Segmentation of Tertiary English Second Language Students Language Learning Strategies

Darrin Thomas

Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Asia-Pacific International University, Muak Lek, Thailand;
darrin@apiu.edu

Abstract: Understanding the characteristics of University ESL students in terms of how they apply language-learning strategies has not been extensively studied. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to segment a sample population of ESL university students into several distinct clusters based on the six dimensions of the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning. Results indicated four clusters (Strategic, Moderate, Low and Unstrategic) based on the respondents' tendencies to use the various strategies. Furthermore, there were no differences found by gender or class level. However, a difference was found based on major with Business and Education majors being over three times more likely to be in the Unstrategic cluster when compared to the Strategic cluster. The implication of this is that non- English majors need additional support in developing language-learning skills, as the purpose of their studies is to acquire content knowledge primarily and English skills secondarily. In particular, support in affective and social learning skills are of the greatest need.

Keywords: ESL, clustering, multinomial logistic regression, Language learning strategies