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Research Article

STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLES AND WRITING STRATEGIES, PROCESS AND REVISION

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A B S T R A C T

This study aimed to find out the language learning styles and writing strategies, process and revision among ninety (90) Bachelor of Arts in English Language (AB-EL) students at the Visayas State University (VSU). Data were gathered using two questionnaires. The first was a survey on English language learning styles adopted from DeCapua *et al* (2005). The second was a self-report on writing strategies, process and revision adopted from Soltani and Kheirzadehb (2017). Data were checked to determine consistency, accuracy and completeness before coding and organizing, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To determine relationship between and among variables, the Spearman's Rho correlation analysis was employed. From the first set of respondents composed of forty-three (43) Junior AB-EL students, results showed that 15 (30%) of them were "very good" and 28 (70%) with "good". No students went "fair" with their English language learning styles. The top 5 language learning styles of the respondents were: 1) I understand better when I read instructions; 2) When I study alone, I understand better; 3) When the teacher tells me the instructions, I understand better; 4) I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities; and 5) When I work alone, I learn better. From the second set of respondents composed of forty-seven (47) graduating AB-EL students, results showed that the respondents scored "very good" in writing strategies, "good" in writing process, and "very good" in writing revision based upon their perception when they do a writing task. Findings also revealed that there is a significant relationship between and among the three variables, namely: writing strategies, process and revision. This implies that the three variables are much related to one another since effective writing calls for a combination of these writing skills. However, it would be better for the students to master first writing strategies and process since they are the basic functions of expressive writing.

INTRODUCTION

The term "learning style" comes from general psychology. Ellis (2005) defines learning style as "the characteristic ways in which individuals orientate to problem-solving". It is how the learners perceive, interact and respond to the environment. It also speaks to the understanding that every student learns differently. Technically, an individual's learning styles refer to the preferential ways in which the student absorbs, processes, comprehends, and retains information. Individual learning styles depend on cognitive, emotional and environmental factors, as well as one's prior experience. The more the teachers know about their students' style preferences, the more they can orient their second language instruction, as well as the teaching strategy that can be interwoven into language instruction, matched to those style preferences (Vaseghi, 2012). Without adequate knowledge about their individual students' style preferences, teachers cannot systematically provide the needed instructional variety.

Learning style is both a characteristic which indicates how a student learns and likes to learn, as well as instructional strategy informing the cognition, context and content of learning (Graf, Liu, and Kinshuk, 2010). Previous studies have reported that students' learning performance could be improved if proper learning style dimensions could be taken into consideration when developing any learning or instructional process. On the other hand, the development of writing is needed for university students as it is a very essential skill for their academic development (Graham and Perin, 2007). Within educational contexts, the ability to write in English is very fundamental and instrumental for university students to function successfully in their academic areas. Writing is crucial for every sphere of life (Yigiter, 2012). It is the foremost ground upon which one's work, learning experience, or intellectual level will be judged at an educational institute, at a workplace, and in the community. While writing faculty is a requisite for every aspect of the quotidian life, scholarly writing is an indispensable part of an academic's professional life, since the need for writing in the academe is undoubtedly of importance compared to other fields. The respondents of this study have been into writing strategies, process and revision, although more often than not,

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they are not aware of them. Therefore, it is about time to update some knowledge on language learning styles and writing strategies, process and revision among college students.

Objectives of the Study

This research was on the students' language learning styles and writing strategies, process and revision. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Determine the students' language learning styles;
2. Survey the students' writing strategies, process and revision;
3. Determine the relationship between the students' writing strategies and writing process;
4. Determine the relationship between the students' writing strategies and writing revision; and
5. Determine the relationship between the students' writing process and writing revision. .

Theoretical Background

An important common theme in both the works of Kolb and Cuthbert (2005) is that learning styles are seen as stable aspects of the individual's personality. This implies that an individual's learning style is unlikely to change in short term. It is, however, acknowledged that the characteristics of the learning environment and learning experiences influence their development (Desmedt and Valcke, 2004). These stable styles interact with environmental conditions, resulting in the individual's selection of specific approaches to learning (Entwistle, 1988; Lindemann, Duck, and Wilkerson, 2001). Meanwhile, Kellogg (1988) pointed out that proper writing strategies can enhance writing performance and reduce attentional overload. However, several researchers indicated that instructors usually face tremendous challenges in developing a suitable writing strategy to assist students since writing is a complex task requiring the organization of several abstract ideas (Kieft, Rijlaarsdam, and Van den Bergh, 2008). Besides, to promote writing performance, the teacher plays an importance role in helping students develop viable strategies for getting started, drafting, revising, and editing (Silva, 1990).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study followed a descriptive survey design. Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire on language learning styles adopted from DeCapua *et al* (2005) and a self-report questionnaire on writing strategies, process and revision adopted from Soltani and Kheirzadehb (2017). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To determine relationships between the students' writing strategies, process and revision, Spearman's Rho correlation analysis was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the first set of respondents composed of forty-three (43) Junior AB-EL students, results showed that 15 (30%) of them were "very good" and 28 (70%) were "good". No student went "fair" with their English language learning styles. This implies that the respondents went average when it comes to their language learning styles. The top 5 language learning styles of the respondents were: 1) I understand better when I read instructions; 2) When I study alone, I remember things better; 3) When the teacher tells me the instruction, I understand better; 4) I learn best in class when I can participate in related

activities; and 5) When I work alone, I learn better. The bottom 5 language learning styles of the respondents were the following: 1) I prefer to study with others; 2) I learn more when I study with a group; 3) I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates; 4) I enjoy making something for a class project; and 5) I learn better by reading than by listening to someone. In language learning, an individual might have his or her own preferred learning style preferences due to certain factors such as personal characteristics, as well as ethnic, cultural and educational background (Kang, 1999). By determining the students' learning style, it could be a big help for them to be facilitated in identifying the most effective way for them to gain a better understanding on certain subjects or fields and make the learning process easier for them. From the second set of respondents composed of forty-seven (47) graduating AB-EL students, results showed that they scored "very good" in writing strategies, "good" in writing process, and "very good" in writing revision based upon their perception when they do a writing task. In their writing strategies, findings revealed that the respondents would "always" analyze the topic, consider the purpose of the topic, write without the written plan, think of the ideas in their native language, read their teacher's feedback on their previous writing and try to learn from their mistakes, and would choose a relaxing environment when writing. However, respondents were not so particular of their writing process since only two item indicators got the response of "always": 1) I handwrite a draft copy first; and 2) I use electronic/online dictionary. Based on the response of the respondents' writing revision, they would "always" revise the draft to clarify the meaning, check whether more examples are needed, check whether more explanation is needed, check whether the sentences in the paragraph are connected, check whether the citations are appropriate to the arguments, check the punctuations, check the draft themselves, prepare a final polished draft, and check to make sure that they have met the requirements of the writing activity. Finally, for the students' writing strategies and writing process, the p-value of 0.039 shows that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. The positive correlation coefficient of 0.031 means that the students with very good writing strategies tend to have very good writing process. For the students' writing strategies and writing revision, there is a significant relationship between the two variables as shown by the 0.002 p-value. This further implies that the correlation coefficient of 0.442 means that students with very good writing strategies tend to have very good writing revision skills. For the students' writing process and writing revision, there is a significant relationship between the two variables as shown by the p-value of 0.019 (Sig. 2 tailed). This means that the correlation coefficient of 0.432 shows that students with very good writing process tend to have very good writing revision skills. Thus, when it comes to writing, all of these three variables are related to one another.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has come to conclude that since language learning styles depend much on the students' preferences along with their ethnic, cultural, or educational background, this study suggests that teachers and students as well work hand in hand to have the language learning styles matched with the lessons and activities for English language learning. When it comes to writing strategies, process and revision, it would be better for the students to master first writing strategies and process

before coming to a revision since the first two variables are the basic foundations in expressive writing.

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