

Learners' Beliefs about the Effectiveness of Learning English Online and Their Use of Strategies: Do College Majors Matter?

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the relationship between learners' beliefs about the effectiveness of learning English online and their use of strategies. It is motivated by two facets. First, learners' beliefs are conceptions of learning that learners hold and bring to the learning task (Benson & Lor, 1999) and learning strategies contribute to the development of the language system and affect learning directly (Rubin, 1987). Therefore, study of strategy use as an important mental or behavioral operation and learners' beliefs as a determining factor influencing learning might shed light on understanding how learners' beliefs relate to the skills they develop in learning languages. Second, online learning has been applied broadly as part of curriculum in learning English due to a very high rate of internet access, and the features of sheer flexibility, such as the repetitive practice, and time and geographical convenience.

The participants are 351 freshman students from a university in central Taiwan. A set of questionnaires including—Strategies Used in Online Learning and Beliefs about Online Learning—is adopted.

The results have shown that the participants use compensation strategies (Mean 3.22) most frequently, followed by cognitive strategies (Mean 3.11); the least used strategies fall into the categories of social (Mean 2.84), and affective strategies (Mean 2.79). Non-English majors use compensation strategies most, while English majors prefer metacognitive, cognitive and compensation strategies.

Correlation coefficient analysis indicates a fairly strong relationship between different strategy categories and belief types among all the participants. Interestingly, for English majors, there are no significant correlations between compensation strategies and all belief types as well as the entire belief questionnaire. Finally, English majors significantly use more strategies in the six categories than non-English majors, except that there is no difference between English majors and engineering majors in using compensation strategies.

Key words: learners' beliefs about the effectiveness of learning English online, online English learning strategies, English learning strategies

學習者對於英語線上學習效率之信念與學習策略運用： 學生之主修科系具關聯性嗎？

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摘要

本研究旨在探討英語學習者對於英語線上學習效率之信念與學習策略運用的關聯性。研究動機基於兩個面向：第一、信念為學習者持有之概念，學習策略則對語言系統建構具直接的貢獻性；第二、英語線上學習，因其極具靈活性，可反覆練習且不受時間地點限制，已廣泛被運用於教學課程。本研究以問卷為施測工具，受測者為 351 名台灣中部大學之大一學生。

研究結果顯示：最常被使用的策略為補償性策略 (Mean 3.22)，其次為認知策略 (Mean 3.11)；最低頻率使用的策略為情感策略 (Mean 2.79)，其次為社交策略 (Mean 2.84)。外文系學生最常使用後設認知策略、認知策略及補償性策略。學習者對於英語線上學習效率之信念與學習策略運用，二者具顯著正相關性。然而，外文系學生的英語線上學習效率之信念（三大信念類別與整體信念）與補償性策略，均未存在顯著相關性。此外，外文系學生運用六大學習策略顯著高於非外文系學生；但對於補償性策略之應用，外文系學生與工學院學生二者間並未存有顯著差異性。

關鍵字：英語線上學習效率之信念、英語線上學習策略、英語學習策略