CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in 4 main areas along with a summary: (1) overview of attitudes in language learning, (2) overview of self-directed learning, (3) overview of self-access learning, and (4) overview of self-access centres.

2.1 OVERVIEW OF ATTITUDES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

There has been a great deal of research on the concepts and roles of attitudes in language learning. Usually, it is mentioned together with motivation as factors affecting second language (henceforth L2) learning. According to Gardner (1985), positive attitudes and motivation are related to success in L2 learning.

In relation to Secord and Backman (1964), attitude refers to certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts, and predisposition to act towards some aspect of the environment. Generally, it is useful to infer ones' attitudes in an attempt to understand their behaviors. In language education, attitudes provide explanations of learners' motivation towards their learning processes. As mentioned by Green (1977), attitudes are not directly observable but are inferred from behavior. Nonetheless, Fishbein (1967, p. 477) notes that even though research on attitude has been going on for many years, there is little or no consistent evidence supporting the hypothesis that knowledge of an individual's attitude toward some object will allow one to predict the ways he will behave with respect to that object. However, many measurements have been developed to quantify individual's attitudes. With reference to Suphat Sukamolson (2006), the Likert scale which is designed for the respondents to rate each attitude item, usually on a 5-point scale, is one of the most popular attitude test/scales which is used to measure the overall attitude of a person towards a particular issue.

Normally, L2 learners hold attitudes towards the need to acquire L2 and about members of communities who use this language. As mentioned by Lightbown and Spada (2003), motivation in L2 learning can be defined in terms of 2 factors, learners' communicative needs and their attitudes towards L2 community. If learners have

favorable attitudes towards the speakers of the language, they will desire more contact with them.

Research into the roles of attitudes and motivation in L2 learning is founded on the work of Gardner and Lambert. They suggest the social and cultural milieu learners are raised in determines the attitudes and motivational orientation they hold toward the target language, its speakers, and its culture. These in turn influence the types of learning behaviors learners choose to engage in, and as a result play major roles in learning outcomes. In addition, one of five motivational attributes affecting L2 learning is the attitudes held toward the target language and culture (Gardner, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1988; Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972).

Motivation for learning L2, as divided by Gardner, consists of two components. Instrumental motivation concerns an individual's primary concern for linguistic growth, apart from social goals in second language acquisition (henceforth SLA) whereas integrative motivation refers to an individual's willingness and interest in promoting SLA through social interactions with members of the L2 group (Gardner, 1979, 1983, 1988; Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972). While Gardner asks whether learners are primarily concerned with acquiring L2 for business or educational purposes (instrumental motivation), these are not connected to attitudes toward interacting within the target language and with members of its speech communities.

Further, there are different views from other researchers who disagree when Gardner suggests that integration motivation has a secondary role in SLA to instrumental motivation (Collier & Thomas, 1988; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988). Intercultural communication theorists, in particular, place greater importance on learners' attitudes towards the target language community. Milhouse (1996), following similar findings by Collier and Thomas, and Gudykunst and Hammer, links learners' attitudes in 3 domains to the efforts they made in acquiring L2. They found a stronger motivation for interaction with a target language group to be positively associated with the frequency of inter-group contact learners made (social distance), the degree to which the L2 group was held in a positive regard, and the level of open-mindedness of the language learner. Through the inclusion of these components to SLA motivation, Gardner's concepts can be reinforced and extended to consider how

changes in learner attitudes may result from contact with speakers of the language and their various cultures and the language itself during SLA. A stronger connection can be made between motivation for SLA and efforts learners make to interact with L2 and second culture community, in its suggestion of how deep into the perspective of these people and their cultures the learner wishes to look.

Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) propose a model of language learning whereby language learning strategies interact in a complicated way with other individual factors such as intelligence, aptitude, attitudes, motivation and anxiety. Consequently, they found that attitudes interact with strategies to affect success in language learning.

Furthermore, concerning the study of the attitudes, learning behaviors and learning Strategies of the English majors at Chiang Mai University by Wanpen Chaikitmongkol (วันเพ็ญ ชัยกิจมงคล, 2544), a correlation between the attitudes of students majoring in English and learning strategies students use has been found. She mentions that students with positive attitudes towards English learning tend to pay attention to applying learning strategies such as reading English newspaper or novels, watching movies, etc.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

2.2.1 Concepts of Self-Directed Learning

In most traditional language learning formats, the information comes before the question. The learners must be taught and the teachers will take care of everything. Nevertheless, there has been a remarkable growth of interest in the theory and practice of self-directed learning (henceforth SDL) which educators have investigated and discussed for many years. Countless studies and several evidences have shown how SDL becomes more important in language teaching and learning. In SDL, the learners take the initiative and the responsibility for what occurs. They select, manage, and assess their own learning activities which can be pursued at any time, in any place, through any means, at any age.

In language learning, there are quite a few references and potential meanings to the term “self-directed learning” (SDL). There may be slight variations in how different writers define this term as it tends to be used and represented in a different way by them. Also, it has been related and overlapped with other terms (i.e.

independent learning, autonomous learning, autonomy, self-access learning (SAL), and self-study) that are often used interchangeably or similarly with it. However, they still have some distinctions. A survey of related literature identifies several views that are associated with the concept of SDL.

Knowles (1975) describes SDL as a process:

... in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (p. 18).

He, therefore, gives three reasons for SDL. First, he argues that there is convincing evidence that learners who take the initiative in learning (proactive learners) learn more things and learn better than those who wait to be taught from teachers passively (reactive learners). Second, SDL is more in tune with our natural processes of psychological development as learners tend to develop the ability to take increasing responsibility for their own lives. Third, many of the new developments in education put a heavy responsibility on the learners to take a good deal of initiative in their own learning (Knowles 1975, pp. 14-15).

Additionally, Hiemstra and Sisco (1990) view SDL as an individualizing instruction and a process focusing on characteristics of the teaching-learning transaction. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) state that SDL is an instructional process centering on such activities as assessing needs, securing learning resources, implementing learning activities, and evaluating learning. In addition, SDL is seen by Hiemstra (1994) as any form in which individual have primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and even evaluate the effort.

Moreover, SDL has focused on training learners how to be good learners and encouraging them to take charge of their own learning. In other words, they have been trained to teach themselves (Harmer, 1991).

According to Corno, (1992), Leal (1993), and Bolhuis (1996), teachers scaffold learning by making learning visible. They model learning strategies and work with learners so that they develop the ability to use them on their own. For Corno (1992) and Garrison (1997), SDL recognizes the significant role of motivation and volition in initiating and maintaining learners' efforts. Motivation drives the decision

to participate and volition sustains the will to see a task through to the end so that goals are achieved.

Higgs (1993) also notes that SDL is an approach to learning in which the behavior of the learner is characterized by responsibility for and awareness of his or her own learning process and outcome, a level of autonomous learning and solving problems which are associated with the learning task, the use of teacher as a resource person, and learner interdependence with teacher and co-learners. In SDL, control gradually shifts from teachers to learners. Learners exercise a great deal of independence in setting learning goals and deciding what is worthwhile learning as well as how to approach the learning task within a given framework (Morrow, Sharkey, & Firestone, 1993).

Regarding Temple and Rodero (1995) and Bolhuis (1996), SDL develops domain-specific knowledge as well as the ability to transfer conceptual knowledge to new situations. It seeks to bridge the gap between school knowledge and real world problems by considering how people learn in real life. In addition, SDL is ironically and highly collaborative as learners collaborate with teachers and peers in (Guthrie, Solomon, & Rinehart, 1997; Temple & Rodero, 1995). Further, Bolhuis (1996) and Garrison (1997) mention that SDL views learners as responsible owners and managers of their own learning process. SDL integrates self-management (management of the context, including the social setting, resources, and actions) with self-monitoring (the process whereby the learners monitor, evaluate and regulate their cognitive learning strategies).

Concisely, SDL can be described as an approach in which learners are encouraged to choose what they want to learn and do to suit their learning styles. They can set their own goals of learning and choose means to achieve those goals. Moreover, they can monitor and assess their own work. Consequently, SDL stresses the importance of individual differences, learner training, and learner self-assessment. In addition, SDL supports the concept of life-long learning since language learning in class may be insufficient to provide enough practice to learners and make them master the target language. Therefore, it seems to be part of the teacher's duty to help them realize that they have to continue developing their English language skills outside the class as well.

To put it briefly, regarding the literature on SDL, the characteristics of self-directed learners are that they have a greater awareness of their responsibility in making learning meaningful and monitoring themselves (Garrison, 1997). They are curious and willing to try new things (Hunt & Lyman, 1997), view problems as challenges, desire change, and enjoy learning (Taylor, 1995). Taylor also finds that they are motivated and persistent, independent, self-disciplined, self-confident and goal-oriented. Moreover, SDL allows learners to be more effective learners and social beings. Morrow, Sharkey, and Firestone observe that with proper planning and implementation, SDL can encourage them to develop their own rules and leadership patterns.

2.2.2 Concepts of Autonomy in Language Learning

Over the years, autonomous learning has influenced the development of several pedagogical and methodological innovations which may be summarized as self-directed learning, independent learning, or autonomous learning (Little, 1991; Nunan, 1996). Boud and Sidery (as cited in Dickinson, 1978) describe the two terms, self-directed learning and autonomy, as two names for the same phenomenon as follows:

"We understand self-directed to imply maximum autonomy for the individual concomitant with concern for the autonomy of others, and the use of each other's resources in sensitive and effective ways."

Based on this assumption, an educated person should be able to identify his own needs, set his own goals, develop strategies for meeting his needs, and monitor his own action in this process. However, Dickinson (1978) has another point of view that autonomy represents the upper limit of self-directed learning measured on a notional scale from total direction to full freedom. Therefore, autonomy is one set of possibilities within the larger category of self-directed learning. In other words, we have fully self-directed learning when the learners' choices can be made freely, and some degree of self-directed learning when only some choices are freely made.

Furthermore, the publication of Holec's seminal report, according to the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3). Quite the opposite, Little

(1991) places psychology at the heart of learner autonomy. He emphasizes the psychological attributes of autonomous learners and prioritized “interdependence” over “independence” in learning. From his view, learning is efficiently achieved among learners who are psychologically autonomous as they are able to apply and integrate their previously possessed knowledge in learning new things. He claims that “all learning is internal to the learner” and that too much reliance on classroom-based learning is seen as an obstruction for the internal interaction of language learners. Also, he argues that learner autonomy did not imply any particular mode of practice but was dependent upon the quality of the “pedagogical dialogue” between teachers and learners (Little, 1995). However, Little (2000a, p. 69) combines Holec’s definition with his own as follows:

Autonomy in language learning depends on the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action (Little 1991: 4); autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining the purpose, content, rhythm and method of their learning, monitoring its progress and evaluating its outcomes (Holec, 1981, p. 3).

It can be seen that Little’s psychological approach assumes the dependency of the capacity to manage one’s own learning on underlying psychological capacities, while Holec explains what autonomous learners are able to do but doe not mention how they are able to do it. Little (1991) also mentions that the behavior of autonomous learners “can take numerous different forms, depending on their age, how far they have progressed with their learning, what they perceive their immediate learning needs to be, and so on” (p. 4).

It is believed that in order to develop learners' responsibility for their own learning, they need to have some ideas of learning strategies, and should know how to choose their own materials and how to evaluate themselves. In the context of self-directed or autonomous learning, learners' interests can be maintained depending on whether they find the materials they use interesting and useful (Frankel, 1982; Hughes, 1982).

More to the point, while Holec treats autonomy as an attribute of the learner, the term is also used to describe learning situations. Dickinson (1987) describes autonomy as “the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all

of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions" (p. 11).

For Allwright (1988), the idea of learner autonomy was for a long time "associated with a radical restructuring of language pedagogy" that involved "the rejection of the traditional classroom and the introduction of wholly new ways of working" (p. 35).

Ellis and Sinclair (1989) state that learners can become autonomous when they take charge of their own learning. Providing self-access learning is one way of increasing responsibility in learning, thus encouraging learner autonomy.

Further, Dickinson (1992) mentions that learners often acted "independently" both cognitively and behaviorally in the classroom, while Dam (1995) demonstrates how principles of autonomy could be integrated into secondary school classrooms without self-access or formal learner training.

As mentioned by Cotterall (1998), the way that teachers and learners adopt their roles in the autonomous language learning environment are influenced by 3 variables including culture, mode of learning, and individual differences. In relation to culture, Little (1990) agrees that "If we want to promote learner autonomy in our particular environment, we need to be aware of the conditions and constraints that will define the limits of what can be achieved". In addition, Sheerin (1989) mentions that learner differences may be found in terms of psychological constructs, study habits, personality, motivation, and learning purposes. Cotterall states that learners as individuals differ in terms of their willingness and ability to accept the new role as autonomous learners. Thus, self-access facilities are proposed as one of the techniques for serving needs of individual learners (Barnett & Jordan, 1991; Cotterall, 1998).

Therefore, in enhancing the practicality of learner autonomy, it is essential to develop some degrees of autonomy so that learners can become effective language learners. Nunan (1997, p. 192) states that that there are "degrees of autonomy". He argues that autonomous learners are rare and fostering learner autonomy is best done in the language classroom. He outlines a scheme consisting of five levels for gradually increasing their degrees of autonomy. First, awareness learners are made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the materials they are using. Second, involvement learners make choices of their own goals among a range

of options. Third, intervention learners modify and adapt the goals and content of their learning. Fourth, creation learners create their own tasks. Last, transcendence learners go further than the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world outside.

Besides Nunan's scheme, ten techniques suggested by Carver and Dickinson (1982) can also be used in designing materials to promote learner independence. Such techniques include self-monitoring, self-correction, variable pacing, group-work, project-work, troubleshooting sessions, extensive reading and listening, choices of activities, use of pupil teachers, and sharing objectives. These techniques can help prepare learners to move towards full autonomy.

Further, the education system, according to the National Education Act of Thailand (Thailand, Office of the National Education Commission, 1999), is based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development, and are regarded as the most important element in the teaching and learning process. Thus the aim of education should be to enable learners to develop at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality.

As abovementioned, learner autonomy, proposed as a factor directing learning processes towards learner-centeredness, would allow learners to receive more chances and choices to learn on their own, as well as encourage them to develop themselves to be autonomous learners. Accordingly, it plays an important role in enhancing the practicality of this principle.

2.3 OVERVIEW OF SELF-ACCESS LEARNING

In order to help learners to follow SDL, it is interesting to understand self-access learning (henceforth SAL). The SAL has been identified in several ways according to each writer’s views. Dickinson (1987) identifies self-access as being learners’ ability to decide on what to do, what objectives to work on, and what particular skill to work on. Learners can find appropriate materials, know how to do particular activities, what to do first and next, and how to self-assess without direct control from the teacher.

On the other hand, Sheerin (1991) mentions that self-access is a way of describing learning materials that are designed and organized in such a way that

learners can choose and work on tasks on their own, as well as obtain feedback on their performance.

As stated by Gardner and Miller (1999), SAL and learner autonomy is an approach to language learning. Self-access is sometimes seen as a collection of materials and sometimes seen as a system for organizing resources. It is a combination of several elements to provide a supportive learning environment including resources, people, management, individualization, needs and wants analyses, learner reflection, counseling, learner training, staff training, assessment, evaluation, and materials development.

SAL is a good approach in promoting learner autonomy as it allows learners to pursue their own goals and interests while accommodating individual differences in learning styles, levels, and pace of learning (Cotterall & Reinders, 2001).

In this study, SAL is seen as the system that promotes learners' independent and autonomous learning where such learning is done in accordance with their wants and needs. Learners know their goal and how to achieve it step-by-step, as well as whether they have reached it.

2.4 OVERVIEW OF SELF-ACCESS CENTRES

2.4.1 Concepts of Self-Access Centres

SAL is one of the language learning approaches which take place in the self-access centres (henceforth SACs) (Cotterall & Reinders, 2001). The SAC consist of numerous resources in the form of materials as well as activities and support which usually located in one place. It is designed to accommodate learners of different levels, styles, goals, and interests as it is aimed to develop learner autonomy (Gardner & Miller, 1999).

As mentioned by Gardner and Miller, SACs are likely to promote learner autonomy in various ways. First, they provide facilities which allow learners to follow their own goals and interests while accommodating individual differences in learning style, level, and pace of learning. Second, the resources possibly raise learners' awareness of the learning process by highlighting aspects of the learning management such as goal setting and monitoring progress. Third, SACs can be a

bridge between the teacher-directed learning situation, where the target language is studied and practiced, and the real world, where the target language is used as a means of communication. Finally, SACs can promote the autonomy of learners who prefer or are obliged to learn without a teacher by supporting their learning in the absence of an organized language course. Therefore, SACs are set up in order to allow learners to do what they like in whatever manner they prefer with whatever materials they select for a period they themselves specify.

Regarding Sheerin (1989), the major purpose of SAC is to solve language teaching problems such as mixed-ability classes, and students with different background and needs. The SAC can be a good resource for finding information since it not only contains the materials for learning language but also a lot of reference books, textbooks, magazines etc. Gardner and Miller (1999) mention that a SAC is a resource that provides learning materials, authentic materials, activities, technology, access to authentic language users, and access to other language learners.

To put it briefly, using the SAC prompts learners to approach independent learning, where they can learn what they want to learn, not what someone else tells them to learn. As mentioned by Nunan (1994), learning will be enhanced if learners are given space to make choices. In addition, the SAC provides opportunity that they can set their own pace and in their own time of learning. However, learners do not have to agree with the whole values and practical use of it. It depends on the teachers and teaching establishment how far they are prepared to encourage the idea of independent learning, the actual self-access resources provided, and the degree to which these resources are integrated into actual teaching formats.

2.4.2 Self-Access Learning Center (SALC) at Thammasat University, Rangsit Campus

SAL has grown rapidly in Thailand over the past decades. Its idea is spreading to a variety of schools, universities, and language institutes. The self-access centres (SACs) have been set up in various educational institutions. Thammasat University is one of the institutions that realize the usefulness of SAL, which encourages learners to take charge of their own learning and provides language learning opportunities outside their classes. Therefore, the proposal of Thammasat

University Language Institute to establish a SALC was approved, and resulted in the establishment of the SALC on November 10, 1996. It aims to encourage students to learn and develop their English competence in a self-instructed way, and at their own learning pace, by providing them with opportunities to practice their English skills outside the classroom in accordance with their language learning abilities, interests, and needs. The SALC also aims to enable them to become autonomous learners.

The SALC is located in the Audio-Visual Center of Rangsit campus. The opening hours are Monday to Friday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. The first–year students who enroll in Fundamental English courses (English I, II and III) are required to attend the SALC as part of their completion of those courses. The self-access learning activities will be assigned to them for practicing English skills through various media and materials. The Language Institute lecturers are available to give some advice to them about language learning materials as well as orientate them to the resources and facilities. When the tasks are completed, they have to write reflection reports on their learning experience and submit the portfolios to their teachers at the end of the semester. At present, the SALC consists of 4 rooms which are divided as follows:

1. SALC 1 (Reading and Writing Room) is provided for the students to practice their reading and writing skills. A reading section provides such materials as Institute-developed and commercially-produced reading exercises and worksheets, which are graded according to levels of difficulty, a reading-skill development package (SRA), outside reading books, reference materials, and a wide variety of English magazines and newspapers. A writing section provides the Institute-developed and commercially-produced reading exercises and worksheets which are graded in the same way as the reading materials.

2. SALC 2 (Computer Room) houses computers equipped with headsets and microphones for students to practice English via using CD-ROMs and the Internet.

3. SALC 3 (Edutainment Room) consists of video, games, and karaoke sections for students' relaxation. This room supplies the following equipment and materials: sets of TVs and video players equipped with headphones, various kinds of

movies, commercially-produced language learning videos, and English-practice games.

4. In SALC 4 (Listening Room or Sound Lab), listening booths with headsets are provided for practicing listening skills from commercially-produced listening exercises and worksheets, song cassettes, and cable TV programs.

In summary, although the SAC is very useful for helping students develop their language learning and promoting learner autonomy, it is not a substitute for classroom-based learning. Rather, it is a supplement to create learner autonomy in stimulating learners' internal psychological interaction (Waterhouse, 1990). Basically, it provides learners with rich resources with which they can work on their own. It is not a place where autonomy is readily found but one of the environments in which autonomy can be put into practice. Thus, it is interesting to study the students' attitudes and satisfactions as well as their problems, comments, and recommendations towards the use of the SALC as the results will be useful for the improvement of materials, facilities, and service provided to better serve their language learning needs. The SALC at Thammasat University was chosen as the site of this survey study. The methodology used in the study and the results of the study will be presented in Chapter 3 and 4 respectively.