The Influence of Cognitive Style and Computer Self-efficacy on Web-based EFL Writing Performance

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ABSTRACT

Cognitive styles and computer self-efficacy have been found to be a major factor influencing students ’ Web-based learning achievements, as seen in previous studies. This study aims to further investigate learners ’ cognitive styles and computer self-efficacy on their online writing performance and attitude toward English writing in online learning environments. Seventy participants were chosen from one university located in central Taiwan. The experiment was conducted using quantitative methods to collect data. The instruments used in the study included the Group Embedded Figure Test (GEFT), a Computer Self-efficacy Scale, and an Attitude Questionnaire. The results of the present study revealed that there was no interactive effect between cognitive styles and computer self-efficacy on the writing performance and attitude toward online writing experience of the student learners. Also, cognitive style was found to be the main factor influencing participants ’ writing achievement and attitude toward online writing. Field independent students outperformed field dependent students and more positively considered learning English writing in a Web-based environment. They also had more positive attitudes toward the online English writing experience. From these study findings, several recommendations can be made to improve current education practices in Web-based learning environments. First, online instructors should prepare pre-instructional activities so novice online learners or field dependent learners can acquire minimum competencies for learning through technology devices. Second, a variety of learning content presentation methods in connection with learners ’ different cognitive styles with well-guided instructions and structuring activities, such as visuals, video, audio, interactive exercises, etc. might be employed. In addition, preparing a paper-based review that highlights the importance of online content may be more time effective.

Keywords : cognitive styles ; field independence ; field dependence ; computer self-efficacy ; Web-based EFL writing

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