Teaching and Learning Methods Section (EMI)

A Qualitative Investigation into English Learners' Language Learning Strategies in an English-Medium Mainland-Hong Kong Cooperative University in China

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Abstract

The use and effectiveness of Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) are thought to be shaped by personal variances as well as environmental and contextual factors. Given the intricate and dynamic characteristics of LLSs, a qualitative research approach is fitting for investigating this topic. This paper details the qualitative findings from a multiple-case study on English learning strategies among university students in the context of an English-medium university and complements earlier quantitative research on the topic (Luo et al., 2024). The data was gathered from semi-structured interviews. Findings show that the construction of students' LLRs is profoundly influenced by significant others and their individual interest. There is considerable diversity in the size of LLS repertoires among learners as well as significant variation in their preference for dominant LLSs and their usage. The transition to an English-medium university environment has transformed participants' perspective of the language from a distinct subject to a vital tool for acquiring professional knowledge. As a result, they place a greater emphasis on enhancing their speaking and writing skills. However, most learners lack affective strategies to manage their speaking anxiety. This study not only enhances understanding of students' LLSs but also yields some important pedagogical implications.

Keywords: language learning strategies (LLSs), English-medium instruction (EMI), pedagogy, cooperation between Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong, internationalization, diversity

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Over the past forty years, there has been a significant increase in research activities focused on the strategies that second or foreign language (L2) learners employ either during the language learning process or during language use or both (Cohen, 1998). Language learning strategies (LLSs) have been defined as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1996, p. 8). Researchers classify LLSs differently based on various perspectives. One of the most commonly followed classifications of LLSs is provided by Oxford (1990), who claimed that two main categories of LLSs are direct strategy, including memory strategy, cognitive strategy, and composition strategy, and indirect strategy, including metacognitive, affective and social strategy. Although there are different definitions and classifications, most studies have reached a consensus that effective learning strategies improve not only learning efficiency but also learning effectiveness.

Under the influence of the latest research development in this area, it can be argued that LLSs are complex and dynamic (Duong & Nguyen, 2006; Nguyen & Terry, 2017), being influenced by individual differences and contextual factors.

Therefore, the effective use of LLSs is determined by the interaction between a "thinking, feeling human being, with an identity, a personality, a unique history and background" (Ushioda, 2009, p. 215) and "the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro-and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves, and is inherently part of" (Ushioda, 2009, p. 220).

Literature Review

A notable study with wide scope and depth of analysis was conducted by Peacock and Ho (2003). They investigated the application of 50 common second language learning strategies among 1,006 students across eight disciplines at a university in Hong Kong. The study reported a positive correlation between proficiency and the use of 27 specific strategies, highlighting the potential benefits of strategic learning in enhancing language proficiency.

Another study within this field was undertaken by Ras (2013), aiming to investigate and provide a comprehensive understanding of the learning strategies employed by excellent students in reading. The study included 101 participants and reported differences in language learning strategies among students in terms of gender, ethnic group, parents' income, and

academic results in secondary school. It can be concluded that these strategies were impacted by various demographic and socio-economic factors.

In a study examining LLSs of students in the University of Hong Kong, Wang et al. (2021) primarily investigated the use of cognitive, memory, and metacognitive strategies among Cantonese native speakers. One key finding was the predominance of cognitive strategies and least utilization of memory strategies among these participants. This indicated that participants understood and manipulated the language material in a conscious way rather than relying on rote memorization techniques. This study also found significant variations in the use of memory strategies among male students.

Nguyen and Terry (2017) employed a qualitative approach to explore English learners' LLSs by focusing on the lived experiences and attitudes of both students and teachers in a specific educational context. Data for the study were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 English teachers and 10 students at a university in Vietnam. This study reported that all participants acknowledged the importance of LLSs in English learning. In addition, students' personal variables and learning environment mutually influenced their choice and use of learning strategies.

Putri (2020) conducted a case study focusing on a single primary school student who has developed excellent English abilities in Thailand. Data were collected through interviews and observations. It was reported that the participant employed a broad range of learning strategies in English study. Particularly, the participant frequently used social strategies by interacting with foreign teachers. These findings highlighted the importance of active engagement and personal initiative in language learning, even in contexts with limited language exposure.

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that LLSs are context-specific. This suggests a need for more studies to explore the characteristics of learners' LLSs in various educational settings. To address this research gap, the current study aims to explore the characteristics of students' LLSs in an English-medium cooperative university between Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong, located in South China. The present article follows an earlier, quantitative study of LLSs in the same educational context (Luo et al., 2024).

Methodology

Context of the Study

The context of this study is the first full-scale cooperation in higher education

between Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong, Beijing Normal-Hong Kong Baptist University (BNBU), formerly United International College). BNBU, which is situated in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, has the historical mission of advancing the internationalization of Chinese higher education. BNBU provides students with a unique learning experience that includes instruction in English for all subjects, teaching and assessment standards adopted from Hong Kong Baptist University and faculty members from over 30 countries and regions. According to BNBU's annual report on careers and employment in 2022, 81% of students opted for postgraduate studies abroad and 83.5 % of those students entered world's top 100 universities.

Participants

Given that qualitative research seeks participants "who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 126), a purposive sampling method was used to recruit students. To minimize subjectivity of purposive sampling, researchers in this study identified clear criteria for participant selection, including gender, major, and language proficiency. Ten sophomores from various majors with different levels of language proficiency in BNBU were recruited. Three participants major in English Language and Literature, and six participants are from the three most enrolled non-English majors, namely Applied Economics, Finance, and Accounting. Another participant majored in Public Relations and Advertisement. The table below lists the participants' pseudonyms, majors, genders, and language proficiency.

Table 1 *Detailed information of the participants*

Name	Major	Gender	Language proficiency
Sellina	English Language and Literature	Female	High
Yasmine	English Language and Literature	Female	Moderate
Leo	English Language and Literature	Male	Moderate
Galen	Finance	Male	High
Lily	Finance	Female	Low
Queena	Accounting	Female	High
Salina	Accounting	Female	Moderate
Zelle	Applied Economics	Female	Moderate
Maria	Applied Economics	Female	Low
Fiona	Public Relations and Advertisement	Female	High

Data Collection and Analysis

In this qualitative study, a multiple-case study method was used. As defined by Nisbet and Watt (1980), a multiple-case study with a focus on a particular group or individuals explores complex phenomena holistically rather than from a reductive perspective. Therefore, researchers tried to extensively explore the characteristics of the English learning strategies among the participants in BNBU.

The main data collection tool was semi-structured interviews based on an Interview Guide (Appendix A). Participants' interviews were recorded, transcribed, organized, and analyzed with the assistance of Nvivo 12. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data, a procedure that "identifies, analyzes, and codes emergent themes within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79), and as Clarke and Braun (2014) state, isaccessible and flexible. The thematic analysis in this study started with an "immersive process" (Mann, 2016, p. 212), which involved listening to recorded interviews in Chinese repeatedly, transcribing them, and translating them into English using a repeated checking strategy to capture participants' meanings accurately. Theories related to LLSs were utilized to complete the analysis and investigation. After identifying the preliminary and overarching codes of individual participants, a cross-case analysis was performed to identify themes related to the research question.

Results and Discussion

The qualitative data collected in this study allow for a preliminary understanding of the characteristics of LLSs of students in BNBU, which could potentially influence the daily pedagogical and learning routines of the English for Academic Purposes teachers and learners. According to the analysis, a number of key themes emerged, including (1) the construction of LLSs influenced by significant others and individual interests; (2) diversity in the size of LLS repertoires among learners; (3) personal preference of dominant LLSs, and how to use LLSs; (4) environmental influence on strategy employment; (5) the lack of affective strategies in learning the speaking skill.

LLS Construction Influenced by Significant Others and Individual Interest

In all the participants' data, the influence of significant others (i.e., English teachers and parents) and the participants' interest on their use of LLSs emerged as a common theme. A similar finding was reported by Wang et al. (2021) and Putri

(2020). Sellina mentioned that her mother played a significant role in advising her to memorize words as if she was singing a song. This means that she could try to break words into syllables for easier memorization. This strategy was quite effective for her.

I don't have much difficulty memorizing vocabulary, because I have my own method. My mother advised me to memorize words like singing a song, breaking the words into syllables for recitation. (Sellina)

Sellina also pointed out that one of her foreign teachers had a significant impact on her strategies in speaking English. Initially, she was shy and reluctant to express herself in English because she feared that she would make mistakes. However, the encouragement from a foreign teacher helped her to focus on communication rather than perfection, which in turn boosted her confidence.

When I first began practicing spoken English, I was worried that I would make mistakes when chatting with my teacher. I was also worried about my pronunciation, so I didn't want to speak up. However, a foreign teacher later told me that it was already quite good for me to be able to speak English like this at my age. This encouraged me to speak up, with a focus first on expressing meaning. As my knowledge of grammar improved over time, I stopped making very noticeable grammatical errors. (Sellina)

Similarly, Galen stated that his junior high school English teacher, who was an English enthusiast, had a profound influence on his approach to learn and memorize new words. The teacher suggested students that students use the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, which not only provides the meaning of a word but also its collocations and usage.

The influence of my junior high school teacher was profound. He spent time with us looking up the Oxford Dictionary in class, discussing usage and collocations of new words……. Using the dictionary for learning, treating the dictionary as a textbook, allowed for a deeper understanding of vocabulary. The focus was not on the meaning of the words, but rather on how to use the vocabulary. This is an excellent learning method. I use this method to memorize at least ten words every day. (Galen)

When talking about their interests, the majority of participants mentioned that they enjoy listening to English songs and watching English TV shows, movies, or short videos, as these activities help them learn new vocabulary and natural expressions.

My personal method for practicing spoken English involves listening to songs and watching TV shows. Watching TV shows is much more relaxing. Even if a TV show or movie doesn't have subtitles, you can generally understand the meaning just from the pictures. During the process of watching, my English improves. (Marria)

When I was in the final year of my middle school, I had access to a variety of on-line English resources (i.e., on-line short videos). I found that English can be learned through more natural ways, beyond just translating from English to Chinese. (Yasmine)

After I watch some videos for some time, my listening skills improved. (Yasmine)

By contrast, Fiona enjoyed watching lecture videos and chatting with her foreign friends. She found, in particular, that interacting with others was quite interesting.

When traveling abroad, I also engage in many conversations with native speakers, which I find quite interesting. I enjoy the process of talking with others…….I find interacting with others quite interesting. (Fiona)

In conclusion, the guidance from English teachers and parents, alongside personal interests, contribute to more effective employment of LLSs in acquiring vocabulary, instilling confidence and enhancing communication skills in learners. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge and leverage these influences in language education to foster more effective LLSs employment.

Diversity in the Size of LLS Repertoires among Learners

Compared with other participants, two participants with high English proficiency employed a much wider array of English learning strategies. One of them is Galen, who expressed a profound love for English study. He views English as a useful tool that enables him to understand, explore, and communicate with people from different regions. Driven by his passion for English, he had experimented with various methods of learning and memorizing new English words until he discovered the most effective approach for him.

The approach I found effective was to use real-life situations to help me remember English words. For example, when I come across the word "volcano", I visualize erupting lava to help me to remember it. I find that using divergent thinking to memorize words seems to work better.

English is everywhere in life. For example, when you see a table, there might be

a book or newspaper on it. I believe that scene-based memorization is very helpful. (Galen)

Another unique practice that Galen has maintained over the years is learning at least ten new English words daily. He emphasized that he has many notebooks where he records the meanings, collocations and usage of these words.

I use the association method. When I encounter new vocabulary, I turn the word into a specific situation or image, especially those that I am interested in. I also look up those words in the dictionary to see their thorough explanation and learn how to use these words. I revise my notes regularly for profound memory. (Galen)

Galen also employs a variety of effective strategies. He participates in speaking contests to showcase his skills and boost his confidence. He meticulously revises his essays to ensure the accurate use of a broad range of vocabulary and diverse sentence structures. He learns advanced English grammar as needed for knowledge enhancement. Furthermore, he repeatedly watches English TV shows and analyzes their scripts. This helps him gain insights into foreign cultures and acquire useful spoken expressions.

I watch English TV shows every day. For me, Friends has had a significant impact. I watch the show with the script in hand. I learn those idioms to understand their culture better. After thoroughly researching and learning for about six or seven years, my spoken English has improved significantly. (Galen)

The encouragement that Sellina took from a foreign teacher to boost her confidence has been mentioned above, Another effective method she employs to enhance her speaking skills is by listening to English songs. She concentrates on the spoken expressions and idioms of lyrics. She also mentioned her fondness for practicing English speeches in front of a mirror in the evenings.

In the evenings, I enjoy practicing speeches on various topics in front of a mirror. When I encounter words I can't express, I use simple sentences to explain until I can clearly convey my thoughts. I make it a point to review some of my speeches, considering the topics from various angles to expand the content. Afterwards, I re-deliver the speech in front of the mirror. (Sellina)

Sellina also employs other effective strategies. She repeatedly revises her essays to ensure the accurate use of diverse sentence structures and advanced vocabulary. In addition, she joins international

social platforms to chat with foreigners to enhance her language skills and understand foreign cultures. Furthermore, she categorizes new vocabulary by field, including science and technology, humanities, philosophy, social sciences, history, and archaeology. More specifically, she uses effective methods to memorize words in the same field, such as prioritizing the most common ones, followed by infrequent ones.

Unlike Sellina, Leo stated that he had not found any particularly effective strategies for improving his speaking skills.

In terms of spoken English, I haven't found any particularly effective methods yet. At most, I study some sentence structures in spoken dialogues. (Leo)

Another participant who utilizes limited language learning strategies is Lily. She is learning English solely to pass exams. She avoids speaking with native English speakers for fear of making mistakes. Additionally, she primarily learns new words through rote memorization.

I rely on rote memorization. I write words down in a notebook, memorize them through example sentences, and review them multiple times to prepare exams. (Lily)

In conclusion, the participants' English learning strategies varied significantly, reflecting their differing beliefs and goals. Participants with a passion for the language and a strong desire to improve their language skills proactively explore and implement a wide range of learning strategies. Conversely, other participants who employ a limited range of learning strategies demonstrate less engagement in learning. This finding is in line with Ni et al. (2008) and Putri (2020). The two studies revealed that successful learners employed a wider range of LLSs.

Personal Preference of Dominant LLSs and Variation in Dominant LLSs Use

Adjikary (2020) reported a very divergent situation in the language learning strategies among students. This echoed the finding in this study. The participants' lived experiences reveal varied preferences for dominant language learning strategies. While most participants primarily use memory strategies, affective and social strategies significantly influence Sellina's English learning. She expressed that learning English well boosted her confidence and brought her a sense of accomplishment. Her success in learning English has even transformed her personality, shifting her from being introverted to more extroverted.

Subsequently, I became more willing to

express myself in English. When I couldn't articulate something directly, I would resort to simple sentences for explanation. This experience transformed my personality, making me more inclined to communicate with others. (Sellina)

Additionally, Sellina introduced her proactive strategy for improving her English skills. She actively seeks more opportunities to converse with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, including friends and teachers who are native English speakers. This strategy not only provides her with real-world contexts to practice her language skills but also enhances her understanding of various cultures.

I usually choose elective courses taught by foreign teachers. In this case, I am required to absorb professional knowledge in English. If the teacher is Chinese, I might be tempted to ask questions in Chinese. However, when the teacher is a foreigner, I am compelled to communicate in English. (Sellina)

As mentioned, one common strategy employed by all participants in this study is the use of a memory strategy, which contradicts the findings of Wang et al. (2021). In their study, participants employed a memory strategy least, predominantly utilizing a cognitive strategy. The predominant use of a memory strategy by participants in this study could be attributed to the fact that their English learning in middle and high school was primarily exam-oriented, requiring them to memorize words and grammar rules for exam preparation. However, they utilize a memory strategy by way of various methods. For instance, Leo shared his approach: he typically listens to the pronunciation of a new word, then silently memorizes its spelling. Afterward, he breaks the word's pronunciation into syllables, and while listening again, he tries to spell it out. In addition to this method, he took an online course to learn word roots and affixes.

I have a new method of memorizing words. I took an on-line course on word roots and affixes. I have learned that a root can have multiple meanings, and by combining it with prefixes and suffixes, one can deduce the meanings of words. (Leo)

In contrast to Leo's approach, Galen prefers to memorize words by their comprehensive explanations and fixed collocations and associating the meanings of new words with real-life scenarios. Unlike the others, Lily consistently employs rote memorization. Similarly, Marria adopts a strategy of repeatedly reading and writing new words to commit them to memory. In addition, he uses a smartphone application named Baicizhai to aid in memorizing new

vocabulary.

In conclusion, learner preferences for dominant LLSs can differ significantly. While memory strategies were common among participants, the use of affective and social strategies by Sellina highlighted the potential for effective use of those indirect strategies. The diverse approaches to memory strategy, ranging from Leo's syllable breakdown and root study to Galen's comprehensive explanations and Lily and Marria's rote memorization, further underscore the individualized nature of language learning.

Environmental Influence on Learners' Strategy Employment

Based on the collected data, it is evident that participants' LLSs were influenced by their learning environment and objectives. After entering their English-medium university, their opportunities to use English significantly increased compared to their time in middle and high schools. They are required to read English textbooks and research papers, listen to lectures in English, and complete assignments in English, such as essay writing, presentations, and debates. As a result, some participants do not view English as a separate subject, but rather as a tool for acquiring professional knowledge.

A significant shift in the participants'

memory strategy is the opportunity to repeatedly and naturally encounter new professional words in teachers' PPTs and textbooks. Consequently, they spend less time in deliberate rote memorization of words. Instead, they can learn these new terms more organically by understanding their meanings in specific contexts. The environmental influence on learners' LLRs was substantiated by Wang et al. (2022). They reported that education settings exert significant influence on students' choice and use of LLSs. Gao (2006) also documented the dynamicity of LLRs selection and employment under the influence of different learning context.

I no longer study English as a separate subject, and the need for mechanical repetition of word memorization has decreased. The main idea now is to treat English as a tool for acquiring professional knowledge. (Yasmine)

I don't study English as a standalone subject. I use English to learn other subjects. Traditional English teaching, which is knowledge-oriented, offers few opportunities to use the language. However, at university, I have more opportunities to use English. (Queena)

Because of this English-medium environment, participants have more chances to practice their English, such as using En-

glish to complete their assignments. These successful experiences in turn encourage their further improvement.

My confidence has been enhanced through various tasks such as discussions, presentations, and speaking exercises, largely due to the high grades I've achieved in these continuous assessments. (Queena)

After I completed tasks in English, the applause from my classmates made me feel that I did well, which encourages me. (Queena)

I once sought out a native English-speaking teacher at the ELC to practice IELTS speaking, which was free of charge. The conversation in that environment was quite enjoyable and helpful. Everyone has a desire to express themselves. Chatting with native speakers brought about a subconscious change in me. (Yasmine)

Moreover, most participants have plans to pursue their postgraduate studies abroad. Concurrently, most participants have expressed that their primary learning objective is to utilize English to effectively communicate essential information and developments within their professional fields. As a result, they place a greater emphasis on enhancing their speaking and writing skills.

In conclusion, the transition to an English-medium university environment has transformed participants' perspective of the language from a distinct subject to a vital tool for acquiring professional knowledge. This shift has also led to a change in their learning strategies, moving away from rote memorization to a more organic understanding of language. Additionally, the English-medium environment has provided participants with more chances to manage their speaking anxiety through affective strategies. Opportunities for social interaction with native English speakers have also provided them more chances to improve their speaking skills through social strategies.

Lack of Affective Strategies in Speaking Skill

From the interviews conducted, it is apparent that, with the exception of Galen, Sellina, and Fiona, the other participants expressed concerns about their speaking skills. Their worries primarily stemmed from a fear of struggling to find appropriate expressions to convey their thoughts, making grammar mistakes and having incorrect pronunciation. These concerns are indicative of deeper issues related to language proficiency and confidence. In other words, they lack the affective strategies to alleviate their anxiety about speaking English.

*I am not confident in speaking English with native speakers. I'm still worried that there might be some mistakes. I'm afraid that I might not speak well or be able to express myself. Speaking English with foreigners can easily make me feel nervous and flustered. (*Yasmine)

I do not use English in my daily life, because I find my native language more convenient. The use of English is limited to the classroom. I am fluent in Chinese, and English communication is less smooth. From what I've observed, there is no daily communication in English among my classmates. (Queena)

Whether it's using English to communicate with classmates in daily life or in the classroom, the fear of saying something wrong actually makes you hesitant to answer questions or express your views. (Leo)

Even if I can ask a question in English, I might not be able to have a back-and-forth conversation with the teacher in English. I'm still concerned that I won't find the appropriate English expressions. (Leo)

Salina also expressed that a significant amount of speaking anxiety stems from peer-pressure. She is acutely aware of the gap between her speaking abilities and those of these proficient speakers. She prefers to be silent in classes most of the time because she does not want to be perceived as showing off but with low language proficiency, for fear of being ostracized or isolated from their classmates.

Unless called upon, I would not voluntarily answer questions, fearing that others might perceive me as being both unskilled and boastful. I would choose to remain silent unless I am required to speak. I am afraid of being criticized. However, after entering university, I think that I am not as excellent as others and I am worried about being judged by others. Some classmates graduated from international high schools, and they often have good pronunciation. There are also some regional differences. I have an accent when I speak English and I tend to speak quite fast. (Salina)

In conclusion, speaking anxiety is not only rooted in students' perceived linguistic inadequacy, but is also fueled by a fear of judgement and criticism from their peers. These students are conscious of their limitations and they are keenly aware of the gap between their proficiency and that of their more fluent peers, which exacerbates their fear of speaking English. More importantly, they do have the awareness to use affective strategies to manage their emotional responses and build their confidence, thereby reducing their speaking anxiety. In other words, a lack of effective

strategies significantly impacts a student's willingness to engage in spoken English, both inside and outside the classroom.

From the aforementioned key themes, it can be concluded that various factors influence the language learning strategies (LLSs) of students at BNBU. The findings underscore the importance of significant others, individual interests and environmental influences in shaping these strategies. It is clear that the participants' LLSs are highly personalized, reflecting their individual experiences, goals, and preferences. In other words, language learning strategies among students are complex and dynamic.

Implications and Recommendations

The results show that there is significant diversity in the size of LLS repertoires among learners in the context of an English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) university in China, with some students employing a wide array of strategies driven by their passion for English, while others demonstrate a more passive learning attitude with a limited range of strategies. For students who possess limited LLS repertoires, educators could provide explicit training on a wider array of language learning strategies and how to effectively implement these strategies. Furthermore, teachers should strive to create a stimulating and engaging

learning environment that increases motivation for language learning. Additionally, given learners' diversification, teachers should raise their awareness of the diverse influences, preferences, and challenges of individual learners. Therefore, there is a need for educators to implement more personalized learning plans that cater to the specific needs and interests of each student. This could involve a more flexible curriculum design that allows students to choose the learning methods they find most effective.

The findings of the present study also imply that a majority of participants lack affective strategies to manage their English-speaking anxiety, which reduces their willingness to participate in language-based activities and negatively impacts their overall learning experience. It is suggested that teachers should consider integrating training on affective strategies into their courses. This could include introducing anxiety management techniques and incorporating confidence-building exercises. It is also important for teachers to create a supportive and non-judgmental learning environment where students feel safe to make mistakes and express themselves. In other words, promoting mutual respect and understanding among students is critical to reducing their fear of judgment or ridicule. More importantly,

the concept of a growth mindset could be introduced to learners, instilling in them the idea that abilities and intelligence can be developed through hard work and persistence. This can help students view mistakes as opportunities for learning rather than as failures. Another suggestion is that teachers could encourage students to share their unique LLS experiences, allowing them to learn from each other.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of the complexity and dynamic nature of learners' LLSs in the context of an EMI university in China. The findings revealed that learners' LLSs are influenced by significant others, individual interests, the English-medium learning environment, and personal objectives. Given the variation of learners' LLSs, a learner-centered approach is needed to promote effective learning strategies tailored to each learner's unique needs.

The transition to an English-medium university environment has changed participants' views of English from a distinct subject to a tool for acquiring professional knowledge. This highlights the importance of practical language use and students' use of affective strategies to manage speaking anxiety. Therefore, the study underscores the necessity of integrating training on affective strategies into the language teaching curriculum. Meanwhile, creating a supportive and non-judgmental learning environment, and promoting a growth mindset among learners are also critical to helping learners overcome fears of making mistakes when they speak English.

The limitations of the present study should be considered in future research. First, considering the limited scope of data collected in this study, future research is encouraged to further explore and validate these findings. Second, the participants in this study were only at the beginning of their second year at this English-medium cooperative university, and their exposure to discipline-specific knowledge was limited. Their interviews revealed that their decade-long English learning experience had a more significant impact on their LLS adoption than their professional knowledge learning in English. While participants noted the general influence of the English Medium environment, such as a shift in their perception of language learning purpose, none specifically mentioned the impact of their disciplinary study on language learning. Future research could therefore investigate how learners' English learning strategies are shaped by their disciplinary studies, potentially employing a longitudinal research design.

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(Appendix A: Interview Guide)

1.Why are you learning English?

2. Do you like/dislike learning English?

3. How often do you use English inside and outside of the campus?

• Do you ask English speakers to help you solve your language problems?

• Do you practice English with your classmates or friends?

• Do you like the culture of English speakers?

• Do you encourage yourself to speak English even when you are afraid of making a mistake?

• Are you tense or nervous when you are studying or using English?

• Do you try to find as many ways as you can to use English?

• Do you make guesses to understand unfamiliar English words?

• Do you use gestures when you can't think of a word during a conversation in English?

• Do you read for pleasure in English?

• Do you start conversations in English?

• Do you read or write new English words several times?

4. How do you learn English/ what specific techniques and methods do you think are useful in learning English?

• How do you usually remember new English words or phrases?

• Do you usually review English lessons?

• Do you notice your English mistakes and use that information to help you do better?

• Do you try to find out how to be a better learner of English?

• Do you prefer to use L1 to help you study English?

• Do you plan your schedule so you will have enough time to study English?

5. Are you happy with your English learning methods and your English proficiency?

6. Do you use apps/ software to help you learn English?

7. What do you find most difficult about learning English?

8. What challenges do you have in BNBU, where English is used as a medium of instruction?

9. What are the differences between your BNBU and your past experience in terms of learning English?

10. Do you have a specific goal in terms of English proficiency?