

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion, discussion and recommendation

#### 5.1 Summary of the study

The objectives of the research were 1) To construct and develop strategies-based English language syllabus to improve students' learning outcomes according to five domains of Thailand Qualification Framework, 2) To explore students' learning outcomes according to five domains of TQF after the implementation strategies-based English language syllabus and 3) To explore the language learning strategies used by students before and after the implementation

The research subjects were 29 undergraduate students from Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna. They were first year students from tourism major. These students attended the 21 hours strategies-based language syllabus to enhance learning outcomes for a period of 7 weeks.

The instruments used in this research were divided into two main types, a treatment and data collecting instruments. The treatment instrument was lessons plans. Moreover, there were seven types of data collecting instruments in this research: (1) a lesson plan assessment form, (2) learning strategies questionnaire (Pre/Post), (3) teacher's log, (4) self and peer evaluation, (5) achievement test (pre/post), and (6) oral presentation. Data obtained was analyzed by using the statistical analysis and content analysis.

The results of the study are presented as follows:

1. Regarding to the research question 1, "Does strategies-based language syllabus improve students' learning outcomes according to five domains of TQF?"

1.1 Strategies-based English language syllabus was constructed; it consisted of 14 lesson plans covering 21 hours. The analysis of the lesson plans as presented in chapter four shows the series of the strategy syllabus lesson plans, which were valid and reliable because they were evaluated by the three experts ( $x = 4.08$ ). The strategy syllabus is effective. When focusing on the effectiveness of the lesson plans it shows the lesson plans were adjusted and improved according to the experts' suggestion. After implementing the improved lesson plans, these lesson plans were

changed and improved again to solve the problems that really occurred during the teaching period, and to make them appropriate to the students' outcomes and to the time available for the lesson.

Moreover, the lesson plans were reliable because the instructions matched with the syllabus objectives that aimed at improving the students' learning outcomes. This was because each lesson plan included activities that implemented the students to practice the learning strategy to help them develop the learning outcomes according to five domains of Thailand Qualification Framework (TQF).

In conclusion, the lesson plans for strategies-based English language syllabus to enhance students' learning outcomes are valid and reliable because they were evaluated by the experts, and also were revised and edited before and after the implementation.

1.2 In addition, the results of the students' learning outcomes according to the five domains of TQF consisting of language skills after the implementation considerably increased. Language skills including oral presentation (speaking), listening, reading, and writing after the implementation rose significantly.

2. Based on the research question 2, "What are learning strategies that the students use?" The results from the questionnaire of language learning strategy use presented that the frequency of strategies used after the implementation is higher than before the implementation.

When looking to the details of each learning strategies the students' use of some cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social strategies have improved.

In conclusion, the results from each data collecting instrument proved that the implementation of strategies-based English language syllabus does enhance the students' learning outcomes following five domains of Thailand Qualification Framework (TQF).

## **5.2 Discussion of the Results**

### **5.2.1 Language learning strategies have an effect on language performance**

The learning strategies that have been introduced to students are divided into three main parts; cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and social strategies (Oxford, 1990). The session was based on the theory 'strategies-based instruction'.

After the training session, students were introduced the learning strategies that they could choose which strategy assisted them to achieve the learning outcomes according to Thailand Qualification Framework for Higher Education.

At the first of the implementation session, the researcher introduced the meaning of learning strategies and shared the background knowledge unless they had experienced those strategies. The advantage of this methodology is that students have been introduced the right learning strategies that match to their learning style. At the end of each implementation session, students have been asked to identify which learning strategies they have applied to complete the task achievement. They have had to assess themselves on their learning to state what they have learned and which strategies they have used.

From the research, the result showed that the students applied the learning strategies after the strategies-based English language syllabus more frequently than the pre implementing. According to Cotton (1998b), a strategic learner means a learner who can read, listen, speak, and listen well enough, a learner who is aware of what they need to learn, and who knows how to make and to follow the plan, and a learner who has the learning outcomes. Cotton (1998) also mentions that one supportive way to help the students to be more aware of English learning is for the teacher to implement the strategies-based English language syllabus to the English lesson.

Based on Oxford's principle (1990), and learning strategies idea, the researcher constructed the lessons to develop the students' language learning outcomes. This study implemented the language learning strategies to enhance the learning outcomes according to Thailand Qualification Framework. The two domains of TQF which deals with language learning outcomes are knowledge domain (listening and reading) and cognitive skills domain (speaking, listening, reading and writing). The data from student's achievement test also proves that learning strategies are helpful and necessary for the learners. The results of the study concerning knowledge domain and cognitive skills domain show that the students' language learning outcomes significantly increase after the implementation of strategies-based English language syllabus ( $t = -5.15, p < .05, t = -4.59, p < .05$ ). It means that the learning strategies promote the student' language learning outcomes, the results of this study support the theory by Oxford (1990) in that strategies-based English language syllabus enhance student's language performance.

Also, there are many research studies that show the improvement of the students after the strategies implementation. Regarding to speaking and listening ability, O'Mally et al (1985) found that the learning strategies have improved the students speaking and listening skills. Cohen (1995) found that the strategies based instruction had a positive influence on the 10 weeks course results. Strategies-based speaking exercises appear to be very useful for improving speaking skill in a foreign language. Moreover, Mosby (2008) found that strategic language training can be used in developing the students' oral presentation skills. Therefore, these studies do prove that strategy training is effective in developing the students speaking and listening skills.

Additionally, the reading ability of the students has gradually increased after the 21 hours implementation ( $t = -3.87, p < .05, t = -3.89, p < .05$ ). Mercer (2005) reports that learning strategies training increased the students' ability in reading and

also help the students to remember the new English vocabulary better. Gibson (2009) also supports that strategies-based instruction is an effective way to improve reading comprehension. Thus, learning strategies does increase the students' ability in reading.

Concerning writing skill Adams (2007) states that strategic learners exhibit effective written and verbal communication skills. They need to have strong basic literacy skills. They need to have the ability to be able to read and write effectively, and to have effective essay writing skills. The results of this study also show that the development of the students writing skill has significantly increased ( $t = -7.78$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### **5.2.3 Language learning strategies have an effect on learning behavior**

According to National Education Act and the Commission on Higher Education (2006) has determined the qualification framework for higher education, the domain related to students' self-discipline is ethical and moral development. It is the development of habits of acting ethically and responsibly in personal and public life in ways that are consistent with high moral standards. It is an ability to resolve value conflicts through application of a consistent system of values.

The results from this study show that more than 80 percent of students submitted the assignments and attended the class on time. These results can be proved that during strategies-based English language syllabus, students applied the 'metacognitive strategies to help and manage themselves in the general learning process, and specific learning tasks (Oxford, 2001). According to Paris & Winograd (1990), the intent of learning strategies instruction is to help all students become better language learners. When students begin to understand their own learning processes and can exert some control over these processes, they tend to take more responsibility for their own learning. This self-knowledge and skill in regulating one's own learning is a characteristic of successful learners, including successful language learners. Research with both first and second language learners is revealing some of the ways of thinking that guide and assist an individual's attempts to learn more effectively.

From the class attendance checking, there were two students who were absent from the class. One student did not attend the class twice but she submitted the assignment later. Another student did not attend the class once, but she followed up the assignment and could submit it on time. It can be assumed that students have discipline in working and learning that comply with the TQF first domain "Ethical and Moral Development". Regarding to Oxford and Nyikos (1989, p.291), they mention that "the use of appropriate learning strategies enables students to take responsibility for their own learning by enhancing learner autonomy, independence and self-direction".

Dealing with the fourth domain of TQF, namely, inter-personal skills and responsibilities domain, they focus on the ability to work effectively in groups, and exercise leadership, accept personal and social responsibility and plan and take responsibility for their own learning. In this study, after the implementation of strategies-based English language syllabus, students develop collaboration skills ( $x = 3.43$ , very often). From peer evaluation, students reported their peer also had developed as well ( $x = 4.58$ , very often). Learning a language is getting involved with other people, thus developing social strategies is very important for the language learner. Social strategies are those activities learners engage in which give them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge (Wenden & Robin, 1987). Social strategies facilitate learning with others and help learners understand the culture of the language they are learning (Oxford, 2001). Social strategies include actions that learners select for interacting with other learners, a teacher, or with native speakers (Cohen, 1995).

When focused on the last domain of TQF which is numerical analysis, communication and IT, they are the ability to use basic mathematical and statistical techniques, to communicate effectively in oral and written form and to use information and communications technology. The students in this study applied metacognitive strategies to plan their oral presentation in order to achieve the target language and tasks. In this study, students have developed their oral presentation from 71% (Good), 73% (Good), and 85% (Excellent) respectively. It shows a gradual increase of oral presentation deal with planning their oral presentations. Metacognitive strategies help learners manage themselves as learners, the general learning process, and specific learning tasks (Oxford, 2001).

From Oxford's theory, strategies-based English language syllabus, the researcher constructed the training to improve students' learning outcomes in communication skills part. The overall result of the study showed that students' communication have been significantly increased after the implementation. From the data gained, proves that students' communication skills have progressively improved after the training. The learning strategies are helpful and necessary for the learners, because it helps learners to develop the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as enhance the learning ability of the students in learning English language (Chaikitmongkol, 2007).

### **5.2.3 Learning strategies use**

What is more, data gained from the strategies learning questionnaire shows the learning strategies that the students frequently used are; using resources for receiving and sending messages, adjusting or approximating the message, self-evaluating planning for language tasks, over viewing and linking with already known material, and asking questions. The students' selection of the learning strategies in their language learning is also related to the characteristics of the autonomous learner. Moreover, the strategy training is useful in applying to the language classroom because it is effective in fostering the students to become an autonomous learner. "However, due to the fact that autonomous learning capacity is not an inborn, but acquired and developed capacity (Chu, 1998; Dickinson, 1994)." Therefore, in order

to transform the students into an autonomous learners, or strategic learners, the strategies training was taken into consideration for applying in the English classroom in order to train the students the necessary skills and strategies for their English learning.

In this study, students applied three outstanding metacognitive strategies after implanting strategies-based English language syllabus which are (1) Planning for language (3.50, very often), (2) Overviewing and linking with already known material (3.50, very often) and (3) Self-evaluating (3.61, very often). The results indicate the students as 'autonomous learners'. Regarding to several researchers (Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987; Thanasoulas, 2002; Wenden, 1987) have all acknowledged the roles of the learning strategies in autonomous learning practice. Duan (2005), also mentioned that "once learners become autonomous, they have acquired a language skill and a habit of independent thinking, which will benefit them long after leaving university." Thus, a person who is an autonomous learner is the one that will be developed into a strategic learner.

Even though the results in this study after implementing strategies-based English language syllabus have not been shown any dramatic change in language performance, but students did show their learning progress according to TQF after applying language learning strategies. According to Holec (1981), autonomous learning encompasses determining learning objectives, defining content and learning progress, selecting methods and techniques to achieve their learning objectives, monitoring the procedures of language acquisition, and evaluating what has been acquired. Also, Yang (1998) also reported how students were guided through the process of self-assessment, planning and monitoring which help them become autonomous learners.

Additionally, the students responded positive to the reflection form for task planning and self-evaluating which presented that the students know how to make a plan for their language task, and be able to evaluate their own ability of doing the task as well as judge their language improvement". Cotterall (1995) considered autonomous learning as the learners' use of "a set of tactics for taking control of their learning." Sets of tactics, as specify by Cotterall, are tactics for setting goals, choosing materials and tasks, planning practice opportunities, monitoring, and evaluating learning progress. It means that the students who have the mentioned tactics can be considered as autonomous learners who are likely to become strategic learners.

From the results of this study it can be gathered that with the growing of the learning outcomes, these students have had characteristics according to the five domains of TQF and are ready to develop themselves into strategic learners.

### **5.3 Implication**

Even though, some results were not shown the high improvement in each domain of Thailand Qualification Framework for Higher Education because the study was limited in time applying language learning strategies in the classroom as a means

to improve the students' learning outcomes. According to the results, the following classroom suggestions can be used from this study.

English teacher should be more concern about implementing strategies-based English language syllabus to the classroom to improve students' learning outcomes according to Thailand Qualification Framework for Higher Education.

In the classroom, teachers are not only 'teachers' but also 'facilitators' for the students in order to suggesting useful learning techniques and language learning strategies.

Teachers should be more considered at the beginning of applying language learning strategies in the classroom, point out the background knowledge or experience of students who have been applied those strategies and linked then together.

Finally, the teachers should help students to be more aware of their learning strategies, classroom application and their personal improvement of learning outcomes. This will help them to become more independent learners and they will gain more confidence in learning. With the right activities, and instruction, implementing strategies-based English language syllabus to improve the learning outcomes in the EFL/ESL classroom will give a lot of benefits for the students both in their English class and in their community now and in their future.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

In conducting this research it was found that the study was limited and consequently there are many different areas that could be done better. Firstly, the existing study was limited, so the students had only seven weeks for implementing and developing themselves. Secondly, this study was conducted with participation of non- English major students from tourism major, and if these students can show improvement of their learning outcomes, imagine what improvements can be had with English major students.

Thus, it will be very interesting to conduct this type of research on the English major students and study their improvement whether they have a different style of using the learning strategies, or how much they can improve their learning outcomes. It would be interesting to see how the results might be turning out when the research is conducted with students on different proficiency levels. Also, the research could be done with the more mature students such as ESL/EFL/TESOL students or college students in another teaching field. It is interesting to see the future teacher development of learning outcomes and their use of learning strategies.

Thirdly, the repetition of the idea of learning outcomes and the learning strategies must keep occurring. The understanding of the meaning of learning outcomes and learning strategies, and also its importance are significant for the students to improve themselves. What's more, if the ideas have been repeated several times during the instruction, the ideas will be absorbed and the students will be able to

use them more naturally. Also, when students understand the concepts of learning outcomes and learning strategies, they will show great improvement in their studies because they know what they are doing.

Fourthly, there should be the evaluator who has been trained in the TESOL field to visit the classroom in order to observe the application of the lesson plan. This will help the researcher to develop the more effective lesson plan.

Finally, because of the limited number of studies done on learning outcomes and Thailand Qualification Framework, the researcher could conduct a study that helps the students to improve their learning outcomes by using other learning techniques and methods. This because the students need to be ready in developing the necessary knowledge, skills, and life's experience in today's rapidly changing society, and be ready for the changes that will occur in their lifetime.

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