

Understanding Constructive Discrimination between Language Learning Strategies by the Students at Tertiary Level in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Strategic learning is a problem-solving approach to the learning material. It subsumes behaviours, techniques and mechanisms that contend with reasons, demands and the content of the task. Attributed to its perennial significance, language education has sought to encapsulate language learning strategies at the tapering end of the umbrella theme of learning strategies. In the L2 context, strategies are effective, specific means that can improve the language learning activity in order to help develop an autonomous, self-directed learner. The strategies, though intrinsically linked with learning styles, are rather overt, controllable factors. The users may unconsciously follow them owing to habit or ease of application. When deployed knowingly, they serve flexible manipulation of the language at hand while corresponding to individual preferences or styles. Adequate research into language learning strategies in the global literature is appropriately complemented by this study on the Sri Lankan student body as the research of that character is still growing proportionately. The local students apply language learning strategies in their L2 learner endeavour only unconsciously as they do not possess an explicitly standard repertoire of learned strategies. It aims to analyse the size of the user base while explaining the procedural aspects of the application. The target sample included students at the Institute of Technology, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. Based on a mixed-method approach, an online survey depicting language learning strategies inventory representing all the four skills and an in-depth interview to cross-check the findings of the survey, involving 9 participants, were conducted. Quantitative data were measured for the percentage, mean and standard deviation whereas qualitative data were evaluated by Thematic Analysis. It was established that many local students apply strategies unconsciously even though they have not learnt them distinctively. They also exhibit contextual awareness while being selective about strategies and the related steps.

Keywords: *Autonomous, procedure, strategic learning, unconsciously*

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