1	2	3	4	5
54	İngilizce video, film ve şarkılardan faydalanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
55	Kendimi kelime sınavları yaparak denerim.	1	2	3	4	5
56	Kelimeleri daha iyi aklımda tutabilmek için düzenli aralıklarda tekrar ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
57	Yeni kelimeyi öğrenmeden geçerim.	1	2	3	4	5
58	Belli zamanlarda kelime çalışmaya devam ederim.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D- Interview Questions

1. What do you think about vocabulary learning in English? How important is vocabulary learning in your opinion?
2. How do you learn English vocabulary and what do you do?
3. Please tell me about the feelings you have when you encounter a word for the first time.
4. What strategies do you apply to discover the meaning of a new word in or outside the classroom environment? Please explain in detail.
5. Please tell me about the feelings you have when you encounter a previously learned word.
6. What are the difficulties when you have encountered unknown words or previously learned words to reinforce?

3. GÖRÜŞME SORULARI (INTERVIEW)

1. İngilizce kelime öğrenimiyle ilgili ne düşünüyorsunuz?
2. İngilizce kelimelere nasıl çalışıyorsunuz? Günde- haftada ne kadar zaman ayırıyorsunuz?
3. Yeni bir kelime ile karşılaştığımızdaki hislerinizi lütfen anlatınız.
4. Derslerinizde veya dersleriniz dışında İngilizce çalışırken yeni bir kelime ile karşılaştığımızda nasıl bir yol izlersiniz? Varsa kullandığımız yöntem (stratejileri) açıklayınız.
5. Daha önce öğrenmiş olduğunuz bir kelime ile karşılaştığımızdaki hislerinizi lütfen anlatınız. Kelimenin anlamını bilmek ya da bilmemek nasıl hissettiriyor?
6. Bilmediğiniz bir kelime ile karşılaştığımızda karşılaştığımız zorluklar nelerdir?
7. Önceden öğrendiğiniz kelimeleri tekrar ederken karşılaştığımız zorluklar nelerdir?

Appendix E- Consent Form

Çocuğunuzun katılacağı bu çalışma, “*Dördüncü Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Derslerinde Kelime Öğreniminde Karşılaştığı Zorluklar ve Kullandıkları Kelime Öğrenme Stratejileri*” adıyla, 2023-2024 Eğitim Öğretim yılı içerisinde yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yapılan bir araştırma uygulamasıdır. Çalışma, Trakya Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümünden *Doç. Doç. Dr. Selma DENEME GENÇOĞLU* danışmanlığında yüksek lisans öğrencisi *Ezgi BALKAN* tarafından yapılacak bir araştırma uygulamasıdır.

Araştırmanın Hedefi: Öğrencilerin yabancı dil olarak İngilizce dersi kelime öğreniminde karşılaştığı zorlukların tespit edilerek kullandıkları kelime öğrenme stratejilerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmaktadır.

Araştırma Uygulaması: *Anket ve Görüşme* şeklindedir.

Araştırma T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı’nın ve okul yönetiminin de izni ile gerçekleştirilmektedir. Araştırma uygulamasına katılım tamamıyla gönüllülük esasına dayalı olmaktadır. Çocuğunuz çalışmaya katılıp katılmamakta özgürdür. Araştırma çocuğunuz için herhangi bir istenmeyen etki ya da risk taşımamaktadır. Çocuğunuzun katılımı ***tamamen sizin isteğinize bağlıdır***, reddedebilir ya da herhangi bir aşamasında ayrılabilirsiniz. Araştırmaya katılmamama veya araştırmadan ayrılma durumunda öğrencilerin akademik başarıları, okul ve öğretmenleriyle olan ilişkileri etkilemeyecektir.

Çalışmada öğrencilerden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplar tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir.

Uygulamalar, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular ve durumlar içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden çocuğunuz kendisini rahatsız hissederse cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta özgürdür. Bu durumda rahatsızlığın giderilmesi için gereken yardım sağlanacaktır. Çocuğunuz çalışmaya katıldıktan sonra istediği an vazgeçebilir. Böyle bir durumda veri toplama aracını uygulayan kişiye, çalışmayı tamamlamayacağını söylemesi yeterli olacaktır. Anket çalışmasına katılmamak ya da katıldıktan sonra vazgeçmek çocuğunuza hiçbir sorumluluk getirmeyecektir.

Onay vermeden önce sormak istediğiniz herhangi bir konu varsa sormaktan çekinmeyiniz. Çalışma bittikten sonra bizlere telefon veya e-posta ile ulaşarak soru sorabilir, sonuçlar hakkında bilgi isteyebilirsiniz. Saygılarımızla,

Araştırmacı : Ezgi BALKAN (İngilizce ders öğretmeni)

İletişim bilgileri:

***Velisi bulunduğum sınıfı numaralı öğrencisi
.....’in yukarıda açıklanan araştırmaya katılmasına izin
veriyorum. (Lütfen formu imzaladıktan sonra çocuğunuzla okula geri gönderiniz*).***

.... / /

APPENDIX F- Permission for using scale

Permission to use questionnaire



İletiyi şu dile çevir: Türkçe | Şu dilden hiçbir zaman çevirme: İngilizce



Norbert Schmitt

Kime: Siz



28.07.2023 Cum 11:28

Hi
It's fine. Good luck with your project.
Norbert Schmitt

Norbert Schmitt
Emeritus Professor of Applied Linguistics
School of English
University of Nottingham
Nottingham NG7 2RD
UK

From: Ezgi Balkan
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 3:40 PM
To: Norbert Schmitt
Subject: Permission to use questionnaire



Alıcı: ederici

Sayın hocam merhaba,

Yüksek lisans tezinde Türkçe çevirisini sağlamış olduğunuz
"Schmitt's (1997) Vocabulary Learning Strategies" anketini Trakya
Üniversitesinde yürüttüğüm tezimde uyarlanmış haliyle kullanmak için
izininizi istiyorum.
İyi çalışmalar

Ezgi BALKAN
Trakya Üniversitesi



Elif Derici

Alıcı: ben

9 Ağu 2024 14:58 (2 gün önce)



Merhaba Ezgi Hocam,

Anketin uyarlanmış halini kullanabilirsiniz, iznim vardır.

İyi çalışmalar dilerim.

--

Öğr. Gör. Elif Derici

/ Ofis: Y331 /

TOBB University of Economics and Technology

APPENDIX G- Approval from Ethics Committee



T.C.
TRAKYA ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başkanlığı



Sayı : E-29563864-050.03.04-553984
Konu : Kararlar

24.11.2023

Sayın Doç. Dr. Selma DENEME GENÇOĞLU

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız, Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Ezgi BALKAN tarafından, Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'nun 22.11.2023 tarihli toplantısında alınan 10/12 numaralı kararı ile uygun görülmüştür.
Gereğini bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Ayhan GENÇLER
Başkan

Ek: Etik Kurul Kararı

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Belge Doğrulama Kodu : BSUA3SY179 Pin Kodu : 08052
Adres : Trakya Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Balkan Yerleşkesi 22030 Edirne
Telefon : 2842234004 Faks : 2842234203
e-Posta : erezkalern@trakya.edu.tr Web: http://www.trakya.edu.tr/
Kep Adresi : trakyauni@ts01.kep.tr

Belge Takip Adresi : <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/trakya-universitesi-ehys>

Bilgi için : Ceyda DÜRSÜN
Unvanı : Sekreter



APPENDIX H – Ethical Approval From Ministry Of National Education



T.C.
İSTANBUL VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü



Sayı : E-59090411-20-92737918
Konu : Anket ve Araştırma İzni (Ezgi BALKAN)

22/12/2023

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlgi : a) Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğünün 21.01.2020 tarihli ve 2020/2 sayılı genelgesi,
b) Trakya Üniversitesinin 07.12.2023 tarihli ve E-59426830-730.08.03-559863 sayılı yazısı.
c) Müdürlüğümüz Araştırma ve Anket Komisyonunun 14.12.2023 tarihli tutanağı.

Araştırma Konusu : Dördüncü Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Derslerinde Kelime Öğrenmede Karşılaştığı Zorluklar ve Kullandıkları Kelime Öğrenme Stratejileri (Challenges Faced by Fourth Grades on Vocabulary Learning in EFL Classes and the Vocabulary Learning Strategies They Use)
Araştırma Türü : Anket / Görüşme
Araştırma Yeri : Avcılar Vali Rıdvan Yenişen İlkokulu
Araştırma Kişiler : İlkokul Öğrencileri
Araştırmanın Süresi : 2023 - 2024 Eğitim - Öğretim Yılı

Yukarıda bilgileri verilen araştırmanın; 6698 sayılı Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Kanununa aykırı olarak kişisel veri istenmemesi, öğrenci velilerinden açık rıza onayı alınması, bilimsel amaç dışında kullanılmaması, bir örneği Müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen mühürlü ve imzalı veri toplama araçlarının kurumlarınıza araştırmacı tarafından ulaştırılarak uygulanması, katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına göre seçilmesi, araştırma sonuç raporunun kamuoyuyla paylaşılmaması ve araştırma bittikten sonra 2 (iki) hafta içerisinde Müdürlüğümüze gönderilmesi, okul idarelerinin denetim, gözetim ve sorumluluğunda, eğitim ve öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde, ilgi (a) genelge esasları dâhilinde uygulanması kaydıyla Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

Makamınızca da uygun görüldüğü takdirde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Doç. Dr. Murat Mücahit YENTÜR
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR

Mustafa KAYA
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

Ek:
1- İlgi (b) Yazı ve Ekleri (13 Sayfa)
2- İlgi (c) Tutanak (1 Sayfa)