UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

ASSESSING DIPLOMA STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

This study was aimed firstly, to determine the levels of awareness among the students on language learning strategies as assessed using Oxford's Strategy Language Learning Inventory (SILL) and secondly, to determine the students' beliefs about language learning using Horwitz's Beliefs about language learning (BALLI) questionnaire. The two questionnaires were administered to a group of 35 diploma students at Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak, doing a Diploma in Office Management. The data collected using the two sets of questionnaires were computed and run using the SPSS 13.0 for analysis in descriptive statistics to find the mean and standard deviation. In addition, semi-structured interviews were also conducted on a group of 5 learners randomly selected from the group. The interview data was transcribed and interpreted qualitatively. The study found that the students had a very low level of usage on language learning strategies awareness. The students also demonstrated beliefs that tended to be in disagreement on two of the three sections on BALLI. The students however, showed agreement towards one section of the BALLI questionnaire. The findings indicated that the students need to be made aware of the available learning strategies in order to make them more prepared to learn language. The findings also suggested that the students be made aware of the right beliefs they need in order to be able to learn the language more effectively.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This topic has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

In the event that my thesis be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree to be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

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INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

English is extensively used in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) as the medium of instruction in almost all of its academic courses. Learners are thus faced with learning English not only as a subject but also learning it in order to cope with it for their academic survival. Thus, it is important for English language lecturers to determine ways and means to help raise the learners' ability in using English, one of which is to equip learners with the necessary language skills to become effective and strategic learners.

This study sets out to identify and raise learners' self-awareness in language learning strategies (abbreviated as LLSs henceforth) which may help them in learning English. It also attempts to identify and determine the learners' perceptions regarding their beliefs about language learning.

This chapter sets out to discuss the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations of the study and the definition of terms.

1.1   Background of the Study

With communicative approaches to language teaching, a key goal is for the learners to develop communicative approaches to develop communicative competence in the target language. However, despite having gone through 11 years of formal