

A Study of EFL Freshmen's English Learning

Strategies in Southern Taiwan

Chiung-Li Li¹, Sandy Haggard², Chih-Hui Yang³

Abstract

For many years, the English proficiency of students in vocational colleges has been poor. Teachers face the challenge to help improve college students' English proficiency in a short amount of time. In fact, many factors are responsible for EFL college students' poor English competence. Based on a review of the literature, learning achievement was connected with not only learning motivation but also with learning strategies. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to determine which learning strategy the freshmen used most often when learning English. The research instrument was an English learning strategy scale designed by Li et al. (2006), and the subjects were 246 freshmen who took the General English course at Meiho Institute of Technology. In order to know the subjects' background, the researchers asked the subjects some questions about their background. According to the data collected from the subjects' background, the researchers found that most subjects graduated from vocational high school, and most of them spend less than one hour per week learning English after class. Moreover, most subjects did not have any experience to travel English native speaking countries. Only some of the subjects have earned a language certificate. More Level A students had a positive English learning experience, but most Level C students had negative English learning experiences. Level A students used the Internet to learn English more frequently, but Level C students seldom used the Internet to learn English. However, both Level A and Level C students would like to improve their English listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. On the other hand, based on the data collected from the English learning strategy scale, the findings were that the order of learning strategy use by Level A students from the highest to the lowest was the compensatory strategy, social strategy, cognitive strategy, affective strategy, metacognitive strategy, and memory strategy. The order of learning strategy use by Level C students from the most to the least was the compensatory strategy, affective strategy, social strategy, memory strategy, cognitive strategy, and metacognitive strategy. Finally, the researchers drew a conclusion and provided some implications to English learners and instructors.

Keywords : English learning strategy, English Placement Teaching

¹ Associate professor, Applied Foreign Languages Department, Meiho Institute of Technology

² Lecturer, Applied Foreign Languages Department, Meiho Institute of Technology

³ Lecturer, Applied Foreign Languages Department, Meiho Institute of Technology

I. Introduction

The researchers have taught English in an institute of technology for many years and find most of their students' English ability to be low. These young people will be the workforce in this country in the future. In order to increase global competition, having a proficient English ability is important. Therefore, it is worth considering how to promote college students' English ability. The researchers find that most of their students didn't have any successful English learning experiences or they had an English-phobia when they were in junior high school. Those students lost confidence in learning English, so they are afraid of learning English. The researchers believe previous English learning failure has a great effect on the following learning. Only when those students experience learning achievement will they regain their confidence and their learning motivation will be stimulated. The researchers think employing an English learning strategy will help students access English much more easily. The researchers apply an English learning strategy questionnaire to understand students' English learning preference. After analysis of the data collected by questionnaire, the results can be utilized reference of English teaching.

II. Literature Review

1. Language learning strategy

Whether learning strategy has some effect on language learning has gotten some researchers' attention. In fact, Yang (1999) indicated that there are four reasons why English learning strategies are being paid more attention: (1) a proper English learning strategy is connected with successful language performance, (2) a proper English learning strategy makes students be responsible for self-learning, (3) the teaching of learning strategies make teaching and learning effective, (4) the understanding of factors influencing English learning strategy could provide a scientific theoretical base for personal instruction. Therefore, it seems worthy to study the relationship between language learning and language learning strategy.

2. Research on learning strategy use

As matter of fact, we need to keep in mind that there are no good or bad strategies, there is good or bad application of strategies just as Cohen (1998) mentioned that, with some exceptions, strategies themselves are not inherently good or bad, but have the potential to be used effectively.

Some researchers studied the kinds of language learning strategy learners like to use. For example, Fillmore (1989) found bilingual children would use many cognitive strategies and skills to help them learn language; they gain language

information from communication and interaction, and then analyze rules; finally they internalize the language information to be their own language knowledge. In other words, they use cognitive strategies, such as generalization, categorization, induction, inference, association, imagination, and memorization to grasp language concepts.

Bremner (1999) employed the strategy scale designed by Oxford (1990) to investigate the language learning strategy used by Hong Kong university students, and found that compensatory strategy and metacognitive strategy were the most commonly used, and affective strategy and memory strategy were used the least. Sheorey (1999) showed that Indian university students preferred to use functional strategies to promote their English communicative ability, and they prefer to use the memory strategy to help them get high scores on language tests.

Chen (2002) investigated language learning strategies used by 276 high and low English proficiency students at the technology college level, and found that both high and low English proficiency students used compensatory strategies most frequently; high English proficiency students seldom used memory strategies; low English proficiency students employed cognitive strategies the least frequently. In addition, Wu (2003) studied the EFL learning strategies used by 145 vocational high school students in Taiwan, and found that both proficient and female EFL learners used reading strategies most often.

Also, Ong (2005) explored 342 sophomores' use of English learning strategy and found that compensatory strategy was the highest rank used by all the participants despite their majors, and cognitive strategy was the lowest rank used by the participants, however, different majors/schools actually had significant differences in the strategy use.

Hsu (2005) found that in 1554 junior high school students', female students scored higher grades in cognitive strategy and compensatory strategy than male students, and seventh graders scored higher grades in memory strategy, cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy and social strategy than ninth grades; students with English learning experience of more than three years scored higher grades than English learning time under one year in cognitive strategy, compensatory strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy and social strategy. Furthermore, Liu (2005) investigated 288 senior high school students' beliefs about language learning and their use of language learning strategies, and found that the subjects used compensatory strategies most frequently and social strategies least often.

Then, in 2006, Hsieh investigated 713 junior high school students' English learning strategy use in an EFL learning environment and its relationships with their English leaning achievements. Hsieh found that junior high school students do not

use English learning strategies frequently. They seem to use compensatory strategies most frequently and affective strategies least frequently. In the same year, Lin (2006) investigated 353 EFL technological university students' use of language learning strategies; their beliefs about language learning; and the relationship between their language learning strategies and beliefs about language learning. Lin found that the language learning strategy category with the highest average frequency for EFL technological university students was compensatory, followed by cognitive strategies, social strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and memory strategies.

Recently, Lo (2007) investigated 255 comprehensive high school students' use of language learning strategies, and found that comprehensive high school students used compensatory strategies most often, followed by cognitive strategies, memory strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and the least, social strategies; and Chou (2007) examined 1002 senior high school students' English learning strategies and found that appropriate English learning strategies have not been adopted; the most common strategies used are the cognitive practice strategies and the least used strategies are functional practice strategies. Moreover, Lin (2007) investigated the relationship between English learning motivation and English learning strategies among 526 college English majors, and found that students use cognitive strategy the most, and seldom use the affective strategy. In addition, Chuang (2007) investigated 675 elementary school students' anxiety, motivation and learning strategies in English learning, and found that the sixth graders used more memory, cognitive strategies than fifth graders; and students learning English more than 5 years used more cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies than those learning English 2-4 years.

Language learning strategy use still attracts some researchers' attention; for example, Lee (2008) investigated the EFL learning strategies used by 164 cadets in Taiwan, and found that compensatory strategy had the highest frequency, and affective strategy had the lowest frequency, and Hsu (2008) explored the differences of English learning strategies that are adopted by 1455 junior high school students in both Taiwan and China, and found that the situations of the usage of English learning strategies of junior high school students in Taiwan and China are pretty close; however, the usage of English learning strategies of junior high school students in China are better than those of junior high school students in Taiwan; the usage of English learning strategies of junior high school students in both Taiwan and China is with the best development in affective strategies, but with the worst development in memory strategies.

From those studies from past thirty years, language learning strategy use has continued to be an issue in language learning, and some researchers focus on different

areas, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, or vocabulary learning strategies. For example, two research projects in Taiwan highlight the continued interest in learning about strategies used by L2 writers (He, 2002). The research conducted by He involved 38 Taiwanese college-level writers. These writers were divided into two groups: mastery-orientation (intrinsic motivation to improve writings) or performance-orientation (extrinsic motivation to be better than other writers). Results indicated that the writers in both groups reported using strategies classified into five categories: planning, monitoring/evaluation, revising, retrieving, and compensating strategies. Revising strategies and mastery orientation served as two significant predictors of successful writing. Nassaji (2003) explored the use of strategy and knowledge resource in the semantic inference of second language learning, and studied the relationship between the use of strategy and successful inference. Nassaji found that different strategies would result in different successful inference, and successful inference was more significantly related to the quality of strategy use than the quantity of strategy use.

Moreover, Wu (2003) investigated the EFL learning strategies used by 145 vocational high school students in Taiwan, and found that “reading strategies” were most often used by the subjects, and the “speaking strategies” were least often used; greater use of EFL learning strategies was found among proficient EFL learners. Both proficient and female EFL learners used reading strategies most often. At the same year, Fan (2003) investigated how 1067 Hong Kong students used vocabulary learning strategy to learn vocabulary, and found that those students did not frequently use mechanic strategy mentioned by Schmitt (1997), neither frequently use repetitious nor imaginary strategy. The finding suggested Asian students did not like to use imaginary strategy and grouping to learn vocabulary. In fact, the reason why Hong Kong students did not like to use imaginary strategy could be the long language distance between Chinese and English. As Chen (1998) mentioned the less the language distance between target language and mother tongue, the easier the learners learn. Besides, Fan (2003) found though Hong Kong students used the guessing strategy more than dictionaries, as they thought dictionaries were more useful for them.

Later on, Wu (2005) found the use of electronic dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, and guessing from context are the most popular strategies shared by students from different age groups when they learn vocabulary. Also, Lee (2008) investigated the EFL learning strategies used by 164 cadets in Taiwan, and found that compensatory strategy had the highest frequency, and affective strategy had the lowest frequency; the strategy of guessing was most frequently used to understand unfamiliar English words; the strategy of keeping diary to write down English

learning feelings was the least used. And, then Wu (2007) investigated 236 sophomores' English learning strategy uses and found that the reading strategy 'Guessing the approximate meaning by using clues from the context of the reading material' ranked the first of all language learning strategies; the listening strategies were the most frequently used ones among the four strategy categories.

In short, based on the results of those studies, the use of language learning strategy varies with the subjects. Sometimes they use the same or similar strategies when learning language, but sometimes they use greatly different strategies to learn language. Therefore, it is suggested more researchers do more detailed research studies.

The comparison of proficient and non-proficient learners' language strategy use

Some research found that successful language learners use the proper strategy to help them learn language more quickly, and the use of learning strategy could explain learners' excellent language performance (Naiman, Frohlich & Todesco, 1975; Rubin, 1975, 1987; Sheorey, 1999; Wenden, 1985). Moreover, Ehrman and Oxford (1990, 1995) found that more effective second language learners would systematically choose and combine the learning strategies related to language tasks, and then learn based on their prefer learning styles. On the contrary, the less effective second language learners would grab at any learning strategies desperately and randomly, but ignored the relationship between learning strategies and language tasks (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Vann & Abraham, 1990). Some researchers showed that low-achieved language learners could not use English learning strategy appropriately or they did not have enough learning strategy (Hosenfeld, 1979; Reiss, 1983; Chen, 1984; Zeng, 1984; Yang, 1993). And some research found that less proficient L2 learners draw on a smaller number of strategies and do so in a less effective manner (Anderson, 1991; Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Green & Oxford, 1995).

Moreover, Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) and Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) conducted significant research on the metacognitive reading strategies of L2 learners and to examine the differences in reading strategy usage between native speakers and non-native speakers of English. Results show that the ESL students reported a higher use of strategies than the U.S. students. However, there was one significant difference in the use of the strategy of underlining information in the text for ESL learners. In addition, He (2002) found that writers in the mastery-orientation group had a higher frequency of reported strategies in the monitoring/evaluation, revising, and compensating categories. Also, Chen (2002) investigated language learning strategies used by 276 high and low English proficiency students at the technology college level, and found that high English proficiency students seldom used memory

strategies; low English proficiency students employed cognitive strategies the least frequently.

Recently, some studies still focused on the frequency of strategy use by proficient and non-proficient learners. For example, Hinkel (2005) indicated that proficient L2 learners have been found to have a wider repertoire of strategies and draw them on to accomplish L2 tasks. Liu (2005) investigated 288 senior high school students' use of language learning strategies, and found that students with high English proficiency reported higher frequency of usage of strategy use than did low proficiency students.

Hsieh (2006) found that higher achievers are likely to employ English learning strategies more frequently than lower achievers. Lo (2007) also showed that proficient students reported higher frequency of usage of overall strategy use. Furthermore, Wu (2007) found that there were significant differences in the English learning strategy uses between the English and the Non-English majors. Furthermore, Lin (2009) investigated the beliefs about language learning and language learning strategy use of 155 high and low proficiency freshmen in Taiwan, and found that the subjects used various strategies when they learned English; metacognitive strategies were used most often; high proficiency learners tended to use more language learning strategies than did low proficiency learners

However, Anderson's research (1991) showed that effective and less effective learners reported using the same kinds of strategies; the difference is in how the strategies were executed and orchestrated, and the ways that effective learners use strategies and combine them makes the distinction between them and less effective learners.

The relationship between learning strategy and various background factors

In the past twenty years, quite a few researchers studied the relationship between learners' language learning strategy and their background factors. Some focused on the learners' gender or learning experience; some learners' parental influence, or social economic status (SES). Although some of their studied findings were inconsistent, they have the value of reference for the later studies. For example, regarding to the relationship between learning strategy and learners' gender, Yang (1991), Chang and Chang (1998), Sheorey (1999), Chien (2004), Hsu (2005), Hsieh (2006), Hsueh (2006), Huang (2006), Tsai (2005), Tseng (2005), Tseng (2005), Chou (2007), Chuang (2007), Lin (2007), Wu (2007), Chen (2009) found there was significance between them. Moreover, most of them found female learners use significantl more language strategies than males, no matter whether the subjects were elementary school students, high school students, or college students.

However, some studies achieved different results; for example, Kuo (2001),

Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) and Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), Wu (2003), Hsu (2007), Lo (2007), Lee (2008) found that no significant differences were reported between the male and female readers in the study no matter how old the learners were. In other words, the relationship between language learning strategy and learners' gender has not reached consistence. And it implies there is a need for more studies to involve the related research.

Regarding to the relationship between learning strategy and other factors, such as learners' cultural, family, educational backgrounds, learning experience, learning time span, and so forth, Chang and Chang (1998) found that junior high school students' English learning experience, experience of traveling abroad, and social economic status (SES) were the factors having greatest impacts on their English learning strategy. Moreover, Tseng (2005), Hsu (2007), and Chen (2009) also found students' learning experience was related to their language learning strategy use. Hsu indicated that more experienced students tended to use language learning strategies frequently. In addition, Lin (2007) also showed that experience of traveling abroad affected their use of a language learning strategy. On the other hand, Sheorey (1999) found that Indian university students' cultural background and educational background seemed to have some effect on their use of some learning strategies. Moreover, Tseng (2001) found that learners' employment of English learning strategies is significantly affected by their personality types. Also, Huang (2004) indicated that 529 middle school students' family background variables significantly affected the family educational capital and students' English learning strategies.

Tseng (2005) found that 803 fifth and sixth graders' differences in the frequencies of English learning strategies use were significantly related to their school region, grades, and prior English learning experience. And, Tsai (2005) investigated the English cram school for elementary school sixth graders, their English learning attitude and English learning strategies and found that students whose parents paid greater concern to schoolwork, students whose parents received high (vocational) school education or higher, students who began English learning in first grade showed better use of English learning strategies. Furthermore, Tseng (2005) found that 1,885 vocational high school students' English learning strategy use would vary with their school, major, learning experience, and English learning length. Also, Chuang (2007), Hsu (2007), and Chen (2009) found that the amount of time students studied English was related to different language learning strategies; Chuang (2007) indicated that students learning English more than 5 years used more cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies than those learning English 2-4 years. Moreover, Hsu (2007) showed that municipal elementary school students were better at using language learning strategies in comparison to those of rural students, and districts

adjacent to urban areas also showed a better performance in language learning strategies use.

Hsiao (2007) found that elementary school students' frequency of using English learning strategy was at middle level, and there were significant differences among the subjects of diverse parental influences in terms of English learning strategy. Hsu (2007) and Chen (2009) also showed some similar findings. Hsu indicated that 740 sixth graders' frequency of using language learning strategies was at medium to low level, and Chen mentioned that the situation of 457 sixth graders' English strategies is up middle level.

Regarding to the relationship between language learning strategy and experience of attending cram school, Lin (2007) found that 526 college English majors' experiences of cram school would affect their language learning strategy use. Chen (2009) also found that 457 sixth graders' language learning strategy was related to their attendance experience of cram school classes after school. Moreover, Chen also mentioned that English learning strategies correlated directly with English learning attitudes, and Lin showed that students' cognition of English material would also affect their language learning strategy use.

From the above studies, many studies explored the relationship between subjects' background factors and their language strategy use; some had similar findings, but some did not. In other words, the relationship between subjects' background factors and their language strategy use is very complicated, and it is worthy to be paid more attention in related studies.

III. Methodology

Research method

The research subjects were 246 freshmen in Meiho Institute of Technology. The researchers employed Li et al.'s (2006) English Learning Strategy Scale as the instrument (shown in Appendix) and also asked the subjects some background questions to conduct the study. The English learning strategy scale can explain 59.89% variance and the value of coefficient (Cronbach's) alpha for English learning strategy scale is .924. In other words, the English Learning Strategy Scale has good validity and reliability. The researchers collect the data in the end of the first and second semester; then the data collected was to be analyzed through SPSS software.

IV. Finding and Discussion

Results and discussion

In this study, the subjects were 142 English Level A students (38 male, 104

females) and 104 English Level C students (52 males, 52 females) in freshmen English course. Based on the data analyzed, the researchers recorded the findings as the following:

Regarding the subjects' previous educational background, 22.5% of the English Level A students graduated from the high school section in vocational high school, 60.6% of the English Level A students graduated from vocational high schools, 14.1% graduated from senior high schools, 2.1% graduated from junior colleges, and 0.7% graduated from another kind of school. On the other hand, 17.3% of the English Level C students graduated from high school section in vocational high school, 71.2% of the English Level C students graduated from vocational high schools, 11.5% graduated from senior high schools. In other words, most of the subjects graduated from vocational high school.

With regard to the subjects' major, 16.2% of the English Level A students major in business or management, 61.3% major in nursing, food science, or beauty science, 22.5% major in humanities. On the other hand, 45.2% of the English Level C students major in business or management, 39.4% major in nursing, food science, or beauty science, 15.4% major in humanities. That is to say, the range of the subjects is various.

Concerning the amount of time learning English outside of class per week, 74.6% of the English Level A students spent less than one hour studying English after class, 22.5% of them spent 2-5 hours, 1.4% of them spent 5-10 hours, 1.4% of them spent more than 10 hours. On the other hand, 88.5% of the English Level C students spent less than one hour studying English after class, 10.6% of them spent 2-5 hours, 1% of them spent 5-10 hours, none of them spent more than 10 hours. In other words, most of the subjects spend less than one hour per week studying English after class.

Regarding the experience of traveling in English-speaking countries, 5.6% of the English Level A students have been to English-speaking countries; 94.4% of them didn't have this kind of experience. On the other hand, 11.5% of the English Level C students have been to English-speaking countries, 88.5% didn't have this kind of experience. That is to say, most of the subject did not have any experience of traveling in English-speaking countries.

With regard to earning foreign language certificates, 12% of the English Level A students have foreign language certificates, 88% of them didn't have any foreign language certificates. On the other hand, 3.8% of the English Level C students have foreign language certificates, 96.2% of them didn't have any foreign language certificates. In other words, most of the subjects did not have a foreign language certificate.

In terms of the experience of learning English, 52.1% of the English Level A students have had positive English learning experiences; 22.5% of them have had unhappy English learning experiences; 25.4% were neutral in their opinions or didn't have any special learning experience. On the other hand, 26% of the English Level C students have had positive English learning experiences; 47.1% of them have had unhappy English learning experiences; 26.9% of them were neutral in their opinions or didn't have any special learning experience. In fact, more Level A students had positive English learning experiences than the Level C students.

Regarding the frequency of using the Internet to learn English; 12.7% of the English Level A students frequently use the Internet to learn English; 61.3% of them sometimes use the Internet to learn English; 26.1% of them never use the Internet to learn English. On the other hand, 6.7% of the English Level C students frequently use the Internet to learn English; 49% of them sometimes use the Internet to learn English; 44.2% of them never use the Internet to learn English. Surprisingly, most of the subjects did not learn English through the Internet.

With regard to the use of an English learning strategy, 59.3% of the English Level A students frequently use compensatory strategy; 48.6% of them frequently use the social strategy; 47.7% of them frequently use a cognitive strategy; 46.7% of them frequently use an affective strategy; 40.5% of them frequently use the meta-cognitive strategy; 35.9% of them frequently use a memory strategy. On the other hand, 36.3% of the English Level C students frequently use the compensatory strategy; 29.9% of them frequently use an affective strategy; 29.8% of them frequently use the social strategy; 27.5% of them frequently use a memory strategy; 26.9% of them frequently use the cognitive strategy; 19.1% of them frequently use the meta-cognitive strategy. In other words, the order of strategy use of English Level A students is compensatory strategy, social strategy, cognitive strategy, affective strategy, meta-cognitive strategy; and memory strategy. On the other hand, the order of strategy use of English Level C students is compensatory strategy, affective strategy, social strategy, memory strategy, cognitive strategy, and meta-cognitive strategy. Both of them use the compensatory strategy the most to learn English.

Concerning different English learning strategy items, the researchers found 64.1% of the English Level A students often underlined or marked the important parts when they learned English (cognitive strategy). Moreover, 57% of the English Level A students frequently used scanning and skimming to learn English (cognitive strategy). In addition, 59.2% of them used different ways to express their ideas when they did not know how to express their thoughts exactly (compensatory strategy). And 52.1% of them often used gestures to help them express their thoughts when they communicated with others in English (compensatory strategy).

Furthermore, 68.3% of them would guess the meanings by use of the pictures or titles in English articles (compensatory). Moreover, 57.8% of them frequently asked others when they did not understand English (compensatory strategy), and 64.8% of them would listen to music or relax when they felt tired during the process of English learning (affective strategy). On the contrary, most of the English Level C students did not use various English learning strategies frequently. Only 51% of them would listen to music or do some relaxing activities to help them feel comfortable when they felt tired during the process of English learning (affective strategy).

In this study, compensatory strategy was reported to be the most used by English Level A and C students. The finding was consistent with the results of Bremner (1999), Chen (2002), Ong (2005), Liu (2005), Hsieh (2006), Lin (2006), Lo (2007), and Lee (2008), but inconsistent with the results of Lin (2007), Chuang (2007), and Hsu (2008). On the other hand, the memory strategy was reported to be the least used by English Level A students. The finding was consistent with the results of Bremner (1999), Chen (2002), Lin (2006), and Hsu (2008), but inconsistent with the results of Ong (2005), Liu (2005), Lo (2005), Lin (2007), Chuang (2007), and Lee (2008). Moreover, the metacognitive strategy was reported to be the least used by English Level C students. The finding was inconsistent with the results of Bremner (1999), Chen (2002), Ong (2005), Liu (2005), Hsieh (2006), Lin (2006), Lo (2007), Lin (2007), Chuang (2007), Lee (2008), Hsu (2008). The inconsistency could be resulted from the difference on the subjects' age, major, language competence, learning experience, and so forth. Therefore, it is worthy to have more studies to involve related research in the future.

V. Conclusions

According to the findings and results, the researchers drew the following conclusions. First, regarding participants' previous educational background, no matter what level the participants are in, most of them have graduated from vocational high school. Second, regarding the time participants spend on English learning outside of English courses, they did not spend much time on English learning. Third, regarding experience of traveling English-speaking nations, most of the participants didn't have any experience of traveling to English-speaking countries. Fourth, regarding obtaining foreign language certificates, most of the participants don't have any foreign language certificates. Fifth, regarding the experience of English learning, about half of the subjects had positive English learning experiences, but still half of them had negative English learning experiences. Sixth, regarding the frequency of using the Internet to learn English, most Level A participants learn English through the Internet, but near half of Level C participants never used the Internet to learn English.

Seventh, with regard to the order of English learning strategy use, Level A participants mostly used the compensatory strategy, followed by social strategy, cognitive strategy, affective strategy, meta-cognitive strategy, and memory strategy. On the other hand, Level C participants use the compensatory strategy most, followed by affective strategy, social strategy, memory strategy, cognitive strategy, and meta-cognitive strategy. Eighth, regarding the items of different English learning strategies, most Level A students frequently underlined or marked important vocabulary words when reading English, and most of them find the main points first and then read the articles carefully when reading English. That is to say, they would use the cognitive strategy when reading English. Moreover, most of English Level A students find different ways to express unfamiliar vocabulary, frequently used gestures to help them express unfamiliar vocabulary, used the pictures or titles in the context to help them learn unfamiliar vocabulary, and asked others when meeting unfamiliar vocabulary. In other words, Level A students use the compensatory strategy when learning vocabulary. In addition, most of Level A students frequently listened to music or did something relaxing to help them feel comfortable when they felt tired when learning English vocabulary. That is, Level A students would use the affective strategy when learning vocabulary. On the contrary, most Level C students seldom use various learning strategies when learning English vocabulary, and only near half of them use the affective strategy when learning English vocabulary. Therefore, Level A students used different learning strategies than the Level C students when learning English.

VI. Implications

Based on the conclusion, the researchers provide the following suggestions for English learners, English instructors, and educational organizations in order to promote English learning efficacy. First, English instructors should provide learners various English learning resources and channels to learn English, encourage students to self-learn English after school, and give students rewards when they make progress. Second, English instructors should design some English contests according to students' learning content to promote students' learning motivation. Third, English instructors should provide students some training related to using an English learning strategy to increase the frequency of using English learning strategies. Fourth, English instructors should design some activities or programs based on students' learning habits to motivate students to use an English learning strategy. Fifth, English instructors should assign a few high-achieving students to share their English learning experience and strategies with classmates to provide students with role models. Sixth, students should learn others' learning strategies to promote their English learning efficacy. Seventh, students should try different strategies to find

proper learning ways for themselves to promote learning effectiveness.

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Appendix

A. Background information

1. What is your gender? male female
2. What is your major? business school nursing humanities
others _____
3. You graduated from comprehensive high school vocational high school
senior high school college others

4. Every week you learn English by yourself less than one hour 2-5 hours
 5-10 hours over 10 hours
5. Have you ever been to English speaking countries? Yes No
6. Do you have any English certificates? Yes No
7. Did you have a positive English learning experience?
 Yes No I don't know
8. Do you use the Internet to learn English?
 frequently sometimes never

B. Please answer the following questions based on your experience.

English learning strategy scale	Always	often	sometimes	never
1. I will repetitiously write English to help me remember.	4	3	2	1
2. I will use interesting associations to help me remember English.	4	3	2	1
3. I will use a word table or list to help me remember vocabulary.	4	3	2	1
4. I will associate new English vocabulary with my mother tongue to help me remember new vocabulary.	4	3	2	1
5. I will use imagination and comparison to learn English.	4	3	2	1
6. I will highlight or mark new English vocabulary.	4	3	2	1
7. I will imitate English native speakers or teachers' accent when I learn English.	4	3	2	1
8. When I learn new English vocabulary, I will note the use of them in a context.	4	3	2	1
9. I will use dictionaries to help me learn English.	4	3	2	1
10. When I learn new English words, I will use them to make sentences.	4	3	2	1
11. If I don't know how to express my thoughts in English, I will use various ways to make others understand.	4	3	2	1
12. I will use gestures or body language when I speak English.	4	3	2	1
13. When I don't understand an English article, I will use the title or pictures in the context to guess the meanings.	4	3	2	1
14. If I have English questions, I will ask others.	4	3	2	1

15. I will practice English by myself.	4	3	2	1
16. I will learn English with tapes or videos to correct my pronunciation.	4	3	2	1
17. When teachers ask other classmates English questions, I will try to answer as well by myself.	4	3	2	1
18. I will find proper places to learn English.	4	3	2	1
19. I will speak aloud to make sure the use of English is proper.	4	3	2	1
20. I will tell myself to work hard to learn English.	4	3	2	1
21. If I feel tired when I learn English, I will relax myself by listening to music or exercising. ◦	4	3	2	1
22. I will record my English learning experience by writing in journals or diaries.	4	3	2	1
23. If I reach my English learning goal, I will praise or encourage myself by seeing a movie or eating a big meal.	4	3	2	1
24. I will ask others to correct my English pronunciation.	4	3	2	1
25. I will discuss what I've learned with classmates after English classes.	4	3	2	1
26. If I have English questions, I will ask teachers or classmates.	4	3	2	1
27. I will review the content before English tests.	4	3	2	1
28. I will pay attention to others when they speak with me in English.	4	3	2	1