

## MEMORIZATION IN EFL LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

*Learning a foreign language by heart to meet the requirements in language classes has become a common practice. Memorization as a learning strategy may be regarded from two opposing perspectives. While some EFL teachers and learners argue that memorization does act as a learning method that facilitates the establishment of information in memory, for some teachers and learners, memorization and learning can not coexist as they believe that relying on memorization for learning a foreign language will hinder critical thinking which would empower learners to make appropriate verbalization of thoughts with productive results. Moving from this controversy, in this study, we initially aim to elicit EFL students' beliefs about memorization in language learning. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate the reasons why memorization is used as well as how it is incorporated into the learning process. The participants will be 100 EFL students enrolled at ELT Department. The data will be collected through questionnaires and interviews and obtained data will be subjected to both quantitative (SPSS Computer Program) and qualitative analyses.*

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Definition of a Language Learning Strategy

The term language learning strategy has been defined in EFL context. Wenden and Rubin (1987:19) define learning strategies as "... any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information." Richards and Platt (1992:209) state that learning strategies are "intentional behavior and thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information." Faerch Claus and Kasper (1983:67) stress that a learning strategy is "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language." According to Stern (1992:261), "the concept of learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional

directions and learning techniques." All language learners use language learning strategies either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information and performing tasks in the language classroom. Learners are viewed as possessing individual learning styles, preferences, or intelligences. Pedagogy is most successful when these learner differences are acknowledged, analyzed for particular groups of learners, and accommodated in teaching. There are different categorizations of language learning strategies in the field. Chamot and O'Malley (1990) divided language strategies into three main categories as seen in Figure 1 (the focus of the present study will be the classification made by Chamot and O'Malley). In addition, Oxford (1990) categorized the strategies differently and she introduced two main categories: a) direct b) indirect. Memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies are included in the direct group while metacognitive, affective and social strategies are included in the indirect one.

<b>A. Metacognitive strategies:</b> 'higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring, or evaluating the success of a learning activity' (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, 44)	<i>advance organisers:</i> planning the learning activity in advance - "You review before you go into class".
	<i>directed attention:</i> deciding to concentrate on general aspects of a learning task.
	<i>selective attention:</i> deciding to pay attention to specific parts of the language input or the situation that will help learning.
	<i>self-management:</i> trying to arrange the appropriate conditions for learning - "I sit in the front of the class so I can see the teacher".
	<i>advance preparation:</i> planning the linguistic components for a forthcoming language task
	<i>self-monitoring:</i> checking one's performance as one speaks - "Sometimes I cut short a word because I realize I've said it wrong".
	<i>delayed production:</i> deliberately postponing speaking so that one may learn by listening "I talk when I have to, but I keep it short and hope I'll be understood".
	<i>self-evaluation:</i> checking how well one is doing against one's own standards
	<i>self-reinforcement:</i> giving oneself rewards for success
	<b>B. Cognitive strategies</b>
<i>resourcing:</i> making use of language materials such as dictionaries.	
<i>directed physical response:</i> responding physically 'as with directives'.	
<i>translation:</i> 'using the first language as a basis for understanding and/or producing the L2'	
<i>grouping:</i> organising learning on the basis of 'common attributes'.	
<i>note-taking:</i> writing down the gist etc of texts.	
<i>deduction:</i> conscious application of rules to processing the L2.	
<i>recombination:</i> putting together smaller meaningful elements into new wholes.	
<i>imagery:</i> visualising information for memory storage - "Pretend you are doing something indicated in the sentences to make up about the new word".	
<i>auditory representation:</i> keeping a sound or sound sequence in the mind - "When you are trying to learn how to say something, speak it in your mind first".	
<i>key word:</i> using key word memory techniques, such as identifying an L2 word with an L1 word that it sounds like.	
<i>contextualisation:</i> 'placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence'.	
<i>elaboration:</i> 'relating new information to other concepts in memory'.	
<i>transfer:</i> using previous knowledge to help language learning - "If they're talking about something I have already learnt (in Spanish), all I have to do is remember the information and try to put it into English"	
<i>inferencing:</i> guessing meanings by using available information - "I think of the whole meaning of the sentence, and then I can get the meaning of the new word".	
<i>question for clarification:</i> asking a teacher or native for explanation, help, etc.	
<b>C: Socioaffective strategies:</b>	<i>cooperation:</i> working with fellow-students on language

Figure 1. Types of Learning Strategies by Chamot and O'Malley (1990)

What makes a strategy positive and helpful for a given learner? A strategy can be said to be useful if: a) the strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand; b) the strategy fits the particular student's learning style) the student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies. Strategies that fulfill these conditions "make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p.8). Learning strategies can also enable students to become more independent, autonomous lifelong learners

(Allwright 1990; Little 1991). According to Oxford (1994) there are some important factors affecting language learning strategies. These factors are learning styles, gender, age, nationality, beliefs, previous educations and cultural backgrounds, and learning goals. Numerous studies were carried out whether these strategies would be effective or not in their language learning. According to Hosenfeld (1977) guessing was mostly preferred by successful language learners. Bialystok (1979) also found out that inferencing worked well with language learners. O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1985) found that second language learners developed effective listening skills through the use of monitoring, elaboration, and inferencing. Cohen and Aphek (1981) in their study they focused on vocabulary. They found that in most instances language learners tried to memorize words. In addition, Adamson (1990, p. 76) summarizes the use of memorization by English learners as learning to cope with assignments. In one of his studies, he found out that an Arabic student used memorization as a way of learning new vocabulary. In another study by Kovecses and Szabo (1995), we see positive learning effects for students memorizing phrasal verbs.

### **Memorization As a Learning Strategy**

Memorization that belongs to the cognitive learning strategy will be dealt since it is the concern of this study. Memorization, in the most general sense, refers to a method of learning in which the individual recalls information. From a broader perspective,

memorization can be defined as a strategy that focus on the storage and retrieval of language. Though strategies such as drill and repetition might be considered the same as memorization strategies, the storage and retrieval process are the focus of attention in the case of memorization (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p.22). As in other kinds of learning, human memory is crucial in the acquisition of second language learning. "The ability to understand spoken and written language, and to produce it in speaking and writing depends on the ability to recognize and retrieve information stored in memory" (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p.43). In line with this, Cook (1994, p. 133) believes that repetition and learning by heart are valuable, pleasurable and efficient uses of language learning activities and can help language learners set valuable goals as they will be involved in the authentic and communicative use of language.

### **METHODOLOGY PARTICIPANTS**

In this study, the aim of which was to elicit EFL students' beliefs about memorization in language learning, the participants were 50 senior (aged between 21-22) and 50 freshmen (aged between 17-18) EFL students enrolled at English Language Teaching Department, Çukurova University. The participants were randomly selected from a total population of 300 students. All the participants' native language is Turkish and all the senior students had completed preparatory class. Gender of the participants was not the concern of our study.

### **INSTRUMENTS**

The data were collected through a questionnaire (See Appendix 1). The questionnaire, which aimed to elicit EFL learners' beliefs about memorization in language learning and developed by the researchers, was administered to all participants in their regular classroom atmosphere and there was no time limitation. The questionnaire was written in English yet they were free to ask for any clarification they needed as to prevent a misunderstanding of the items in the questionnaire. There were two main parts one of which was designed to elicit personal

information. In the longer section of the questionnaire, there were eight questions. One question was designed in the multiple choice format.

Two of the questions were designed using Likert- Scale, one of the questions was in Yes/No format and for the yes answer the participants were required to elaborate on their answers. Four of the questions were open-ended and the participants were allowed to use their native language if they needed. one question was designed in the multiple choice format. The second instrument for data collection was the interviews. The purpose of conducting

interviews was to clarify the points seemed unclear to the researchers. The interviews following the administration of the questionnaire were structured as the researchers predetermined the agenda beforehand.

## DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results of the questionnaire and interview data which were subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analyses. For the quantitative part item by item analysis was used under Statistical Package for Software 16.0 (SPSS).

**Table 1. The Frequency of L2 Learning Strategies Used by Freshmen Students.**

	Chi – Square Sig.	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Memorizing	.295	----	----	12	24	21	42	17	<b>34</b>
Getting the idea quickly	.113	----	----	16	32	23	46	11	22
Translating	.000	1	2	24	48	13	26	11	22
Transferring	.000	2	4	31	62	11	22	6	12
Taking notes	.000	1	2	9	18	18	36	22	<b>44</b>
Summarizing	.016	4	8	19	38	16	32	11	22
Highlighting	.003	7	14	23	46	13	26	7	14
Guessing	.000	2	4	20	40	20	40	8	16
Switching to L1	.000	5	10	26	52	9	18	10	20
Using mime or gesture	.021	7	14	18	36	18	36	7	14
Setting goals and objectives	.027	4	8	18	36	12	24	16	32
Self monitoring	.003	6	12	23	46	13	26	8	16
Self evaluating	.008	7	14	17	34	20	40	6	12
Taking risks	.001	7	14	24	48	12	24	7	14
Cooperating with peers	.003	2	4	17	34	19	38	12	24
Imagining	.002	3	6	21	42	16	32	9	18

(sig:  $p \leq .05$ )

Table 1 shows quite an even distribution of the frequencies of the strategies that are always used in L2 learning. However, the highest frequency for the strategy always used belongs to “taking notes” (44 %). That is, freshmen students seem to be note taking most

as compared to other strategies. The reason for such a high tendency to write down may be attributed to their not being exposed to language much in the first year. The item with the second highest frequency for the item always used in L2 learning belongs to “memorization”. The list

below displays the five most frequently chosen strategies (the list is based on the strategies freshmen claim to always use)

1. taking notes (f: 22; 44%)
2. memorizing (f: 17; 34%)
3. setting goals and objectives (f: 16; 32%)
4. cooperating with peers (f: 12; 24%)
5. summarizing, translating, getting the idea quickly ( f: 11; 22%)

The list above displays that memorization is the second most frequently used item for the freshmen. That is, 34 percent of the first graders claim to always make use of memorization in learning a foreign language. That none of the participants chose the item “never” for memorization may indicate the fact that memorization is one of the most frequently used language strategies by freshmen. The interview data also support this finding as more than half of the participants stated that they prefer using memorization especially in learning new words.

**Table 2. The Frequency of L1 Learning Strategies Used by Freshmen Students.**

	Chi – Square Sig.	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Memorizing	.084	5	10	13	26	17	34	15	30
Getting the idea quickly	.001	1	2	12	24	17	34	20	40
Translating	.830	14	28	10	20	14	28	12	24
Transferring	.308	11	22	17	34	14	28	8	16
Taking notes	.350	8	16	13	26	17	34	12	24
Summarizing	.003	5	10	20	40	18	36	7	14
Highlighting	.036	4	8	18	36	14	28	14	28
Guessing	.001	2	4	13	26	23	46	12	24
Switching to L1	.253	7	14	13	26	17	34	13	26
Using mime or gesture	.025	6	12	9	18	20	40	15	30
Setting goals and objectives	.005	2	4	13	26	17	34	18	36
Self monitoring	.009	3	6	19	38	16	32	12	24
Self evaluating	.001	3	6	23	46	11	22	13	26
Taking risks	.104	5	10	16	32	15	30	14	28
Cooperating with peers	.112	7	14	13	26	19	38	11	22
Imagining	.068	6	12	14	28	19	38	11	22

(sig:  $p \leq .05$ )

The analysis of the findings in Table 2 indicates similar results. The strategy “getting the idea quickly” has the highest frequency in L1. As for memorization, we see that 30 percent of the freshmen claim to use memorization in their

native language. In addition, we see that similar to L2, memorization is the third most frequently preferred L1 strategy. This may be attributed to learners’ transferring their L1 strategies to L2 learning context. The list below displays the

three most frequently chosen strategies (the list is based on the strategies freshmen claim to always use)

1. getting the idea quickly (f:20 ; 40 %)
2. setting goals and objectives (f: 18; 36%)
3. memorizing (f: 15; 30%)

**Table 3. The Frequency of L2 Learning Strategies Used by Senior Students.**

	Chi – Square Sig.	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Memorizing	.923			16	32	18	36	16	32
Getting the idea quickly	.003	3	6	15	30	21	42	11	22
Translating	.000	7	14	26	52	11	22	6	12
Transferring	.000	2	4	21	42	19	38	8	16
Taking notes	.007			7	14	18	36	25	50
Summarizing	.008	2	4	16	32	17	34	15	30
Highlighting	.002	1	2	19	38	15	30	15	30
Guessing	.000	2	4	24	48	12	24	12	24
Switching to L1	.000	4	8	29	58	11	22	6	12
Using mime or gesture	.007	8	16	23	46	11	22	8	16
Setting goals and objectives	.000	1	2	15	30	23	46	11	22
Self monitoring	.084			14	28	24	48	12	24
Self evaluating	.002	2	4	21	42	15	30	12	24
Taking risks	.001	4	8	24	48	13	26	9	18
Cooperating with peers	.000	3	6	23	46	17	34	7	14
Imagining	.001	1	2	21	42	13	26	15	30

(sig:  $p \leq .05$ )

The results (based on the item “always” displayed in Table 3 state that “taking notes” is the most frequently used L2 language learning strategy for seniors, which was the same for freshmen. The reason for this similarity might be attributed to the safety that note taking might provide for the language learners. Memorization is the second most frequently item for the

seniors when they learn a foreign language (f: 16; 32%). Similarly, for freshmen students memorization stands as the second most frequently used strategy. The similarity between the two groups may suggest that learning strategies especially memorization do not lose its priority as the level of students increases.

**Table 4. The Frequency of L1 Learning Strategies Used by Senior Students.**

	Chi – Square Sig	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Memorizing	.308	9	18	18	36	12	24	11	22
Getting the idea quickly	.000	2	4	10	20	14	28	24	48
Translating	.207	16	32	16	32	11	22	7	14
Transferring	.000	2	4	24	48	14	28	10	20
Taking notes	.002	3	6	10	20	16	32	21	42
Summarizing	.051	4	8	15	30	15	30	16	32
Highlighting	.001	2	4	17	34	13	26	18	36
Guessing	.005	8	16	22	44	9	18	11	22
Switching to L1	.019	5	10	17	34	14	28	14	28
Using mime or gesture	.090	2	4	16	32	14	28	18	36
Setting goals and objectives	.006	4	8	17	34	15	30	14	28
Self monitoring	.044			12	24	23	46	15	30
Self evaluating	.144	8	16	22	44	9	18	11	22
Taking risks	.000	4	8	28	56	11	22	7	14
Cooperating with peers	.038	6	12	17	34	9	18	18	36
Imagining	.011	2	4	10	20	17	34	21	42

(sig:  $p \leq .05$ )

The analysis of the results in Table 4 reveal that “getting the idea quickly (f: 24; 48%), taking notes (f: 21; 42%) and imagining (f: 21; 42) are the three most frequently strategies that seniors claim to always use in L1. Surprisingly, the frequency for “memorization”

in the always column is low (f: 11; 22%), which was quite high in L2. The difference might be due to learners’ seeking for more safety in learning a foreign language.

**Table 5. The Reasons Why Freshmen and Seniors Use Memorization**

The reasons	Freshmen		Seniors	
	f	%	f	%
To learn vocabulary	23	46	20	40
To improve grammar	1	2	-----	----
To improve speaking	2	4	3	6
To pass the exams	5	10	2	4
It is the only way to succeed	1	2	2	4
It saves time	6	12	9	18
It is easy	1	2	8	16
I am good at memorizing	2	4	3	6
I am used to memorizing	8	16	5	10
It is a must	4	8	-----	----
It is permanent	3	6	-----	----

When we analyze the results displayed in Table 5, we see some differences in the reasons why freshmen and seniors use memorization. If we rank the reasons both for the freshmen and seniors, we see that using memorization to learn vocabulary (f: 23; f: 20) and to save time (f: 6; f: 9) are among the first three reasons both groups. That is, participants in both groups associate memorization with quick learning and see it as a means to acquire new words. Another significant result is that while seniors use memorization to improve grammar (f: 1), to fulfill a requirement (f: 4), and to keep the learnt item in the long term memory (f: 3), seniors do not use memorization for the mentioned reasons, which could be attributed to freshmen's being more anxious as to learn the items in a

way that would lead to permanency whereas seniors – having gone through a four- year education period during which they may have developed their own strategies as to keep the items in their long term memory. That is, being equipped with a greater amount of knowledge and a greater number of strategies during their education, students at the fourth graders (seniors) may have the preference of using another strategy over memorization as to enhance permanency in their learning. Another finding which is also significant is the difference between the two groups in regard to being used to memorizing. Not surprisingly, while sixteen percent of the freshmen state that they memorize because they are accustomed to doing so, only ten percent of the fourth graders (seniors) claimed to do so.

**Table 6. Causes of memorization**

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	f	%	f	%
Personal preferences	21	42	23	46
Teachers	15	30	4	8
Education system	36	72	30	60
Other	2	4	----	----

The incentives learners have in using memorization technique may differ. The results displayed in table 6 reveal that the item with the highest frequency for both groups is the "education system" (total f: 66). That is, sixty percent of seniors and thirty six percent of freshmen stated that they memorize when learning a foreign language because they feel that the education system with its requirements urge them to do so. The item with the second highest frequency is personal preferences in both groups. Our interview data also support this finding as more than half of the participants in both groups state that they use memorization because they find it easier as compared to other language learning strategies and they believe memorization to be an enjoyable strategy to adopt. Another finding displayed in Table 6 regarding the causes of memorization reveals that the frequency for the teachers who prefer

the memorization technique seems to be quite high as 30 out of 50 senior students believe that their teachers cause them to learn the things by heart. Another interesting finding reveals that both for the freshmen and seniors, education system is the first important reason why they prefer to memorize when they are learning a foreign language. This may lead to the assumption that during their four-year education, the students are expected to fulfill the same educational requirements which include the grading system, teachers' preferences regarding the methods of teaching and so forth. As for the influence of the teachers on students as to lead them to memorization, we see that when they become fourth graders (seniors) the teachers' influence decreases which may stem from the fact that as students get older and more experienced, they develop a better understanding of different methods to be



utilized in learning a foreign language and they choose the one which suits them best. In our study, the results reveal that during the first year of learning, students memorize because they

feel that their teachers expect them to do so; however, when they are seniors they memorize less as they seem to have been influenced less by their teachers.

**Table 7. The Distribution of Memorization in Regard to Skills**

Skills	Freshmen		Seniors	
	f	%	f	%
Speaking	21	42	33	66
Writing	31	62	36	72

Though memorization could be associated more with speaking, its use may differ. The results displayed in Table 7 indicate quite a striking result. Both freshmen and seniors state that they use the items they memorize more in writing than in speaking. That is, the frequencies for using memorization

in writing are higher both for the first graders (freshmen) and fourth graders (seniors) than the frequencies for speaking. Despite this difference, the specific areas where students use the memorized items both in speaking and writing should be investigated, which will be the topic of the discussion below.

**Table 8. The Use of Memorization in Speaking**

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	f	%	f	%
In class discussions	6	12	5	10
In real life conversations	14	28	4	8
In class presentations	-----	-----	3	6
When using different words	-----	-----	14	28
When forming sentences	-----	-----	1	2
When expressing myself	3	6	3	6
To be more fluent	-----	-----	2	4
To seem more advanced	-----	-----	1	2

When we analyze the results in Table 8, we see some striking results. Fourth graders (seniors) claim to use memorized items in a variety of tasks while freshmen have a more limited range. That is, while fourth graders use memorized items in class discussions, real life conversations, class presentations, when forming a sentence, in expressing themselves, to be more fluent and to seem more advanced in

their speech, freshmen prefer to use memorized items in class discussions, real life conversations and in expressing themselves. The items shared by both groups are “self expression”, “class discussions” and “real life conversations” However, the frequencies for the common items display differences. For instance, while twenty eight percent of the freshmen claim to use the memorized items when they are

involved in real life conversations, the percentage for this item decreases to eight in fourth graders (seniors). This may indicate that

after a three-year education period, fourth graders seem to depend less on memorization when they are in a real life conversation.

**Table 9. The Use of Memorization in Writing**

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	f	%	f	%
In essays	24	48	13	
In exams	10	20	3	
In academic writing	----	----	8	
In translations	----	----	1	
In letter writing	----	----	1	
When forming grammatical structures	----	----	6	

As in speaking, the results for the use of memorization in writing indicate some striking differences in both groups. Of the six items provided by seniors, only two are shared with seniors. That is to say, while seniors claim to use the memorized items in forming grammatical structures, essays, exams, academic writing, translation, and letter writing,

freshmen stated that they make use of the memorized items only when writing essays and having exams. We can also draw from the results in Table 8 that seniors have a wider range of areas in which they use memorized items, which was the same in speaking (see Table 9).

**Table 10. As a prospective teacher, would you advise memorization to your students?**

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	f	%	f	%
Yes	22	44	25	50
No	28	56	25	50

When asked if they would advise their students to use memorization in language learning, both freshmen and seniors gave similar responses (Table 10). However, there was still a slight difference in the frequencies. While 44 percent of the first graders stated that they would advise their students to use

memorization, the number of seniors who stated that they would urge their students to memorize is 25. The slight difference seen between the two groups is quite striking as we believe that freshmen would be relying more on their role models as compared to seniors.

**Table 11. The reasons for advising students to use memorization**

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	f	%	f	%
It helps with learning new words	6	12	11	22
It is a must	6	12	3	6
It is easy	6	12	----	----
It is quick	3	9	5	10
They will always have to memorize in real life	1	2	----	----
It is good for passing the exams	----	----	1	2
It improves speaking	----	----	1	2
It improves grammar	----	----	1	2

The results displayed in Table 11 reveal that though the number of reasons why participants would advise their students to memorize does not indicate a significant difference, the content does. That is, while freshmen stated that they would advise their students to use memorization as they believe it to facilitate learning new words, its being easy,

quick, and a requirement, while fourth graders (seniors) believe that memorization could be a good strategy for their students as it helps with learning new words, it is quick, and it is a requirement. In addition, seniors also stated that memorization improves speaking, grammar and it facilitates passing the exams so it would help their students.

**Table 12. The reasons for not advising students to memorize**

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	f	%	f	%
It is not permanent learning	26	52	15	30
Builds no relationship with prior knowledge	----	----	3	6
Kills imagination and creativity	----	----	4	8
It is a waste of time	----	----	1	2
It is not entertaining	----	----	5	10
Makes students lazy	2	4	2	4

The analysis of the item “the reasons why you would not advise your students to “memorize” which was used as a double check for the previous item (see Table 12) reveals that seniors have a broader range of reasons why they would not advise students to use memorization in language learning. From their perspective, memorization does not lead to permanent learning, it kills imagination and creativity, it is a waste of time, boring, and causes laziness on the part of the students. In addition, seniors also believe that by using memorization, students can not achieve building

a relationship between prior knowledge and newly learnt information. The highest frequency among the reasons which seniors provides belongs to the item “memorization does not lead to permanent learning”. That is, in seniors’ opinion, their students should not use memorization as it is for temporary learning not the permanent. The analysis of the freshmen’s answers for this item reveals quite a significant difference as they seem to be limited in their responses. The reasons why they would not advise their students to memorize are only two: memorization does not lead to permanent

learning (freshmen f: 26; seniors f: 15) and it makes students lazy (freshmen f: 2; seniors f: 2). These two items in fact are the only items that freshmen share with seniors. 52 percent of freshmen and 30 percent of seniors believe that. That is, both for the first and fourth graders, their students should not use memorization if they wish to have permanent learning and if they want to avoid being lazy.

### ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

Since our main focus was to search into whether EFL students use memorization, how and where they use memorization as a learning strategy, the main purpose of the interviews was to elaborate on “memorization” and verify the results obtained from the questionnaire. From the research point of view, the underlying aim was to see whether the results of the questionnaire matched with the interview data to yield reliable results. As to achieve this aim, we asked participants to elaborate more on the reason why they use memorization as a language strategy and for which language skills and components they use it.

Below are some of the extracts we obtained during the interview sessions

#### Extract 1

“I feel as if I have to use memorization as it helps me with speaking especially with new words that I learn”

#### Extract 2

“I think memorization is a good strategy because it makes learning easier and more enjoyable”

#### Extract 3

“I often use memorization in studying vocabulary and phrasal verbs”

#### Extract 4

“ For me, memorization has some positive effects such as making me feel better. I mean, I feel more self-confident if I memorize.

#### Extract 5

“I always want to speak like native speakers and when I memorize I can be like them”

#### Extract 6

“In our education system, when you memorize you are successful”

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we aimed to figure out whether memorization is used by freshmen and senior ELT students as a cognitive learning strategy as well as where, why, and how it is used. We analyzed the data obtained from the questionnaire (adapted from Chamot and O'Malley (1990) classification) and interviews as to search into learners' beliefs. The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

- As a L2 learning strategy, memorization is among the three most frequently used learning strategies.
- While freshmen students highly use memorization as a learning strategy in their native language, seniors do not seem to have such a tendency. The reason for this difference might be seniors having a bigger repertoire of language learning strategies as compared to freshmen students.
- Both freshmen and senior students prefer memorization especially in vocabulary learning. This finding is also in line with a study carried out by Adamson (1990, p. 76). In his study, he found out that an Arabic student used memorization as a way of learning new vocabulary. In another study by Kovecses and Szabo (1995), we see positive learning effects for students memorizing phrasal verbs. The reason for the finding in our study might be because of the previous education experiences in which students are expected to memorize the given target vocabularies as to learn them. In addition, the language education at secondary and high schools tend to focus more on

evaluating the product rather than the process of learning.

- As for the incentive they have for memorizing, both freshmen and senior students believe that it is the education system that urges them to memorize.
- Both freshmen and senior students use memorization more in writing as compared to speaking. As for the specific area in which they use memorization, students in both groups prefer to use memorization in writing essays. The interview data also reveal that freshmen and seniors use the memorized items when writing essays in classroom.
- Freshmen use memorized items in real life conversations outside the class whereas seniors' preference is limited to using the memorized items in uttering words.
- There is not a significant difference between the two groups regarding whether, as a prospective teacher, they would advise their students to memorize or not when learning a foreign language.
- When advising their students, both freshmen and seniors emphasize the use of memorization in learning new words in L2 context.
- In both groups, the reason for not advising students to memorize is that

students can not retain knowledge in their long term memory through memorization.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As we know, language learning strategies facilitate the learning of a foreign language and each language learner chooses the strategies that s/he believes to be of great importance in the learning process. As language teachers, we are not the ones who can prescribe students which strategies to use. What might be of great help to the learners is to expose them to a strategy training in order to make them become aware of the most practical strategies that fit their needs. Memorization as a cognitive learning strategy can also be an important tool for the language learner as it may have positive impacts as well as the negative ones. Language teachers in strategy training should explain the roles of memorization in language learning; focus both on good and poor memorization. However, the main aim of the language teachers should be to explain their students to analyze memorization as a double-edged sword which can have effective and ineffective outcomes. That is, the teachers should be open enough to share with their students to use memorization if they are seeking for a quick learning process and to avoid using it if they do not wish to become competent and natural communicator

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