

The Relationship between Learner Autonomy and Language Learning Strategies among English for Medical Purposes (EMP) Students in Turkey

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to find out the level of learner autonomy, the use of language learning strategies and examine the relationship between them in the English for Medical Purposes (EMP) program in Turkey. The study also aimed to shed light on EMP learners' and their instructors' perceptions regarding ESP instruction. In this mixed-method study, the data were collected from two questionnaires applied to gather information on the level of learner autonomy, and the frequency of the use of learning strategies; a placement test administered at the very beginning of the semester, and semi-structured interviews conducted with the participating learners and their instructors. The findings revealed that the students were moderately autonomous. Social and metacognitive learning strategies were most frequently used by the participants. Additionally, there was a varied relationship between learner autonomy and the use of learning strategies. However, no significant correlation was found in their proficiency level. Finally, both EMP students and their instructors shared positive perceptions of ESP instruction.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Medical Purposes (EMP), learner autonomy, language learning strategies.

Introduction

Learner Autonomy

Autonomy as a concept within the scope of the English language teaching (ELT) field has a long history that dates to the 1970s (Benson, 2013). Basically, learner autonomy is “to take charge of one’s learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3). Little (1991) revises Holec’s (1981) definition suggesting that learner autonomy refers to the learners’ active involvement in the learning process. Benson’s definition (2013)

supports that learner autonomy refers to learners' capacity to take control over their learning.

Learner autonomy does not necessarily refer to an inborn capacity. Learners should have the ability to develop autonomy so that they can learn the target language more effectively (Benson, 2011). Chan (2001) argues that one of the responsibilities of a teacher should be to help students notice that they should become autonomous learners. In other words, each learner's development of autonomy should be a goal to achieve. Cotterall (2000) presents strategies related to the learner's goals and learning processes that constitute a remarkable part of the ESP context as well. What is more feasible is to teach them how to learn more on their own (Bárbara, 2007).

Learning Strategies

With the increasing attention directed to the uniqueness of the individual and the concept of autonomy, there is also a greater interest in various strategies employed by learners. Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as "actions that are taken by learners to make the learning process more effective" (p. 8). It is the management of the learning process by responding to the difficulties encountered productively (Hardan, 2013).

Ellis (1994) confirms that students with higher motivation levels implement more strategies than their peers with lower motivation levels. According to Azumi (2008), these concepts of individual differences may include age, gender, motivation level, and aptitude and they may all influence the use of learning strategies. Macaro (2006) summarizes the frameworks on which language learning strategies are built. According to the review, the description of the learning strategies should include "a goal, a situation, and a mental action" (p. 332).

Parallel to the concept of learner autonomy, learning strategies have received great attention from scholars in the field of language teaching and learning since the first definition of the concept was presented by Oxford (1990). According to Lai (2009), there is a significant relationship between language learning strategies and other concepts such as the proficiency level of learners. Therefore, learning strategies are regarded as an important concept of that interplay with other educational concepts including autonomy, and language proficiency level.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Although ESP has a relatively long history that dates to the 1960s, Belcher (2006) suggests that it is not an easy task to describe. According to Strevens (1997), there

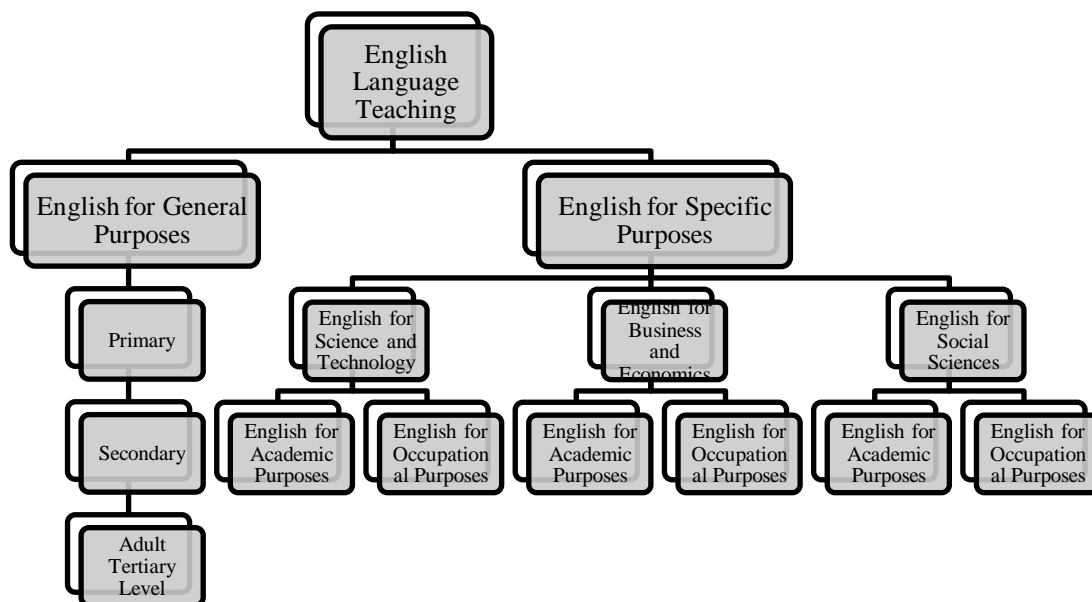
are two issues to address while making the definition of ESP, including learners' needs and content. It is proposed that ESP is an instructional design where the content is appropriate to specific language learners in meeting their specific needs. Coffey (1984) states that usefulness is a key term in language teaching in the ESP context and that is why learner needs should be carefully analyzed first. As for the characteristics of ESP, Belcher (2006) highlights some distinctive features distinguish ESP from other course designs and she presents the following including "needs-based, pragmatic, cost-effective, and functional" to describe ESP (p. 134). Therefore, a needs assessment can be regarded as one of the basic characteristics of ESP.

Types of ESP

The learners' needs may play a prominent role in the identification of the type of ESP. Coffey (1984) points out the distinction between EAP and EOP. On one hand, if learners need English to complete their academic degree, then, it might be appropriate to talk about EAP. Others, on the other hand, may need to learn English to manage their job in their careers. In this case, it would be more appropriate to talk about EOP.

Another most cited classification of the types of ESP is put forward by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) representing it through a "Tree Model" (p. 17). According to this model, ELT ranks at the very top and it is first divided into two English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP branch is further divided into three based on the major fields including English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE); and English for Social Sciences (ESS). Each of these branches is further divided into two English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Figure 1. The tree model of English for Specific Purposes. From "The Tree of English Language Teaching" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p. 17)



According to Belcher (2009), there are more sub-branches of EOP and there also might be combinations of both EOP and EAP. The subdivisions of EOP may develop because of the variety in the types of occupation and she further mentions English for Business Purposes (EBP), English for Legal Purposes (ELP), English for Medical Purposes (EMP), and many more.

English for Medical Purposes (EMP)

After its emergence as a distinct area in the field of ELT, ESP was divided into many field-specific sets including EMP (Rahman, 2015). EMP refers to a subdivision of ESP and its focus is on medicine and health sciences. In other words, EMP aims to teach medical and health-related English to people from the fields such as Medicine and Nursing (Antic, 2007). With the emergence of EMP, English in Medicine has resulted in a growing body of research on EMP (Salager-Meyer, 2014).

As for the second characteristic of EMP, Antic (2007) argues that the main goal of EMP should be to enable learners to deal with problems that they may encounter in their occupational life. Learners should develop autonomy by being exposed to real-life problems and skills. Therefore, EMP teachers should be a facilitator in the

process of teaching how to learn through certain learning strategies and to become autonomous learners.

Language Learning Strategies

Since the 1960s, there has been widespread research on language learning strategies within the framework of cognitive psychology (Lai, 2009). Stoyhoff (1993) proposes that the emergence of the concept of learning strategies occurred within the field of cognitive psychology. Since that time, the construct gains remarkable interest because language learning strategies function as facilitators in the learning process.

There have been several attempts to understand language learning strategies in terms of different aspects. To exemplify, Rubin (1975) examined strategies employed by learners reporting that these strategies contribute to their learning process. Similarly, Naiman (1978) presented the strategies used by successful language learners based on real classroom experiences. O'Malley, O'Malley, and Chamot (1990) focused on the classifications of learning strategies. One of the most well-known categorizations of learning strategies is presented by Oxford (1990) who defines language learning strategies as “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). According to Stoyhoff (1993), Oxford (1990) can be regarded as the most extensive source on the subject who grouped the learning strategies into two main categories as direct and indirect strategies. The categories and subdivides into 6, including Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation as direct strategies and, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social as indirect strategies (p. 17).

In this study, the definition used belongs to Oxford (1990) as the most prominent work in the field. Another reason for using Oxford's (1990) definition is that there are many aspects of assisting learning. In other words, learning strategies not only make the learning process faster but also more enjoyable and more effective.

The Relationship between Learner Autonomy and Learning Strategies

The review of the literature reveals that the concepts of learner autonomy and learning strategies are interrelated. According to Oxford (1999), learning strategies are key to learner autonomy. There are various studies conducted to see the relationship between the two recently (Abadi & Baradaran, 2013; Negari & Solaymani, 2013; Chen & Pan, 2015; Samaie, Khany, & Habibi, 2015; Ceylan, 2017).

Abadi and Baradaran (2013) examined the relationship between learner autonomy and learning strategies among 190 Iranian EFL learners with different language proficiency levels. Data were collected through two questionnaires and two language proficiency tests. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between learner autonomy and vocabulary strategy use among the low, high, and advanced proficiency groups.

To investigate the relationship between learners' attitudes to autonomous learning, thinking styles, and their language learning strategy use, Negari, and Solaymani (2013) conducted a study with 92 Iranian EFL learners. The analysis of the autonomy, thinking styles, and learning strategies inventories reported a significant relationship between autonomy and the subcategories of strategy use in terms of learners' attitudes.

Chen and Pan (2015) examined the relationship between learner autonomy and language learning strategies used in the Taiwanese EFL context. A learner autonomy questionnaire was used to identify the level of autonomy followed by a language learning strategies survey (N=130). The results reported a strong correlation between autonomy level and the use of language learning strategies.

Samaie, Khany, and Habibi (2015) aimed to identify the learners' autonomy level and use of strategies. Data came from two questionnaires including learner autonomy and strategy use inventory (N=150). The findings showed that the students were autonomous learners, and they knew they needed to take responsibility for their learning. There was a statistically significant correlation between learners' autonomy and their strategy use.

Finally, Ceylan (2017) looked at the relationship between learner autonomy and strategy use in a Turkish context. According to the gathered results, the learners were partially autonomous. They were aware about the strategies that fostered their learning, but they did not make use of them considerably. There was also a positive relationship between learner autonomy and strategy use.

Methodology

Research Questions

To meet the objectives, the current study addressed the following research questions:

- 1) What is the autonomy level of EMP students at the tertiary level?
- 2) Which language learning strategies do EMP learners use most frequently?

3) Is there a significant relationship between the autonomy level, the use of learning strategies, and the proficiency level of EMP students?

Research Design and Analysis

In this study, mixed methods were adopted as a research design gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. To analyze the quantitative data, SPSS (Social Package for the Social Sciences) 27.0 was used. Specifically, the Shapiro-Wilk test was run to make sure that the data gathered was normally distributed. To examine the relationship between learner autonomy and language strategy use based on the proficiency level of the participants Pearson's Correlation analysis was used.

Participants

The participants of this study were 84 students studying at the English preparatory school at a private (foundation, non-profit) university in Istanbul, Turkey. The students were selected from health-related disciplines using purposeful sampling. Specifically, they were selected from the EMP departments of Medicine (n=29), Nursing (n=35), and Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation (n=20). There were 55 female and 29 male students whose age range was between 18 and 23. As for language proficiency levels, the participants were separated into 3 groups: basic, independent, and proficient users. Each group consisted of 28 participants.

Apart from the students, 3 EMP instructors took part in the interview to share their perceptions of ESP instruction. They were females who worked in the institution for four years and they were a part of the ESP material developer team.

Data Collection Instruments

In this mixed-method research, data were collected both qualitatively and quantitatively. To collect the quantitative data, the learner autonomy questionnaire (Zhang & Li, 2004) and the learning strategies questionnaire, "Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)" (Oxford, 1990) were administered to the students. As for the qualitative data, a semi-structured interview adapted from Yang and Cornelius (2004) was carried out with seven students and three EMP instructors to shed light on their views about ESP instruction.

Results

Findings about the Learner Autonomy of EMP Students

In this part, the findings of the data gathered through the learner autonomy questionnaire were reported. First, for the overall autonomy level, the descriptive statistics showed that the participants were moderately autonomous with an overall mean score of 3.17 (see Table 1). Similarly, the mean scores of learner autonomy remained medium in all three proficiency levels. However, there were slight differences between the mean values. The lowest score was gained by the basic level group with 2.98 while it was followed by the proficient group with a mean of 3.22. The highest mean belonged to the independent group with a score of 3.32. This finding revealed that there was no linear relationship between the level of learner autonomy and language proficiency level since all three groups ranked medium.

Table 1. *The Overall Learner Autonomy Level of the Participants*

Level of Learner Autonomy	M	SD
Basic	2.98	.49
Independent	3.32	.73
Proficient	3.22	.56
Overall	3.17	.61

Furthermore, when each item was analyzed separately, Item 12 with an overall mean score of 4.02 showed that the participants wanted to study English mostly because they thought that English was a key to getting a good job and they were interested in English. Most of them corresponded 48 % studied English with their own instincts but not because of parental demands (see Table 2). It was also interesting to find out that none of the participants studied English because of their parental demands. Finally, there was not a statistically significant variance among the participating students with different proficiency levels related to the reason for studying English.

Table 2. *Item 12: Reason for Studying English*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Parents' demands	0	0	0	0
Curiosity	2	1	0	1
Job/Major	35	13	11	11
Interest	6	0	3	3
Job/Interest	41	14	14	13
Total	84	28	28	28

As for item 13 which questioned the relationship between learners and teachers, the results showed that 26 of the participants thought the relationship should be that of explorer and director while 23 of them selected the terms receiver and giver. This was followed by children and partners with 15; and raw material and maker (n=13). Only 7 students suggested that the relationship was that of a customer and shopkeeper. For the level-based analysis, the data revealed that more students in the proficient group viewed the teacher-student relationship in a relatively more autonomous way than the other two groups since 11 students responded as explorer-director (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Item 13: Learner-Teacher Relationship*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Receiver-Giver	23	9	9	5
Raw material-Maker	13	5	4	4
Customer-Shopkeeper	7	3	2	2
Children-Partners	15	4	5	6
Explorer-Director	26	7	8	11
Total	84	28	28	28

Furthermore, Item 14 aimed to find out the source of success and/or failure in English. As shown in Table 4, most of the participants corresponded with 55 % regard themselves as the reason for their success or failure. With a mean of 3.99, it seemed that the participants could be regarded as autonomous in terms of the source of success and failure. On the other hand, 16.7 % suggested that it was the environment that affected success or failure while 15.5 % said it was teachers. Only 4.8 % of the participants stated luck while 8.3 % thought it was studying facilities and aids. Level-based analysis showed that there was not a significant variance in the responses among the participants in terms of source of success and/or failure.

Table 4. *Item 14: Source of Success and/or Failure*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Luck or Fate	4	0	2	2
Environment	14	8	5	1
Studying Aids	7	2	3	2
Teachers	13	2	4	7
Total	38	12	14	12

In item 15, the participants were asked whether they should be a part of the process of preparing a teaching plan with their teachers or not. At this point, many of the participants that were around 43 % agreed and thought that they should take part in the process. While 27.4 % remained neutral, 22.6 % said they strongly agreed with the idea of participating in the process. The percentage of the participants who opposed and strongly opposed taking part in the preparation process was around 4.8 and 2.4 % respectively. There was no significant variance in the responses depending on the level. The majority agreed with the idea of taking part in the teaching plan preparation process (see Table 5).

Table 5. *Item 15: Students' Role in Teaching Plan Preparation*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Strongly Agree	19	8	9	2
Agree	36	16	10	10
Neutral	23	3	7	13
Oppose	4	1	1	2
Strongly Oppose	2	0	1	1
Total	84	28	28	28

Further, as presented in Table 6, Item 16 aimed to find out what the participants would like to do when they were asked a question during lessons. As suggested by Maftoon, Daftarifard, and Lavasani (2011), there was a positive relationship between autonomous language learners and their active participation. The analysis revealed that most of the subjects preferred to think and be ready to answer (46%). This was followed by the ones who would like to look up books or dictionaries (13%). 12% stated that they preferred to wait for others' answers, 8% would like to join a pair or group discussion and only 5 % said to clarify it with their teacher.

Table 6. *Item 16: What to Do When They were Asked a Question*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Wait for others	12	1	7	4
Think and get ready	46	14	16	16
Look up books	13	7	3	3
Clarify with teachers	5	2	0	3
Join a discussion	8	4	2	2
Total	84	28	28	28

For item 17, when the participants were asked what they would do if they came across an unknown word, most of the participants making up around 57 % suggested that they would either ask others or look up a dictionary. Besides, 26 % expressed that they only check their dictionaries while 12 % preferred to guess the meaning. Only 5% emphasized that they ask others (see Table 7).

Table 7. *Item 17: What to Do When They Meet an Unknown Word*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Let it go	0	0	0	0
Ask others	4	1	0	3
Guess the meaning	10	1	4	5
Look up the dictionary	22	5	7	10
Ask to others & look up dictionary	48	21	17	10
Total	84	28	28	28

In item 18, the participants were asked whom they would like to correct their mistakes in their studies. Most of the participants argued that teachers should correct their mistakes (45%). Teachers were followed by books or dictionaries and around 32 % of the participants made a statement in that way. 12 % expressed that it can be their friends that could correct their mistakes while around 5 % said others. Only 4 % preferred to let the mistakes be. No significant variance was observed in terms of language proficiency level (see Table 8).

Table 8. *Item 18: Who Should Correct Them When They Make a Mistake* Item 19 tried to find out what the participants would do when they were asked to use new technologies. 51% agreed that they would try to learn new skills. This finding was followed by the ones who suggested that they would learn by following others. Around 11 % suggested that they would feel worried. On the other hand, 2% would like to avoid or put off it while the other 2% would resist using them (see Table 9).

Table 9. *Item 19: What to Do When They were Asked to Use New Technologies*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Try to learn new skills	51	14	17	20
Follow others & learn	20	11	4	5
Feel worried	9	3	5	1
Put it off/Avoid	2	0	1	1

Resist using them	2	0	1	1
Total	84	28	28	28

As shown in Table 10, in item 20, the participants were asked about the most useful way of using English in their studies. 55 % suggested that doing exercises was the most useful way while around 30 % said it was taking notes. 6% stated that mechanical memory was the most useful way of studying English while the other 6% preferred group discussion. Lastly, only 1 participant suggested that classifying and grouping was the most useful way.

Table 10. *Item 20: The Most Useful Way to Study English*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Taking notes	25	8	9	8
Mechanic memory	6	1	3	2
Doing exercises	46	17	12	17
Classifying/Grouping	1	0	1	0
Group discussion	6	2	3	1
Total	84	28	28	28

In item 21, the participants were asked about the authority to choose the materials used in their studies. Most of the participants (71.4%) said “teachers and me”. This was followed by 18 % who suggested “by teachers”. 6 % selected “only by me” and 2.4 % preferred “only by the teacher” and “only by myself separately”. No significant variance was observed in terms of the language proficiency level of the participating students regarding the responsibility of materials selection.

Table 11. *Item 21: Materials Selected by Whom*

	Overall	Basic	Independent	Proficient
Only by teachers	2	1	1	0
Mostly by teachers	15	3	5	7
By teachers and me	60	24	18	18
Mostly by me	5	0	4	1
Only by me	2	0	0	2
Total	84	28	28	28

Findings about the EMP Students' Language Learning Strategy Use

In this section, the findings of the language learning strategies questionnaire were presented. While presenting the findings, first the overall strategy use of EMP students was discussed to find out the general tendency among the participants. The type of strategies covered in each part included “remembering more effectively, using all your mental processes, compensating for missing knowledge, organizing and evaluating their learning, managing their emotions, and learning with others” respectively (Oxford, 1990).

To start with the overall strategy use of EMP students, the mean of *3.41* and the standard deviation of *.52* revealed that the participants ranked in the medium group. It could be suggested that they *sometimes* made use of language learning strategies in their learning. As for remembering more effectively, it was observed that the participants of the current study preferred to use memory strategies *sometimes* with a mean score of *3.24*. However, it should also be noted that the participants did not vary much in this type of strategy with a score standard deviation of *.60*.

Considering the cognitive strategy use in language learning, the descriptive statistics showed that the participants expressed the use of their mental processes at a medium level. However, the mean score of *3.43* showed that they used cognitive strategies more than memory strategies. Finally, a lower score of standard deviation *.59* reported that the variation among the participants was less than memory strategies use.

Further, the data analysis showed that the participants made use of the compensation strategies in a similar way to the cognitive strategies with the same mean score of *3.43*. In other words, they suggested that they *sometimes* used the strategies of compensating for missing knowledge. However, it should also be noted that there was more variation among the participants since the standard deviation at this point was *.70*.

The descriptive statistics also revealed that the participants usually made use of the metacognitive strategies with a mean score of *3.63* and a standard deviation of *.75*. In other words, organizing and evaluating their learning was preferred among the language learning strategies that the participants mostly used compared to other types of strategies including memory, cognitive, compensation, and affective strategies. As for the next category, the participants preferred to use affective strategies less than any other types of strategies. The mean score of *3.02* revealed that although the participants still sometimes made use of affective strategies in their learning, it was the less preferred one.

Finally, for the last type of strategy, which was about learning with others, the analysis of the data showed that it was the most preferred category. In other words, the mean score of 3.73 revealed that the students generally made use of social language learning strategies with the highest mean among all types. However, it should also be noted that the variation among the participants was highest at this part with a standard deviation score of .77. It could be inferred that the participants showed more variation among themselves in terms of social strategies compared to others (see Table 12).

Table 12. *Mean and Standard Deviation of the Strategy Use of the Participants*

Strategy Use (N=84)	M	SD
Overall	3.41	.52
Part A: Memory	3.24	.60
Part B: Cognitive	3.43	.59
Part C: Compensation	3.43	.70
Part D: Metacognitive	3.63	.75
Part E: Affective	3.02	.74
Part F: Social	3.73	.77

For the participants at the basic level, the overall mean score of 3.32 showed that the participants *sometimes* made use of language learning strategies in a similar way to the finding of all participants. However, there was a slight decrease in the mean score for the basic group. In terms of the categories of language learning strategies, it could be suggested that the participants in the basic group preferred to use memory, cognitive, compensation, and affective strategies *sometimes* with mean scores of 3.29, 3.31, 3.19, and 3.00 respectively. On the other hand, metacognitive and social categories were among the most frequently preferred strategies. In other words, they suggested that they *usually* used metacognitive and social strategies with mean scores of 3.60 and 3.54 respectively (see Table 13).

Table 13. *Mean and Standard Deviation of the Strategy Use of the Participants (Basic)*

Strategy Use	M	SD
Overall	3.32	.42
Part A: Memory	3.29	.47
Part B: Cognitive	3.31	.59
Part C: Compensation	3.19	.67

Part D: Metacognitive	3.60	.59
Part E: Affective	3.00	.48
Part F: Social	3.54	.68

The overall mean score of 3.54 showed that the independent group *usually* made use of language learning strategies. For the categories of language learning strategies, the participants in the independent group preferred to use memory, cognitive and affective strategies *sometimes* with mean scores of 3.35, 3.41, and 3.20 respectively. On the other hand, compensation, metacognitive and social categories were preferred more compared to other categories. In other words, this group of participants *usually* used compensation, metacognitive and social strategies with mean scores of 3.66, 3.66, and 3.94 (see Table 13).

Table 14. *Mean and Standard Deviation of the Strategy Use of the Participants (Independent)*

Strategy Use (N=28)	M	SD
Overall	3.54	.66
Part A: Memory	3.35	.69
Part B: Cognitive	3.41	.71
Part C: Compensation	3.66	.73
Part D: Metacognitive	3.66	.86
Part E: Affective	3.20	.84
Part F: Social	3.94	.87

Considering the findings of participants at the proficient level, the overall mean score of 3.37 showed that they *sometimes* made use of language learning strategies like the basic language users. The findings suggested that this group preferred to use only memory, compensation, and affective strategies *sometimes* with mean scores of 3.08, 3.42, and 2.86 respectively. On the other hand, cognitive, metacognitive, and social categories were the most frequently preferred ones compared to other categories. In other words, the participants in this level stated that they *usually* used cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies with mean scores of 3.55, 3.62, and 3.70 respectively (see Table 15).

Table 15. *Mean and Standard Deviation of the Strategy Use of the Participants (Proficient)*

Strategy Use (N=28)	M	SD
Overall	3.37	.44
Part A: Memory	3.08	.57
Part B: Cognitive	3.55	.40
Part C: Compensation	3.42	.60
Part D: Metacognitive	3.62	.80
Part E: Affective	2.86	.82
Part F: Social	3.70	.73

Note: M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation, N: Number of Participants

In brief, the analysis of the data revealed that it was not possible to mention a linear relationship between the strategy use and the language proficiency level of the students. It was not the proficient group but the independent group that ranked the highest in terms of the frequency of strategy use except for the cognitive strategies. In other words, the analysis of the data showed that the independent language users were the group that made use of the language learning strategies more frequently than the others.

Findings of the Correlation of Learner Autonomy and Strategy Use

To be able to do the correlation analysis, the 3 data sets were created. Then, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted to ensure that the quantitative data gathered were normally distributed (Razali & Wah, 2011). Table 16 illustrates the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test for each data set including learner autonomy, learning strategies questionnaire and placement test results.

Table 16

Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Sig.	Learner Autonomy	Learning Strategies	Placement Results
Basic	.736	.323	.007
Independent	.545	.287	.163
Proficient	.952	.068	.112

After the normality tests, the correlation analysis was conducted to see whether there was a statistically significant relationship between autonomy level and strategy use among the groups. The correlation analysis was conducted separately for each group to be able to see how the relationship varied across different proficiency levels. As the number of participants in each group was limited to 28, a non-parametric test Spearman rank correlation was run. The confidence interval values were also computed to see how well the sample represented the population.

To start with the participants at the proficient level (Table 17), the results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there was a moderately significant positive correlation between the participants' level of learner autonomy and their strategy use, $r(27) = +.68, p < .001$ two-tailed. This finding was supported by the Spearman test, $r(27) = +.57, p < .001$.

Table 17. *Correlation Analysis for Learner Autonomy and Strategy Use in the Proficient Group*

Sig.	Learner Autonomy vs. Strategy Use
Pearson's r	.68**
Spearman's rho	.57**

As for the second group, independent language users, there was a statistically significant relationship between the autonomy level of the participants and their strategy use, $r(27) = +.82, p < .001$ two-tailed. The findings of Spearman's rho were also supportive $r(27) = +.71, p < .001$ two-tailed (see Table 18).

Table 18

Correlation Analysis for Learner Autonomy and Strategy Use in the Independent Group

Sig.	Learner Autonomy vs. Strategy Use
Pearson's r	.82**
Spearman's rho	.71**

Finally, no statistically significant relationship was found between learner autonomy and strategy use at the basic level of proficiency (Table 19).

Table 19

Correlation Analysis for Learner Autonomy and Strategy Use in the Basic Group

Sig.	Learner Autonomy vs. Strategy Use
Pearson's r	.25
Spearman's rho	.22

Discussion

In this study, the first question aimed at finding out the students' autonomy level. The result showed that they were moderately autonomous which shows that they were aware of their own learning. As suggested by Dişlen (2011), the students noticed the importance of learning autonomously. However, it seemed that they still sought teacher support most probably because they all were accustomed to conventional teaching methods.

Regarding the teacher-student relationship, the results revealed that there was a discrepancy among the students. The participants preferred the relationship between an explorer-director and a receiver-giver. The students in the proficient group viewed the teacher-student relationship in a more autonomous way than the other two groups. This finding was supported by previous studies stating that students behaved more autonomously as their proficiency level increased (Dafei, 2007; Myartawan, Latief & Suharmanto, 2013).

For the source of success and failure, most students took their own responsibility which was parallel to the study by Yıldırım (2008) indicating that the students in the Turkish EFL context tended to take more responsibility for their learning. On the other hand, Yıldırım (2008) argued that those who should carry the responsibility of choosing materials must be teachers. Unlike the previous finding, it was not able to be seen that a high majority of the students seemed to prefer to share the responsibility with their teacher about materials selection.

Furthermore, the analysis of the gathered data revealed that the students were inclined to behave more autonomously about answering a question asked by their teachers and the new technologies encountered. However, for meeting an unknown word, only a small number of the students behaved autonomously. This finding were supported by Sönmez (2016) stating that students looked autonomous in some cases while they did not in others.

As for the aspect of error correction, it was found that most of the students still regarded their teachers as the authority. Similarly, Cakici (2017) emphasized that Turkish EFL students still demanded their teachers' support in certain scenarios including error correction. Therefore, it is also important to note that although the learners were aware of the notion of autonomous learning, they needed to take certain steps to make their learning more autonomous (Yumuk, 2002; Dişlen, 2011; Sönmez, 2016).

Furthermore, the aim of the second research question was to provide evidence for the language learning strategies that were frequently used by the participating students. The results showed that the students *sometimes* made use of the learning strategies in an overall sense which was addressed by other scholars as well (Park, 1997; Uztosun, 2014).

Regarding the strategy use at each level, the analysis showed that the independent language users group ranked first in terms of the frequency of using language learning strategies and this group was followed by proficient and basic users respectively. In other words, there was not a linear relationship between strategy use and proficiency level. It was also important to note that the basic language users were the ones that made use of the strategies the least, which showed similarity to the studies cited in that the lower the autonomy level of the students, the lower the proficiency level they possessed. Further, social strategies were found to be the most frequently used language learning strategy type that was followed by metacognitive strategies (Lee & Oxford, 2008; Uztosun, 2014). Another similarity that was found in parallel studies as the least preferred strategy type was affective strategies (Lee & Oxford, 2008; Yılmaz, 2010; Uztosun, 2014).

The third research question aimed to examine the relationship between the participant's level of learner autonomy and the frequency of their strategy use regarding language proficiency. The analysis reported that the relationship between the level of learner autonomy and the strategy use varied to a certain extent. The most significant relationship was observed in the independent language users' group while there was no statistically significant relationship between the concepts in the basic users' group. These findings showed parallelism to the study conducted by Yang (1998) and Samaie, Khany, and Habibi (2015). Regarding the relationship between strategy use and the language proficiency level of learners, there was no statistically significant relationship between the level of language proficiency and strategy use which was similar to Nisbet, Tindall, and Arroyo (2005). In other words,

the strategy use by the participating students did not show an increase in proficiency level.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to examine the EMP students' level of learner autonomy, their strategy use, and the relationship between the two concepts of the language proficiency level. The findings of this current study revealed that the implementation of ESP instruction was supported by not only the instructors but also by students. In this context, learner autonomy and language learning strategies seemed to play an important role in a more productive ESP classroom for both parties. The ESP instructors, therefore, should take part in the process of promoting learner autonomy and strategy use so that their learners could become more aware of the importance of the concepts and behave accordingly.

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