

## Learning Strategies and Teaching Methods in Thai and Vietnamese Universities

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### Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to investigate language learning strategy use of Vietnamese and Thai university students using Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). One main objective of the research was to compare different six aspects of language learning strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social) between Thai and Vietnamese students. The main research question was to learn about learning strategies Thai and Vietnamese university students used. The data of research were collected from 116 English major Thai university students and 174 English major Vietnamese students, using the SILL developed by Oxford (1990) as the instrument and interviews from 16 lecturers from Vietnam and Thailand. The findings revealed statistically significant differences in memory, cognitive, affective, and social strategies between Thai and Vietnamese students. The interview data were used to gain insight into the findings of the questionnaires. The findings of the research can be beneficial to teachers and educators who are involved in the education of both countries, providing better understanding of different aspects of language learning strategies used in learning English.

**Keywords:** language learning strategies, teaching methods, Thailand , university students, Vietnam

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## Introduction

As the use of English expands in countries where it is not an official language, it has become known as ‘a medium’ among people who are from different backgrounds. Due to its significance, English has been brought into early education for students (Trần, 2013). As a result, teaching English has drastically impacted many countries over a short period of time, especially within Asia. Moreover, different methods and approaches have been adopted for English language teaching and learning in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Within the association, Vietnam has become one of the most successful countries in English teaching. According to Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Vietnam ranked 17<sup>th</sup>, and Thailand ranked 50<sup>th</sup> (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Only one percent of Thai students are fluent in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, giving Thai students a very low proficiency.

Moreover, many factors affect how students acquire a language, and learners’ strategies are a significant part of how successful students can be. Language learning strategies do not stand alone when they come to their roles. They involve numerous other factors associated with language learners. Students try to use different learning strategies for their learning (Shen, 1989; Lewis & McCook, 2002). An investigation of a relationship between learners and language learning strategies help clarify how learners learn. Also, it explains how each learner responds to factors related to their learning. Therefore, it is essential to reveal the similarities and differences in the learning strategies used in Thai and Vietnamese universities in second language (L2) students’ learning.

## Research Objectives

This current research is designed to investigate language learning strategies that university students in Thailand and Vietnam employ in learning English using the SILL by Oxford (1990). The context of Thai and Vietnamese universities is quite different. In fact, Vietnam is known as a leading country in English language learning and teaching (Van Van, 2009).

## Research Questions

The research was addressed using two research questions, which were answered using both quantitative and qualitative data:

**RQ 1:** What are the perceived learning strategies of Thai and Vietnamese university students?

**RQ 2:** What are the teaching methods teachers use that affect students’ learning strategies in Thai and Vietnamese classrooms?

## Literature Review

### *Thailand*

Unfortunately, Thailand has been reported as having a very low proficiency in English (Kitjaroonchai & Kitjaroonchai, 2012). This is a major concern for the government, and the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE) is tasked with ensuring Thai learners become more competent in English. However, teaching methodology in classrooms has not been a concern to the government. Within Thailand, current educational reform plans are to provide 12-year compulsory and free education to Thai citizens (OBEC, 2008). The curriculum is created by the government, and it includes English subjects taught by native English teachers at primary and secondary levels (Varavarn, 2005).

For government schools, most English classes are taught by Thai teachers and English-Thai translation is frequently used in class. Often times, teachers focus on form and don't adequately teach its functions or pragmatics system. Teaching is generally recognized as teacher-fronted, so classes utilize one-way communication as teachers transfer the knowledge to the students. Thai students are expected to show respect to teachers and carefully pay attention in class. Thus, questioning and causing arguments rarely occurs in Thai classrooms. Second, showing respect to people also leads to students obeying and not questioning their teachers. Together, these two key concepts may minimize obstacles in classrooms. However, there is a major concern around the interaction and rapport of teachers and students as well as teaching methodology used in classrooms (Mulder, 1996). Different teaching methodology use in Thai and Vietnamese classrooms has impacts on students' learning.

### ***Problems of English Teaching and Learning in Thailand***

Studies indicated a major contributor to Thailand's low proficiency was the use of unqualified and poorly trained non-native English teachers. "According to a survey from the University of Cambridge, it was found that a full 60% of Thai teachers had knowledge of English and only 20% were teaching class-levels for which they were both qualified and competent." (Noom-Ura, 2013). If unaddressed, this is likely to become more challenging for English language teaching in Thailand, especially when other interfering factors are considered. Along with the teacher's proficiency, other factors that could interfere with improving English in Thailand include a learner's native tongue, attitude, limited knowledge of English, poor learning environment, and restricted support. Thai learners, similar to learners in other Asian countries, are generally shy and reserved in language classrooms (Bray, 2009; Zhenhui, 2001). This trait does not support communicative classrooms. Therefore, it is essential for Thai teachers to have a knowledge and understanding of the English language and teaching pedagogy.

### ***Vietnam***

One major issue that has been raised for many decades in Vietnam is who should teach English--native English speakers or non-native English speakers (Bright, 2012; LaBelle, 2007). A study conducted in Vietnam showed that having native English-speaking teachers could help students become more successful (Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012). Also, native speakers are considered as the standard of acceptable language (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). Students who learn with native English teachers believe that they are encouraged more, and they feel more comfortable speaking because native English teachers are seen as friendly (Benke & Medgyes, 2005). On the other hand, non-native English teachers can help students learn because they are able to identify difficulties students have (Ketch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Medgyes, 1992). Therefore, teachers in Vietnam use various teaching methods in classrooms to help students, besides the Grammar-Translation Method. This could be one of the reasons why Vietnamese students have higher English proficiency than students among ASEAN countries (Cook, 1999). A study about Vietnamese teachers revealed that teachers considered the cultural context as well as using a variety of teaching approaches in their classrooms. Le Ha (2004) supported this by mentioning "This moral sentiment has been consolidated and encouraged by Vietnamese society's respect and love for teachers and the teaching profession.". Many Western teachers view teaching in Vietnam as 'traditional', meaning teachers provide advanced knowledge as one-way communication instead of adopting 'Communicative Language Teaching' (Trần, 2013). Recently,

the government has taken a learner-centered approach into consideration. Engaging the students to actively participate in language learning can lead to greater success in learning English (Van Dang, 2006).

### ***Problems and Barriers to English Teaching and Learning in Vietnam***

Even though the success in English teaching and learning in Vietnam appears to go beyond other Asian countries, it is important to be aware of how Vietnamese students participate in classrooms. Learners' views are often not taken into consideration when teachers make decisions about materials, methodologies, and curricula. A lack of acknowledging this has brought failure to language innovation projects in the past in Vietnam because teachers use inappropriate practices in the classroom. Moreover, learners become less successful when they are pushed to learn in ways that they do not find helpful (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Lewis, 1996).

### **Learning Strategies**

Based on previous definitions of language learning strategies, the following definition was synthesized for the purpose of this research: language learning strategies are conscious behaviors, processes, and techniques learners employ in language-related tasks to improve their language competence using English input and output.

There are five basic types of classifications of language learning strategies which can be identified as (1) classifications related to research of successful language learners, (2) classifications formed on psychological functions, (3) classifications associated with a background of linguistics, (4) classifications related to language skills, and (5) classifications hinged on a variety of learning styles (Vlčková et al., 2013). The number of classifications covers a wide range of unclear concepts of learning strategies which helps to illustrate a major problem in strategy research. For language teachers, differences in learning strategies among students cannot be avoided, but it is a teachers' responsibility to find out what works well for their students.

### **A Review of Research in Learning Strategies in SLA**

Without question, learning strategies research has seen a great deal of progress over the years. Early work lacked useful descriptions of the types of strategies, and it also did not focus on cognitive aspects and variables that affected strategy use (Nambiar, 2009). Therefore, researchers have attempted to figure out ways to describe and understand more about the learning strategies of individuals. With this in mind, the strategy called 'think-aloud' protocols whereby students have to verbally express their thoughts while they were doing tasks (Ericsson & Simon, 1980). By using these protocols, the researchers are able to evaluate students' logical thinking (Nambiar, 2009). Along with these protocols, a number of researchers in the field use the SILL developed by Oxford (1990) to collect data on learning strategy use from individual learners. The questionnaire is comprised of four functional groups of learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social (Abhakorn, 2008; Chamot, 2004). Through the use of the SILL, researchers in Ireland reported that learners with higher proficiency used learning strategies to achieve their learning goals (Bruen, 2001). Based on their results, the researchers suggested that it is worthwhile to understand how relevant proficiency levels and learning strategies are, and how the use of learning strategies by each individual could help classroom teachers to promote students' learning.

According to the related research and literature review on language learning strategies above, it appears that the researchers aimed to explore how language proficiency influenced use of learning strategies. Besides using the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL), it might be worth looking at another dimension related to students' English proficiency achieved, which includes teachers' teaching methodology in classrooms.

### **Teaching Methods in Thailand and Vietnam**

In this research, four major teaching methods that are widely used in both countries are reviewed. They are the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach, and the Collaborative Teaching Approach.

#### ***Grammar-Translation Method***

The main purpose of the Grammar-Translation Method is to motivate individual learners to gain knowledge of reading skills by studying grammar and interpreting texts with the use of a dictionary (Mondal, 2012). The main concepts of the Grammar-Translation Method (Celce-Murcia, 1991) include (1) teachers use the mother tongue to teach L2, (2) grammatical rules are taught explicitly with clear explanation, (3) the content of the text is not the focus, and it is used mainly for grammatical analysis exercises, (4) pronunciation is mostly ignored, (5) lists of isolated vocabulary are taught, (6) grammatical rules and instruction focus on form, (7) students are asked to translate texts word for word, and (8) teachers drill a lot of sentences in the target language and students have to translate into their native tongue.

Although this method has been used widely, and it accommodates teachers to improve students' learning, there are advantages and disadvantages to its use in classrooms. The advantages are (1) learners are able to recognize features in L2 and study L2 very well as this method focuses on grammar and vocabulary, (2) learners' reading skills can be highly improved because this method uses texts as its main materials, (3) teachers use their native tongue to teach so students are able to understand the teachers precisely. On the other hand, the disadvantages of this teaching method are (1) this method provides little emphasis on communication; (2) students do not have an opportunity to produce their own sentences or develop their creativity; and (3) students do not have a chance to use the target language in all four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

#### ***The Direct Method***

In the United States, one of the most successful language schools, Berlitz, adapted the Direct Method and called it "the Berlitz Method" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The main concepts of the Direct Method are (1) students should not use their native tongues in classrooms, (2) grammar should not be explicitly taught, (3) teachers should not explain or translate, but demonstrate, (4) teachers should create an environment to help students understand meanings (e.g., pictures or realia), (5) accurate grammar points and pronunciation are emphasized, and (6) students use L2 for communication in the form of questioning and answering the questions in pairs or in groups. Teachers who apply the Direct Method in classrooms promote students in communicating with L2 in order to learn L2 naturally. Also, students are less passive than the Grammar Translation Method as they work in pairs and groups.

The advantages of this method are (1) students are familiar with a real command of L2, (2) this method is interesting to students as it emphasizes using pictures, objects, demonstrations, etc., (3) students get a chance to speak and write. Disadvantages include (1) some words cannot be translated directly so it takes a lot of time for teachers to explain, (2) this method might not be suitable for large classes since it depends on the needs of individual students, (3) teachers need to be well-trained in order to use this method effectively.

### ***Communicative Language Teaching Approach***

Unlike the Grammar Translation Method or the Audio-lingual Method, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach emphasizes the understanding of the target language. Therefore, teachers have to select learning activities that can engage students in authentic language usage. Furthermore, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach can be distinguished in two separate ways which are a weak and a strong version. The weak version highlights the importance of preparing students to use the target language through communication with language learning activities. The strong version emphasizes developing L2 through in-class learning activities which are similar to the real world (Molina, Cañado & Agulló, 2013).

Advantages of Communicative Language Teaching are (1) students are able to understand communication skills through real contexts, (2) activities are interesting since they are related to the students' lives and experiences, (3) this method allows teachers and students to communicate so their relationship is interactive. Disadvantages are (1) this approach is not appropriate for large classes because activities are designed to be applied to small groups of students, (2) this approach focuses on fluency, not accuracy, and weaker students may struggle as they do not have enough knowledge in the target language, (3) the Communicative Language Teaching Approach does not focus on reading and writing as much as it should.

### ***Collaborative Teaching Approach***

The Collaborative Teaching approach serves as an important shift away from typical classrooms. Through this approach, students are motivated to work in group discussions and engage in active tasks. As well, a teacher is considered as a person who coaches students in their learning process (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). However, traditional classroom activities such as lecturing and note-taking process do not entirely disappear in collaborative classrooms.

The main concepts of the Collaborative Teaching approach include (1) students share knowledge, questions, and solutions in order to achieve tasks, (2) teachers are facilitators and don't take full control in classrooms, (3) both teachers and students have opportunities to share knowledge and ideas, (4) classroom tasks are relevant to real situations where students can relate.

Advantages of the Collaborative Teaching approach are (1) students are motivated to learn by trying to achieve goals, (2) students develop social skills and get to share ideas with other students in their groups, (3) activities encourage students to communicate through L2 so students get an opportunity to practice, (4) it allows more flexibility of instructional time for students. Disadvantages are (1) weaker students may need to try to catch up with other students, (2) there is loss of instructional independence, and (3) students may get confused with their roles in group work.

## The Framework of the SILL

This particular research is respectively related to the most widely used taxonomies of second language learning strategies: O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) and Oxford's (1990). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classify language learning strategies into three groups, which were adapted from cognitive concepts of learning by Brown and Palincsar (1982). On the other hand, Oxford (1990) only categorize them into two groups, which then contained three subgroups each. Within her taxonomy, Oxford (1990) attempts to combine all kinds of L2 learning strategy aspects with all four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Along with this, she also took into account communicative as well as linguistic aspects. Based on her taxonomy, Oxford (1990) established the SILL, and it included six aspects to classify learning strategies students use: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognition, affective, and social.

## Methodology

In this research, there were two phases guided by the two research questions.

**Phase I:** The first phase was a quantitative phase, a questionnaire was administered and responses were recorded as numerical data.

**Phase II:** The second phase was a qualitative phase; the teacher interviews were conducted. Since in-depth data of language learning strategy use was also required, sixteen Thai and Vietnamese teachers were interviewed to learn their various teaching methods.

## Structure of the Questionnaire

For this study, the questionnaire was translated into Thai and Vietnamese. The questionnaires comprised of three parts. The first part was questions to ask about the personal information of the students. The second part was open-ended questions asking about teachers' teaching methodology. The last part was Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). This part includes 50 closed-ended questions on learning strategies.

Before administering the questionnaires for a pilot study, the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was used to evaluate the questionnaire by using a score range from -1 to +1. The items with scores lower than 0.5 were cut from the questionnaire and the items with scores higher than 0.5 were reserved in the questionnaire. In this process, the questionnaire was checked by three experts with Ph.D. degrees and many years of teaching experience in the teaching field from three different universities.

## Students

Two groups of university students were chosen from one university in Vietnam and one in Thailand. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling as the students had to meet the criteria. Both Thai and Vietnamese students and universities had to meet four main criteria. First, both universities were public universities and they offered English majors. The students had to take similar English courses, especially in their third and fourth year. Second, the number of students in both universities was almost the same. There were about 150 students for the third- and fourth-year programs in both universities. Third, the locations of the universities were not in the capital cities, so facilities and learning environments were very similar. Finally, the English

courses at both Thai and Vietnamese universities focused on English skills, rather than knowledge. The students shared common knowledge and skills in English.

## Participants

### Lecturers

Eight Thai and eight Vietnamese lecturers of English were interviewed in this research. The lecturers in this research had at least one year of teaching experience and mainly taught English major classes to the students who participated in the research. The lecturers were from the same universities as the students.

## Results and Discussion

### Research Questions

**RQ 1:** *What learning strategies of Thai and Vietnamese university students use?*

The questionnaires were collected from 116 Thai university students and 174 Vietnamese university students to see how different they are. Frequencies of responses from 50 questions on the questionnaire were compared. The data were categorized into six learning strategy usage classifications. Each participant responded to 50 questions of SILL were based on a Likert scale (1 = never true of me to 5 = always or almost always).

In order to analyze the results, students' strategy use in each aspect of the SILL was initially examined, and then the overall strategy use of both Thai and Vietnamese university students was analyzed. The data analysis adopted in the research was the *t-test*.

**Table 1 Comparison between Vietnamese and Thai university students**

| Classification | Mean        |             | df  | t     | Sig<br>(2-tailed) | P     |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-----|-------|-------------------|-------|
|                | Thai        | Vietnamese  |     |       |                   |       |
| Memory         | 3.20        | 3.35        | 274 | 2.08  | 0.04              | 0.01* |
| Cognitive      | 3.39        | 3.50        | 282 | 1.63  | 0.10              | 0.04* |
| Compensation   | 3.42        | 3.26        | 288 | -2.08 | 0.04              | 0.81  |
| Metacognitive  | 3.65        | 3.72        | 288 | 0.89  | 0.04              | 0.20  |
| Affective      | 3.65        | 3.39        | 278 | 7.29  | 0                 | 0.01* |
| Social         | 3.79        | 3.56        | 270 | -2.61 | 0.01              | 0.00* |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>3.39</b> | <b>3.48</b> |     |       |                   |       |

$p \leq 0.05$

As shown in Table 1, the t-test analysis was conducted to compare learning strategy use between Thai and Vietnamese university students. Four classifications (memory, cognitive, affective, social) were statistically significant. The results of analysis indicate statistically

significant differences among students occur in memory ( $p=0.01$ ), cognitive ( $p=0.04$ ), affective ( $p=0.01$ ), and social ( $p=0.00$ ) strategies, while there is no statistically significant difference in compensation ( $p = 0.81$ ) and metacognitive ( $p = 0.20$ ) strategies.

The t-test analysis reveals that each classification differed, even though the responses in both groups were very similar in the overall results. In addition, there were significant differences in certain classifications, which suggested the use of a variety of learning strategies among the students.

Based on the research findings, the overall responses of the questionnaires revealed Vietnamese students used learning strategies more than Thai students. As for the means of the memory classification and the cognitive classification, Vietnamese students had higher means. This could indicate the more frequent use of these two strategies of Vietnamese students. On the other hand, Thai students showed higher means of affective and social classifications. Thai students used affective and social strategies more than Vietnamese students.

**RQ 2:** *What are the teaching methods teachers use that affect students' learning strategies in Thai and Vietnamese classrooms?*

Teaching methods in both Thailand and Vietnam were found to be very similar, and they include the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach, and the Collaborative Teaching Approach.

#### *Thai teachers*

In Thai classrooms, the analysis showed that only the Grammar-Translation Method and the Communicative Language Teaching Approach were commonly used. Teachers also reported using Thai and asking students to translate. The main reason why the Thai teachers had students translate is possibly because many Thai students had low English proficiency, and it was difficult for them to understand content. Since the main purpose of the Grammar-Translation Method is to teach grammar explicitly with L1, and students are not expected to learn pronunciation, the method worked better for Thai students (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Another approach found in the Thai classrooms was the Communicative Language Teaching Approach — an approach that requires authentic materials and communication activities associated with real-world language (Wesche & Skehan, 2002; Molina, Canado&Agullo, 2013). In some cases, Thai teachers used Facebook as a teaching tool, so the students could relate lessons to their own experience in order to achieve goals.

#### *Vietnamese teachers*

While the Thai teachers applied two teaching methods or approaches in memory, the Vietnamese teachers used the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, and the Collaborative Teaching Approach. In regard to the Direct Method, almost every teacher used English to communicate with their students in class to create an L2 learning environment (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The teachers did not focus much on teaching grammar and taught it implicitly through class activities. In addition, students were encouraged to work in groups to exchange ideas. This approach is called the Collaborative Teaching Approach, which allows both teachers and students to exchange ideas (Rockwood, 1995; Lai, 2011). Giving students chances to share

and exchange opinions encourages them to think beyond what they know. As well, they can gain new knowledge from other learners. Along with the two methods mentioned above, some Vietnamese teachers also reported using the Grammar-Translation Method in lessons. Since not all students learn the exact same ways, it is important for teachers to provide a wide range of class activities for each individual student.

In response to the interview questions, the Thai and Vietnamese teachers reported engaging all four teaching methods or approaches to promote their students' cognitive strategies. Moreover, there were some similar perspectives between countries. For instance, the teachers from both countries thought students should work together to brainstorm ideas and have group discussions on various topics. When working in groups, the teachers noticed the brighter students were group leaders and told the other students what they needed to do to help. For the students who were not as confident, group work was found to encourage them to interact and ask other students in their group for help. Overall, it seems using the Collaborative Teaching Approach helped to increase the knowledge of students through interactions among themselves. However, it is not the typical teaching method in Thailand and Vietnam, which both rely on one-way communication (Webb, 1993).

Despite the most frequently used strategies, the responses of the open-ended question asking students about classroom activities revealed that their teachers did not use activities which involved metacognitive strategies in either country. Regarding the metacognitive aspect of strategy use, the interview results revealed similar responses from Thai and Vietnamese teachers. When asked about students correcting their own mistakes, Thai and Vietnamese teachers suggested that students with lower English proficiency often made mistakes and did not realize making them without teachers' guidance. In contrast, some students with high proficiency were able to correct their own mistakes right away. One explanation is that both Thai and Vietnamese classrooms tend to be teacher-centered. The students are used to having teachers lead the class. The students with low English proficiency had poor background knowledge of English. Therefore, they were not able to recognize their own mistakes without teachers' assistance. While the students with higher English proficiency had stronger background knowledge, they were able to figure out what mistakes they made. For Thailand and Vietnam, this difference was also connected to the cultural background of the students, especially in Vietnam. For the Vietnamese, teachers give importance to perfection, meaning students should not make mistakes. In regard to paying attention to other students when they speak English, both Thai and Vietnamese teachers felt they were responsible for making sure students paid attention to other classmates. Some teachers provided lists of questions or asked them to share their opinions, and others kept reminding students to listen and show some respect. In relation to this, there was a contrast between the students' responses in the questionnaire and the teacher interviews regarding metacognitive strategies. The students felt they used the strategies, but the teachers felt they were responsible for getting students to pay attention to them. Regardless, it is obvious that the teachers should provide class activities which support metacognitive learning strategies to increase students' learning abilities.

Overall, the t-test results revealed four strategy classifications were statistically significant, which were memory, cognitive, affective, and social. This could signify a higher competency of the Vietnamese students in terms of L2 learning in memory and cognitive classifications based on

the means. While Thai students had a higher competency in affective and social classifications, the means of the two classifications of Thai students were higher than Vietnamese students. This difference in competency is important since the aim of language teaching and learning is to improve language competency of learners with the use of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Van Van, 2011; Nguyen, 2014). With CEFR in mind, Vietnamese teachers focus on perfecting students' L2 skills instead of having students learn from their own mistakes (Murray, 2010). One of the main reasons to use CEFR could involve improving education to the higher level, which means they aim to bring higher standards to students and teachers in the country. Along with this, the Vietnamese government shapes the curriculum and teaching methodology based on a learner-centered approach, meaning students are engaged actively in lessons (William & Burden, 1997).

In brief, the findings of the questionnaire showed the Vietnamese students had a high frequency of language strategy use while the Thai students had a medium frequency. However, some methods and approaches were not relevant to class activities. One method which both Thai and Vietnamese teachers shared was the Grammar Translation Method as they believed students should understand meanings of the content they were being taught. One classification not found in the responses for both questions was compensation. This is understandable since the classroom activities did not fit compensation classification. It is possible that both the Thai and Vietnamese teachers may not have given the students tasks that required them to guess as much as they should have, which would have encouraged the use of compensation. Moreover, it is believed that using cooperative learning approaches can promote and improve students' L2 learning (Sarobol, 2012; Morrisson, 2009). Therefore, both Thai and Vietnamese teachers gear towards using group work such as group discussions and presentations.

### **Limitations and suggestions for further studies**

The results of this research certainly revealed differences in learning strategy use between Thai and Vietnamese university students, as well as differences in the teaching methods of Thai and Vietnamese teachers. To carry out this research, limitations ,and suggestions for further studies have been noticeable as follows;

1. This study might be limited in terms of generalizability since convenient and purposive sampling techniques were used in the research. Having more participants from universities in various areas of Thailand and Vietnam can help findings to become more generalizable.
2. Self-rating questionnaires are based on individual respondents. Therefore, using a variety of research tools might help to obtain more reliable data. Further studies may need to consider using the observation technique or focus group as well.
3. Instead of investigating only differences of strategy use between Thai and Vietnamese students, determining other factors related to strategy use would be helpful. For example, demographic differences of individual students and teachers such as gender, age, beliefs, educational background, cultural experiences, and learning goals could also provide insight into learning styles and teaching methods.

## Conclusion

This current research has helped to further the understanding of the language learning strategy field, especially in regard to Vietnam and Thailand. The main contribution of the research is the six classifications of the language learning strategies employed by Thai and Vietnamese university students.

More specifically, the findings of the questionnaire showed the Vietnamese students used language strategies more than Thai students. Statistically, the comparison between the Thai and Vietnamese students indicated differences among four classifications which included memory, cognitive, affective, and social strategies. From the interview responses, the Thai and Vietnamese teachers were found to use different teaching methods and approaches in their classrooms. However, some methods and approaches were not relevant to class activities. Based on the issues identified in this study, five suggestions were made to improve future research in the field. They were: (1) include more qualitative work to find out more about language learning strategy use of the students; (2) expand the number of participants to obtain stronger data; (3) obtain more information from teachers; (4) find more factors that can influence strategy use; and (5) analyze data of language proficiency to support self-reported responses from the SILL.

In summary, the findings of this research might help provide people in the education with more insights into the different teachers' teaching methodologies and students' learning strategies as they can apply the knowledge and utilize it in classroom settings. Moreover, Thai teachers could adapt teaching methodology from Vietnam to improve English teaching in Thai classrooms.

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