

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USE OF BILINGUAL STRATEGIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY'S LEARNERS OF FRENCH

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between students' use of bilingual strategies and their academic performance in the Department of Business French of Assumption University (AU). A quantitative approach was adopted. The study includes a sample of 63 students learning French in AU. A questionnaire was elaborated to collect data about the frequency of use of bilingual strategies and the academic performance of students. Descriptive and correlational statistics, including a Pearson Product Moment computation of correlation, were used to interpret the data and measure the significance of the correlation between the two sets of variables. The results indicated that a high frequency of use of bilingual strategies is correlated with high academic performances. Some recommendations grounded in the results are proposed in conclusion.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Language Learning Strategies, Academic Performance, Cross-Linguistic Similarities, English, French

Introduction

Various researches have been conducted on how bi/plurilingualism affects the learning process and how it can favor the development of effective learning language strategies. The European Framework of References for languages (Council of Europe [COE], 2001) suggested that plurilingualism, defined as "a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (p.4) is a cognitive and metacognitive advantage for language learners.

Bilingualism, which is the most common case of plurilingualism, is an ability to mobilize knowledge previously acquired in a L1 for learning and using a L2 (Moore, 2006). This competence is observable through the use of specific learning language strategies relying on previously acquired knowledge (Castellotti & Moore, 2002), and is particularly effective in improving learning when the target language is close to the previously acquired language, as it is the case for French and English.

This research took place in the Department of Business French of Assumption University, which is a bilingual learning environment. The students in this program need to be proficient in English, which is the main teaching language of the university, as well as in French. They are generally more proficient in English than in French. Our hypothesis is that, unlike learners of Chinese or Japanese, AU's learners of French possess an advantage for learning due to the linguistic proximity of French

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