Gender and Learning Style Preferences of EFL Learner

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Abstract
This study presents the results of an investigation of the relationship between gender and learning style preferences, and language perception and use of EFL learners. Participants in this study were 212 undergraduate students majoring in English at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in Oman. The students were 58 males and 158 females from different years of study. The students’ learning styles and patterns of language perception and use were measured using a questionnaire consisting of thirty items. The results yielded in this study showed that although all styles were represented in both groups of learners to varying degrees, the female group was significantly more communication oriented than the male group. The results did not reveal any significant differences between the two groups with regard to their perception of the importance of English. They did reveal, however, significant differences between them in the amount of time they spent practicing English outside the classroom, as well as in their enjoyment of learning English. The study suggests that success in learning a foreign language depends on adopting effective learning strategies, as well as on the learners developing awareness about their own learning. The study also maintains that language teachers need to help learners expand their learning styles by encouraging them to use more effective learning techniques.

Keywords: learning styles, learning strategies, language perception, strategy training, gender