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The Road Not Taken: Second Language Learners' Strategy Aspirations

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the language learning strategies (LLS) that university EFL students wanted to try after receiving structured strategy instruction. A total of 57 participants provided written responses, which were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that a significant number of students showed a preference for affective strategies, highlighting the importance of managing emotions, attitudes, and motivation in the language learning process. Amongst those who identified more specific strategies, a majority of participants expressed a strong interest in keeping a language learning journal. This strategy was perceived as a valuable tool for managing emotions, tracking progress, recording learning experiences, and fostering reflection, ultimately enhancing their language acquisition journey. The results underscore the pivotal role of affective strategies in facilitating more effective and positive learning experiences, while also suggesting that LLS instruction may foster self-awareness, encouraging students to consider adopting new strategies that support their language learning.

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Since Rubin (1975) painted a picture of a 'good' language learner, language learning strategies (LLS) have been a subject of exploration. Much indeed has been crytallized over the decades about the nature of strategies and the role that they play in second language acquisition. Amongst this growing knowledge is the effect of strategy instruction and preferred strategies of second language learners.

A body of meta-analyses have consistently shown positive effects associated with strategy instruction on language proficiency and the development of self-regulated learning. For instance, Fathi et al. (2020) reported that listening strategy instruction significantly enhances learners' listening comprehension. Moreover, effective instructional methodologies have emerged from research, indicating that instructor-led mini-presentations and the integration of strategies with specific tasks can impact language acquisition practices (Maeng & Lee, 2014). Such instructional approaches may allow learners to apply strategies effectively to meet their objectives (Oxford, 2017). From these findings, a consensus has been formed on the value of incorporating language learning strategies into second language instruction, contributing to improved outcomes for learners navigating their language acquisition journeys.

Research into LLS has also illuminated preferences exhibited by different learner populations. Studies indicate that metacognitive strategies are preferred among 'successful' language learners, as found by Hanafiah et al. (2021). In fact, several studies have found that metacognitive, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies make up a suite of those most commonly employed by language learners (Kazi & Iqbal, 2011; Kenol & Hashim, 2022).

While previous research has explored effects of strategy instruction and preferred strategies of language learners, the current study has a relatively unique inquiry. It aims to explore the strategies that university-level EFL learners want to try after completing strategy instruction. Essentially, participants were asked: What is a strategy that you have never tried before but would like to try following this course on LLS? The results can build upon existing findings and contribute valuable insights into LLS educational curricula.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Strategy Instruction in Second Language Learning

The role of strategy instruction in second language acquisition has been well-documented. A number of meta-analyses have revealed the effectiveness of strategy instruction in improving language proficiency and self-regulated learning among students. For instance, a review of LLS instruction in Saudi Arabia found that most studies reported positive outcomes (Al-Qahtani & Al-Bulushi, 2020). Relatedly, Dalman and Plonsky's (2025) meta-analysis documented the overall effectiveness of strategy instruction, observing a medium-sized effect on listening comprehension. Ajideh et al. (2018) demonstrated that explicit teaching of metacognitive reading strategies significantly improved the reading comprehension of students in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts. In general, explicit metacognitive strategy instruction has been found to positively affect both reading and writing comprehension in English language learners (Ahmadi et al., 2018; Jafari & Ketabi, 2022; Nejad & Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki, 2015).

The variables of implementing effective strategy instruction, however, have also been noted in the literature. These include contextual factors, such as learner demographics (age, proficiency level, and cultural background) and the instruction methods utilized (Dalman & Plonsky, 2025; Plonsky, 2011). In short, there is a substantiative, positive correlation between strategy instruction and language acquisition and enhanced proficiency.

2.2. Preferred Strategies among Different Learner Groups

There is a fair amount of documentation on strategy preferences of second language learners. A prominent theme emerging from the literature is the dominant role of metacognitive strategies, which entail planning, monitoring, and evaluating processes. These have been widely reported as

favored strategies by many groups (Di et al., 2022; Hanafiah et al., 2021; Rahman, 2020) including specialized ones like engineering technology students (Sari et al., 2019). Other studies have found that metacognitive, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies are a suite that is commonly reported by language learners (Nawaz et al., 2021; Kazi & Iqbal, 2011; Kenol & Hashim, 2022).

In contrast, primary English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in Malaysia were reported to show a marked preference for affective reading strategies (Dawi & Hashim, 2022). Affective strategies focus on managing emotions and maintaining motivation during learning. However, these top reported strategies included "look for things (readings) that are not hard" and "look at the headings" to understand. Arguably, these could be interpreted as metacognitive and cognitive in nature. Still, the researchers looked at the results through the lens of managing anxiety by using safer and easier strategies.

In conclusion, previous findings have documented strategy preferences of varied learner groups. Overall, it appears that metacognitive strategies are among the most preferred, possibly due to their ability to effectivly plan other strategies.

3. Background

This qualitative study focused on eliciting the language learning strategy (LLS) aspirations of EFL learners at a private university in Taiwan. The participants consisted of 57 students who were exposed to LLS teaching, enabling an exploration of strategy usage post-instruction. All participants completed the one semester course entitled Language Learning Strategies. This course was an overview of LLS that included self-regulation (Oxford, 2017) and related traits of strategic language learners. It also included a basic introduction of LLS categories: metacognitive, cognitive, compensation, memory, social, and affective. Essentially, the course was a broad overview of LLS and was designed to foster strategy awareness. All of the participants were learners of English as a second language. In Taiwan, students take English classes from elementary school to senior high school. Moreover, each

participant was an English major with the exception of two, who were majoring in International Business. The participants were comprised of first year to fourth year students.

The study aim was to discover what strategies these learners were interested in adopting after receiving structured strategy instruction.

The specific research questions guiding the investigation were as follows:

RQ1: What are the most commonly chosen strategies that students report an interest in adopting?

RQ2: What themes emerge from these choices?

4. Method

At the conclusion of instruction, participants were invited to answer a single open-ended question: "What is a strategy that you encountered during this course which you have never tried before but would like to try? Why?" A strategy encountered was defined as any LLS that that a participant was exposed to during the one-semester course. This could be from the instructor, a classmate, or the participant's own research. All responses were collected anonymously in English, and each student response was assigned a code number.

A total of 57 valid responses yielded a substantive dataset for thematic investigation. Initial analysis categorized responses into 34 general strategy categories (i.e. cognitive) and 23 more specific strategies (i.e. guessing vocabulary from context). Regarding the second research question, coding was performed manually using thematic analysis to methodically find, arrange, and code patterns of meaning within a dataset after gathering student responses (Creswell, 2007; Fereday & Cochrane, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012). Both researchers independently coded the data to achieve inter-coder reliability, condensed the codes, and separated the data into themes for study. Thus, this analysis aimed to uncover common themes associated with the chosen strategies, providing deeper insights into the learners' motivations and feelings. Overall, the methodology employed in this study highlights the reflective journey of language learners toward adopting new strategies.

5. Results

Initial investigation revealed that responses could be categorized into general strategies and more specific strategies. Amongst the general strategies (n=34), the plurality of responses chose affective strategies (n=10). In the specific strategy group (n=23), language learning journals accounted for the majority (n = 15). The thematic analysis was performed on these responses to derive nuanced meanings from the participants.

Table 1 shows the emergent codes, common patterns, and final themes for affective strategies.

Table 1
The Emergent Codes, Common Patterns, and Final Themes for Affective Strategies

Student Codes	Emergent Codes	Common Patterns	Final Themes
Student Code 1	-Emotional management during speeches -Overcoming nervousnesss during speeches -Relaxation and calmness -Meditation or deep breathing -Focus -Self-talk -Recognizing self-emotions -Self-affirmations -Seeking advice	-Emotional Management -Meditation -Relaxation -Self-affirmations -Self-dialogue -Interacting with peers	*Affective Strategies help students with their:* *Emotional management to overcome or reduce anxiety, frustrations, and fears during speeches. *Positive affirmations through self-dialogue
Student Code 2	-Emotional management -Positive learning mentality and attitude -Controlling anxiety -Relaxation, deep breath, meditation -Self-talk -Self-monitoring and regulation -Interacting with others	-Emotional management -Positive attitude -Controlling anxiety -Relaxation, meditation -Self-dialogue -Self-monitoring -Interacting with peers	*Relaxation and meditation *Self-recognition or affirmations *Interactions with peers
Student Code 3	-Stress avoidance -Positive self-talk -Emotional tracking and monitoring -Sharing emotions with others	-Self-dialogue -Emotional management -Interacting with peers	
Student Code 4	-Autonomous learner -Interactions	-Interacting with peers	
Student Code 5	-Feel lost and anxious -Self-awareness -Adaptability -Emotional management	-Emotional management -Self-awareness	
Student Code 6	-Reducing stress -Self-construction -Self-talk -Overcoming fears -Gaining confidence	-Emotional management through reducing stress and fears -Self-dialogue -Self-confidence	

Table 1. *(cont'd)*

Student Codes	Emergent Codes	Common Patterns	Final Themes
Student Code 7	-Emotional management -Reducing anxiety -Maintaining motivation -Positive mindset -Deep breathing -Self-talk -Rewarding -Emotional awareness -Visualization or mental imagery -Sense of community -Interacting with others -Open-mindnesss attitude	-Emotional management by reducing anxiety -Positive mindset -Self-dialogue -Interacting with peers -Relaxation	
Student Code 8	-Emotional management -Self-encouragement -Self-awareness -Anxiety and frustration -Rewarding and affirmations -Keep me calm and focused -Relaxation -Self-talk	-Emotional management by reducing anxiety and frustration -Self-affirmations -Relaxation -Calmness and focused -Self-dialogue	
Student Code 9	-Positive reinforcement -Reducing stress -Discussing with peers	-Reducing stress -Positive reinforcements -Interacting with peers	
Student Code 10	-Handling emotions such as stress -Emotions were ignored like anxiety and pressure -Self-reflection to relax -Using online tools-can help manage stress -Sharing feelings with friends for support -Listening to methods from others on how to reduce stress -Understanding other culture helps me address emotions like anxiety or frustration	-Handling emotions -Self-reflection -Using online tools, understanding cultures and listening to different methods to reduce stress, anxiety, and frustrations	

Overall, participants who expressed interest in affective strategies often used keywords such as "emotional management," "relaxation," "self-dialogue / affirmations," "deep breathing," and "interaction." These sentiments reflected a common motivation among learners that affective strategies could play a critical role in fostering resilience for the challenges of second language learning. Several participants reported that techniques such as meditation and positive self-talk could be effective in helping them manage anxiety and maintain a motivated or growth mindset. Two sample extracts highlight this sentiment:

> *"I have never really done affective strategies but I would like to try them to manage my emotions. I want to try practicing mindfulness and relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or visualization. This could help me to stay calm, reduce anxiety, and*

focus better. Additionally, I plan to use positive self-talk to build my confidence."

"I now realize how important it is to keep my mood steady and avoid big stress. If I feel too much frustration, I might just give up faster. Maybe saying positive stuff to myself, or doing deep breathing can make me feel less anxious."

Regarding interaction, the participants acknowledged its importance but also the anxiety that may come with it. Here, the dominant theme was one of managing anxiety. There were also consistent sentiments of sharing struggles and successes with others for feedback and greater motivation. Two sample extracts illustrate these themes:

"Social strategies involve interacting with others to enhance language acquisition. Affective strategies can address this anxiety by promoting relaxation techniques and reframing negative thoughts. By managing my emotional responses, I can increase my willingness to participate in social interactions."
"Affective and social strategies go pretty well together, I think. Telling classmates about my struggles or small achievements can let me feel I'm not alone. We can support each other with motivational words."

Perhaps more significantly, all participants seemed to frame affective strategies in a metacognitive sense. That is, a set of strategies that can inform the learning process. This is evident in the following sample extracts:

"For example, after completing a language task, I can reflect not only on what I learned but also on how I felt during the process. If I notice patterns of anxiety or frustration, I can proactively introduce relaxation techniques or motivational tools to address these emotions in future sessions."
"The strategy that I chose connects to self-awareness because when I notice my emotions, I can find the problem and make changes. It also connects to adaptability because I can adjust to different emotions and use the right methods. Resilience helps me deal with emotional situation by changing my approach to get better results."

In addition to "manage," other consistent terms were "adjust" or "adaptability," all of which make up an underlying metacognitive theme. This is noteworthy due to its correlation with previous findings on preferred strategies. As already described, metacognitive strategies are amongst the most commonly reported by successful language learners. Overall, the sentiments highlight affective strategies as vital components of self-regulation that enhance motivation and overall learning.

Among the plethora of strategies discussed, the 'keeping a language learning journal' strategy was the most prevalent, cited by 15 students. Table 2 shows the emergent codes, common patterns, and final themes for the language learning journal choices.

Table 2
The Emergent Codes, Common Patterns, and Final Themes for the Language Learning Journal Choices

Student Codes	Emergent Codes	Common Patterns	Final Themes
Student Code 1	-concentrate -monitor and evaluate -recall vocabulary -seek feedback -connect language and culture	-Journaling and taking notes improve focus, track and assess vocabulary recall, get feedback, and establish a connection between language and culture.	*The language learning journal is a valuable tool for managing emotions to help increase motivation and confidence. *The language learning journal records students' sentences that contain grammatical errors, and language learning progress by using AI tools to monitor vocabulary recall, retention, and self-efficacy. *The language learning journal promotes cultural awareness and understanding by documenting conversations with native speakers and fostering a connection between language and culture.
Student Code 2	-tracking, controlling, and managing emotions such as nervousness and frustrations -breathing techniques like relaxation or meditation to reduce stress -talking to oneself to concentrate progress and maintain motivation -staying confident and motivated	-Emotions like anxiety and frustration can be tracked, managed, and controlled with the aid of a language learning journal. -Relaxation techniques such as meditation or relaxation help people focus, stay motivated, and feel less stressed by having self-dialogue.	
Student Code 3	-records emotions like frustrations monitors learning habits and processes -assesses language skills such as vocabulary and grammar -tracks achievements -notes takeaways and reflections for self-awareness and motivation	-Language learning journals document accomplishments, frustrations, habits, language proficiency evaluations, and reflections for motivation and self-awareness.	
Student Code 4	-outlines planning, reviewing, and study materials -tracks struggles and obstacles -records information for self-improvement and reflection of emotion -basis for formulating a checklist for vocabulary retention and learning autonomy	-Reflection strategies involve organizing, reviewing, and studying materials, tracking difficulties, documenting information for emotional management and self-improvement, and creating a checklist for vocabulary retention and learning autonomy.	
Student Code 5	-records vocabulary and learning habits -helps set up plans and goals, and daily schedules -monitors learning routines and process for self-awareness, reflection, and motivation -assists formulating learning strategies for self-practice -tracks feedback through interactions	-The Language Learning Journal aids in creating plans, tracking vocabulary, learning habits, daily schedules, motivation, self-awareness, self-practice strategies, and tracking feedback through interactions.	

Table 2 *(cont'd)*

Student Codes	Emergent Codes	Common Patterns	Final Themes
Student Code 6	-manages emotions while tracking feelings, problems, and progress -tracks relaxation techniques to reduce negative emotions such as anxiety and frustrations -monitors inner drive and motivation to be more confident, open-minded, and optimistic -records on setting up learning goals -take notes on the feedback of others for positive reinforcements	-The Language Learning Journal involves managing emotions, recording progress, relaxation techniques, motivation, setting learning goals, and taking notes on feedback for positive reinforcement.	
Student Code 7	-assesses learning process, goals, emotions, and improvements -take notes on how to foster interactions with native speakers to understand various cultures and languages.	-The Language Learning Diary evaluates the learning process, goals, emotions, and achievements, while recording interactions with native speakers to enhance understanding of diverse cultures and languages.	
Student Code 8	-records mistakes and improvements through diary and AI tools -assesses learning autonomy and progress -take notes learning habits and strategies for self-efficacy -helps remember suggestions and culture exchanges	-The diary tracks learning habits, self-efficacy techniques, evaluates learning autonomy, aids recall of recommendations, facilitates cross-cultural interactions, and utilizes AI tools for error and advancement documentation.	
Student Code 9	-creates connections and interactions through cultural understanding -take notes vocabulary or phrases through cultural interactions -manages negative emotions such as frustrations, anxiety, and stress -monitors goals, activities, challenges, and progress -helps build self-confidence through writing reflections and learning processes using AI tools -evaluates learning experiences and methods for self-development -documents ways for motivation and confidence	-The Language Learning Journal promotes cultural understanding, manages negative emotions, tracks progress, and promotes self-confidence through AI tools, and assessing learning experiences and strategies.	

Table 2 *(cont'd)*

Student Codes	Emergent Codes	Common Patterns	Final Themes
Student Code 10	-understanding or managing emotions for self-awareness that should not affect motivation -evaluating learning progress -addressing learning needs, weaknesses, challenges and difficulties -writing promotes independent learning -helping remembering things such as vocabulary, current tasks AI tools help translation and encourages active use of the language -providing opportunities for feedback and improvement Fostering cultural understanding by tracking observations -helping recall learnings and reflections	-The Language Learning Journal covers self-awareness, motivation, assessment, learning needs, writing, AI tools, feedback, cultural understanding, and recalling learnings, promoting independent learning, memory retention, and active language use.	
Student Code 11	-checks daily or weekly progress as well as challenges and difficulties -monitors good learning habits to ensure consistency -helps improve writing skill using the target language -tracks achievements -helps increase confidence and motivation -supports self-awareness and emotional management like anxiety, stress, and frustrations -provides feedback and progress through AI tools -records observations and patterns for self-reflections, social interactions, and language use	-The Language Learning Journal monitors progress, self-awareness, emotional management, and learning habits, providing AI feedback and tracking daily or weekly progress.	
Student Code 12	-helps arrange learning strategies -reviews language learning processes and progress -helps reflect learning habits -evaluates learning improvements -assesses the effectiveness of learning strategies -shows both positive and negative impacts on language learning -helps motivate in language learning AI tools support language learning -enhances cultural understanding	-A language learning journal aids in organizing strategies, reviewing procedures, assessing progress, evaluating effectiveness, demonstrating effects, encouraging learning, utilizing AI tools, and improving cultural awareness.	

Table 2 *(cont'd)*

Student Codes	Emergent Codes	Common Patterns	Final Themes
Student Code 13	-records daily progress and learning tasks -reflects on challenges -documents new strategies -deepens language learning process -assesses on what was done or not -records emotional challenges -promotes self-awareness -fosters a deeper understanding of language acquisition process -sets goals -builds confidence and increases motivation -helps remember plans and set goals -documents outcomes and revises new approaches -improves note-taking, vocabulary, and self-reflection -offers and outlet for frustrations and a way to celebrate achievements -reminds of same level of commitment and creativity for consistent language learning improvement	-A language learning journal records daily progress, reflects difficulties, and enhances the learning process. It fosters self-awareness, sets goals, boosts motivation, improves note-taking, vocabulary, and self-reflection. It also provides an outlet for someone's frustrations and encourages continuous improvement.	
Student Code 14	-taking notes helps remember information -helps track mistakes and remember for corrections -keeps connections with language learning strategies -records and monitors own learning for reflection, awareness, and improvement -helps designs tasks and learning processes -monitors and analyzes emotions for learning improvement -explores suitable options for self-improvement -records deep understanding about words or phrases used in various cultures	-A language learning journal helps in memory retention, error tracking, strategy maintenance, reflection, task design, emotion analysis, self-improvement, and understanding cultural vocabulary through detailed notes.	
Student Code 15	-writing a journal to reflect on my emotions during learning will help me understand my challenges and find ways to cope with them	-Writing a journal for emotional refletion	

Analysis of these responses indicated consistent usage of the verbs "monitor," "adjust," and "track." The terms "self-reflection/reflect" and "emotional management/manage emotions" were also common threads of sentiment. The sample extracts show these themes:

"Writing a learning journal can help me monitor my emotions and record frustrations or the sense of achievement. Thus, I can know where I should adjust to make sure my emotions won't be a hinderance. I think the most efficient adjustment would be to modify my external environment."

"With the language learning journal I can monitor my learning routine and evaluate the daily results. The good thing about writing [a] journal is that I can try out different strategies and document which ones work for me and which don't."

"It's not just about recording activities but also reflecting on personal feelings and experiences, which can change daily."

These results suggest that the participants perceived journaling not only as an affective strategy but also as an essential tool that facilitated greater self-regulation of their strategy use and emotional responses. This, in turn, would sustain motivation. This motivational aspect was often expressed explicitly, as the extract below shows.

"With the fixed record, I can be more conscious to check my learning habit and process for long term motivation and success."

Interestingly, there was also some emphasis on using a journal for vocabulary learning. This was evident in almost all of the responses. A few sample extracts are below:

"In my opinion, any reflection strategy can help me with its benefits of improving learning autonomy and enhancing vocabulary retention."

"On enhancing vocabulary retention, I think recording myself could be benenful. By listen to the recordings, occuring errors become obvious. Then, by keeping noticed mistakes on a journal and remember them the next time, or even better, use those notes to do another recording instantly and try to prevent those mistakes from happening again."

"I can use the journal to jot down new vocabulary, phrases, and grammar structures, which helps me with remembering."

In sum, there seemed to be a strong sentiment that journal writing would enable students to track their personal learning progress and gain insights into their effective strategies. Participants noted that journaling provided them with an opportunity to reflect on their feelings—both positive and negative. Also, vocabulary learning emerged as a specific function of language learning journals. Therefore, a language learning journal was perceived as essentially a flexible, personalized instrument that gives students the confidence to take ownership of their language learning journey while achieving their goals.

6. Discussion

The results of this inquiry clearly indicate some strategy awareness. This is consistent with previous findings that have found explicit LLS instruction yielding not only greater awareness but language learning achievements (Alnufaie, 2022; Liu, 2020; Nosratania et al., 2014). However, it is important to note that much of the previous research was focused only on metacognitive training. In the current study, the LLS instruction was a broad overview. Thus, the post-instruction inquiry was open. Affective strategies emerged as the dominant choice for untried strategies that participants wanted to try. The fact that these strategies were relatively untried is in line with some previous findings (Chen & Pan, 2015; Lai, 2009; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Mahalingam & Yunus, 2016, Tumbarayan et al., 2024). For instance, Chen and Pan (2015) reported that junior high school students exhibited infrequent application of affective strategies. Lai (2009) also found that affective strategies were the least frequently reported amongst university learners.

Our thematic analysis revealed that emotional management was a common theme, particularly for overcoming challenges and interacting with others. This seems to correspond with some previous data. Ginting and Sebayang (2021) found a negative correlation between Indonesian English majors' speaking anxiety and the use of affective strategies. In the current study, the potential perceived by participants could also be seen as embodying resilience and a growth mindset, described by Oxford (2017) to be crucial features of a strategic language learner. These two underpinnings have

been observed in successful language learners (Redmer, 2022).

Amongst 23 specific strategies, "keeping a language learning journal" was the majority choice. Our participants expressed a consistent sentiment that the journal could be a valuable tool for self-regulation by maintaining motivation and adaptabiliy. Some prior findings have indeed suggested that journaling positively impacts self-regulation in second language learners (Chodkiewicz, 2023; Hussein, 2018; Zhang et al., 2022).

Moreover, in the current study, the journal was seen as a tool that could enhance vocabulary recall and retention. This seems to be a unique finding that may not have been expressed in other inquiries. Generally, participants clearly recognized the transformative capacity of reflecting upon their experiences. Journals were perceived as instrumental in fostering a deeper understanding of their strategies and feelings, thus aiding them in charting a clearer pathway.

Ultimately, the findings from this study contribute to our understanding of the effects of LLS instruction. There may be real potential to awaken untried strategy awareness. Student responses regarding this issue could also provide rich data to individual instructors about the needs and current practices of their students.

6.1. Pedagogical Implications

The present study is unique. It contributes to the discourse surrounding explicit strategy instruction in language learning, yet it also invites further inquiry into the unexplored strategies learners consider after such instruction. Indeed, another potential benefit of instruction may be student awareness of untried strategies. This extract from one participant who chose journaling illustrates the potential:

> "This course made me realize that addressing the emotional side of learning is just as important as focusing on study techniques."

There could be variations such as eliciting students' strategic preferences at the beginning of a course. This could allow instructors to adapt their teaching strategies, accordingly, fostering a more responsive and personalized learning experience. For instance, conducting preliminary assessments that gauge students' prior knowledge and interests regarding different strategies can guide the design of course materials and instructional methods.

Regarding the present study, affective strategies emerged as the dominant choices. Affective strategies have been increasingly recognized as important for effective language learning. A study by Samadian & Birjandi (2015) demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between various affective strategies and language learning efficacy among Iranian English language learners. Their research indicated that learners who actively employed affective strategies, such as self-encouragement and emotional management, tended to perform better in speaking proficiency. Additionally, a study conducted by Yunus et al. (2013) found that Malaysian gifted students frequently utilized affective strategies as part of their language learning approach.

Lastly, Khosravi's (2012) research observed varying degrees of strategy use according to learners' proficiency levels, with higher proficiency students exhibiting a stronger preference for affective strategies. This suggests that as learners progress, their ability to navigate affective complexities may become more significant in their language acquisition process.

In summary, the literature supports the assertion that affective strategies not only play a crucial role in managing emotions but also enhance overall learner motivation and language proficiency. Yet, there may be a lack of awareness of affective strategies within some learner groups. There is much to explore here pedagogically.

6.2. Study Limitations

While the findings of this study provide valuable insights, several limitations must be noted. The sample consisted solely of participants enrolled as language majors at a private university in Taiwan. This could limit the generalizability of the results. Moreover, characteristics such as age and gender were not documented, which may

contribute to variations in strategy preferences and choices. It should also be noted that participant proficiency levels were not determined. Previous literature indicates that strategy preferences often correlate with learners' proficiency levels, making it imperative to examine learners across diverse academic backgrounds and competencies.

6.3. Future Research

This exploratory study captures interest in the language learning strategies that learners consider adopting after completing a comprehensive strategy instruction course. Future research should build upon these findings by extending the inquiry across diverse educational contexts, exploring the influences of factors such as cultural background on strategy choices. Other variables like age, gender, and language proficiency would present rich avenues for future research, helping educators understand how these variables impact learner preferences.

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