

Investigating language learning strategies: A case study of university teaching staff

Abstract:

This research attempts to understand aspects of one area of language learning, learning strategies, in order to possibly identify teaching implications. To that end, the paper outlines an exploratory study examining the language learning strategies of university teaching staff. It was designed to a) identify and classify the language learning strategies employed by the respondents, and b) explicate the relationship between individual differences and language learning strategy use. This study is based on the assumption that the learning of a foreign language involves some conscious manipulation of input. In this sense, language learning is comparable to the learning of other cognitive skills.

Although a great deal of work has been done to investigate language learning strategies, few studies have examined those used by language learners with a professional interest in language learning, particularly those who are studying to teach in English or participate in international conferences. Data from 28 university teaching staff members were analysed. The findings suggest that learners with a professional interest in the study of English seem to use almost all the strategies derived from the analytical framework. The participants could therefore be defined as independent learners because they appear to take full responsibility for their learning.

Keywords: *Language learning strategies; Conscious manipulation of input; Metacognitive knowledge; Individual differences.*