CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on the literature review of language learning strategies and is divided into three parts. The first part is an overview of language learning strategies; the second part involves research related to language learning strategies and the last part concerns research related to the relationship between English language learning strategies and the students' achievement.

2.1 OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

There is an old proverb which states: "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime". Applied to the language teaching and learning field, this proverb might be interpreted to mean that if students are provided with answers, the immediate problem is solved. But if they are taught the strategies to work out the answers for themselves, they are empowered to manage their own learning (Griffiths, 2004).

Strategies are tools for active, self-directed involvement needed for L2 communicative ability (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Furthermore, learning strategies refer to "….characteristics we want to stimulate in students to enable them to become more proficient language learners." (Oxford, 1990, p. ix)

2.1.1 Definitions of Language Learning Strategies

Since the late 1970s, there has been widespread interest in the strategies that learners use in learning and using second languages (Attapol Khamkien, 2006). However, there are various definitions of language learning strategies as follows:

Wenden & Rubin (1987) defines language learning strategies as "strategies which contributed to the development of the language system which the learners construct and affects learning directly" (p. 23)

Ellis (1994) defines language learning strategies as strategies consisting of mental and behavioral activities related to some specific stage in the overall process of language acquisition and language use.

Cohen (1998, p. 4)) views language learning strategies as processes learners have intentionally chosen to improve their effectiveness in using language.

Cook (2001) states that language learning strategies are conscious or unconscious mental or behavioral activity that the learner makes while learning or using second language. This definition focuses particularly on communication strategies and raises an argument whether acquiring first and second language may employ different learning strategies.

Chamot (2004, p. 15) explains that language learning strategies are the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal and recall of both linguistic and content area information.

According to all the definitions mentioned above, it can be concluded that language learning strategies are behaviors or techniques that language learners intentionally apply to facilitate their learning and language use. However, it is seen that some definitions are not comprehensive and limit the clarification in some aspects. Avoiding those limitations, the clearest explanation is Oxford's (1990) definition of language learning strategies.

Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as "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).

2.1.2 Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Several researchers attempted to divide language learning strategies into various types. Therefore, many classifications of language learning strategies are provided.

Rubin (1987) states that there are three kinds of learning strategies which have been identified which directly or indirectly contribute to language learning: learning strategies, communication strategies and social strategies. Also, students' learning strategies have come to be recognized two major types: metacognitive and cognitive strategies. (p. 23)

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) claimed that metacognitive and cognitive strategies were used in the initial definition of strategies. They believed that second language acquisition uses an active and dynamic mental process.

They define three main categories of learning strategies used by L2 students:

1. Metacognitive strategies involve planning and thinking about learning, such as planning one's learning, monitoring one's own speech or writing, and evaluating how well one has done.

2. Cognitive strategies involve conscious steps or operations of tackling learning, such as note-taking, resourcing (using dictionary and other sources) and elaboration (relating new information to old)

3. Social and Affective strategies mean learning by interacting with another person or others. These strategies involve cooperating or working with peers, questioning for clarification and self-talking, or using mental control to assure oneself.

However, the categorization by Chamot and O'Malley might not cover all strategies used in language learning (Khamkhien, 2006). Ellis (1994, p. 539) states that perhaps the most comprehensive classification of language learning strategies is Oxford's taxonomy.

Oxford (1990, p. 14) has divided learning strategies into two broad categories: direct strategies which include memory, cognitive and compensation strategies (those which directly involve target language and require mental processing of the language) and indirect strategies which include metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (those which provide indirect support for language learning: focusing planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities controlling anxiety, increasing co-operating and empathy and other means). Direct and indirect strategies are subdivided into six categories including the following:

1.   *Memory strategies* relate to how students remember language, to store and retrieve new information.

2.   *Cognitive strategies* relate to how students think about their learning, to understand and produce new language by different means ranging from repeating to analyzing and summarizing.

3.   *Compensation strategies* enable students to make up for their limited knowledge, to overcome limitations in target language skills.

4.   *Metacognitive strategies* relate to how students manage their own learning, to help learners regulate their cognition and to focus: plan and evaluate their progress.

5.   *Affective strategies* relate to students' feelings, to gauge their emotional reaction and to learn and lower their anxiety.

6.   *Social strategies* involve learning interaction with others.

Theses six groups of strategies have further been divided into 19 sets as illustrated in Figure 1. *Diagram of the Strategies System Showing Two Classes, Six Groups and 19 Sets* (Oxford, 1990, p. 17)

DIRECT STRATEGIES		INDIRECT STRATEGIES	
I. Memories strategies	A. Creating mental linkages B. Applying images and sound C. Reviewing well D. Employing action	**I. Metacognitive strategies**	A. Centering your learning B. Arranging and planning your learning C. Evaluating your learning
II. Cognitive strategies	A. Practicing B. Receiving and sending C. Analyzing and reasoning D. Creating structure for input and output	**II. Affective strategies**	A. Lowering your anxiety B. Encouraging Yourself C. Taking your emotional temperature
III. Compensation strategies	A. Guessing intelligently B. Overcoming limitation in speaking and writing.	**III. Social strategies**	A. Asking questions B.Cooperating with others C. Emphathzing with others

2.1.3 Characteristics of Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

The four basic characteristics of language learning strategies (LLS) according to Lessard-Clouston (1997) are as follows:

First, LLS are learner generated; they are steps taken by language learners. Second, they enhance language learning and develop language competence, as reflected in the learner's L2 or foreign language skills. Third, they may be visible (behaviors, steps or techniques, etc.) or unseen (thoughts, mental processes). Fourth, LLS involve information and memory (vocabulary, knowledge, grammar rules, etc.)

Twelve key features of LLS by Oxford (1990, p. 8) states that LLS:

1. Contribute to the main goal and communicative competence

All appropriate language learning strategies are oriented toward the broad goal of communicative competence. LLS help learners participate actively in such authentic communication.

2. Allow learners to become more self-directed

LLS encourage greater overall self-direction for learners. Self-direction is important for language learners because self-directed students gradually gain greater confidence, involvement, and proficiency.

3. Expand the roles of language teachers

Teachers gain new functions as facilitator, helper, guide, consultant, advisor, coordinator, idea person, diagnostician, and co-communicator. Teachers should be able to identify students' LLS, conduct training on LLS and help learners become more independent.

4. Are problem-oriented

LLS are tools to solve problems, to accomplish a task, to meet the objective and attain a goal.

5. Are specific action by the learner

LLS are specific actions or behaviors accomplished by learners to enhance their learning. These actions are naturally influenced by learners' learning styles, motivation, and aptitude.

    6. Support learning both directly and indirectly

Direct and indirect strategies are important and serve to support each other in many ways.

    7. Involve many aspects, not just cognitive

LLS are not restricted only cognitive functions, such as those dealing with mental processing and manipulating of new language but also include metacognitive functions, such as planning, evaluating, and affective (arranging one's own learning) and social and other functions.

    8. Are not always observable

Some strategies are hard to observe because they cannot be seen, such as the act of making mental associations or memory strategy. Moreover, many strategies which are used outside of the classroom in informal, naturalistic situations cannot be observed.

    9. Are often conscious

The use of LLS reflects conscious efforts by learners to take control of their learning and some researchers seem to suggest that LLS are always conscious actions.

    10. Can be taught

Strategy training is an essential part of language education. Strategies training help guide learners to become more conscious of strategy use and use appropriate strategies. Moreover, learning strategies are easy to teach and modify.

    11. Are flexible

LLS are not always found in predictable sequences or in precise pattern. There is a great deal of individuality in the way learners choose, combine, and sequence strategies. However, sometimes learners do combine strategies in a predictable way.

    12. Are influenced by a variety of factors

Many factors affect the choice of strategies: age, sex, nationalities, degree of awareness, task requirement, learning style, aptitude and motivation.

2.2 RELATED RESEARCH

2.2.1 Research on Language Learning Strategies

Many studies have investigated learning strategies since the late 1970's, and this has also been a trend in second and foreign language education. Researchers have discovered that successful second language learners, compared with their less successful classmates, used more strategic mental processes and employed them more frequently; this strategy use was shown to occur before, during, and after second language tasks (Oxford, 1994). Oxford (1990) pointed out how important learning strategies are, both in theory and in practice, for language learners.

Chamot (as cited in Breen, 2001, p 25) states that there are two major goals in learning strategy research:

1.   To identify and compare the learning strategy used by more and less successful language learners

2.   To provide instruction to less successful language learners to become more successful in their language study.

Therefore, to gain a clear understanding of learning strategies used by learners and differences between learning strategies of more and less effective learners is the first step to achieve these goals.

From the research of language learning strategies, O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 112) note that it can be grouped into three general categories:

1) Studies to define and classify strategies
2) Studies to describe strategies in greater detail and types of tasks where the strategies are effective
3) Studies to validate the influence of strategic processing on learning

According to SILL results of 1,200 university samples, Nyikos and Oxford (as cited in Oxford, 1990 p. 255) stated that a wider range of strategies were employed more frequently by learners who were more proficient and motivated.

Green and Oxford, (1995 as cited in Larson-Freeman, 2001, p. 22) found that higher level students used more learning strategies and used them more frequently. Furthermore, Robbins, 1996 (as cited in Chamot, 2001 p. 31) studied the learning strategies of 78 high school ESL students in Japan and found that a range and variety

of language learning strategies were applied for different tasks by more successful students.

2.2.2 Research on English Language Learning Strategies in Thailand

Some studies focusing on identifying language learner strategies applied by students in Thailand are as follows:

Arwuth Wajasath (อาวุธ วาจาสัตย์, 1990) aimed to identify language learning strategy employed by 710 first year students taking Foundation English I in the first semester of the academic year 1987 at Chulalongkorm University and to compare the learning strategies among four groups of students classified by the grades they received from Foundation English I course: Grade A group, Grade B group, Grade C group, and Grade D group. The result of the finding indicated that the language learning strategy most used by the students was an intelligent guess. Moreover, there were differences in the strategies employed among the students classified by grades.

The study of Jarasri Thepphaya (2003) focused on identifying the language learning strategies of 61 second-year high vocational students of the Marketing Department and the Business Department of Business Administration College, Songkla, Thailand. The instrument of this study was the SILL questionnaires developed by Oxford. The findings showed that the overall use of strategies was in medium range. The most frequently used strategies were metacognitive strategies and compensation strategies whereas memory strategies were found to be used the least frequently. The result of the study also revealed that in terms of the relationship between the study outcome and learning strategies, three strategies out of fifty were found having positive correlation with study outcome.

Narisara Tirabulkul (2005) investigated language the learning strategies of 55 students in the Master of Arts TEFL program, Thammasat University, Bangkok, by using the 50-item, SILL questionnaire by Oxford (1990) The study revealed that the metacognitive category was the highest strategy use (2.94) followed by compensation (2.90), social (2.74), cognitive (2.73), affective (1.99) and memory (1.92). Moreover, it was found that metacognitive strategies which were used most frequently matched those strategies employed by the good language learners.

In Attapol Khamkien (2006), a study of Thai and Vietnamese university students' language learning strategies, the results revealed that Thai students used Compensation strategies most followed by Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social, Affective and Memory strategies respectively, while Vietnamese students used the Compensation strategy category most followed by Social, Metacognitive, Affective, Cognitive and Memory strategy categories respectively. Both Thai and Vietnamese used the Compensation strategy category the most, while the least frequently used strategy category was Memory category.

In the study of Zhao (2009) on language learning strategies and proficiency of Chinese university students in Thailand, the researcher found that 254 Chinese students in Assumption University used overall strategies at the medium level. The Compensation strategy was the most frequently used, followed by Metacognitive, Cognitive, Affective and Social strategies. Memory strategy category was the least used. Moreover, there was a positive correlation between the use of language learning strategies and the English proficiency.

2.2.3 The Relationship between English Language Learning Strategies and Achievement

Another aspect that has been studied is the relationship between English language learning strategies and language study achievement. A number of studies also report on the relationship between learning strategies and students' performance (e.g. Griffiths, 2003; Kedsuda Rachadawisitkul, 1987; Mullins, 1992; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990 and Yang, 2007)

Mullins' study (1992) on Thai students enrolled at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, revealed the relationship between strategy use and English proficiency. Interviews and the 50-item SILL version 7.0 (ESL/EFL) by Oxford were used to explore the strategy use related to various measures of English proficiency. The result indicated that students used Compensation, Cognitive and Metacognitive strategies more frequently. Social, Affective and Memory strategies were used in the medium range. Mullins also pointed out the metacognitive strategy use was correlated with language course grades. And a correlation was found between compensation strategy and language placement scores.

Griffiths (2003) discovered a positive correlation between course level and reported frequency of language learning strategies use in a study of 348 students in a private language school in New Zealand. Employing the 50-item SILL by Oxford (1990), Griffiths found a significant relationship between strategy use and course level. Language learning strategies were reported used significantly more frequently by advanced students than by elementary students.

Kedsuda Ratchadawisitkul (เกศสุดา รัชฎาวิศิษฐกุล, 1987) studied the English learning strategies of 918 Mathayom suksa six students in Bangkok Metropolis in the aspect of the strategies use of high and low English proficiency and found that students with high and low English proficiency use English language learning strategies differently at significant level 0.05. The strategy which Mathayom suksa six students used to understand the language was context in guessing or interpreting the meaning of words or sentences at the moderate level, and use of communication strategies to communicate at low level.

In the study of a Model of Causal Relationships of Learning Strategy Variables and English Learning Achievement of Mathayom Suksa Five Students, Bangkok Metropolis of Phithack Nilnopkoon (พิทักษ์ นิลนพคุณ, 1996), his subjects were 363 Mathayom suksa 5 students. The findings indicated that English learning strategy variables had an effect on English learning achievements.

Patcharaporn Kheowruenromya (พัชราพร เขียวรื่นรมย์, 1994) studied to find the relationship between learning strategies and competence in English language receptive skills of Mathayom Suksa Four Students, Bangkok Metropolis and the results indicated that there was the positive relationship between the learning strategies and competence in English reading skill. However, there was no relationship between the learning strategies and competence in English listening skill. The average use of six language learning strategies was in the medium range.

Yang (2007) tried to identify the learning strategies that different ethnic and proficiency groups use. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was administrated to 451 junior college students in Taiwan. It was found that language proficiency influenced learners' use of language learning strategies. More proficient students reported using strategies more often than less proficient students. She

emphasized that understanding students' strategy use may enable EFL teachers to incorporate language learning strategy training in English lessons at junior college levels and ultimately improve students' English language skills.

Pawinee Ounwattana (ภาวิณี อุ่นวัฒนา, 2000) studied the language learning strategies of 186 third year students majoring in accounting at the Certificate of Vocational Education level in Rajamagala Institute of Technology, Bangkok in academic year 2000 by using 50- item SILL (version 7) by Oxford, 1990. The researcher found that the students used all language learning strategies at moderate level and the language learning strategies of the students were not related to their ability in English language reading and writing.

Anchalee Pravitranurak (อัญชลี ประวิตรานุรักษ์, 1994) revealed that there was a relationship between language learning strategies and ability in using English language of 547 mathayom suksa six students in secondary schools in Bangkok at .001 level of significance. It was also found that the samples of this study used all and each aspect of language learning strategies at moderate level.

The next chapter presents the methodology of this study: (1) the subjects, (2) the research instrument and materials, (3) the procedures used in the collection, and (4) the data analysis.