



Exploring the Relationship Among Gender, Language Proficiency, and Language Learning Strategies (LLS) Among College ESL Students

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ABSTRACT

Making the students conscious of their own learning strategies is tantamount to making them learn how to learn. Realistically, when students fail to recognize their own learning styles their academic performance is expected to be a failure. Wirth (2008) recognizes that learning how to learn is an important skill in today's recent explosion of knowledge and technology. This paper investigated on the language learning strategies of the college students and explore the relationship among LLS, gender and language proficiency. The study used the descriptive design in identifying the language learning strategies of the participants. In identifying the strategies objectively, this paper used the Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) of Oxford (1990) since it is designed for ESL and EFL learners. Likewise, this paper correlated the participants' gender and the results of the English language proficiency test. From the result of the analysis of the language learning strategies of the college students, metacognitive strategies are frequently used in learning a second language of the students who are enrolled in education and information technology courses. Significantly, all groups of participants are usually employing social strategies in their language learning. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies among other categories of strategies surveyed are essential for successful language learning. Language learning strategies have significant negative correlation to gender, in favour of female students who utilized these strategies more frequently than male students. The findings of the study might have contributed to the quest for more effective language instruction that is centered on developing L2 learners to become self-directed learners. This can only be possible if language teachers would be able to raise consciousness of students on how they learn best. Understanding LLS of students is a challenge for language teachers to craft teaching strategies or styles that would be a learner-centered approach. By focusing on the learners and considering the different strategies they use while learning L2, ESL learners will become self-directed, and independent learners of English

Keywords: *Language Strategies (LS), Language Learning Strategies (LLS), Second Language (L2), Foreign Language (FL), Direct Strategies, Indirect Strategies, English Proficiency, Socioeconomic Status, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), Differential Aptitude Test (DAT), English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL)*



INTRODUCTION

In the advent of information technology, educators especially teachers are greatly challenged. The presence of social media, online access to global communication, and other digital tools give birth to a new perspective on how the teachers teach and how the learners learn. Today, the access to this kind of digital world and the use of digital tools launch a new kind of skill and literacy. Though learning has shifted to different kinds of perspectives, it is fundamental for educators to understand how students make themselves learn.

Making the students conscious of their own learning strategies is tantamount to making them learn how to learn. Realistically, when students fail to recognize their own learning styles their academic performance is expected to be a failure. Wirth (2008) recognizes that learning how to learn is an important skill in today's recent explosion of knowledge and technology. It includes learning how to diagnose one's own need for learning and how one becomes a self-learner.

As observed, every learner has different ways in responding to learning situations. Each of them has different styles that help him or her acquire learning. While learning styles are the learners' general approach to learning, learning strategies are the specific procedures learners use with individual learning tasks. To sum, they are the choices that a learner can choose in completing the task. Thus, each of the choices or strategies offers particular advantages or disadvantages, and the use of an appropriate learning strategy can enhance success with the learning task (Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Learning strategies (LS) refer to the specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations (Oxford, 1990, p.8). They are often used by students to improve their academic performance. They are behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning which are intended to influence the learner's encoding process (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986 in Clouston, 1997).

In many studies, significant correlation of utilization of Metacognitive, Affective and Social Language Learning Strategies and language proficiency are observed in the performance of ESL learners (Ella, 2018; Arbon&Parina, 2019; Deita&Posecion, 2018). This shows that the development of independent language learning does not only require intellectual prowess, but also social and emotional aptitude. With these, learners become more effective communicators in an ESL classroom.

Language Learning Strategies in L2 Classroom

Oxford (1993) defines language learning strategies (LLSs) as specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability (p.18). According to Oxford (1990) LLSs contribute to communicative competence and allow learners to become more self-directed. A learner who is self-directed works independently and they do not always need a teacher around to guide him/ her as he/ she uses the language. In her book, Oxford (1990) discussed that LLS are tools used in solving a problem, in accomplishing a task, or meeting a goal. Likewise, LLS deal not only with cognitive functions but also metacognitive, affective, and social functions. Relevantly, LLS are easier to teach and modify since learners can be trained on how to use these strategies and how to transfer them in new situations. Clouston (1997) reviewed and described the basic characteristics of the generally accepted view of LLS. First, LLS are learner generated; they are steps taken by language learners. Second, LLS enhance language learning and help develop language competence, as reflected in the learner's skills in listening, speaking, reading, or writing the L2 or FL. Third, LLS may be visible (behaviours, steps, techniques, etc.) or unseen (thoughts, mental processes). Fourth, LLS in-

volve information and memory (vocabulary knowledge, grammar rules, etc.).

Chamot (2001) considered the important contribution of the use of learning strategies in second language acquisition. She discussed that

learning strategies are important in second language acquisition because when one investigates the strategies used by L2 learners during the language learning process, one gains insight into the cognitive, social, and affective process involved in language learning.

Groups	Functions	Sets	Specific Activities
Memory Strategies	Enable learners to store and retrieve new information of a new language	a. creating mental linkages	1. grouping 2. associating/ elaborating 3. placing new words into a context
		b. applying images and sound	1. using imagery 2. semantic mapping 3. using keywords 4. representing sounds in memory
		c. reviewing well	1. structured reviewing
		d. employing action	1. using physical response or sensation 2. using mechanical techniques
Cognitive Strategies	Enable the learners to understand and produce new language	a. practicing	1. repeating 2. formally practicing with sounds and writing system 3. recognizing and using formulas and patterns 4. recombining 5. practicing naturalistically
		b. receiving and sending messages	1. getting the idea quickly 2. using resources for sending and receiving messages
		c. analyzing and reasoning	1. reasoning deductively 2. analyzing expressions 3. analyzing contrastively 4. translating 5. transferring
		d. creating structure for input and output	1. taking notes 2. summarizing 3. highlighting
Compensation Strategies	Allow learners to use the language despite knowledge gaps	a. guessing intelligently	1. using linguistic clues 2. using other clues
		b. overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	1. switching to the mother tongue 2. getting help 3. using mime or gesture 4. avoiding communication partially or totally 5. selecting the topic 6. adjusting or approximating the messages 7. coining words 8. using a circumlocution or synonym

Table 1: Functions, Sets and Specific Activities of Direct Strategies (Oxford, 1990; Tam, 2013)

Direct Strategies and Indirect Strategies

The new systems of LLS which Oxford (1990) considered as mutually supporting each other are the direct strategies and indirect strategies. For Oxford (1990), direct strategies are the performers of the stage play where they work with the target language, while the indirect strategies are the directors

which serve as hosts of functions and internal guide and support to the performer (pp.14-15). Being in mutual support, the groups such as memory, cognitive, and compensation as direct strategies; and social, affective, and metacognitive, affective, and social as indirect strategies naturally overlap (Oxford, 1990).

Groups	Functions	Sets	Specific Strategies / Activities
Metacognitive Strategies	Allow learners to evaluate their own language learning pattern and coordinate the learning process	a. centering your learning	1. overviewing and linking with already known material 2. paying attention 3. delaying speech production to focus on listening
		b. arranging and planning your learning	1. finding out about language learning 2. organizing 3. setting goals and objectives 4. identifying the purpose of a language task 5. planning for a language task 6. seeking practice opportunities
		c. evaluating your leaning	1. self-monitoring 2. self-evaluating
Affective Strategies	Help learners gain control and regulate personal emotions. attitudes, and values	a. lowering your anxiety	1. using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation 2. using music 3. using laughter
		b. encouraging yourself	1. making positive statements 2. taking risks wisely 3. rewarding yourself
		c. taking your emotional temperature	1. listening to your body 2. using a checklist 3. writing a language learning diary 4. discussing your feeling with someone else
Social Strategies	Allows users to interact with users	a. asking questions	1. asking for clarification 2. asking for correction
		b. cooperating with others	1. cooperating with peers 2. cooperating with proficient users of the new language
		c. empathizing with others	1. developing cultural understanding 2. becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

Table 2: Functions, Sets and Specific Activities of Indirect Strategies (Oxford, 1990; Tam, 2013)



Direct strategies directly involve the target language and require mental processing of the target language. The three groups of direct strategies are memory, cognitive, and compensation. Memory strategies enable the learner to store verbal materials and then retrieve them when needed for communication (p. 39). Cognitive strategies are varied and can range from repeating to analyzing expressions to summarizing. Compensation strategies enable the learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in knowledge of language use. These strategies are intended to make up for an inadequate repertoire of grammar, and especially, of vocabulary (Oxford, 1990, pp 43-47). Table 1 shows the functions and the strategies that form the cornerstone of the three major groups.

Indirect strategies (Oxford, 1990) are grouped into three areas: metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies are actions which go beyond cognitive device, and provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process (p.136). Through these affective strategies, the learners are provided with instantiations whereby they learn to control their emotions and attitudes that can make language learning far more effective (p.140). Social strategies involve learning with others. Table 2 summarizes the functions and strategies of indirect strategies.

Studies on Language Learning Strategies

Interesting to investigate are ways on how L2 learners learn effectively. In previous academic inquiries and even today, language learning strategies of ESL or EFL learners have been continuously explored. Several studies determined the factors that affect LLS of L2 learners. In fact, in the recent study of Tam (2013), language learning strategies of Hongkong University students were examined. In the study, Tam (2013) investigated the relationship among gender, English proficiency, socioeconomic status, and LLS. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) test version 7.0 designed by Oxford (1990) was the instrument used to find out the current LLS of the 50 participants, 30 of whom were males and 20 were females. Results revealed that Hongkong University students used compensation strategies most frequently, followed by cognitive, so-

cial and metacognitive strategies. Affective strategies are the least frequently selected while memory strategies are the second least popular group. Also revealed are the strategies used by male students differed from those used by females. Social strategies were more popular to females, but not to males. Cognitive, compensation, and social strategies were found to have a significant correlation at the significant level of .01 on the UE scores. However, memory, metacognitive and affective strategies were not significantly related to English proficiency.

The study of Querol (2010) is a classroom-based research that investigated the use of affective and social language learning strategies of the 24 senior education students who were taking English as their field of specialization. Similar to Tam (2013) and this study, Querol (2010) used the six ALLS and six SLLS in Oxford's SILL. The study also had classroom observation. From the result, the participants were never or almost never utilizing the six affective LLS. Similarly, the participants also were never or almost never using the six social LLS. The result of Querol's study implied that students did not maximize the use of the affective and social LLS.

In the study of O' Malley et al. (1985), from the 70 students interviewed, there were 638 instances of learning strategies described, and an average of 33.6 strategies were noted. From the result, the study grouped the strategies as metacognitive, cognitive, and socio affective strategies. The result also showed that self-management and advanced preparation were among the most frequently used strategies by beginning and intermediate level students. However, the study also revealed that teachers themselves indicated that they were unacquainted with the language strategies used.

Hua (1985) investigated the learning strategies employed by Chinese EFL students for oral communication and found the strategies and techniques of functional or formal strategies such as talking to oneself and memorizing list of words. The study also identified the functional strategies such as thinking in English; speaking English communication activities; and reading extensively out of class. The findings also indicate that good learners, especially those at intermediate and advanced stages, exhibit a high level of independence and that motivation plays a very important



role. In addition, the findings show that good language learners in China are in many respects similar to good language learners elsewhere. This study used three-part questionnaire and oral interview to 60 participants.

Narrowing it to the local setting, several studies in the Philippines show that LLS has correlation with gender, age, task requirement and length of time learning English. This is evident in the paper of (Arbon & Parina, 2018; Chen, 2014) revealing that female students use all six language learning strategies, and that the most dominant of these strategies was metacognitive. Moreover, only the length of time learning English does not directly influence the choice of language learning strategies, and statistically significant relationships existed between different age groups and the use of memory strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, and affective strategies.

Moreover, in the Philippines, achieving high proficiency level in the use of English as the second language has always been emphasized. The proficiency in the use of this language has placed Filipino workers at an advantage. In fact, Lorente (2013) cited in her article the report in 2005 of Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) attributing the global competitiveness of overseas workers to "the continued confidence of foreign principal to employ Filipino workers who are competent, highly trained, English proficient, with caring attitude and adaptable to work environment" (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, 2006, p.8)

Therefore, the vital roles that English language has played among the lives of both the Filipino learners and workers are paramount. Hence, acquiring a second language requires one to have learning skills which involve his or her own language learning strategies so he or she will achieve high level of competence in L2.

Results showed that the respondents' scores are distributed in the five proficiency levels, but they generally belong to "approaching proficiency." Moreover, respondents are aware of the importance of the learning strategies in their language achievement as reflected in the choice and quantity of strategy use. Of the six strategies, metacognitive strategies are the most frequently used while the memory

strategies are the least used.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Students in the tertiary level are most of the time expected to have a good grasp in the use of the English because their proficiency is an advantage in performing their academic task. Recognizing the need for linguistic development of L2 learners, there is a need to understand the strategies on how they learn the language themselves. Hence, this study investigated the language learning strategies of the college students and explored the relationship among LLS, gender and language proficiency.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used the descriptive design in identifying the language learning strategies of the participants. In identifying the strategies objectively, this paper used the Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) of Oxford (1990) since it is designed for ESL and EFL learners. This instrument strategy has been tested for reliability and validity in multiple ways where in many studies like that of Tam (2013); Querol (2010); Kavasglu(2009); and Yilmaz(2010), this strategy test was used. Likewise, this paper correlated the participants' gender and the results of the English language proficiency test.

Participants

The participants of this study are senior college students of Sorsogon State College in Sorsogon province. One hundred participants were expected to take the strategy test but only 98 of these senior students were present during the time the test was administered by the researcher. These participants are enrolled in the courses offered by the campus, namely secondary education, public administration, technical education, and information technology. They were chosen to be the participants because they have completed the 12- unit required course, equivalent to four English subjects in the general education particularly communication skills or study and thinking skills, technical writing, writing in the discipline, and oral communication.



Instrument

This study came up with a questionnaire of two parts. The first part included personal information of the participants such as name, age, course, year level, and gender. The second part comprised items of Strategy Inventory for Language (SILL) adapted from Oxford (1990). SILL version 7.0 is used since it is a fully designed version for speakers of other language learning English, ESL or EFL. Each category of the strategies has three sub categories where statements that reflect the students' use of strategies in learning English are incorporated. Students answer in terms of how well the statements describe them. Responses of the participants are chosen from the scales of 1 to 5 where 1 –never or almost never true of me; 2-usually not true of me; 3-somewhat true of me; 4-usually true of me; 5- always or almost always true of me. Hence, a portion of the SILL is shown in Table 3.

The study also determined the relationship of LLS and gender of the participants. For the language proficiency, the study used the language aptitude test which is part of the Differential Aptitude Test (DAT), a standardized test purchased by the college and being used in the programs of the Guidance Services. As policy, staff members including the counselors of the Guidance Services Office administer the test. The researchers requested a Registered Guidance Counsellor to administer the test. When the approval was secured, the language test was also administered. However, out of the 98 expected examinees, only 88 of the students were able to take the test. The result of the language proficiency test was given to the researchers for it was correlated to the result of the SILL of the participants.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire such as the personal information, SILL results, and the language proficiency test were subjected to statistical treatment. Descriptive analysis was used on the SILL as shown below:

Rating	Description	Range
High	Always or almost always used	4.5–5.0
	Usually used	3.5–4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5. to 3.4
Low	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never or almost never used	1.0 to 1.4

The gathered data were treated statistically using IBM's Statistical Programs for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The mean score and standard deviation were used to answer questions one and two. The Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation (Pearson r) was applied to determine if there are significant relationship among the LLS, language proficiency, and gender of the college students. The biserial coefficient was used to test the relationship of gender and LLS. This special case of Pearson r was utilized since this study has tested the nominal-interval ratios which were gender and LLS. The scales that appear below were used to interpret the obtained results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Language Learning Strategies of ESL College Students

From the result of the analysis of the language learning strategies of the college students, metacognitive strategies are frequently used in learning a second language of the students who are enrolled in education and information technology courses. Significantly, all groups of participants are usually employing social strategies in their language learning. Table 9 presents the categories of LLS, the mean of each strategy and degree of use.

Although students in both education and information technology seem to be the high strategy users, as shown in Table 3, public administration students and technical education students also are medium users of social strategy. Likewise, education students also are high strategy users of the cognitive strategies while the other groups of participants are moderately using these cognitive strategies in learning the L2. Affective strategies are also used in learning their L2; however, the degree of use indicates that the participants are medium users of these strategies. In addition, memory and compensation strategies are used by the participants in L2 learning.

Coming to specific results of this study, ESL learners enrolled in different courses employed metacognitive strategies which have the highest mean rating (M= 3.91; 3.47; 3.30; 2.97) among other strategy categories. This result is similar to the findings of Salahshou et al. (2012) among Iranian high school students who also employed metacognitive strategies very often. Likewise, using this strategy, half of the



Language Learning Strategies	Education			Information Technology			Public Administration			Technical Teacher Education (Automotive)		
	Mean	SD	Degree	Mean	SD	Degree	Mean	SD	Degree	Mean	SD	Degree
A. Memory Remembering more effectively	3.20	0.41	med	3.03	0.48	med	2.97	0.50	med	2.61	0.59	med
B. Cognitive Using all your mental processes	3.49	0.50	high	3.37	0.44	med	3.28	0.57	med	2.82	0.42	med
C. Compensation Compensating for missing knowledge	3.24	0.64	med	3.20	0.61	med	3.08	0.51	med	2.76	0.30	med
D. Metacognitive Organizing and evaluating your learning	3.91	0.62	high	3.47	0.66	high	3.30	0.74	med	2.79	0.44	med
E. Affective Managing your emotions	3.40	0.76	med	3.18	0.59	med	3.21	0.77	med	2.61	0.70	med
F. Social Learning with others	3.84	0.69	high	3.47	0.52	high	3.44	0.85	med	3.01	0.76	med

Table 3: Mean and Degree of LLS in All Groups

English. Also, somewhat true to them is the fact that they tried to find as many ways as they can to use English. Noticing their own English mistakes and using that information to help them do better are also used by the participants. Having a clear goal for improving their English language skills as well as having self-monitoring of their progress in learning process help the participants to learn the target language. These findings corroborate with Kavasoglu's (2009) findings that metacognitive strategies were used by all pre-service teachers of English language at Mersin University.

The students in the education course are the only ESL learners who are noted for their high frequency of use of the cognitive strategies in language

learning. This result can be explained by the fact that since these students are taking English as their field of concentration, they need to employ more of their cognitive skills. The need to strategize in order to gain competence in the use of L2 is significant to these future English teachers. Analyzing the SILL result of BSED students, many of them opt to watch TV shows or movies that are in English. They consider the idea that exposing themselves to foreign English movies would improve their learning of the target language.

However, students in the technical education course are medium users of all the language learning strategies as revealed by the data. The result can be attributed to the major field that they are taking. Unlike BSED students, these students who are all males concentrate more on skills development along the



area of automotive mechanics. Aside from lesson planning, most of their times are spent in the automotive shops where they do machine repair or troubleshooting.

Variations of use of LLS between male and female students

The overall mean in Table 10 shows that male and female participants engaged in strategy use more frequently although female subjects earn a higher mean rating than the males. Significant to note is the highest mean rating which favored the female subjects particularly on the use of the metacognitive and social strategies. Memory, cognitive, compensation, and affective strategies are used with varied frequency by these female participants.

The highest mean of the male participants is M=3.37 which reflects that they opted to employ social strategies in learning their second language. However, the table also presents that the male participants have the M= 2.93 on memory strategies and M=2.90 on affective strategies which indicate that they also involve their emotions and feelings in L2 learning, although, it is not as frequent as the female participants. In addition, male participants minimally

use their memory or the recall strategies in order to learn English.

It is also revealed in the table that female students prefer to use cognitive strategies as indicated by the mean score of 3.37, a direct strategy, and social strategies as indicated by the mean 3.61, an indirect strategy. The results imply that female college students have employed varied mental processing strategies to learn their L2. Many of them believe that by watching and reading English movies and books, there is a high chance for them to learn English. Most of them learn English while they engage themselves in writing notes, messages, letters, or report in English. Other ways where they learn their L2 are by using the English words in different ways, by making summaries of information that they hear or read in English, by trying not to translate word for word, and by saying or writing new English words several times.

Females also are high strategy users of social strategies in learning L2. Whenever they do not understand something in English, they ask the person to slow down or say the word or statement again. In addition, most of them also noted that they practice English or learn English with other students.

Strategies	Gender	Mean	SD	Frequency of use
A. Memory	M	2.93	0.56	medium
	F	3.06	0.47	medium
B. Cognitive	M	3.21	0.57	medium
	F	3.37	0.49	medium
C. Compensation	M	3.08	0.58	medium
	F	3.14	0.57	medium
D. Metacognitive	M	3.29	0.66	medium
	F	3.60	0.76	high
E. Affective	M	2.94	0.72	medium
	F	3.34	0.70	medium
F. Social	M	3.37	0.75	medium
	F	3.61	0.71	high
OVERALL MEAN	M	3.17	0.55	medium
	F	3.34	0.52	medium

Table 4: The Variation of Use of LLS between male and female students



LLS, gender, language proficiency and their relationships

Table 11 shows the correlation matrix for the LLS, gender, and language proficiency. Gleaned in the table is significant correlation of gender with metacognitive ($r = -.214$) and affective strategies ($r = -.271$). The result confirms that female students more often use metacognitive and affective strategies as their language learning strategies than the male students. The results show that the female students are more frequently using six strategies in language learning than the male students. This means that female students employ a variety of strategies when they engage themselves in L2 learning situations.

This result could strengthen the salient findings of this study that female students have higher language proficiency than male students ($r = -.340$) as revealed in Table 11. Hence, it can be surmised that female students are proficient in English because they are being aided and supported by their effective use of LLS. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) explained that effective students used a greater variety of strategies and they used them in ways that helped them complete the language tasks successfully (p.140). In a similar study of Arbon and Parina (2018), female students use all six language learning strategies, and that the most dominant of these strategies was metacognitive. Findings also shows that only the length of time learning English does not directly influence the choice of language learning strategies

The table shows that metacognitive strategies ($r = -.326$) and cognitive strategies ($r = .346$) have significant correlation to language proficiency. This means that cognition and metacognition are indeed effective strategies when it comes to language proficiency. This result indicates that both direct and indirect strategies are involved in developing and improving learners' proficiency in English. Learners use mental processing to learn the language. According to Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies are unified by a common function: manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner. They are typically found to be the most popular strategies with language learners (p.43).

The participants also employed metacognitive strategies in their language learning. This means these strategies become their support; hence, they

plan, set goals, seek opportunities, and evaluate their own progress in learning their L2. For them to acquire proficiency in their L2, participants resort to use their metacognitive strategies. O'Malley et al. (1985a in O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) noted that students without metacognition approaches are essentially learners without direction and ability to review their progress, accomplishments and future directions (p.99).

Significantly, the over-all results reveal that language learning strategies have significant relationship with language proficiency ($r = .301$). This result implies that in order to be proficient in the target language, learners need to utilize both the strategies that are directly influencing the target language and strategies that are supporting and managing language learning. This further asserts the idea that both the direct and indirect strategies should work hand in hand in order to achieve language learning and language proficiency. These strategies operate in both general and specific ways to encourage the development of communicative competence (Oxford, 1990). The findings of this study corroborate with Green and Oxford's (1995). They found that the overall strategy use varied significantly by proficiency level, with more strategy use by more successful students and more strategy use by females than by males.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cognitive and metacognitive strategies among other categories of strategies surveyed are essential for successful language learning. Language learning strategies have significant negative correlation to gender, in favour of female students who utilized these strategies more frequently than male students. The findings that female students used cognitive and metacognitive strategies more frequently supports the other findings in this study that females have higher language proficiency than male students. Hence, both findings asserted the observation that female students have higher proficiency probably because of their ability to use all the LLS. Likewise, each group of participants have revealed that they have different strategies employed in L2 learning. The over-all LLS have significant positive relationship with the language proficiency of the participants which suggest that a variety of strategies used in L2 learning become a factor in the level of proficiency of the learners. By looking at the mean ratings of the partici-



		Gender	Memory Strategies	Cognitive Strategies	Compensation Strategies	Metacognitive Strategies	Affective Strategies	Social Strategies	LLS Over-all	Language Proficiency
Gender	r	1	-.135	-.158	-.049	-.214*	-.271**	-.165	-.155	-.340**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	---	.186	.121	.635	.035	.007	.104	.127	.001
Memory Strategies	r	-.135	1	.665**	.444**	.611**	.600**	.531**	.663**	.177
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.186	---	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.099
Cognitive Strategies	r	-.158	.665**	1	.439**	.673**	.472**	.564**	.784**	.346**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.000	---	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001
Compensation Strategies	r	-.049	.444**	.439**	1	.444**	.378**	.356**	.577**	.174
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.635	.000	.000	---	.000	.000	.000	.000	.106
Metacognitive Strategies	r	-.214*	.611**	.673**	.444**	1	.650**	.744**	.812**	.326**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.000	.000	.000	---	.000	.000	.000	.002
Affective Strategies	r	-.271**	.600**	.472**	.378**	.650**	1	.682**	.704**	.137
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	.000	.000	.000	---	.000	.000	.203
Social Strategies	r	-.165	.531**	.564**	.356**	.744**	.682**	1	.792**	.204
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.104	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	---	.000	.056
LLS Over-all	r	-.155	.663**	.577**	.577**	.812**	.704**	.792**	1	.301**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.127	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	---	.004
Language Proficiency	r	-.340**	.177**	.174	.174	.326**	.137	.204	.301**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.099	.106	.106	.002	.203	.056	.004	---

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for LLS, language proficiency, and gender of the college students



pants, it can also be inferred that the use of these strategies were not optimized by these students. Metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies were only used by the respondents while affective, memory, compensation strategies were used moderately. This observation on the non-exhaustive use of strategies by L2 learners might result a low level of proficiency in the use of English as revealed by the data on the individual scores in the language test.

The findings of the study might have contributed to the quest for more effective language instruction that is centered on developing L2 learners to become self-directed learners. This can only be possible if language teachers would be able to raise consciousness of students on how they learn best. Understanding LLS of students is a challenge for language teachers to craft teaching strategies or styles that would be a learner-centered approach. By focusing on the learners and considering the different strategies they use while learning L2, ESL learners will become self-directed, and independent learners of English.

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