

# A Comparative Study of the Language Learning Systems Used by Monolingual and Bilingual Students

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**Keywords:** Bilingual Students, Language Learning System, Direct and Indirect Learning Strategies, Language Skills, Cognitive Skills.

**Abstract:** The purpose of our study is to compare the language learning systems of students who speak the same language at bilingual universities. We will attempt to determine whether students' use of foreign language learning strategies varies in terms of variables such as gender, department, or type of institution. These studies were conducted and analyzed using descriptive statistics and parametric tests. The study found that bilingual students used more language learning systems in the foreign language learning process than monolingual students. It was found that students mostly use metacognitive strategies and least of all affective strategies; female students use language learning system more than male students; English Language and Literature and Translation Studies students use language learning system more than translation students.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

As in all developing countries, learning and teaching foreign languages in our country has gained great importance due to globalization, increasing international interactions, and the development of technology. Teaching English as a foreign language in our country has a half-century history, but the level of knowledge is not able to achieve the desired success, given the effort, money and time spent on teaching a foreign language. There are many reasons for the ineffective teaching of English in our country, such as the competence of teachers, physical and technical equipment, the learning environment and working conditions. The methods, strategies, and techniques used in foreign language learning and teaching are important. In recent years in our country, foreign language teaching has emphasized student-centered approaches in which the student is active in learning the language, rather than teacher-centered approaches. Since the responsibility for learning is transferred to the learner in a learner-centered environment, the learner's behavior or thoughts in the learning process and how they learn matters. This brings us to the concept of "learning strategy." It is defined differently by different researchers (Oxford, 1990).

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

R. Oxford defined that strategies used by learners to facilitate make the process more effective and transfer it to new situations; Meyer and Vanstein defined learning strategies as behaviors and thoughts that influence the learner's coding process (Mayer, 1983); O'Malley and A. Chamot defined specific thoughts or behaviors that are used to help individuals understand, learn and retain knowledge (O'Malley, 1990); A. Chamot defines conscious thoughts and actions used to achieve any learning goals (Chamot, 2004); H. Güleroglu and D. Ozmen defined as strategies that involve internal human cognitive processes used by learners to enable and manage their own learning (Gullerogly, 2013); Learning strategies not only help an individual to be effective in using or learning a language, but also contribute to an individual's own learning (Hong-Nam, 2006).

Language learning strategies suggest that there are certain social and cognitive variables that influence language learning. Researchers looked for variables that affect foreign language learning, stressing that learning strategies are another variable that influences language learning. Researchers state that successful students use different strategies for language learning and these strategies allow them to internalize more

responsibility in the learning process (Tuncer, 2009). Language learning strategies are directly or indirectly related to self-regulation and R. Oxford states that they promote autonomous learning (Chamot, 2004). One of the most common ways to assess language learning strategies is through the use of data collection tools such as surveys, inventories, and scales.

Stern classifies management and planning strategies: cognitive strategies, communicative-empirical strategies (Stern, 1992). In studies concerning the definition of language learning strategies. The most frequently used tool is the "inventory of language learning strategies" developed by R. Oxford. Since this data collection tool uses individual strategies in relation to language skills, such as reading, writing, listening speaking skills, R.Oxford divided them into two groups: direct and indirect. And each group was divided into three subcategories. Direct learning strategies directly contribute to learning, divided into three categories: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensatory strategies. Memory strategies help transfer knowledge to long-term memory to retain knowledge in memory and recall. When appropriate. For these strategies, you can use techniques such as creating a meaning map, making mental connections, grouping, linking, and using keywords. Cognitive strategies are used in creating mental schemata and interpreting learning. For these strategies, methods such as using native language when speaking or writing, using facial expressions and body language, using cues, and overcoming limitations in various ways can be used. Indirect learning strategies are not directly related to learning, but contribute to individual regulation of learning and fall into three categories: metacognitive, emotional, and social. Metacognitive strategies help students organize, plan, and evaluate their own learning. These strategies can be addressed by methods such as setting learning goals, creating organization, planning for learning, and self-assessment. Affective strategies help students control motivation, emotions, and attitudes toward learning. In relation to these strategies, one can use feelings experienced when learning a language, taking risks, and doing relaxation-oriented exercises. Social strategies help learners communicate verbally with those who use the same language. They are matched by methods such as cooperation, developing empathy. Questioning techniques, creating cultural awareness, can be used in relation to these strategies (Oxford, 1990).

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When the definition of "bilingual people" is used in the literature, different opinions are expressed regarding this condition. According to the simplest definition, they are those people who know two languages and can keep them separate from each other (Ahlsen, 2006). Some classifications regarding bilingualism are available in the literature. These classifications vary widely, from having a second language as one's mother tongue to being able to use any linguistic features in the second language. For example, anyone who can read and write, but cannot speak a language other than their mother tongue, can be called bilingual. Some researchers consider various criteria related to the state of bilingualism: the age of language learning of persons learning a language other than their native language; the level of language proficiency and frequency of language use; social factors and the context in which the language is learned, all become important factors in classifying bilinguals. The most widely used classification criteria are based on age and language proficiency. Classifications made according to age criteria can be divided into early, late, and adult bilingualism; classifications made according to language proficiency levels can be defined as fluent, balanced, and dominant. In addition to these criteria, E.Aslen proposed a comprehensive classification of learning age criteria and grouped them under three headings: complex bilingualism, where both languages are learned simultaneously before age 6, and usually one of the languages is learned by family members; coordinated bilingualism, where the second language is learned at home or in another environment before puberty; natural bilingualism, where the first language is dominant, and the second is instrumental, where one thinks in the former and translates it into the latter. Bilinguals in this study can be seen as composite or coordinated. It is believed that a person who is able to use his or her native language at a certain level will act more consciously with respect to the structure of the foreign language being learned (Sarica, 2014). As a result, it turns out that bilingual people will learn a foreign language more effectively and use language-learning strategies more often, because the similarities between the foreign language the individual has to learn and the other languages he/she speaks are likely to facilitate the process of learning the foreign language. Research on the language learning strategies that bilinguals use when learning a new language is often conducted in countries where English is the official language or spoken language. Research done on language

learning strategies used by bilinguals in countries where English is not the official or native language is rather limited in the literature. Undoubtedly, bilinguals are more sought after than monolinguals because of their past language experience in learning a new language, and bilinguals perform better in a variety of cognitive skills (Hakuta, 1990). It is important to compare bilingual and monolingual people in terms of language learning strategies that are used in foreign language learning.

The aim of our study was to compare the language learning strategies used by bilingual and monolingual university students and to determine whether students' use of language learning strategies during foreign language learning differs according to gender, department, or type of school. In accordance with this goal, we will try to find answers to the following questions:

1. At what level do university students use language-learning strategies when learning English?
2. Is there a significant difference between the levels of language strategy use by monolingual or bilingual university students?
3. Is there a significant difference between the levels at which university students use language learning strategies in terms of gender?
4. Is there a significant difference between the levels of language strategy use of university students in terms of terms?

The study is a survey model. Since survey models aim to describe the situation in the same way as it has occurred in the past or continues to this day, it is an appropriate model for this study. Participation was conducted with 524 students enrolled in the Faculty of Literature at two universities and a vocational school in Turkey. 335 participants (63.9%) were monolingual and 189 participants (36.1%) were bilingual. Students' use of language learning strategies was assessed based on mean values. The mean scores and standard deviations for each item were calculated according to the scores on the inventory questions to determine the level of students' use of language strategies. If the strategies used by students were scored below 2.4 to 3.4, strategy use was considered to be at an average level; 3, 4, and above meant that strategy use was at a high level. Thus, the analyses were interpreted according to these categories.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Our study showed that university students usually use language learning strategies at the intermediate level. The algorithm most commonly used by bilingual and monolingual students is similar. Both bilingual and monolingual students used metacognitive strategies. However, monolingual students used metacognitive techniques moderately, whereas bilingual students used them frequently. Metacognitive concepts represent high-level management skills and include skills such as planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating. The more frequent use by bilingual students of metacognitive strategies, which allow students to question their learning process based on past linguistic experiences, was an expected finding, and its frequent use by students is generally encouraging because it shows that students are able to plan, organize, and evaluate their own learning. But similar studies have reached different conclusions about the most frequently used algorithms. In a study of bilingual students, it was found that this type of student most frequently used social strategies, which contradicts the results of this paper. Social concepts mostly involve interactive learning situations such as asking questions and collaboration in foreign language learning, productive skills are not taught at a sufficient level, which may explain why students do not really want to speak English and do not use social algorithms enough. We observe that both bilingual and monolingual students were the least likely to use effective strategies. Bilingual students are more engaged in language learning compared to monolingual students. Individuals with some level of skill, using their native language, are more successful in understanding the structure of the foreign languages they are learning. Bilingual people have the skills to use both languages as their mother tongue, and they should both be more effective in their efforts to learn the other language, using better strategies and achieving more effective and efficient learning by drawing parallel lines between the languages they already know and the new language.

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