A Study of EFL Learning Strategy Use Profile of University Students in Central Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the language learning strategy (LLS) preference of university students and to examine whether there are any significant differences in the research participants ' language learning strategy use (LLSU) with respect to gender, location of educational institute, academic major, starting period of learning English and fondness for English. The current study investigates 411 (M=196, F=245) university students ' LLSU from two universities in Taiwan by using Oxford 's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, Version 7.0) as a research instrument. The results showed that the research participants had a medium LLSU. Among the six strategy categories, the participants tended to use Compensation strategies most often and Affective strategies least frequently. Female participants used more LLSs than their male counterparts. The research also revealed significant effects in overall strategy use in terms of gender, location of educational institute, academic major, starting period of learning English and fondness for English. Three significant effects on the participants ' LLSU were also found in all six strategy categories (SCs) with respect to academic major, starting period of learning English and fondness for English. Furthermore, greater LLSU was found among participants that liked English. Six significant interaction effects were discovered: (1) location of educational institute and starting period of learning English on Affective strategies; (2) location of educational institute and fondness for English on Memory strategies; (3) location of educational institute and fondness for English on Compensation strategies; (4) location of educational institute and fondness for English on Affective strategies; (5) gender, location of educational institute and academic major on Metacognitive strategies; (6) academic major, starting period of learning English and fondness for English on Affective strategies. Finally, the current study suggests EFL instructors provide stimulating teaching activities to motivate learners and introduce different LLSU to students so they are able to adopt any that is facilitating to their EFL learning experiences. Instructors can also provide male learners, science majors and learners from rural schools more information about LLSs. In addition, findings showed that the earlier learners expose themselves in learning English, the more LLSs they can use. Therefore, such finding encourages the authorities to put English courses in the curriculum at learners ' early age.

Keywords : Language learning strategies (LLSs), location of educational institute, starting period of learning English, fondness for English, university students

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