CHAPTER 5

VIETNAMESE STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

This chapter presents an account of the findings based on the data as measured by the questionnaires (the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning or SILL) and from the semi-structured interviews, concerning language learning strategies used by Vietnamese students. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section presents the overall use of the six strategy categories based on the data from the SILL. The subsequent section reports the use of individual strategy based on the data elicited by the SILL and from the interviews.

5.1 Overall Learning Category Strategy Use

After the researcher distributed 200 SILL questionnaires to first and second-year students at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi, Vietnam, 96 SILL questionnaires were returned (48%). Of these 96 SILL questionnaires, 44 SILL questionnaires were excluded from the analysis because they did not meet the criteria as set out in 3.1:2. 7 SILL questionnaires were from the students who were more than 21-year old, 10 from those who had studied English less than 6 years, 8 from those who had more than 4-month experience in an English speaking country, 8 from those who answered the test incompletely, and 11 from those who used to study in international schools and/or programs. The findings reported in this chapter, thus are based on the 52 SILL questionnaires, completed by 24 male, and 26 female students.

After all of the selected SILL questionnaires were statistically analyzed according to the six sets of strategy classifications categorized by Oxford (1990), it

was discovered that Vietnamese university students variably used each strategy category according to the summarized descriptive statistics. The mean scores, standard deviations, minimum scores and maximum scores on each category of language learning strategies used were shown in Table 5.1. It is worth noting that the mean scores and standard deviations were interpreted from the responses' score from the 80-item SILL, which use a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, representing the degree of learning strategies used by Vietnamese students, ranking from never or almost never true, generally not true, sometimes true, generally true, and always or almost always true, respectively.

Table 5.1: Overall Strategy Category Use of Vietnamese University Students

Rank	Strategy category	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
1	Compensation	3.59	0.55	2.25	4.63
2	Social	3.54	0.62	2.33	4.67
3	Metacognitive	3.50	0.56	2.50	4.81
4	Affective	3.36	0.64	2.14	4.71
5	Cognitive	3.29	0.58	2.20	4.56
6	Memory	3.07	0.52	1.87	4.47
	Average	3.39	0.58	2.22	4.64

N = 52

As can be seen from the table, the average use of language learning strategies of Vietnamese university students was 3.39. The mean scores of language learning strategy category used ranged from 3.07 to 3.59. Following Oxford (1990), the criteria used for evaluating the degree of strategy use frequency are as follows. 1.0-2.49 signifies low frequency use, 2.5 to 3.49 represents moderate frequency use, and 3.5 to 5.0 means high frequency use. Thus, the average score of language learning strategies used by Vietnamese students is considered to be moderate. The findings shown in the table are consistent with the previous study conducted by Hoang (1999),

focusing on language learning strategies of different groups of Vietnamese students: tenth grade pupils, Medical students, and third and fourth-year students of English. The study revealed that, in general, compensation category was reported as being used most frequently, while memory category was used least by these groups of students. Therefore, it might be said that compensation category is the most important language learning strategies used by Vietnamese students when learning English.

With respect to direct and indirect strategies classified by Oxford (1990), as mentioned earlier, direct strategies consist of Memory, Compensation, and Cognitive strategy categories, while indirect strategies consist of Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategy categories (see 2.2.2 for further details). The findings shown in Table 5.1 indicate that most of Vietnamese students preferred to use more indirect strategies (M=3.46) than direct strategies (M=3.31). This implies that they tend to use learning strategies which support and manage language learning without necessarily involving the target language directly. This is because teaching English in Vietnam may focus on more social interaction and environment than naturalistic language acquisition requiring mental processing of the language. Particularly, given the fact that the use of Social category turns out to be the second strategy used by Vietnamese students among the six categories of language learning strategies is very intriguing when compared to Thai students. This may help understand the difference in learning English between Vietnamese and Thai students.

The following sections present the findings with respect to the use of individual strategy by Vietnamese students through the mean scores and standard deviation. Similar to Chapter 4, it is noteworthy that the reported use of individual strategy under each category is arranged in order of preference from the most to the least used strategy.

5.2 Frequencies of the Use of Individual Strategy

As for the overall findings shown in 5.1, there is very little difference in the mean scores of strategy use for each of the six categories of strategies reported by Vietnamese students, as considered from the mean scores. However, when the data was further analyzed on the basis of the individual strategy in each category, a statistical analysis showed a number of interesting results. Therefore, this section reports the results of each language learning strategy used by Vietnamese university students, based on the data elicited by the SILL and from the semi-structured interviews with 8 informants selected from 52 Vietnamese participants.

For the interviews, these 8 informants were chosen because they represent both highly motivated and lowly motivated students based on their responses to the question no. 12 in the background questionnaire (Why do you want to study English?) (see details for selecting the informants in Chapter 3). These informants consisted of 4 of each gender—3 first-year students and 5 second-year students. A series of questions used in the interviews to gain greater insights into the learning strategies that they used to learn English based on the six categories of learning strategies covered in the questionnaire (see Appendix C).

5.2.1 Compensation Strategies

With respect to *Compensation Strategies* (**Questionnaire items 41 to 48**), Table 5.2 shows that overall frequency of each strategy is quite high, reflecting that compensation category is the most frequently used strategy category. The strategy no. 41, *"Guessing meanings of unfamiliar words"*, the strategy no. 46, *"Using circumlocutions or synonyms"*, and the strategy no. 45, *"Asking others for words*

when they are stuck" are the three most frequently strategies used by Vietnamese university students, respectively.

Table 5.2: Overall Reported Compensation Strategy Used by Vietnamese Students

Strategy No.	Strategy	Mean	S.D.
41	Guessing meanings of unfamiliar words	4.23	1.02
46	Using circumlocutions or synonyms	3.90	1.00
45	Asking others for words if they are stuck	3.85	0.98
44	Using gestures or own langauge when they are stuck	3.48	0.87
48	Changing to a topic where they know words	3.48	1.20
47	Inventing new words when they are stuck	3.37	1.21
42	Reading without looking up all new words	3.31	1.02
43	Anticipating what person will say	3.17	0.98
	Average	**3.59**	**0.56**

As for the least three used strategies, Vietnamese students infrequently reported the use of the strategy no. 43, *"Anticipating what person will say"*, followed by the strategy no. 42, *"Reading without looking up all new words"*, and the strategy no. 47, *"Inventing new words when they are stuck"*, respectively.

While the findings from the SILL indicated that asking others for words when the Vietnamese students did not understand the words heard or read was the third strategy which they preferred using most in learning English, the responses from the interviews also confirmed this finding, as shown in (1) to (4)[1].

(1)   *In English classes, actually, I will ask the teacher*
          the questions when I don't understand.   *[V1]*

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[1] V1 to V6 are the representatives of highly-motivated Vietnamese students, and V7 and V8 are those of lowly-motivated Vietnamese students. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese by the researcher's assistant. Then, they were translated by the researcher and submitted to the experts in English for corrections.

(2)   *I'll ask my teacher or my friends or someone who can*
         explain that word for me.   *[V3]*

(3)   *Actually, I will ask him or her to say that again.*   *[V5]*

(4)   *I'll ask him or her to say that again. If I'm practicing*
         my listening by myself, I'll stop the tape and replay again. I want
         to listen repeatedly until I understand.   *[V6]*

From the interviews, Vietnamese students would seek confirmation from a person who they believe is knowledgable. In this case, it is seen that English teacher is a reliable person for them in learning English. Moreover, it was found that most of the Vietnamese students preferred using bilingual dictionary (English-Vietnamese) to find out the meanings of new English words. The realization of the preference for using dictionaries is illustrated in (5) to (8).

(5)   *When I don't know English words that my teacher used in classes,*
         I will look them up in the dictionary. And I use my electronic dictionary
         because it is helpful and faster than looking the words up in the
         paper dictionary.   *[V2]*

(6)   *When I don't understand, I will find out the meanings by*
         looking up from English-Vietnamese dictionary or ask my friends to
         explain it for me. In case of conversation, I will ask him or her to
         say that again and listen to it carefully if I don't understand.   *[V4]*

(7)   *I ask other persons to tell me the meanings or look it up*
         in the dictionary.   *[V7]*

(8)   *I'll find out the meanings from the dictionary.*   *[V8]*

5.2.2 Social Strategies

As for *Social Strategies* **(Questionnaire items 72 to 80)**, Table 5.3 shows that the strategy no. 74, *"Asking other people to correct pronunciation"*, followed by the strategy no. 72, *"Asking speakers to slow down, repeat, or clarify what was said"*, and the strategy no. 77, *"Asking for help when talking with native speakers"* were the

three most frequently strategies used by Vietnamese students, respectively. The overall findings concerning the use of Social strategies are summarized in the following table.

Table 5.3: Overall Reported Social Strategy Used by Vietnamese Students

Strategy No.	Strategy	Mean	S.D.
74	Asking other people to correct pronunciation	3.81	1.03
72	Asking speakers to slow down, repeat, or clarify what was said	3.73	1.27
77	Asking for help when talking with native speakers	3.69	1.15
80	Paying attention to speakers' feelings	3.65	0.91
78	Asking questions to maintain dialogue	3.62	0.97
73	Asking others to correct English or comprehension	3.56	0.98
79	Trying to develop culture understanding	3.44	1.13
75	Practicing with other students	3.31	1.09
76	Having a regular English learning partner	3.10	1.01
Average		**3.54**	**0.62**

At this point, when the researcher asked Vietnamese informants the question, *"Do you like to speak English with native speakers? Why?"*, it might be said that the strategy no. 74 was the characteristic strategy of this group of students as the finding was confirmed by the responses form the interview data (9) to (12), showing that a majority of the informants reported that, if possible, they might ask native speakers to correct their pronunciation.

(9)   *I think I can speak English better if I ask them to correct my English.*   *[V1]*

(10)   *Of course, I would like to speak English. I think I can speak well if I have a chance to speak to foreigners. I will notice the way they speak, and I will imitate their pronunciation. And sometimes, they correct my pronunciation.*   *[V5]*

(11)   *Normally, I try to imitate them (foreigners). But they don't*
correct me. I want them to correct me but it's because it's just
communication so no one corrects my pronunciation. I just correct
by myself when they speak with different sounds. And I will try to
imitate them.   *[V6]*

(12)   *I can speak English correctly if I ask them to collect*
my pronunciation.   *[V7*

Meanwhile, some responses from the interviews revealed that they could learn culture from speaking with the native speakers.

(13)   *I can learn about western ideas and culture.*   *[V1]*

(14)   *I feel good when I speak English with native speakers because*
that's a chance I can exchange my attitude toward culture. *[V8]*

In addition, the responses from the interviews also elucidate the importance of social strategies, indicating that Vietnamese students are interested in speaking English with native speakers as the following responses from the interviews illustrate:

(15)   *I will speak English as much as possible if I have a chance.*
Especially, if I have a chance to speak with native speakers. I think
they are like a mirror, reflecting my English. I think they are the best
teacher. And I will try to follow them.   *[V2]*

(16)   *I love speaking with native speakers because I can learn*
a lot of things such as new vocabulary and the way they speak.
And I will ask them to correct my English so that I will read and
write English better. That will make me more confident as well.   *[V4]*

Table 5.3 also illustrates that the strategy no. 76, *"Having a regular English learning partner"* is the least learning strategy used by these students, followed by the strategy no. 75, *"Practicing with other students"*, and the strategy no. 79, *"Trying to develop culture understanding."* These findings are surprising in the sense that the interview data show that Vietnamese students are interested in speaking with native speakers; however, they do not care much to develop culture understanding even

though this strategy is vital in better learning a foreign language. Moreover, since Vietnam adopted *Doi Moi* policy, there were a number of foreigner tourists (Thinh, 2006). Virtually, this strategy should be substantially promoted in English learning.

5.2.3 Metacognitive Strategies

With regard to *Metacognitive Strategies* **(Questionnaire items 49 to 64)**, as can be seen from Table 5.4, the strategy no. 50, *"Paying attention when someone is speaking"*, followed by the strategy no. 56, *"Having clear goals for learning English"*, and the strategy no. 63, *"Learning from own mistakes"* are the strategies that Vietnamese students tend to use most, respectively.

Table 5.4: Overall Reported Metacognitive Strategy Used by Vietnamese Students

Strategy No.	Strategy	Mean	S.D.
50	Playing attention when someone is speaking	3.96	0.84
56	Having clear goals for learning English	3.85	0.92
63	Learning from own mistakes	3.85	1.04
64	Evaluating the general progress	3.65	0.99
52	Trying to find out about English learning	3.60	0.98
49	Previewing lessons to get a general idea	3.58	1.16
55	Organizing language information in English notebook	3.58	0.98
62	Noticing language errors and finding out why	3.54	0.92
51	Paying special attention to specific English aspects	3.50	1.15
59	Identifing purposes of language activities	3.44	0.98
60	Trying to find ways to practice English	3.40	1.05
57	Planning learning objectives each week	3.35	0.99
53	Planning schedules to have time to study	3.31	0.96
54	Arranging physical space to help learning	3.29	1.07
58	Analyzing task type and own skills for task	3.10	1.16
61	Finding people to talk to in English.	3.02	1.09
	Average	**3.50**	**0.56**

Conversely, Table 5.4 shows that there are three strategies: the strategy no. 61, *"Looking for people to talk to in English"*, the strategy no. 58, *"Analyzing task type and own skills for task"*, and the strategy no. 54, *"Arranging physical space to help learning"* which are likely to be used least by Vietnamese students, respectively. As for the strategy no. 53, *"Planning schedules to have time to study"* which Vietnamese students fairly frequently used, as shown in the table, this finding is not in line with the interview data in which a majority of the informants reported that they prepared themselves, particularly completing the assignments or homework before attending English classes.

(17)   *I prepare English everyday before coming to English classes.*
         For example, I will fill in the blanks in my exercise book and read the
         whole exercise before I learn that exercise.   *[V1]*

(18)   *I do the assignments everyday but I don't do all of them.*
         I mean, if I have ten questions to do, I will complete about 7 or 8
         because every night I will learn the TOEFL by myself.   *[V2]*

(19)   *I try to finish all of my homework at home.*   *[V3]*

(20)   *I usually prepare my readings such as looking up new words*
         in the dictionary at home. Sometimes, I prepare questions on the
         readings in order to ask my teacher in class.   *[V4]*

(21)   *Usually, I complete all of my assignments at home. And I*
         prepare readings before attending English classes.   *[V5]*

(22)   *I do the exercises, read and prepare new English words.*   *[V7]*

Nonetheless, as reflected by the responses (23) to (24), two informants talked about their preparation before attending English classes different from others; one said that he/she would focus more on the lessons than usual when having a test. Another stated that he/she did not have time much to prepare the lesson.

(23)   *It depends. I mean if I prepare for a test, I will pay more attention and review 3 or 5 times a day. But if I don't have a test, I just write diary and take notes what I learned from the class everyday.* .   *[V6]*

(24)   *Actually, I seldom prepare anything for English lesson because I don't have much time.*   *[V8]*

5.2.4 Affective Strategies

In terms of *Affective Strategies* **(Questionnaire items 65 to 71)**, as Table 5.5 illustrates, Vietnamese students engaged in active use of the strategy no. 66 and 65: *"Encouraging self to try harder"* and *"Trying to relax when anxious"*. Another strategy which they tended to use most is the strategy no. 71, *"Talking to someone about attitudes and feelings"*.

Table 5.5: Overall Reported Affective Strategy Used by Vietnamese Students

Strategy No.	Strategy	Mean	S.D.
66	Encouraging self to try harder	3.98	0.83
65	Trying to relax when anxious	3.60	1.19
71	Talking to someone about attitudes and feelings	3.58	1.13
67	Encouraging self to take wise risks	3.54	1.04
69	Noticing when tense or nervous	3.19	1.16
68	Rewarding self for doing well	3.08	1.34
70	Recording feelings in learning diaries	2.56	1.30
	Average	**3.36**	**0.64**

In this case, the response from the interview below supports the strategy no. 66, *"Encouraging self to try harder"*.

(25)   *I'll relax and talk to myself. Also, I will encourage myself that I can do it. After that, I will back to my study.*   *[V7]*

Likewise, the table shows that the strategy no. 70, *"Recording feelings in learning diaries"* is the strategy used least frequently by these students, followed by the strategy no. 68, *"Rewarding self for doing well"*, and the strategy no. 69, *"Noticing when tense or nervous"*. These findings raise further interesting questions as to the ways these students used when learning English became stressful for them, therefore, the researcher asked the informants the question *"What do you do when you are stressed or tired of learning English?"*. The findings from the interviews showed that most of them reported trying to relax by several approaches when they are tired of learning English.

(26)   *If I get tired of doing my homework, I will listen to music, especially English songs. After that, I will do my homework again.*   *[V1]*

(27)   *I play the piano and listen to music such as therapy songs.*   *[V2]*

(28)   *I will listen to English music to relax.*   *[V3]*

(29)   *When I feel stressed from learning English, I will choose another subject to review. I will watch TV or take a nap for 15 minutes and back to my study.*   *[V4]*

(30)   *I will listen to music or go out, riding my motorbike around the city with my friends.*   *[V5]*

(31)   *I listen to music and watch news on the TV or cinema. Sometimes, I go out to Ho Hun Kiem (the lake in the center of city).[V6]*

(32)   *I sleep, go out, or go picnic.*   *[V8]*

Taken the responses from the interviews into consideration, although several approaches used to relax are revealed as evidenced by the interview data, most of the informants shared similar opinion towards listening to music as one of the most frequently used strategy. Therefore, it might be said that listening to music is the most popular strategy used to relax when Vietnamese students are stressed or tired of learning English. According to Oxford (1990), using music is a useful strategy before

any stressful language task. This is because *"five or 10 minutes of soothing music can clam learners and put them in a more positive mood for learning"* (p. 164). Therefore, the powerfully relaxing capabilities of using music cannot be denied in English learning context.

5.2.5 Cognitive Strategies

In regard to *Cognitive Strategies* **(Questionnaire items 16 to 40)**, the strategy that Vietnamese undergraduates use most is the strategy no. 31, *"Using glossaries or dictionaries for help"*. Also, the other two strategies that these students tend to use most when learning English are the strategy no. 29, *"Skimming then reading carefully"*, and the strategy no. 37, *"Trying not to translate word-by-word"*.

On the other hand, Table 5.6 also shows that the strategy no. 21, *"Using idioms or other routines"*, followed by the strategy no. 26, *"Attending events in which English is spoken"*, and the strategy no. 33, *"Making summaries of English material"* are the three least strategies used by Vietnamese students, respectively. The findings of the reported use of Cognitive strategies are shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Overall Reported Cognitive Strategy Used by Vietnamese Students

Strategy No.	Strategy	Mean	S.D.
31	Using glossaries or dictionaries for help	3.90	1.18
29	Skimming then reading carefully	3.77	0.98
37	Trying not to translate word-by-word	3.67	1.04
16	Saying or writing new expressions repeatedly	3.63	1.01
36	Seeking similarities or contrasts between Englsih and own langauge	3.56	0.98
18	Reading dialogue several times until I understand	3.54	1.09
20	Practicing English sounds or alphabet	3.52	1.18
35	Finding meanings by dividing word into parts	3.50	1.08
17	Imitating the way native speakers talk	3.48	0.98
39	Looking for patterns in English	3.42	0.96
30	Seeking specific details in what heard or read	3.40	0.98
40	Developing own understanding of English	3.40	0.93
24	Watching TV, movies, or listening to the radio in English	3.33	1.06
34	Applying general rules to new situations	3.33	1.04
32	Taking class notes in English	3.26	1.17
22	Using familiar words in different ways	3.13	0.95
27	Reading for pleasure in English	3.13	1.07
28	Writing personal notes, messages, etc.in English	3.12	1.04
19	Revising English written works to improve writing	3.08	1.01
25	Trying to think in English	3.02	1.35
38	Trying not to transfer words or concepts from own language	3.00	1.19
23	Initiating conversations in English	2.98	1.13
33	Making summaries of English materials	2.77	1.08
26	Attending events in which English is spoken	2.73	1.22
21	Using idioms or other routines	2.65	0.93
	Average	**3.29**	**0.58**

Taken the finding of the strategy no. 33 into consideration, the researcher asked all informants the question, *"When you take notes, do you think and summarize*

in English or do you prefer to take notes in Vietnamese?". It was found that most of the responses from the interviews did not support the finding shown in the table, indicating that making summaries of English material is also considered one of the three least used strategies. The realization of this finding is reflected by the responses (33) to (35).

(33)   *Actually, I like to summarize the lessons I learned in English*
         In class, I usually take notes in English as well.   *[V1]*

(34)   *Yes, I do. I will try to take notes in English.*   *[V3]*

(35)   *Yes, I take notes in English.*   *[V4]*

(36)   *Yes, I will take notes in English and whenever I don't know*
         the word, I will look it up in the dictionary.   *[V5]*

(37)   *I take notes in English. And when I write down the new*
         words in my pocket book, I will write their phonetic symbols
         for pronunciation also. This is the way every Vietnamese student
         is trained from the school. And English book used in school
         provides phonetic symbols too.   *[V6]*

(38)   *Yes, I take notes in English.*   *[V7]*

Distinctively, only one informant stated that he/she had never taken notes in English. In other words, he/she always took notes in Vietnamese only when learning English. In this regard, it is interesting to note that this response is taken from the informant, representing lowly-motivated student. Another informant, in the mean time, reported that he/she did not take notes but he/she would listen and keep the details of what his/her teacher taught in class.

(39)   *No, I never take notes in English.*   *[V8]*

(40)   *I will not take notes at all. I will listen to my teacher and*
         memorize the important things.   *[V2]*

As suggested by Oxford (1990), taking notes is a very important strategy for listening and reading, but in general, learners are not taught to use it well. Oxford also suggests several key points in taking notes. First, note-taking should be in the

learners' own language. Next, it can be in the target language, depending on the purpose. Finally, note-taking can be allowed a mixture of the target language and the learners' own language. Therefore, classroom English teacher should promote this strategy to language learners, focusing on understanding of the purpose of each note-taking in order to improve their language learning.

5.2.6 Memory Strategies

As for *Memory Strategies* **(Questionnaire items 1 to 15)**, Table 5.7 shows that the three most preferred strategy for Vietnamese undergraduate students are the strategy no. 7, *"Visualizing the spelling of new English words"*, followed by the strategy no. 15, *"Refreshing memory of things learned earlier,* and the strategy no. 2, *"Putting new English words in a sentence to remember them"*. The following table shows the results of Memory strategies used by Vietnamese students.

Table 5.7: Overall Reported Memory Strategy Used by Vietnamese Students

Strategy No.	Strategy	Mean	S.D.
7	Visualizing the spelling of new English words	3.71	0.89
15	Refreshing memory of things learned earlier	3.60	0.93
2	Putting new English words in a sentence to remember them	3.46	1.13
3	Placing new English words in group with similar words	3.42	1.14
13	Reviewing often	3.35	1.10
11	Using flashcards to remember new English words	3.19	1.36
1	Connecting new materials with already known	3.06	0.89
10	Connecting words and their location (e.g., on page)	3.02	1.21
4	Connecting word sounds with known word sounds	3.00	1.10
8	Using sounds and images to remember English words	3.00	1.07
14	Scheduling regular review sessions	2.92	1.03
5	Using rhyming to remember words	2.67	1.35
9	Connecting known words related to new English words	2.62	1.19
6	Connecting word with images or pictures	2.54	1.20
12	Acting out physically new English words	2.46	1.15
	Average	3.07	0.52

Table 5.7 also shows that the strategy no. 12, *"Acting out physically new English words"*, followed by the strategy no. 6, *"Connecting words with images or pictures"*, the strategy no. 9, *"Connecting known words related to new English words"* are the strategies that Vietnamese students use least, respectively. Given the importance of Memory strategies, the researcher further asked all informants *"What do you do when you want to memorize a new English word? What technique do you use most?"*. Only one informant reported that, after he/she recited new English words, he/she would put the new English words in a sentence and then memorize that sentence as the following response shows:

(41)   *I learn by heart. I will speak out the word repeatedly until I*
          think I can remember and make a sentence using that word.   *[V1]*

Meanwhile, most of the informants reported that they preferred writing a new

English word down in their notebook and read it repeatedly.

(42)   *I write the word down in a piece of paper. I think that*
          if I write it down, I can remember. And I usually practice
          reading newspapers on the Internet because I can read again
          and again. Sometimes, I also tape-record my voice and listen
          to it.   *[V6]*

(43)   *I will write and think about the meaning to memorize the*
          new English words.   *[V7]*

(44)   *I write down the new English words repeatedly and create*
          a new sentence using these words. I like to listen to the radio station
          and CD.   *[V8]*

Moreover, some of them stated that they could memorize the new English

words when they read books or prepared their readings before class, whereas some

reported other strategies, such as using tape-recorder and flashcards in memorizing

the new English words, as shown by the responses from the interviews (45) to (48):

(45)   *I will read the new English word repeatedly for 3 times,*
          I think. And I can remember it.   *[V3]*

(46)   *Actually, I don't have time much to study the new English words,*
          except when I prepare my readings. I will memorize the new English
          words from my reading preparation.   *[V4]*

(47)   *I use flashcards to memorize English words. I will compose*
          rap song by gathering new English words I want to memorize. And
          I use developed software at sound lab to practice my
          English vocabulary.   *[V2]*

(48)   *I have a tape-recorder to keep teacher's lecture and record*

my pronunciation. I will spend time on my way school, or when

I have a free time for listening to it repeatedly. In class, I will write

unfamiliar words in my notebook. And I write the English words

I want to memorize on the wall in my room and I can remember

where I wrote those words too.   *[V5]*

Therefore, it can be concluded from the interview data that Vietnamese students have a number of strategies to memorize the new English words, such as writing down in notebooks, and using a tape-recorder.

Conclusion

The results show that the six categories of language learning strategies in Oxford's (1990) taxonomy could identify the Vietnamese students' language learning strategies. In the present study, it was discovered that overall the most preferred strategies for Vietnamese students was Compensation categories, followed by Social, Metacognitive categories. Affective and Cognitive categories were less often mentioned, while Memory category was least often mentioned. The results of this study also confirm Hoang's (1999) study indicating that Compensation category was the most frequently used strategy category, while Memory category was the least frequently used by Vietnamese students. Therefore, the consistency of the findings may indicate Compensation category is a special strategy category used by these students.

Taken together, it is interesting to note that Social category was ranked second among the six categories of Vietnamese students' learning strategies. In this case, Oxford (1990) considered cooperation as an imperative element in student's learning by stating that it can *"encourage positive independence and mutual support"*

(p. 145-6). If this is to be the case, Social strategies may be the effective strategies for Vietnamese students, allowing them learning English relatively successful nowadays.

With regard to individual strategies under the six categories, it was found that Vietnamese students preferred to guess meaning of unfamiliar words most (M=4.23), whereas they reported acting out physically new English words least (M=2.46). In addition, what is unique for these students is to encourage self to try harder and ask other people to correct pronunciation. Moreover, like Thai students, Vietnamese students preferred using glossaries or dictionaries for help, and guessing meanings of unfamiliar words in conversation. Meanwhile, the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with Vietnamese informants clearly show a variety of strategies used to relax (e.g., listening to music, going out with friends) when they are anxious about learning English.