

1 **ARE SELF-EFFICACY, LANGUAGE LEARNING**
2 **STRATEGIES, AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE ABILITY**
3 **INTERRELATED?**
4

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6

7 **ABSTRACT¹**
8

9 This study investigated the interrelationships among three variables: self-
10 efficacy, language learning strategies, and language ability. The study
11 participants were thirty-seven college students studying French at a
12 midwestern, medium-size, university located a large metropolitan area. All the
13 students were at the intermediate level of proficiency in French. The students'
14 self-efficacy was measured through a forty-item questionnaire in which they
15 expressed their levels of certainty that they could perform learning tasks at
16 desired levels of proficiency. Their use of language learning strategies was
17 also measured through a forty-item questionnaire that was an adaptation of
18 Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Their
19 language ability in French was measured through a sixty-item cloze test. The
20 results of the study revealed the existence of positive and statistically
21 significant relationships among the three variables. Recommendations for
22 second language students, programs, and instructors were suggested to help
23 students achieve higher communicative competence.
24

25 **INTRODUCTION**
26

27 The purpose of this study was to investigate the interrelationships among
28 strategy use, self-efficacy, and language ability in a foreign language
29 environment in a medium-size, midwestern university. Most language
30 teaching approaches lack an emphasis on learner autonomy, feelings and
31 attitudes (Celce-Murcia, 2001). They view language teaching as an enterprise
32 where the teacher's role is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills
33 they think students need and to assess whether the learners have met the
34 expectations. The students' role is to learn the material taught to them, and,
35 during assessment, to demonstrate what they know. However, these two roles
36 seem very simplified. Effective teachers ought to look for and find ways to
37 motivate their students, encourage them, teach them learning skills, and also
38 teach them ways to continue learning outside the classroom and away from the

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1 teacher (Rubin & Thompson, 1994, Wenden, 1991). It is necessary for
2 teachers to help their students recognize their emotional temperature and lower
3 their affective filter when it is interfering with learning (Krashen & Terrell,
4 1983; De Serres & LaFontaine, 2005; Oya, Manalo & Greenwood, 2004).

5 What kind of input, environment, motivation, and learner characteristics
6 are associated with higher levels of language learning? This is a very
7 important question that includes language learning strategies and self-efficacy,
8 two constructs that have received different levels of attention in the research
9 on second language acquisition. Teachers and other language practitioners are
10 increasingly aware of the existence of learning strategies and self-efficacy. But
11 the extent to which these two constructs might play a role in foreign language
12 learning has not been fully investigated. In fact, they have been either
13 unknown, ignored, or neglected by many language teaching approaches. There
14 is still a need to improve teaching by focusing on how learners conduct
15 learning tasks in second language acquisition (Rivers, 2001; Mondala, 2005;
16 Noels, 2005). Although language instructors carry much responsibility, this
17 study stemmed from the belief that much of the success in language learning
18 rests with individual students and their ability to take advantage of every
19 opportunity to learn. Regardless of the approach with which they are taught,
20 effective learners are active, self-directed, and engaged in learning; they have
21 acquired the skills, tools, and attitudes necessary to overcome most learning
22 and communication difficulties.

23 What does the use of these skills, or learning strategies, entail in terms of
24 the beliefs that these learners hold in relation to their abilities as language
25 learners? Do they feel that they are up to the task? Beliefs about a person's
26 ability to accomplish tasks satisfactorily are known as self-efficacy (Bandura,
27 1997a; Schunk, 2001). Self-efficacy is an aspect of social cognitive theory,
28 which is an approach to understanding human cognition, motivation, and
29 emotion. This theory assumes that people possess the ability to reflect and
30 regulate their actions and to shape their environment rather than merely react
31 to it. High levels of self-efficacy have been associated with high levels of
32 achievement in different domains. In the field of second and foreign language
33 acquisition, self-efficacy is still underexplored. The role, if any, it may play in
34 language learning has not been definitely determined. There are still unknown
35 or partially explored areas in terms of second language acquisition, language
36 learning strategies, and self-efficacy.

37 38 **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

39
40 The purpose of this study was to investigate the interrelationships among
41 language learning strategy use, self-efficacy, and language ability in a
42 university foreign language setting. The study was set to test two theories.

1 First, the use of language learning strategies is associated with high levels of
2 language ability. Second, high levels of self-efficacy in a specific domain lead
3 to high achievement in that domain.
4

5 **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RELATED ALTERNATIVE** 6 **HYPOTHESIS**

7
8 1. What is the relationship between strategy use and language ability?

9 Hypothesis 1: There is a significant positive relationship between strategy
10 use and language ability.

11 2. What is the relationship between strategy use and self-efficacy?

12 Hypothesis 2: There is a significant positive relationship between strategy
13 use and self-efficacy.

14 3. What is the relationship between self-efficacy and language ability?

15 Hypothesis 3: There is a significant positive relationship between self-
16 efficacy and language ability.
17

18 **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

19
20 The knowledge about the relationship among attitudinal factors such as
21 self-efficacy, language learning strategies, and language ability requires
22 additional research. This study provided additional insights into the constructs
23 that may be associated with the development of second and foreign language
24 ability. The study participants gained a deeper insight of the role of strategies
25 and attitude as they go through the often-challenging task of learning a
26 language in their adult age. In addition, language teachers will understand the
27 extent to which incorporating strategy training into their programs and
28 assisting students develop a positive attitude could lead to successful language
29 learning.
30

31 **LITERATURE REVIEW**

32
33 Language learning strategies are defined as “operations employed by the
34 learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information....
35 They are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster,
36 more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to
37 new situations” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Strategies for language learning and use
38 have been the subject of growing attention, especially in the areas of second
39 and foreign language learning and teaching (Oxford, 1990; McDonough,
40 1995; Cohen et al, 1996; Kojic-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999). The use of these
41 strategies may be closely related to language ability and some attitudinal
42 factors, one of which is self-efficacy. Wenden (1991) theorizes that language

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1 learners who use strategies are more successful learners than those who do not
2 use them. Thompson and Rubin (1993) trained a group of students learning
3 Russian in the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. On a listening
4 comprehension test, the experimental group that had received the training
5 outscored the control group. Kojic-Sabo and Lightbown (1999) studied 47
6 ESL learners and 43 EFL learners and looked for a relationship between
7 strategy use and the level of linguistic achievement. They found that frequent
8 and elaborate strategy use was associated with higher levels of achievement
9 for both groups. Spending time on language study and seeking out
10 opportunities to use and practice the target language outside the classroom
11 were associated with higher learning outcomes for both ESL and EFL
12 students. The difference between an expert language learner and an
13 unsuccessful one is not only in the amount of language material they can learn,
14 but also in the ways they can regulate their own learning, and the extent to
15 which they can become autonomous learners. Autonomy in language learning
16 is built on language learning strategies and second language teachers should
17 incorporate strategy training in their language teaching (Wenden, 1991).

18 Self-efficacy is defined as self-perceptions or beliefs of capability to learn
19 or perform tasks at designated levels (Bandura, 1997a), or a learner's
20 judgments of his or her competency for successful task completion
21 (McCombs, 2001), or "the beliefs about one's ability to perform a given task
22 or behavior successfully" (Huang and Shanmao, 1996, p. 3). Self-efficacy
23 affects students' aspirations, their level of interest in academic work and
24 accomplishments, and how well they prepare themselves for future careers.
25 Self-efficacy beliefs interact with affective, motivational, personal goal
26 setting, as well as other cognitive processes (Hackett and Betz, 1992).
27 However, it is important to emphasize the fact that self-efficacy is domain
28 specific. Nobody possesses a general sense of self-efficacy, which means that
29 self-efficacy is not a contextless disposition. That is why measures of self-
30 efficacy must specify the domains of actions and must reflect task difficulty or
31 task demands within those domains.

32 Self-efficacy has been seldom applied in the field of second language
33 acquisition. Huang and Shanmao (1996) studied four ESL students and found
34 a positive statistically significant relationship between their self-efficacy
35 ratings and their scores on the reading and writing sections of their TOEFL.
36 Templin (1999) found a statistically significant difference between the grades
37 of low-efficacy students and those of high-efficacy students in their English
38 course. Templin, Guile, and Okuma (2001) concluded that their self-efficacy
39 course raised self-efficacy levels and the English ability (writing and
40 speaking) of 293 Japanese students learning English.

41 There are still unknown or partially explored areas in terms of second
42 language acquisition, language learning strategies, and self-efficacy. In studies

1 that have confirmed the existence of a significant positive relationship
 2 between self-efficacy and one measure of language ability, researchers
 3 analyzed scores from a test of one or two skills, such as the written portion of
 4 the TOEFL and correlated them to scores obtained on a self-efficacy scale.
 5 There is a need for studies that would test integrated skills and analyze how
 6 scores obtained on those tests relate to strategy use and self-efficacy.

7
 8 **METHODOLOGY**

9
 10 This study was quantitative and used a correlational design. In
 11 correlational investigations, researchers study relationships among two or
 12 more quantitative variables and make predictions based on an understanding
 13 of those relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2004). Data were gathered through
 14 from 37 students enrolled in Intermediate French in a small-size, midwestern
 15 university in the United States of America.

16
 17 Table I: Characteristics of Study Participants
 18

Race	Gender		Age		Years of French Study		Total
	Female	Male	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	
African American	19	9	24.7	18 - 64	2.9	1 - 6	28
White	3	2	23.8	19 - 35	3.8	1 - 7	5
Hispanic	0	1	22(N/A)*	N/A*	1(N/A)*	N/A*	1
Other	2	1	30	19 - 41	2	1 - 3	3
Total	24	13	24.8	18 - 64	3	1 - 7	37

19 * Averages and ranges not applicable because there was only one Hispanic
 20 participant.

21
 22 Data were collected through two surveys and a cloze test. The two
 23 surveys, in which students rated themselves, were used to collect data on
 24 strategy use and self-efficacy. The strategy use survey consisted of 40 items
 25 with corresponding 6-point Likert-scale response options. A certain behavior
 26 was stated and followed by 6 numbers, each one corresponding to the extent to
 27 which the respondent believed the statement applied to him. The self-efficacy
 28 construct was operationalized through scores obtained on another 40-item, 6-
 29 point Likert-scale questionnaire. These two Likert scales being 6-point scales,
 30 there was no balancing or neutral point. A split-half test of internal
 31 consistency was computed on the strategy and self-efficacy survey, and the
 32 coefficients were .94 and .97, respectively. A cloze test was also administered
 33 to the 37 participants and 35 of them (95%) completed it. It was then scored
 34 by two independent scorers and the interrater reliability was .98. The data thus

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1 obtained were entered on a Microsoft Excel 2003 spreadsheet and analyzed
2 using the Microsoft Excel Data Analysis Toolpak. The results are reported
3 below to answer the three research questions.
4

5 RESULTS

6
7 The intercorrelations among language learning strategy use, self-efficacy,
8 and language ability are summarized in Table II below.
9

10 Table II: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations: Strategy Use,
11 Self-efficacy, and Language Ability (N=37)
12

	Strategy Use	Self-Efficacy	Language Ability
Strategy Use	1		
Self-Efficacy	0.63*	1	
Language Ability	0.56*	0.83*	1
<i>M</i>	2.16	2.36	48.97
<i>SD</i>	0.58	0.56	6.69

13 * $p < 0.05$

14
15 *Research question 1. What is the relationship between strategy use and*
16 *language ability?*
17

18 Students' reports of the extent to which they used language learning
19 strategies during their French learning experience were linked to their ability
20 level in French. There was a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .56$,
21 $p < .05$) between scores obtained on the strategy use scale and scores obtained
22 on the French cloze test.
23

24 *Research question 2. What is the relationship between strategy use and self-*
25 *efficacy?*
26

27 Data obtained from the strategy use survey and the self-efficacy survey
28 were used to answer the second research question. A Pearson correlation was
29 computed on the scores obtained on both surveys, and the results show a
30 strong association between the participants' strategy use and the extent to
31 which they felt capable of accomplishing language tasks successfully. There
32 was a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .63$, $p < .05$) between
33 scores obtained on the strategy use scale and those obtained on the self-
34 efficacy scale.
35

1 *Research question 3. What is the relationship between self-efficacy and*
2 *language ability?*

3
4 Data from the self-efficacy survey and those from the cloze test were used
5 to answer this question. A Pearson correlation was computed o scores obtained
6 on the self-efficacy scale and those obtained on the cloze test. The results
7 showed a very strong association between the two sets of scores. There was a
8 statistically significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and
9 language ability ($r=.83$, $p<.05$). The coefficients of correlations found above,
10 though of different magnitudes, confirm the hypotheses that there exist
11 statistically significant positive relationships among strategy use, self-efficacy,
12 and language ability.

13 14 **DISCUSSION**

15
16 With a positive correlation of .56, it is safe to say that for this group of
17 French learners, strategy use was found to be linked to language ability.
18 Learners who use strategies adopt behaviors that improve their linguistic
19 ability. They have tools to make the learning easier and more manageable, as
20 well as solutions to overcome problems associated with learning a language as
21 an adult, especially in a foreign language environment, which is not an
22 acquisition-rich environment. For example, they pay attention and actively
23 participate in class, purposefully put themselves in situations where they have
24 to interact with native or more proficient speakers, use resources, and seek
25 assistance. They monitor their own learning and have learned how to deal with
26 anxiety, nervousness, and the fear of making mistakes (Wenden, 1991).

27 However, the correlation between language learning strategy use and
28 language ability was not as strong as one might expect. The participants rated
29 themselves highly on certain items of the survey, such as paying attention in
30 class (overall rating of 3.5), taking notes during French classes (3.4), using the
31 context to understand the meaning of new words (3.3), paying attention to
32 one's mistakes and using that information to help oneself do better (3.2), and
33 asking interlocutors to repeat or slow down (3.0). On the other hand, a number
34 of items on the survey received very low ratings, such as attending out-of-
35 class events where French is spoken (overall rating of 1.1) with as many as 26
36 students out of 37 rating themselves 1 or 0 on that item. It was also surprising
37 to notice that they rated the use of dictionaries and other reference materials as
38 low as 2.2. The lowest rates items were the ones that asked participants to rate
39 themselves on reading for pleasure and keeping their feelings in a language
40 learning diary. These items received ratings of 0.9 and 0.8, respectively. The
41 low rating about reading for pleasure may be partially attributed to the lack of
42 French reading material in the participants' immediate environment, as well as

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1 their low interest in that activity. Their low level of their journaling was also
2 surprising because these students were required by their French instructor to
3 maintain a language learning diary. One possible explanation is that students
4 misunderstood the statement as asking for their personal feelings such as
5 sadness, joy, frustration, anger, without relating them to their language
6 learning experience. Another possible explanation is that students were
7 truthful about writing feelings in their diaries and that they used this document
8 to write assignments such as reports about their lives.

9 Other factors could account for these students' low level of strategic
10 behavior. First, they might not know what is available to them. Second, they
11 might not know the strategies themselves. One participant wrote at the end of
12 the survey that the study had taught her things that she should have been
13 doing. Third, students may lack the confidence to engage in activities where
14 they would have to use their L2, such as visiting places where French is used,
15 or interacting with native and more proficient speakers.

16 On the self-efficacy scale, all but seven of the forty items received an
17 overall rating between 2 and 3.4, but only three items were rated between 3
18 and 3.4. No item received a higher rating. The lowest rating was given to the
19 item that asked of students how sure there were that they could read a novel in
20 French (1.2). It may be the case that the participants abstained from reading
21 because they believed they would not be able to understand the books.
22 Another explanation might be that reading a book, no matter how interesting,
23 is an activity that takes time and effort, especially if it is done in a foreign
24 language, and students might not be willing to expend that time and effort to
25 do so. The second lowest rating (1.5) was given to an item in which students
26 had to rate their level of certainty that they could write essays or long text in
27 French. Reading a text in French and retelling the story, understanding details
28 of what they hear, and accomplishing real life tasks in which they have to
29 speak French tied for an overall rating of 1.8. Three more items tied for an
30 overall rating of 1.9. These were items that asked students to rate their levels
31 of certainty that they could tell their interlocutor details and explanations if the
32 listener asks for them, correctly spell most words, and interact with other
33 French speakers. From the students' self rating of their self-efficacy in the
34 items discussed in the preceding paragraph, the recurrent area of concern
35 involves activities in which students have to produce their L2, either in written
36 or oral form. In the next paragraph, items that were rated 3 or above are
37 discussed.

38 The participants were quite sure that they could find books and other
39 materials to study French outside the classroom. They also believed that, given
40 enough time, they could achieve near native fluency in French (overall rating
41 of 3). The last item on the self-efficacy scale summarized the highest
42 expectation that second and foreign language teachers can hold for their adult

1 students, i.e., to achieve near native fluency. After all, expecting native
2 fluency from adult second language learners might turn out to be an unrealistic
3 and unachievable goal. With a rating of 3, the students expressed their
4 confidence in themselves to achieve that highest goal. Two items tied for the
5 highest overall rating on the self-efficacy scale (3.4). In those two items,
6 students expressed a high level of certainty that they could learn more French
7 than they knew at the time of this research project; they also expressed a high
8 level of certainty that they could ask and obtain assistance from their instructor
9 and classmates.

10 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11
12
13 This section will be subdivided in two main parts. The first part deals with
14 recommendations for practical applications of the study. In the second part,
15 recommendations for future research are suggested.

16 Foreign language students ought to take a more active role in their foreign
17 language learning, rather than rely solely on their instructor. They may start by
18 looking around and collecting resources that can be used for learning and
19 practicing pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and other language aspects.
20 University libraries are rich in such resources and usually are connected in a
21 vast network of interlibrary loans, a system through which patrons can borrow
22 materials from libraries in other locations, and pick them up at their own
23 libraries. Materials available in those libraries include books, audiotapes, and
24 movies targeted to foreign language learners or speakers at different levels of
25 proficiency. In addition to library resources, students could take advantage of
26 human contacts available both on campus and off campus. There are foreign
27 students as well as expatriate professors on several university campuses. These
28 individuals can provide conversation practice or even tutor foreign language
29 learners. Off campus, some large cities house foreign consulates. Visitors are
30 welcome and entrance is free.

31 Activities such as these allow the learner to participate in out-of-class
32 events where their L2 is spoken. In addition to practicing aspects of their
33 foreign language, students also learn about the culture of their L2. Language
34 learners greatly benefit from purposefully putting themselves in situations
35 where L2 is spoken (Wenden, 1991; Rubin & Thompson, 1994). These human
36 contacts would result on a second benefit, that of potentially reducing the
37 students' anxiety because they provide them with an opportunity to try out and
38 practice new knowledge, and with models to imitate. Conversing with more
39 proficient speakers can be intimidating, but it is a very efficient way to learn a
40 language. If the learners feel nervous or too intimidated to speak with very
41 proficient speakers, they could speak to other students of the same foreign

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1 language, as well as cooperate through study groups and conversation
2 partnerships.

3 Given the statistically significant positive relationship found between
4 language learning strategies and language ability, students need to be trained
5 in the use of strategies. In addition, since they do not read for pleasure,
6 literature at their reading level should be brought and loaned to them.
7 Participation or attendance in an out-of class event should be a requirement,
8 following the example of departments where students must complete a number
9 of hours of field experience and write reports or make presentations in class.
10 Students also need time during class to discuss their experiences learning L2,
11 the difficulties they encounter, and possible solutions (strategies).

12 In order to work successfully with second language learners, it is
13 necessary for the teacher to study the L2 setting. Is it to be learned in a second
14 or a foreign language environment? What are the patterns of L2 use in that
15 society? What role does it play in that environment, economy, educational
16 system, and labor market? What is its status in that society? It is also useful for
17 the teacher to know the attitudes of the learners toward L2 and the reasons the
18 students are studying it. In some cases, the students may have taken a
19 deliberate decision to study that language. In others, it may have been imposed
20 on them by their educational system. These factors can affect, either positively
21 or negatively, the learners' motivational level.

22 After this fact-finding stage is complete, teachers ought to establish
23 realistic goals and decide on the selection and organization of learning
24 experiences. Goals that seem too ambitious might discourage students and
25 reduce their self-efficacy. Teachers also identify and collect necessary
26 teaching materials. In order to increase student motivation, learning
27 experiences and teaching materials that involve the student as much as
28 possible should be selected. Authentic materials motivate the students more
29 and increase their curiosity, especially in a foreign language environment
30 where L2 might be close to nonexistent. Such materials are audio and video
31 tapes, pictures, books, clothing, newspapers, restaurant menus, money, as well
32 as guest speakers who are native or more proficient speakers of L2. Nobody
33 should underestimate the richness of the World Wide Web; it provides
34 numerous opportunities to virtually visit foreign lands, to practice
35 pronunciation and grammar, and to learn about the culture of L2. In many
36 foreign language environments, American Cultural Centers, French Cultural
37 Centers and Alliance Française are well established. These agencies can serve
38 as resources for both the teacher and the student of English or French as a
39 foreign language.

40 Learners need to be active in order to be successful. They need to be
41 actively engaged in communicative activities where they can experiment and
42 try out what they know without the fear of making mistakes, and where they

1 can interact with classmates through pair or group work. These kinds of
2 activities give students the opportunity to negotiate meaning and reach
3 unpredictable, nonformulaic outcomes. While negotiating meaning, they are
4 using strategies, noticing which ones are effective, and which ones fail to
5 work. These activities can be context-embedded or context-reduced, or
6 somewhere between the two extremes, depending on the learners' proficiency
7 level.

8 Technology has made second language teaching and learning easier than it
9 was a few years ago. Today's instructors need to search beyond the customary
10 textbook and workbook as several publishers now offer packages that contain
11 audio and video tapes, CDs, DVDs, dictionaries and websites. The students
12 can also be trained to use both the technology already available to them, such
13 as the computer laboratories on campus and their MP3's and CD players.
14 Instructors can bring technology to the classroom or assign students learning
15 tasks that can be complete only through technology.

16 Foreign language programs and institutions of higher education need to
17 take advantage of foreign students' presence on their campuses. These
18 international students can assist foreign language instructors by fulfilling the
19 roles of conversation and group work leaders, or tutors. The advantage for the
20 learners is that they will have an opportunity to hear a more proficient speaker,
21 other than the instructor, on a regular basis. An international student would be
22 another model to imitate, someone who is not an authority figure and therefore
23 less intimidating than the instructor. The presence of this person could reduce
24 the anxiety and nervousness experienced by students; it would also be
25 beneficial for all parties involved, especially in large, beginner courses.

26 These recommendations could improve the quality of the foreign language
27 environment, make the task of learning a second language easier and more
28 manageable, afford students more opportunities to learn their L2 and its
29 culture, orient students towards more autonomy, maintain and grow the
30 positive attitude the participants of this study (and others like them) hold about
31 themselves and their ability to learn a second language. The results of all these
32 efforts will definitely mean higher language ability. In addition to these
33 recommendations for practice, a number of recommendations for future
34 research emerged.

35 Close analysis of the data showed that several of the participants had been
36 studying French for as much as 4 to 7 years. However, their scores on the
37 cloze test were not any better than those of participants who had studied it for
38 just 2 years. Assuming that there was a period of time when they interrupted
39 their study of French to restart it some years later, one wonders how long the
40 learner has to be away from the second language instruction for his
41 proficiency level to fall to lower or beginning level. To carry out such a study,
42 one would recruit a group of students exiting a foreign language program and

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1 administer to them a language proficiency to determine their level. After this
2 initial measure of proficiency, and at regular intervals, they would take the
3 same test or its equivalent. Data thus obtained would allow the researcher to
4 determine the students' proficiency level after every testing session. Such a
5 longitudinal study would make it possible to chart the changes in proficiency
6 level over a long period of time. Another possible investigation would be an
7 experimental that would provide strong evidence about the effect of strategy
8 instruction and self-efficacy training on language ability. It would also be
9 enlightening to undertake a qualitative study to take a closer look at the
10 students' documents, especially their note books and journals. This analysis
11 would provide insights in the strategic behavior of foreign language learners
12 and help expose the problems they face, their fears, anxiety, as well as the
13 solutions they use to solve their learning problems. Finally, replicating this
14 study with a sample that is stratified to include comparable numbers of
15 African Americans, Caucasians and Hispanics would result in more
16 generalizable findings.

18 **IMPLICATIONS**

19
20 This study has proven the existence of statistically significant relationships
21 among self-efficacy, the use of language learning strategies, and language
22 ability. These links entail some attitudes and behaviors that could improve
23 second language learners' linguistic ability. Planning, being actively engaged,
24 monitoring one's progress and emotions, and believing in one's ability to
25 tackle learning tasks successfully can make learning a second language more
26 manageable, enjoyable, and productive. Second language learners ought to be
27 aware of the importance of practicing one's target language through
28 communicative activities with other speakers of the language. Many learners
29 shy away from such interactions because of nervousness, the fear of making
30 mistakes, or being intimidated by more proficient speakers. However, learners
31 should know that to learn a language, one has to speak it, and spending time
32 with other speakers, trying to speak, and encouraging oneself to overcome
33 one's nervousness and the fear of making mistakes are very important.
34 Language learning takes practice and independent work outside the classroom.
35 Students need to believe that they have what it takes to reach desired levels of
36 proficiency in their target language. After all they mastered their native
37 language at a much younger age, and much less cognitive ability. Instructors
38 can increase their students' exposure to L2 and its culture by bringing
39 resources to the classroom. They can invite their L2 speaking colleagues,
40 friends, and community members to be guest speakers. They can also bring
41 audio and videotapes for students to listen to and learn about the culture of L2.
42 They can also assign work which requires students to use the Wide World

1 Web, as well as group work inside and outside of the classroom so that
2 students can help and learn from each other.

3 In addition to resources, instructors can use motivational techniques to
4 engage students in their learning process and to increase their self-efficacy.
5 Encouraging students to participate during class, praising them for
6 contributing an answer, offering extra credit points to students who go beyond
7 the minimum requirements of the course, are all good techniques to motivate
8 students. Knowing how nervous students are, instructors can make them more
9 comfortable and reduce their affective filter by making sure that they have
10 understood and exhaustively practiced a topic before moving to the next.
11 Instructors can also reduce students' anxiety by conducting lessons in an
12 interesting manner, using authentic materials (some instructors who have
13 travelled to foreign countries have a collection of these), being friendly and
14 available to offer assistance.

15 **CONCLUSION**

16 This study has shown the importance of knowing and using language
17 learning strategies and having a positive attitude by believing in one's
18 capability to accomplish learning tasks at desired levels of success. Training
19 students to use strategies, and raising their self-efficacy could help students
20 attain the goal they have for learning the target language. Increasing students'
21 use of strategies could raise both their self-efficacy and their language ability
22 at the same time. Increasing their self-efficacy would develop their language
23 ability even further. Self-beliefs definitely matter.
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ARE SELF-EFFICACY, LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES, AND
FOREIGN LANGUAGE ABILITY INTERRELATED?

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