Language Learning Strategies and English Proficiency of Chinese University Students

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This study investigated the relationship between language learning strategy preferences and proficiency among Chinese university students of English as a foreign language (EFL). Participants consisted of a volunteer pool of 168 third-year English majors at a university in Kaifeng, China. Oxford’s (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and the Institutional Testing Program Test of English as a Foreign Language (ITP-TOEFL) were administered as measures of learning strategy preferences and English proficiency. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among six types of learning strategies and score on the ITP-TOEFL. Results of this analysis revealed that a combination of two learning strategies, metacognitive strategies and affective strategies, accounted for 4% of the variation in ITP-TOEFL score. Thus, while results revealed a statistically significant correlation, practical significance was minimal. The effects of gender were analyzed by conducting a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Results indicated no significant differences between males and females on any of eight measures of learning strategy preferences and proficiency. Results of the current study suggest a need for further research to identify factors other than SILL learning strategies that may account for variation in proficiency among Chinese learners. An additional recommendation is that future studies explore the role of autonomy in relation to language learning strategies and proficiency, particularly across diverse cultural contexts.