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A Comparative Study of Language Learning Strategy Use in an EFL Context: Monolingual Korean and Bilingual Korean-Chinese University Students

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Since language is socially mediated and context dependent, it would be expected that learners' use of language learning strategies may vary with the environment. Using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990), this study examines the language learning behaviors and thought processes of two geographically and socio-educationally different groups by comparing learning strategy use as reported by 428 monolingual Korean and 420 bilingual Korean-Chinese university students. Monolinguals reported using compensation strategies most and affective strategies least. Bilinguals preferred to use metacognitive strategies most and memory strategies least. Despite a less favorable formal English education environment in the Korean-Chinese community and less experience in learning English, bilingual Korean-Chinese reported higher use of learning strategies, which is arguably indicative of the positive effects of the bilingual context in learning a new language.

Key words: language learning strategies, Korean, Korean-Chinese, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Introduction

Learners' use of language learning strategies is one window into the nature of language learning processes for individuals acquiring a new language. According to Oxford (1990) learning strategies are "…specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). She emphasized, "…learning strategies are important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement" (p.1), making learning strategies a crucial element of the learning process. The effective use of learning strategies is closely related to learner independence and competence, furthermore, studies have found that successful language learners are more likely to engage in active language learning and use more learning strategies than less successful learners (Bialystok, 1981; Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Park, 1997; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Phillips, 1991; Politzer, 1983).

Studies of language learning strategies have shown that their application is related to both individual differences (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003; Skehan, 1991) and the contexts in which learners acquire the language (Garcia, 2005; Parks & Raymond, 2005). Since language is socially mediated and context dependent, it would follow that learners' use of language learning strategies could vary with the environment. Starting out from this perspective, this study

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attempts to examine language learning behaviors and thought processes of two geographically, culturally and educationally different groups that share the same mother tongue. The first group is Korean-Chinese students living in the Korean community (Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture) in China where people live in multilingual and multicultural environments. The second group is Korean students living in Korea where monolingualism is more prevalent.

Historical context

Since China and Korea agreed to open their doors to each other in 1992, more and more Korean-Chinese students have enrolled in universities or colleges in Korea for their higher education, and more Korean students have taken opportunities to attend universities in China. Although they share the same first language, they have acquired it in different settings; in addition, the Korean–Chinese students have also acquired a second language (Chinese) making them bilingual. Thus, the two groups have differing socio-economic, cultural and educational learning experiences, especially in the area of language learning.

The increasing number of students studying in the alternate country has focused the attention of teachers and researchers in both countries on the particular needs of these two rather different groups. Misunderstandings may arise between teachers and students due to a simple lack of experience with alternate social and cultural worlds (Chamberlain, 2005; Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Horwitz, 1999; among others). In order for instructors to assist their new students, they must assume the existence of differences in thinking and behaviors when they interact with socially and culturally different learners. This culturally-responsive teaching perspective underpins this study in an attempt to provide information on the perspectives and learning behaviors of Korean and Korean-Chinese university students in order to maximize understanding between instructors and students, prevent the academic failure of students, and provide valuable information about respective learning processes.

Intuitively, it would seem logical that the acquisition of a new language by multilinguals would differ from that of monolinguals. Having had more experience with language learning through exposure to and acquisition of more than one language, multilinguals or bilinguals may have certain skills, strategies, or beliefs that enable them to approach the process of language learning more efficiently than people with experience in only one language. McLaughlin and Nayak (1989) referred to these multi-language learners as "experts" in language learning. Some studies have found the language learning abilities of these "experts" (e.g., bilinguals or multilinguals) to be superior to those of monolinguals (Lerea & Kohut, 1961; Nayak, Hansen, Krueger, & McLaughlin, 1990; Thomas, 1988). These studies found that bilinguals had a greater facility for learning a third language, were more flexible in seeking and utilizing strategies appropriate to the task, and knew more readily than monolinguals which learning approach would work best for them in different language learning situations. Nayak et al. (1990) concluded that in the long run, multilinguals can be expected to outperform monolinguals during language learning because of "their superior ability to shift strategies and restructure their internal representations of the linguistic system" (p. 242).

Beyond these studies, there is little additional empirical research that proves the advanced expertise of the bilingual/multilingual learner. In addition, limited studies on contrasting language learning behaviors and thoughts of monolingual and bilingual learners are available. No comparative analyses have been conducted to explain how bilingual and monolingual EFL learners differ in their use of language learning strategies. This topic is especially relevant in the current social and educational context of Korea because of the increasing exchange of students across social and geographic borders, and the need for current information on how instruction in English is best facilitated for these two groups of learners. The purpose of this study was to investigate language learning strategy use of monolingual and bilingual EFL students currently engaged in learning English. The research questions were:

1. What are the reported language learning strategies of monolingual Korean and bilingual Korean-Chinese university students?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the use of learning strategies between these two groups?

Method

Participants

The first group of participants comprised 428 undergraduate students in Korea. Their first, acquired language was Korean. Although they had all learned Chinese characters and had studied English in school as a compulsory subject since 6th grade, none were fluent or able to

communicate consistently and accurately in any language other than Korean. Thus, they are best described as monolingual with some experience in academic foreign language instruction. The monolingual Korean group was balanced in terms of gender with 223 males (52%) and 205 females (48%) who ranged in age from 18 to 28 with an average age of 22.8.

The second group comprised 420 Korean-Chinese university students living in China. The bilingual Korean-Chinese students were 182 males (43%) and 238 females (57%) and ranged in age from 20 to 28 with an average age of 22.3. Korean-Chinese students were chosen from a Korean ethnic university run by the Korean Autonomous Prefecture in China where the language of instruction is Korean. Like the monolingual group, these participants acquired Korean at home as their first language. Additionally, informal Chinese language education was begun by their parents at home before the participants entered elementary school. Formal Chinese language education is initiated in the second grade and throughout middle and high schools. Because of the social and geographic context they inhabit in China, they use both Korean and Chinese consistently in their daily lives. Based on their ability to communicate fluently in both Korean and Chinese and to use both languages interchangeably as their functional every day languages and in their daily activities, these Korean-Chinese university students comprised the bilinguals group for this study. It was expected that all participants would have had experience learning English as a foreign language because it is mandatory for university students to take English classes for graduation.

The students from both groups were undergraduate students majoring in various disciplines (e.g., Social Science, Humanities, Engineering, and Science). The students ranged from freshmen to seniors. Participants were fairly balanced across groups in terms of academic year and major.

The Individual Background Questionnaire (IBQ) designed especially for bilingual Korean-Chinese students confirmed the evidence of bilingualism in the Korean-Chinese community (see Table 1). They reported speaking both Korean and Chinese fluently both at home and with friends. At home, the majority of bilinguals preferred to use Korean (84%) and 16% of students favor Chinese. Almost equal portion of the students (80%) usually speak Korean with friends or at school and 20% of the group preferred to

Table 1. *Language-related Experiences of Bilingual Korean-Chinese Students* [a]

Category	Description	n	%
Language Use at Home	Korean	354	84.3
	Chinese	66	15.7
Language Use with Friend	Korean	336	80.0
	Chinese	84	20.0
Self-rated Overall Korean Proficiency	Beginning	23	5.5
	Intermediate	106	25.2
	Advanced	291	69.3
Self-rated Overall Chinese Proficiency	Beginning	28	6.7
	Intermediate	219	52.1
	Advanced	173	41.2

		Primary		Middle School		High School	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Types of School	Korean Ethnic	380	90.5	377	89.8	373	88.8
	Chinese	40	9.5	43	10.2	47	11.2

Note. [a] N=420

use Chinese with friends or at school. The majority of the bilingual students in this study reported having attended Korean ethnic schools in all three levels before coming to the university: primary (91%), middle school (90%), and high school (89%). Of the subgroup reporting 12 years of schooling in Korean ethnic schools, the large number of bilingual

Korean-Chinese students rated themselves as: advanced in Korean (69%) and Chinese (42%), intermediate in Korean (25%) and Chinese (52%). The remaining students for each language group reported their proficiency as low. When asked to rate their English proficiency, over half of the bilingual Korean-Chinese students (56%) characterized themselves as intermediate English language learners. In contrast, 54% of the monolingual Korean students considered themselves as beginners (see Table 2).

In terms of years of formal English study 92% of the monolingual Korean participants reported 6 or more years of English study in a formal school setting. In the bilingual Korean-Chinese group, fewer students (62%) reported having 6 or more years of formal schooling in English. As shown in Table 2, only 13 bilingual Korean-Chinese students (3%) had visited or lived in an English-speaking country, while 101 monolingual Korean students (24%) had visited or lived in an English-speaking country. The small percentage of Korean-Chinese students who reported visiting an English-speaking country indicates possible differences in financial support for such endeavors. When they were asked about having taken standardized English tests (i.e., TOEFL or TOEIC), only 5 Korean-Chinese students (1%) reported that they had taken one of the standardized English tests, whereas 157 Korean students (37%) had done so. These results are reflective of the socio-economic and educational differences between the Korean and Korean-Chinese communities in terms of the importance placed upon English for achieving personal professional goals and the financial resources available for

Table 2. *Demographic and Language Experience Information of Participants*

Category	Description	Monolinguals*		Bilinguals**	
		n	%	n	%
Gender	Male	223	52.1	182	43.3
	Female	205	47.9	238	56.7
Self-rated English Proficiency	Beginning	229	53.5	163	38.8
	Intermediate	186	43.5	236	56.2
	Advanced	13	3.0	21	5.0
Years of English Study	0~2	16	3.7	94	22.4
	3~4	18	4.2	67	16.0
	5~6	81	18.9	45	10.7
	7~8	87	20.3	132	31.5
	9~10	144	33.6	67	16.0
	11~12	41	9.6	14	3.4
	13~14	28	6.5	1	0.2
	15~17	13	3.0	0	0.0
Experiences Taking English Proficiency Test (TOEFL or TOEIC)	Yes	157	36.7	5	1.2
	No	271	63.3	415	98.8
Experiences Living/Visiting English-Speaking Country and Visited Countries	Yes	101	23.6	13	3.1
	No	327	76.4	403	96.9

* N=428, ** N=420

English instruction (Lee, 1999; Park, 1998).

Instruments

Two instruments were distributed to 428 monolingual Korean and 420 bilingual Korean-Chinese university students. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, Oxford, 1990) was utilized to identify the use of language learning strategies of Korean and Korean-Chinese university students. In this study, the SILL contains the original 50 items classified into six groups: Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies.

Memory strategies help learners store and retrieve information (9 items), such as grouping, reviewing, and creating visual images. Cognitive strategies involve manipulating the language and understanding and producing meaning (14 items), such as repeating, analyzing, practicing, and summarizing. Compensation strategies assist learners to overcome limitations in language learning (6 items), such as guessing, using clues, getting help, and using gesture and synonyms. Metacognitive strategies are techniques involved organizing, centering and directing learning (9 items), such as planning schedule, self-monitoring and evaluating, and setting goals. Affective strategies mean controlling emotions, attitudes, and motivation (6 items), such as lowering anxiety and discussing one's feelings with others. Social strategies involve interacting and cooperating with others in language learning (6 items), such as asking questions and asking for correction.

The SILL is a self-report questionnaire and uses a Likert-scale system for each strategy ranging from 1 to 5 (never or almost never true of me, generally not true of me, somewhat true of me, generally true of me, and always or almost always true of me). The participants were asked to rate themselves according to their experiences in use of language learning strategies. The responses were categorized based on the following reporting scale which was designed by Oxford (1990) to inform students which groups of strategies they use the most in learning English: 1) 'High Usage' (Always Used with a mean of 4.5-5.0 or Usually Used with a mean of 3.5-4.4); 2) 'Medium Usage' (Sometimes Used with a mean of 2.5-3.4); and 3) 'Low Usage' (Generally Not Used with a mean of 1.5-2.4 or Never Used with a mean of 1.0-1.40).

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed to determine an internal consistency reliability of the SILL (50 items) for each group. The reliability on the SILL for the monolingual Korean students was .94 on 428 cases, and for the bilingual Korean-Chinese students it was .91 on 420 cases. The high alpha of the SILL for both groups indicated that students' responses of both groups were relatively consistent on SILL items measuring the same construct. These alpha levels of the SILL are well above what is considered an acceptable alpha level of .60 (Landau & Everitt, 2004).

In order to assist with interpretation of the results, two Individual Background Questionnaires (IBQ), one for Korean students and one for Korean-Chinese students, were designed to collect demographic and other background information about these two socially and educationally variant groups. The IBQ provided information about the two groups regarding their prior English learning experiences, language use, years of English study, their self-rated language proficiency, experiences taking English proficiency tests, and experiences living/visiting English-speaking country and other countries. Both were translated into Korean to minimize any possible misunderstandings, to maximize the comprehensibility of the items, and to ensure greater accuracy in interpreting the results.

Data Collection/Analysis

The SILL and IBQ were administered to intact classes at two universities in Korea and China. The full instructions regarding administration procedures for the instruments were provided to one instructor at each university. The instruments were administered during regular class time by the instructors following a brief explanation about the purpose and nature of the study. Subjects were informed that they were not required to fill out the questionnaires, were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and that there were no rights or wrong answers on the questionnaires. It was also announced that neither their agreement to participate or not, nor their actual responses on the questionnaires would affect their grades. In addition, the confidentiality procedures surrounding data analysis, storage and reporting of results were explained. After the completion of the instrument, the questionnaires were collected by class instructors and given to the researchers for data analysis.

Data analysis yielded descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages to represent demographic information and to summarize learning strategy use. In order to determine any variation in strategy use, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using mean scores of each category of strategies as independent variables. The composite variables of the SILL were used as dependent variables. The Scheffé post-hoc test

was used to find where any significant differences in strategy use were.

Results

Overall Strategy Use

In Table 3, the participants in each group were categorized into three ranges (High, Medium, and Low Usage) based on their overall mean scores and frequency of strategy use. As shown in the table, 95% of the bilingual group and 81% of monolinguals reported medium to high (M=3.4 or above) strategy use.

The mean scores and standard deviations for overall strategy use were also calculated for both groups for comparative purposes. As shown in Table 4, strategy usage means were within the medium range for both groups. However, bilingual Korean-Chinese students (M=3.11) reported higher overall strategy use than monolingual Korean students (M=2.88) when learning English. An F-test revealed a statistically significant difference (F=45.95, p=0.00) in the

Table 3. *Differences in Overall Means of Reported Strategy Use*

Usage	Monolingual Korean		Bilingual Korean-Chinese	
	n	%	n	%
High (M≥3.5)	66	15.0	72	17.0
Medium (3.4≤ M ≥2.5)	281	66.0	327	78.0
Low (M≤2.4)	81	19.0	21	5.0
Total	428	100.0	420	100.0

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for the Variables and F-tests for Mean Difference of the Strategy Use*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	F	Sig.	Difference*
Monolinguals	428	2.88	0.53	1.64	4.65	45.95	0.00	B>M
Bilinguals	420	3.11	0.43	1.19	4.62			
Total	848	3.00	0.48	1.42	4.63			

Note: B=Bilinguals, M=Monolinguals

* p< .05 level (Scheffé post-hoc test)

Table 5. *Monolingual Korean Students' Overall Means and F-test for Difference in Six Categories of Strategies in the SILL*

Variables	Mean	SD	Rank	F	Sig	Difference*
Compensation	3.27	0.64	1	61.37	0.00	Com,Met,Cog> Aff
Metacogntive	3.01	0.71	2			
Cognitive	2.99	0.60	3			
Memory	2.75	0.63	4			
Social	2.69	0.83	5			
Affective	2.57	0.66	6			

* p<.05 (Scheffé post-hoc test)

strategy use of bilinguals over monolinguals.

In addition, all SILL items were grouped into six categories to compare use across the six categories of strategies. Tables 5 and 6 summarize the means and standard deviations of six categories of strategies of monolingual Korean and bilingual Korean-Chinese, respectively.

Preferences of Monolingual Korean Students

The strategies preferred by monolinguals (see Table 5) were (in order by means from highest to lowest) Compensation strategies (M=3.27), Metacognitive strategies (M=3.01), Cognitive strategies, (M=2.99), Memory strategies (M=2.75), and Social strategies (M=2.69). The least preferred were Affective strategies (M=2.57). All strategy use fell within the medium range for usage ($3.4 \leq M \geq 2.5$). Results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that there were statically significant differences in usage across the six categories (F=61.37, p=0.00). A Scheffé post-hoc test was conducted to determine where the differences occurred, indicating Compensation, Metacognitive, and Cognitive strategy use were significantly higher than Affective strategy use ($p < .05$).

Table 6. *Bilingual Korean-Chinese Students' Overall Means and F-test for Difference in Six Categories of Strategies in the SILL*

Variables	Mean	SD	Rank	*F*	Sig	Difference*
Metacognitive	3.30	0.58	1	20.30	0.00	Met,Com,Cog> Mem,Soc
Compensation	3.20	0.58	2			
Cognitive	3.15	0.49	3			
Affective	3.06	0.61	4			
Social	3.03	0.65	5			
Memory	2.93	0.62	6			

* p<.05 (Scheffé post-hoc test)

Table 7. *Differences in Means and Standard Deviations of Overall Strategy Use among the Six Categories of Strategies in the SILL*

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	*F*	Sig.	Difference*
Memory	M	428	2.75	0.63	18.51	0.00	B>M
	B	420	2.93	0.62			
Cognitive	M	428	2.99	0.60	16.99	0.00	B>M
	B	420	3.15	0.49			
Compensation	M	428	3.27	0.64	3.66	0.06	--
	B	420	3.20	0.58			
Metacognitive	M	428	3.01	0.71	39.84	0.00	B>M
	B	420	3.30	0.58			
Affective	M	428	2.57	0.66	126.22	0.00	B>M
	B	420	3.06	0.61			
Social	M	428	2.69	0.83	42.32	0.00	B>M
	B	420	3.03	0.65			

Note: B=Bilinguals, M=Monolinguals

* p<0.05 (Scheffe post-hoc test)

Preferences of Bilingual Korean-Chinese Students

As shown in Table 6, Metacognitive strategies (M=3.30) were the most preferred strategies by the bilinguals, followed by (in order by means from highest to lowest) Compensation strategies (M=3.20), Cognitive strategies (M=3.15), Affective strategies (M=3.06), Social strategies (M=3.03), and Memory strategies (M=2.93). All strategies used by bilinguals also fell within the medium usage range ($3.4 \leq M \geq 2.5$). The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated a statistically significant difference across the categories of strategies (F=20.30, p=0.00). Specifically, bilinguals were significantly more likely to choose Metacognitive, Compensation and Cognitive strategies over Memory or Social strategies at $p<.05$ level.

Monolinguals verses Bilinguals

In addition to examining the preferred strategies within each group, the differences in the use of strategies between the two groups are presented in Table 7.

F-tests were computed using the mean scores to compare the use of each category of strategies between monolinguals and bilinguals, indicating a higher use of strategies by bilingual students for five categories of strategies. Bilinguals reported more frequent use of five categories of strategies (Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies), only Compensation strategies showed no significant difference in use between two groups. However, Compensation strategies are the only category of strategies monolinguals used more than bilinguals, even though the difference did not reach a significant level.

In addition to the mean scores for overall strategy use, the summary of descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation) for individual 50 items of the SILL is presented in the Appendix. This shows a variety of learning strategy use of monolingual Korean and bilingual Korean-Chinese students, with some strategies being used more frequently than others.

Discussion

Monolingual Korean and bilingual Korean-Chinese university students employed a wide variety of language learning strategies to learn English more effectively, with bilingual learners employing more, on average, than their monolingual peers. This reporting of greater strategy knowledge and use provides some support for the argument that bilinguals' exhibit advanced abilities when learning a new language as previous studies have indicated (Nation & McLaughlin, 1986; Nayak et al., 1990; Lerea & Kohut, 1961; Thomas, 1988).

Monolinguals

For the six categories of strategies, Compensation strategies were the most frequently used by monolingual Korean students. Monolinguals relied more heavily than bilinguals on Compensation strategies to process information. The majority of monolinguals reported frequently making guesses, using synonyms for unknown words, and employing gestures to convey meaning when vocabulary was lacking. The high use of compensation strategies may reflect the culture of teaching English in Korea. In other words, the monolinguals were more likely to have more formal classroom English experience than the bilingual group. Specifically, three fourths reported having seven or more years of formal classroom English. English learners in the classroom in Korea are often encouraged to make guesses and use gestures, linguistic or nonlinguistic clues, and employ synonyms in order to process information. Making informed guesses is strongly encouraged because of the test-oriented nature of the learning environment. If students are not willing to take risks, or will respond only if certain their answer is correct, these avoidance behaviors would likely have a negative impact on their test performance because questions would be left unanswered and count as incorrect. Another characteristic of language learning classrooms in Korea is the traditional and didactic orientation regarding the teacher-student relationship and student to student interactions. This model typically yields an input-poor environment in terms of linguistic interactions which can reduce the students' communicative vocabularies because of a lack of opportunities to practice verbally with others (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Kouraogo, 1993). This leaves Korean English learners with fewer tools to converse with, making Compensation strategies necessary for getting their point across to others.

Metacognitive strategies were the second most favored strategy group for the monolinguals. The monolingual group reported efforts to think about their progress in learning English and tried to set clear goals for improving English skills. However, they were much less likely to seek out opportunities to talk to English-speakers, read text in English or find as many ways as possible to use their English. This reflects their more classroom-based learning experiences which have afforded them less practice in spoken English and

also is in agreement with their reports of anxiety related to trying their English out with others. They also reported lower awareness of errors and using fewer correction strategies when their learning broke down which are characteristics of a less-experienced learner (Flavell, 1978).

While Cognitive strategies ranked as the third preferred strategy category for both groups, overall, lower use was reported for the vast majority of cognitive items by monolinguals. Monolingual students in other studies also reported that cognitive strategies were useful to them (Chang, 2003; Mullins, 1992; Shen, 2005). Oxford (1990) has emphasized that cognitive strategies are typically found to be extremely popular strategies with language learners and essential in learning a new language, because these strategies require and allow for direct and immediate manipulation or use of input, such as, saying or writing target language words multiple times, practicing the sounds of the new language, using words in different ways, reading and writing in the new language and so on. The cognitive strategies monolinguals reported electing to use most reflected instructional strategies they most likely experienced in their many years of formal language learning. Practicing sounds, writing words multiple times, identifying grammar patterns and trying to perfect pronunciation reflect traditional instructional approaches supported by teachers as ways to learn English.

Memory strategies were the fourth most used strategies by monolinguals. They tended to favor visual and spatial strategies such as connecting the sound of a new English word to an image or picture, making a mental picture of a situation, in which the word might be used, remembering the location of new words and phrases on the page, on the board, or on a street sign to help them remember new words. They did try to link what they already knew to what they were learning in English, and this is something which normally reflects more active cognitive engagement.

Social strategies were reported as the second least-used strategies by monolinguals. Social strategies often involve interactive learning with people such as asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others. A likely explanation for this is that monolingual students may lack confidence in speaking the target language to native speakers or even to other students due to their fear of making mistakes or being embarrassed. Another explanation may be the input-poor EFL environments (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Kouraogo, 1993) which typically provide fewer opportunities to practice English with native speakers, making social strategies harder to employ.

Affective strategies were the least used by monolinguals. Affective strategies involve awareness of emotions and the ability to regulate feelings and anxieties that may interfere with language learning, for example, being aware of their tension or nervousness when using or studying English and trying to relax. While emotions were clearly a factor for both groups (almost as many monolinguals as bilinguals reported being aware of their nerves and tension), monolinguals were not as adept in using strategies like writing their feelings down or telling someone how they felt to mediate these negative emotions. Monolinguals had a great deal more time spent in the more passively-oriented, traditional classroom learning environments in Korea, and may have been reflecting the more acceptable behavior of listening to teachers rather than expressing their feelings about language learning (Kim, 2001; Lee, 1998).

Bilinguals

Bilingual students reported implementing metacognitive strategies with the greatest frequency. These higher-order executive skills that involve planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) are a characteristic of strategic learners and are often the most important difference between novice and expert learners (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1994). The Korean-Chinese students reported using metacognitive strategies to control learning by for example, thinking about their progress in learning English, seeking out ways to improve their learning, setting clear goals in learning English, and planning their schedule to study English. More importantly, they reported greater tendencies than monolinguals to notice their mistakes and be able to learn from them. Denckla (1996) describes this metacognitive self-assessment and self management as part of an expert learners "executive functioning." Of the two elements of executive functioning, Rivers (1990) regards self-assessment as the more crucial skill in language learning, especially in terms of a language learner's ability to learn autonomously. Over three-quarters of the Korean-Chinese students reported planning their schedules to accommodate their study of English, while only about half the monolingual group reported this effort to plan. This may signify that bilingual learners were more cognizant of the organization and time management necessary to learn a foreign language successfully because they have a better understanding of the real effort language learning requires. Perhaps the language learning expertise of the bilingual students allowed them to surpass monolinguals in self-regulated language learning, and to budget their time accordingly.

Compensation strategies were the second most used strategies by bilingual students. This may have some relationship to varied years of formal language learning. Half of the bilingual group reported four or fewer years of classroom learning. Therefore, although bilingual students may have higher order executive skills in language learning because of greater overall exposure to language learning in informal settings and have a better ability to organize incoming information, they may still be lacking in some of the "tools" needed for English (i.e., vocabulary, syntactic structures, verb conjugation and so on). Consequently, many bilingual students found compensation strategies useful in overcoming their missing knowledge of English through the use of synonyms, guessing, and reading English without looking up every new word.

Cognitive strategies ranked as the third amongst preferred strategies in both groups, although use was higher for the bilingual group. Oxford (1990) emphasized that cognitive strategies are typically found to be the most popular strategies with language learners and essential in learning a new language because these strategies require and allow for direct and immediate manipulation or use of input. Bilinguals were more likely to use higher-level cognitive strategies like analyzing and synthesizing, again possibly due to their advanced expertise. They also selected strategies suggesting more active engagement in their language learning. For example, they were more likely to seek out an English speaker to practice with than to watch an English show on television, the latter being a more passive activity. These bilinguals have had the experience of acquiring two languages since a very early age and have also had formal experience in language learning. These opportunities have offered them enhanced opportunities to practice, analyze, and reason about new language input and thus, they may be using these strategies with less effort than monolingual participants. Ben Zeev (1977) found this to be true, citing the greater flexibility in language learning strategy use for bilinguals over monolinguals.

Affective strategies were the next most used by bilinguals. Here it is important to look at the specific choices they made of affective strategies. As mentioned, both groups were equally aware of their anxiety and tension, however, the bilingual group reported using more strategies geared toward coping with the feelings they had. They were more likely to engage in self-talk about the importance of trying to speak English in the face of embarrassment or mistakes and more likely to reward themselves when they did well. They were more likely to express or vent their feelings either privately or in a conversation with others in order to regain their emotional balance so they could continue learning effectively. Bilinguals' success in already having acquired a second language may have offset any tension they felt (i.e., they may have a sense that they will be successful based on their previous success). If the assumption that bilingual learners are more advanced in their language learning is true, then they may have experienced this same fear in the beginning of their own second language learning, but have learned through the process of acquiring the second language that fears are not helpful. Additionally, Korean-Chinese students learned their second language as children in the context of day to day activities; they would likely not have experienced the same degree of concern about others' opinions as adults might have experienced. Their overall comfort level with mistakes, combined with the hindsight of knowing that mistakes are a natural part of language learning, may allow bilingual learners to have less anxiety and more control. Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1990) found more confident students were more likely to use more learning strategies which makes a great deal of sense, especially when the use of the strategy involves displaying their knowledge (or lack of knowledge) to others in a public context.

Social strategies were reported as the second least-used strategies by bilinguals. Still, over half the bilingual group reported always or almost always trying to practice English with other students and native speakers. They were much more likely to ask for help or ask English speakers to correct them when they were speaking than monolinguals were. While Korean-Chinese students and Korean participants likely shared a similar EFL environment (e.g., input-poor context), bilinguals in this study had had very different experiences, for instance, experiencing learning their second language (Chinese) in more of a language acquisition context than just a classroom-based language learning context. The greater likelihood of them using social strategies may have stemmed from the nature of their language learning within the Korean-Chinese community. This context provides a rich language learning environment for students to interact with Korean and Chinese speakers in daily life. These bilingual students were much more likely to have experienced successful language acquisition through conversation with others to improve their skills. This use of social strategies through interaction with both Korean and Chinese likely made them feel more comfortable and confident in interacting with native speakers of Chinese. Language anxiety has been found to have a multitude of negative effects on language learning including reduced word production, impaired

vocabulary learning and low grades in language classes (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997). MacIntyre (1995) noted that anxiety-provoking language learning experiences "may cause difficulties in the cognitive processing of L2 materials" (p. 345). Therefore, lack of language anxiety may have been an asset to these bilingual learners in terms of their ability to engage in the use of social strategies to improve their proficiency.

Memory strategies were least favored of the six categories of strategies by bilinguals. While seeming to oppose the common assumption that Asian students have strong preferences for traditional memory strategies such as rote memorization, other studies have also found such contradictory results (Al-Otaibi, 2004; Bremner, 1998; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Wharton, 2000; Yang, 1999). One reason these were at the bottom of the list overall in terms of preferred strategies might have been that for the age of participants in this study, some of the memory strategies on the SILL instrument may not have been considered appropriate by adult learners. For example physically acting out new English words or making up rhymes, may be strategies preferred by learners at lower grade levels. Interestingly, the bilingual learners were significantly more likely to review their English lessons than the monolingual students, again evidence of planning for their success and of the autonomous learning that is more characteristic of expert learners (Rivers, 2001).

In sum, one assumption underlying this study was that bilinguals have higher skill and strategy levels for learning a new language or superior language learning abilities because of their dual language status. Studies on strategy use by monolingual and bilingual groups have reported more efficient use of learning strategies by bilingual students (Nation & McLaughlin, 1986), better language performance by bilinguals with formal training (Thomas, 1988), bilinguals outperforming monolinguals in learning rules for grammar (Nayak et al., 1990), and more capability for language learning in a self-paced, self-instructional format (Ramsay, 1980), indicating the same metacognitive superiority shown in this study. As reported, bilingual Korean-Chinese students showed higher use of learning strategies than monolingual Korean students. As previous studies on good language learners have stated, good language learners are aware of the various learning strategies available to them and tend to use more learning strategies (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). Higher strategy use may lead bilinguals to be more successful in learning languages than monolinguals.

Conclusion and Implications

The current study has presented empirical evidence of language learning differences between monolinguals and bilinguals in terms of learning strategy use. Monolingual Korean and bilingual Korean-Chinese EFL students employed a variety of language learning strategies when learning English and reported similarities and differences in strategy use. Although the context for formal English education in the Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture (Korean-Chinese community) appears to be less favorable in terms of classroom teacher qualifications, materials and resources than in Korea, where economics are not as much of an issue, bilingual Korean-Chinese students showed higher use of learning strategies than did monolingual Korean students. This is evidence of bilinguals' potential ability to learn a new language or superior language learning abilities as previous studies have also indicated. (Nation & McLaughlin, 1986; Nayak et al., 1990; Thomas, 1988). Although evidence of English proficiency (measured by standardized tests) for these two groups was not available, bilinguals self-reported English proficiency was higher (see Table 1), which can be viewed as evidence in favor of bilingual ability to learn a new language.

The difference in language use in daily life in two countries was also a factor that contributed to differences in strategy use. For example, some degree of fluency in two languages (Korean and Chinese) for Korean-Chinese students is necessary for reasons of day to day survival in this community. Dual language acquisition at an early age is encouraged at all social, educational, and economic levels in the Korean-Chinese community. The findings of the current study have served as a useful reminder that not only learners' individual background variables (e.g., academic major and self-rated English proficiency) affect the use of learning strategies, the difference in learning experiences of the participants from different socio-educational learning setting between the two countries could likely have been one of the factors that affected strategy use of the students in the current study.

Pedagogically, the findings of the current study suggest that teachers should be aware of learners' strategy use to assist students to be good language learners. Language teachers in Korean and Korea- Chinese communities tend to play the role of transmitters of knowledge of the target language in the classroom (a teacher-centered teaching approach) instead of being facilitators in language teaching and learning. For students who, like some in this study,

reported low use of social strategies, teachers should focus on classroom activities based on the concepts of communicative teaching and learning (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Savignon, 1991). Teachers in both countries should encourage students to use strategies involving practical activities and exercises which aid the development of communicative competence.

Some socio-cultural implications to be drawn are that, in a bilingual learning context such as the Korean-Chinese community, it is important to keep in mind that Korean-Chinese students come from a variety of different backgrounds, such as different levels of proficiency in Korean and Chinese, different types of schooling (Korean ethnic verses Chinese), and English learning experience in secondary school (English verse Japanese), which may affect their choice and use of strategies. Just as previous studies have argued that bilinguals' exhibit greater learning potential and superior abilities in learning language (Bialystok, 2001; Lerea & Kohut, 1961; Nation & McLaughlin, 1986; Nayak et. al., 1990; Thomas, 1988), this study also supported the argument of the superiority of the bilinguals as good language learners over monolinguals despite less overall formal language learning on the part of bilinguals. Therefore, foreign language educators and curriculum developers of Korean-Chinese students need to keep in mind that a homogeneous language-in-education policy is not likely to succeed in a Korean-Chinese community where two cultures and languages come together and several heterogeneous groups with different views about foreign language learning and teaching may exist. Any attempts to formulate foreign language curricula at the national level should take such factors into account. The participants' distinctive ways of learning languages should remind publishers of materials for learning English in both countries for producing effective and appropriate materials, especially for the Korean-Chinese students whose bilingual abilities can be of great advantage when it comes to learning English.

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Appendix

Means and Standard Deviation for Six Categories of Strategies

1. Memory Strategies

Item		*M*	SD
1. I think of the relationship between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	M	3.36	0.96
	B	3.18	1.00
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	M	2.54	1.09
	B	2.86	0.98
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	M	3.22	1.12
	B	3.10	1.04
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	M	3.09	1.06
	B	3.18	0.97
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words (e.g., know-no, nail-snail, cat- bat).	M	2.29	1.09
	B	2.75	1.07
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.	M	2.29	1.21
	B	2.66	1.15
7. I physically act out new English words.	M	2.21	1.14
	B	2.50	1.14
8. I often review English lessons.	M	2.44	0.99
	B	3.01	1.01
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	M	3.33	1.07
	B	3.19	1.00

Note: M=Monolinguals, B=Bilinguals

2. Cognitive Strategies

Item		*M*	SD
10. I say or write new English words several times.	M	3.72	1.07
	B	3.72	0.97
11. I try to speak like native English speakers.	M	3.29	1.10
	B	3.41	1.02
12. I practice the sounds of English.	M	3.21	1.09
	B	3.36	0.97
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.	M	2.80	0.95
	B	2.87	0.93
14. I start conversations in English.	M	2.72	1.08
	B	3.36	0.96
15. I watch English language television shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	M	3.25	1.09
	B	3.19	0.96
16. I read magazines, books, newspapers, and textbooks written in English.	M	2.62	1.10
	B	2.86	0.99
17. I write notes, messages, letters or reports in English.	M	2.06	1.03
	B	2.77	0.97
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	M	3.03	1.12
	B	3.06	0.99
19. I look for words in my own language (Korean or Chinese) that are similar to new words in English.	M	3.31	0.96
	B	3.16	0.99
20. I try to find patterns (grammar) in English.	M	3.08	1.08
	B	3.35	1.02
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	M	2.79	1.12
	B	3.08	0.96
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.	M	3.33	1.11
	B	3.02	1.04
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	M	2.74	0.97
	B	2.91	0.94

Note: M=Monolinguals, B=Bilinguals

3. Compensation Strategies

Item		*M*	SD
24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	M	3.72	0.91
	B	3.40	0.96
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	M	3.38	1.11
	B	3.14	1.03
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	M	2.74	1.13
	B	3.12	1.02
27. I read English without looking up every new word.	M	3.31	1.11
	B	2.92	1.13
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	M	2.83	1.03
	B	3.05	1.00
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	M	3.68	0.92
	B	3.55	0.88

Note: M=Monolinguals, B=Bilinguals

4. Metacognitive Strategies

Item		*M*	SD
30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	M	2.98	1.01
	B	3.27	0.94
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	M	2.81	1.10
	B	3.30	1.00
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	M	3.30	0.95
	B	3.38	0.95
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	M	3.25	1.05
	B	3.42	0.94
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	M	2.75	1.02
	B	3.07	0.93
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.	M	2.62	1.12
	B	3.08	0.97
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	M	2.84	1.04
	B	3.14	0.99
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	M	3.04	1.10
	B	3.38	0.97

Note: M=Monolinguals, B=Bilinguals

5. Affective Strategies

Item		*M*	SD
38. I think about my progress in learning English.	M	3.56	1.00
	B	3.65	0.92
39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	M	2.66	1.00
	B	3.35	1.00
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I feel afraid of making a mistake.	M	2.73	1.06
	B	3.26	0.98
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	M	2.86	1.05
	B	3.41	1.01
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	M	3.08	1.11
	B	3.40	0.98
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	M	1.74	0.88
	B	2.15	1.02
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel about learning English	M	2.37	1.17
	B	2.78	1.00

Note: M=Monolinguals, B=Bilinguals

6. Social Strategies

Item		*M*	SD
45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	M	3.65	0.95
	B	3.26	1.01
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	M	2.88	1.11
	B	3.04	1.00
47. I practice English with other students or native speakers of English.	M	2.14	1.07
	B	2.79	0.99
48. I ask for help from English speakers.	M	2.24	1.15
	B	2.89	1.06
49. I ask questions in English to other students or native speakers of English.	M	2.32	1.19
	B	3.05	1.06
50. I try to learn about the culture of English.	M	2.94	1.22
	B	3.15	1.00

Note: M=Monolinguals, B=Bilinguals