Language Learning Strategies and Test Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

The role of learner's strategies and skills in learning a foreign language has been investigated in the last three decades. However, the part it plays in ESP achievement tests is not seriously treated. Moreover, as students take the final exam, their chief complaint concerns the idea of test anxiety as a debilitating factor. Therefore, the present study was conducted to evaluate the role of study strategies in successfully taking the final exam. To do so, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire was given to all 253 students, taking an ESP course, to identify their use of language learning strategies. A few moments prior to taking the final, they took Spielberger's (1980) anxiety test to get an estimate of their test anxiety. Findings revealed a negative linear relationship between SILL score (meta-cognitive strategies in particular) and anxiety. It is argued and concluded that among many other outcomes, test anxiety is attributable to inappropriate study habits in adult ESP learners. Therefore, it is recommended to teach effective strategies as part of the ESP courses so that learners feel less anxious on taking the test and develop more effective strategies for learning, to be considered by both instructors and textbook compilers.

INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language has always been associated with some level of uneasiness or tension especially when taking a test, although a small amount of anxiety is normally expected, as it is naturally a