SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, LEARNING STRATEGIES, AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT

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Abstract

The present study hopes to investigate a comprehension of the relationship between second language proficiency, language strategies and the employability skills of undergraduate students. Though limited in the number, the studies conducted with respect to the topic under discussion in the current study show that there is a strong relationship between second language proficiency, language learning strategies and employability skills of undergraduate learners. Raising students awareness regarding their proficiency and strategies might make them not only more prepared for learning but also more analytic about their learning proficiency and the strategies they make use of it. Employability skills are those personal and daily living habits that have been identify employers and young entry level workers as essential for obtaining employment and for success in the work place. Language fluency plays a vital role in deciding the learning strategies as well in the job market. The current study focus on employability skills undergraduate students as it is high time to study their skills and enhance their skills as education is development of all round personality

Keywords: *Second Language Proficiency, Language Strategies and the Employability Skills of Undergraduate Students*

Introduction

In today's globalized landscape, the acquisition of a second language stands as an invaluable asset, transcending beyond mere linguistic prowess. The proficiency in a secondary language has evolved into a corner stone of success, fostering a multi faceted impact on various facets of undergraduate education and subsequent employability. This article seeks to delve into the interconnected relationship between second language proficiency, learning strategies employed during language acquisition, and the pivotal role these elements play in nurturing a set of indispensable employability skills among undergraduate students.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the ability to communicate across linguistic boundaries becomes a requisite skill rather than an advantage. Proficiency in a second language not only facilitates effective communication but also enhances cultural

understanding and opens doors to a myriad of global opportunities. However, the journey towards linguistic fluency is not solely dependent on innate abilities but heavily influenced by the strategies employed during the learning process. The exploration of these strategies— be it immersion, practical application, or cultural engagement—sheds light on their role in expediting language acquisition and shaping a comprehensive understanding of the language.

Moreover, this article aims to elucidate the transferable nature of language proficiency to the realm of employability. The development of communication skills, cultural adaptability, and a nuanced global perspective attributed to second language acquisition can significantly augment an individual's marketability in diverse professional settings.

Through an extensive review and analysis, this article endeavours to underscore the profound interplay between second language proficiency, learning methodologies, and the cultivation of indispensable employability skills among undergraduate students, thereby advocating for the integration of language learning strategies into the educational paradigm to better prepare future professionals for the dynamic global landscape.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study

- To identify the level of second language proficiency of under graduate students
- To study the learning strategies of college students
- To find the employability skills of under graduate students
- To study the significant difference in the second language proficiency of undergraduate students based on the select sub samples
- To investigate the significant difference in the learning strategies in English of under graduate students based on the select sub samples
- To find the relationship between the second language proficiency of undergraduate students and its dimensions
- To find the relationship between the learning strategies of undergraduate students and its dimensions
- To find the relationship between the employability skills of under graduate students
- To find the correlation between the second language proficiency and learning strategies of undergraduate students
- To find the correlation between the learning strategies and employability skills in English of undergraduate students.

Method Chosen for the Study

The present investigation adopted Normative survey Method as a method of study. The present investigation was conducted in Namakkal District. The Arts and Science College from Namakkal District were randomly selected by the investigator for the present investigation.

Population and Sample for the Study

The population of the study included Arts and science college students in Namakkal districtin the year 2015 – 2016. For the present study stratified random sampling method was used. 1010 students from 6 select colleges formed the sample. They were from Government, Government aided and Private colleges.

Statistical Techniques Used

Qualitative (percentage) analysis and quantitative analyses like descriptive, inferential, regression and discriminant analyses were done in the present study.

Findings and Discussions

Figure 1 Showing Second Language Proficiency Level of Under Graduate Students
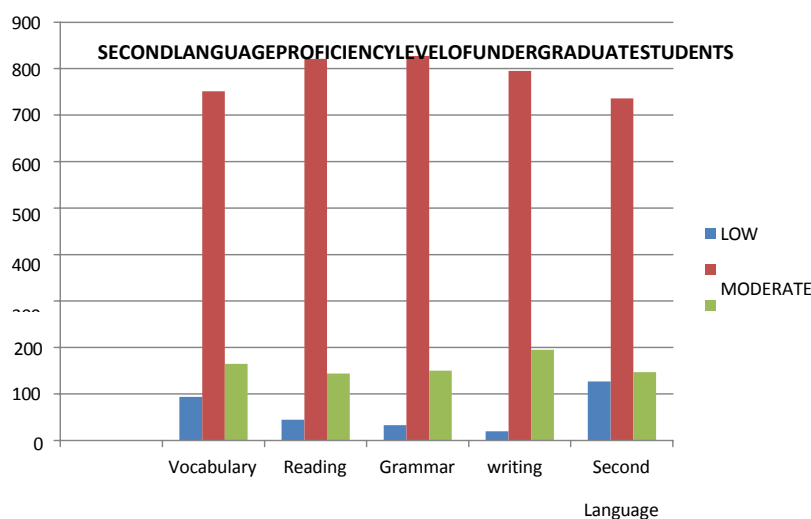

- 736 (72.87 %) under graduate students were in moderate level in the second language proficiency. Only 147 (14.55%) under graduate students were in high level while 127 (12.57%) were low in the second language proficiency.
- 195 (19.31%) under graduate students were in high level in writing whereas only 1.98% under graduate students were in low level in writing
- 94(9.31%) under graduate students were in low level in the vocabulary.
- Under graduate students were found to be in high level in writing followed by vocabulary, grammar and reading proficiencies.

Figure 2 Showing Language Learning Strategy of Under Graduate Students

LANGUAGELEARNINGSTRATEGYOFUNDERGRADUATESTUDENTS NUMBER OF STUDENTS


NUMBEROFSTUDENTS
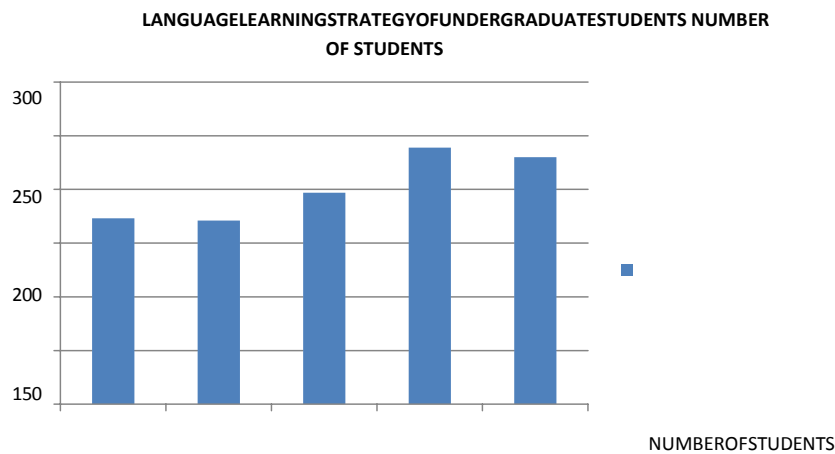
From the above table it is clear that 239 (23.66%) under graduate students followed social strategies. 197 (19.5%) under graduate students adapted affective strategies.173 (17.13%) under graduate students used knowledge strategies and 171(16.93%) under graduate students preferred. Cognition strategies while 230 (22.77%) under graduate students practiced no particular learning strategy.

Figure 3 Showing Employability Skills of Under Graduate Students

EMPLOYABILITYSKILLS OFUNDERGRADUATESTUDENTS

■ NUMBEROFSTUDENTS
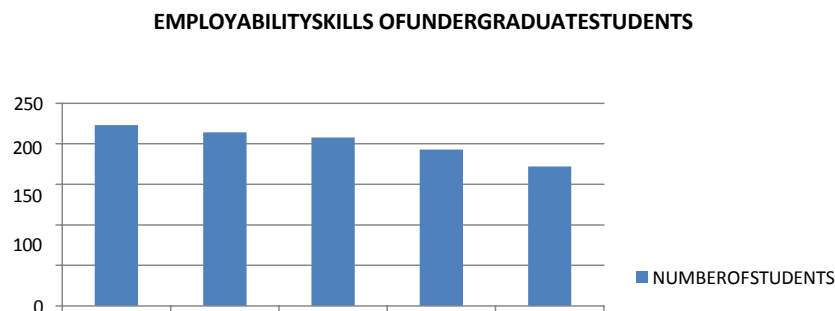
From the above table it is observed that 223 (22.08%) under graduate students had soft skills. 214 (21.19 %) under graduate students had team working skills, 208 (20.59%) had Self- reliance skills ,193(19.11%) under graduate students had Management Skills whereas 172 (17.02%) under graduate students had not developed their employability skills.

Figure 4 Showing Employability Skills of Under Graduate Students based on their Second Language Proficiency
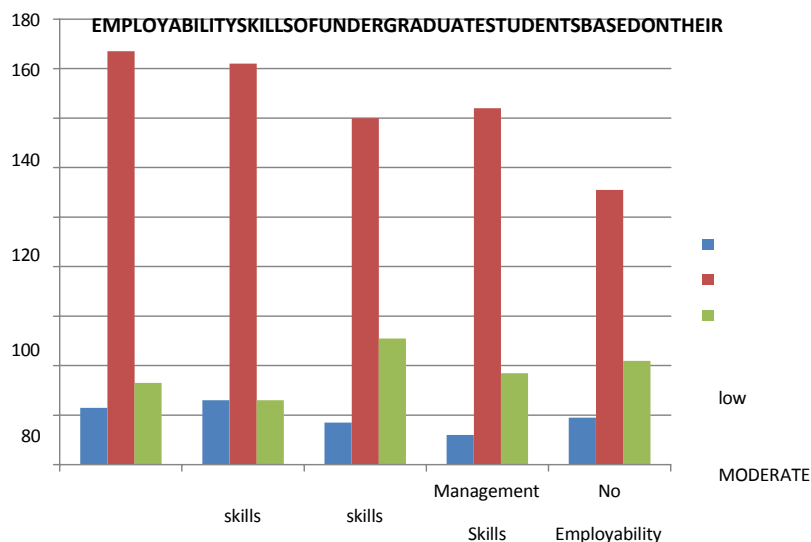

From the above table it is evident that among the under graduate students who had high second language fluency 24.52% had self-reliance skills. 19.17% had management skills. 17.61% had not developed their employability skills.

Among the under graduate students who had moderate and low second language fluency were found to have team working skills.

It is inferred that among the 147 under graduate students who had high second language fluency, 18.71% followed cognition strategy, 16.24% under graduate students adopted affective strategies, 16.18% under graduate students adhered to knowledge strategies, 14.64 % under graduate students practiced social strategies and 8.69 % under graduate students preferred no learning strategy.

It was found that among the 736 under graduate students who had moderate second language fluency, the order of language learning strategies followed was seen as social strategies (74.04%) succeeded by affective (72.58%) Knowledge (70.52%), and cognition strategies (69.59. %)

Similarly, among the 127 under graduate students who had low second language fluency, the preference to learning strategies was noted as no learning (15.21 %) followed by Knowledge (13.29%), cognition strategies (11.69%) Social (11.29%) and affective strategies (11.16 %).

Figure 5 Showing Employability Skills Developed and Learning Strategies Followed
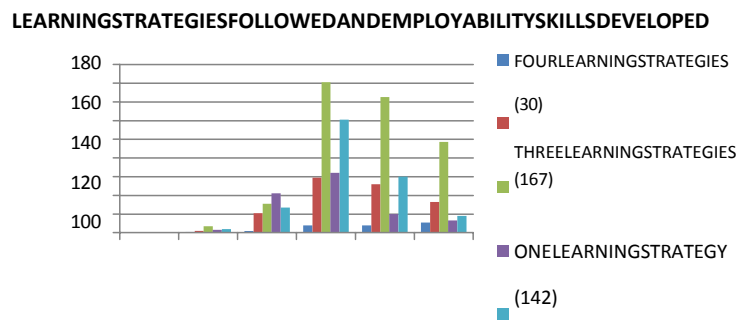
Among 30 under graduate students who followed all the four learning strategies, only one student had all the four employability skills also.8 had a single and two employabilityskills.2 had three and 11 had none of the four employability skills.

Among the 230 under graduate students who didn't favour any learning strategies, 18 had no employability skills either. Single employability skill was developed in 60 .121 had two employability skills. 27 seemed to have three employability skills whereas 4 had all the four employability skills.

142 undergraduate students preferred a single specific learning strategy. Among them 13 had not developed their employability skills too. 20 practiced a single employability skill. 64were found to have two employability skills. 42 had three employability skills and only3 had all the four employability skills.

441 under graduate students adapted two learning strategies. Among them 97 had not developed any employability skills. 145 had a single employability skill. 161 were with two employability skills. 31 had three employability skills and only 7 were equipped with all the four employability skills.

Among the 167 under graduate students who adhered to three learning strategies, 33 had not developed any employability skills. One employability skill was developed in 52.59 seemed to have two employability skills. 21 were with three employability skills while only2 had all the four employability skills.

Figure 6 Showing mean differences in Second Language Proficiency on Gender, Locality and Medium of Undergraduate Students

Differential Analysis
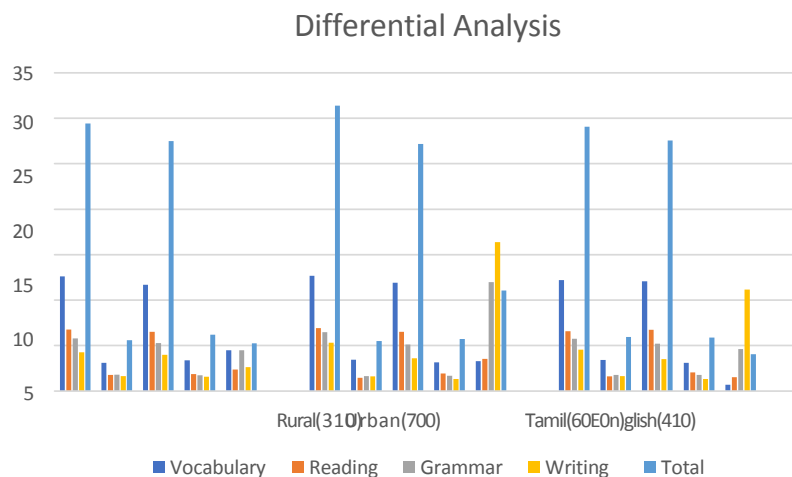
- The calculated 't' values are greater than the table value in all the cases. Hence the hypothesis is not accepted. So Male and female undergraduate students differ in their second language learning proficiency.

- The calculated 't' values are greater than the table values in all the cases. Hence the hypothesis is not accepted. Rural and urban undergraduate students differ in their second language proficiency.

- The calculated 't' values are less than the table value in two cases. Hence the hypothesis is accepted in these two cases. The calculated values are more than the table value in all the remaining cases. Hence the hypothesis is not accepted in these cases. English and Tamil Medium Undergraduate students do not differ in the dimensions vocabulary and reading of second language proficiency.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

- Orientation courses may be arranged for the teachers on learning styles, teaching styles and learning strategies. As a result teachers will be able to help their students become better language learners by training them in using the appropriate strategies.

- Strategy-training sessions might be designed to assess whether designing such training sessions has an impact on the achievement of the students.

- Appropriate learning strategies have also been an essential issue for instructional designers because they have to increase instructional systems that are perceptive to learning strategies of each student, both in group instruction and individual learning contexts as learning strategies have more relation to the academic achievement.

- Colleges should create environments that enhance students 'acquisition and development of job- or employment-related skills.

- College teachers should provide enrichment activities to develop their students' competency in language and employability skills development.
- Opportunities should be created in colleges for students to participate more in industrial attachment/placement, part-time work experience, taking courses on employability, interaction with job/work placement agencies, visit to industries, and other infrequent but vital employability promoting activities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intricate relationship between second language proficiency, learning strategies, and employability skills presents a compelling narrative for the academic and professional development of undergraduate students. As highlighted throughout this exploration, proficiency in a second language serves as a gateway to enhanced communication, cultural understanding, and global opportunities.

Moreover, the diverse range of learning strategies employed in the acquisition of a second language not only facilitates linguistic competence but also nurtures a spectrum of transferable skills vital for success in today's workforce. From adaptability and communication to cross-cultural competence, these skills are indispensable assets in an increasingly interconnected global landscape.

The correlation established between second language proficiency and the development of employability skills underscores the importance of fostering linguistic dexterity among undergraduate students. Equipped with these multifaceted skills, individuals are better prepared to navigate the complexities of diverse professional environments, fostering innovation, collaboration, and understanding across borders.

Moving forward, acknowledging and harnessing the potential of second language acquisition as a catalyst for personal and professional growth remains paramount. Institutions, educators, and students alike can benefit from recognizing the profound impact of linguistic proficiency, embracing diverse learning strategies, and leveraging these skills to enhance employability and thrive in an ever-evolving global society. Ultimately, the integration of second language acquisition into educational frameworks empowers students to become versatile, culturally aware, and adaptable individuals poised for success in an interconnected world.

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