



## Original Article

# The Use of Self-Regulated Language Learning Strategies among Vietnamese English-Majored Freshmen: A Case Study

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**Abstract:** Self-regulation of learning plays a vital role in improving second/foreign language learning as it can encourage the development of autonomous learners. However, ESL/EFL learners in different contexts are not fully aware of the importance of self-regulated language learning (SRL) strategies in their English language learning. This study, therefore, aims at investigating the use of SRL strategies by a group of English-majored students at a university in Bac Lieu province, Vietnam. The study involved 100 English-majored freshmen in answering a closed-ended questionnaire. The results show that the students sometimes used SRL strategies for keeping and monitoring records and seeking social assistance more often than for other purposes. The findings suggest that the students lacked the knowledge of how get engaged in using SRL strategies and how to use the strategies appropriately. The study recommends that students' awareness of SRL strategies should be seriously taken into account in order to facilitate their learner autonomy.

**Keywords:** Case study, English-majored student, Self-regulated language learning (SRL) strategy, Vietnamese context.

## 1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, the English language has become an international language as well as a medium communication all over the world. The desire to be fluent in English among EFL learners, including Vietnamese

ones, has been increasing. It is observed that different students have different self-regulated language learning (SRL) strategies in order to improve their English proficiency. It has been an important area of research in the fields of education and psychology over the last few decades (e.g. Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997 [1]; Zimmerman, 1998 [2]) to describe learners who learn for their own purposes in spite of often adverse circumstances. Generally, self-regulation

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is described as learners' efforts to direct their own learning by setting goals, planning how to achieve them, monitoring the learning task, using learning strategies to solve problems, and evaluating their own performance.

It is widely believed that time is an essential and key element of student learning (e.g. Anderson, 2000 [3]; Bloom, 1985 [4]; Gandara, 2000 [5]; Lofty, 2000 [6]; Pitman & Romberg; 2000 [7]). Unless students use their valuable time to reflect and study materials, it is too difficult to imagine a student learning new information. As can be seen, much of what students have to do is to attend class and listen carefully to the instruction presented by the teacher in school learning; however, attending class and paying full attention to classroom instruction may not assure the highest level of learning because students may not gain all the new or profound knowledge presented by the teacher while they are studying in class. It may require them to spend more time independently outside of the classroom on studying the materials presented by the teacher, but which they do not comprehend or remember.

As for self-study at home, accordingly, the highest level of student learning may be realized by a large amount of time which was devoted to their study and the use of a high degree of self-regulatory language learning strategies during the independent study time (e.g. Rau & Durand, 2000 [8]; Schunk, 1995 [9]; Zimmerman, 2000 [10]). Therefore, freshmen are often encouraged to carry out research in studies and to use higher levels of SRL strategies while learning. A number of researchers (e.g. Dickinson & O'Connell, 1990 [12]; Michaels & Miethe, 1989 [13]; Rau & Durand, 2000; Trần Quốc Thao & Dương Mỹ Tâm, 2013 [13]) have shown that the essential role of independent study time in student SRL and have examined the relationship among private study time and student SRL. Even though the relationship is not linear, they have realized that a great deal of independent study

time will increase student SRL (e.g. Michaels & Miethe, 1989; Rau & Durand, 2000). According to Michael and Miethe (1989), it is also said that the high degree of student learning is a function of the quality of the independent study time. Moreover, according to Zimmerman, Greenberg, and Weinstein (1994) [14], the quality of study time is often related directly to as the effective learning process, which indicates to be a product of the use of SRL. Since the 1980s, it has been reported that SRL, which emerged in the field of health psychology and cognitive psychology, has been embraced by a number of researchers like Zimmerman (1989) and Boekaerts (1997) [15]. Moreover, it is a multidimensional construct which requires cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, environmental and social aspects of learning, has been theoretically well established.

In the context of a university in Bac Lieu province, first year students have a sense of satisfaction in multiple courses, and they may join in all of their English courses, but they have known a little about the differences between the allocation of independent study time and the adoption of SRL during courses. Therefore, this research aims at investigating the use of SRL strategies among English - majored students at a university in Bac Lieu city, Vietnam. The research questions of this study are formed as follows:

1. What SRL strategies do tertiary English-majored freshmen use?
2. What are the top ten most common and least common SRL strategies used by tertiary English-majored freshmen?

## 2. Literature review

Several studies have indicated that SRL has become an important topic in educational research (e.g. Boekerts, Pintrich, & Zeidner, 2000 [16]; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001 [17]) as it is recognized as an important predictor of

student academic achievement (e.g., Tran Quoc Thao & Duong My Tham, 2013; Zumbrunn, Tadlock & Roberts, 2011 [18]). It has been variously defined by many researchers (e.g. Pintrich, 2000 [19]; Zimmerman, 1990 [20]; Zumbrunn, Tadlock & Roberts, 2011). Pintrich (2000) defined SRL as “an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment” (p. 453). According to Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts (2011), it also is “a process that assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences” (p.4). They also argued that this process “occurs when a student’s purposeful actions and processes are directed towards the acquisition of information or skills” (ibid.). Therefore, the SRL strategies have the roles that have effects on both teaching and learning. For example, in the area of behaviorism, teaching effectiveness was decided as the light of teachers’ pre-defined behaviors and students’ achievements, so effective teachers were evaluated based on the process of teaching and learning rather than the prescribed and observable product. Moreover, the SRL strategy is also a variable to infer talent or motivation in laboratory studies of human learning; the faster an individual completes a task, the higher aptitude he or she possesses, or the longer one perseveres on a difficult task, the more he or she is motivated toward the task (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994 [21]).

When students are at school, they are expected to complete many assignments and projects outside of the school. To complete learning the tasks and be good at the curriculum outside the school, students must engage in self-regulatory behaviors (Zimmerman, 2002 [22]). Although there are some basic similarities among self-regulation models, there are differences among the constructs that define

the self-regulation and the mechanism that affect self-regulation behaviors. There are differences among three popular self-regulation models (Pintrich, 2000; Winne & Hadwin, 1998 [23]; Zimmerman, 2000). Those models are often used in learning strategies research for students as the materials.

Pintrich’s (2000) model of SRL delineates self-regulation as a four-phase cycle which takes place in four phases, including planning, monitoring, controlling, and reacting. It has been cautioned that each situation will unite various phases of self-regulation and not every situation requires all phases of self-regulation. It will take place in a general time-ordered result; however, the phases are not structured linearly so that an earlier phase must always follow later phases. Some researchers (e.g., Pintrich, Wolters, & Baxter, 2000 [24]) have suggested that the control, monitoring, and reaction phases take place at the same time and they hardly separate from one another. Moreover, Pintrich’s (2000) model also includes four areas of self-regulation that learners are able to control, monitor and regulate cognition, motivation, behavior, and context.

Winne and Hadwin’s (1998) model of SRL commented that it takes place in four fundamental phases that task definition, goal setting and planning, studying tactics, and adaptive metacognition. These phases are repeated so that any phase can feed into metacognitive monitoring in any previous phase. Besides, they have realized that there are five factors affecting directly self-regulation behavior, including conditions, operations, products, evaluations and standards (COPES). The COPES influence each phase of SRL: Definition of the task, goals and plans, studying tactics and adaptations.

The final model of SRL is Zimmerman’s Social-Cognitive View of SRL (2000). The social cognitive context explains human functioning as a series of interactions between behavioral, environmental and personal

variables (Bandura, 1986 [25]). According to Zimmerman (2000), personal variables consist of the self-efficacy and motivation which involve achievement behaviors as effort and persistence in learning situation. These self-regulatory processes and the motivational beliefs occur in three phases: A forethought phase, a performance and volition control phase, and a self-reflection phase (Zimmerman, 2000). The forethought phase leads actions and establishes conditions for learning. The performance and volition phase refers to the use of cognitive, affective and behavioral actions that appear during a learning effort. Self-reflection includes the processes that reach after accomplishment efforts.

There have been different studies which have attempted to help learners have an overview look at SRL strategies. Significantly, in 2012 Sardareh, Saad and Baroomand [26] carried a study on SRL and academic achievement in pre-university EFL learners. A cohort of 82 pre-university students answered a questionnaire. The results revealed that female outperformed males and used SRL strategies more often than males. In 2013, Anthony, Clayton and Zusho [27] investigated 160 high school students' self-regulated learning strategies in English and Math. The research instrument was an open-ended questionnaire. The results indicated that most students employed shallow-processing strategies when they prepared for final exams. Recently, Lin (2019) [28] investigated the differences in learning strategies of adult learners. The number of participants was 137 ESL adult learners taking part in answering a questionnaire. The findings showed that adult learners had a higher frequency in using rehearsal and organization strategies, and they used SRL strategies differently. In Vietnam, Trần Quốc Thao and Dương Mỹ Thảo (2012) conducted a study on non-English majors' attitudes towards English language learning (ELL) and use of SRL strategies at one college in Dak Lak, Vietnam. There were 241 non-English majors answering a closed-ended

questionnaire. The study found that research participants' attitudes towards ELL were positive, and they used SRL strategies at a low frequency. In 2019, Ngô Công Lê [29] did a study on the use of SRL strategies and its relation to Vietnamese EFL learners' L2 listening achievement. It involved 38 sophomore students at a university in answering a questionnaire. The results indicated that participants used SRL strategies at a moderate frequency. It is noticed that the results in the abovementioned studies indicated that learners' use of SRL strategies was not at a high frequency. The types of participants were various in different learning contexts. However, tertiary English majored freshmen' SRL strategies who are quite new to the university context seem not yet to be exploited. Therefore, this study endeavors to explore English majored freshmen's SRL strategy use at the context of Bac Lieu University.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research context and participants

This case study was conducted at a university in Bac Lieu province, Vietnam. There were about 380 students majoring in English and 19 teachers (2 teachers of French and the others are teachers of English) working at this university. Participants in this study who were conveniently sampled were 100 English majors (aged from 19 to 24) studying at a university in Bac Lieu province, Vietnam. They were first-year students consisting of 91 females (91%) and nine males (9%) as shown in Table 1. There were 12 (12%) participants having learned English from three to five years, 46 (46%) participants having learned English from six to eight years and 42 (42%) participants having learned English over eight years. It is further noticed that 65% of participants allocated 1-3 hours per day to self-study, followed by 24% to 4-5 hours, 10% to less than 1 hour, and 1% to more than 5 hours.

Table 1. Participants' general information

No.	Information	N=100		
		F	%	
1	Gender	Male	9	9.0
		female	91	91.0
2	Age	Under 20	65	65.0
		21-24	35	35.0
3	Level of English proficiency	Beginner	29	29.0
		Elementary	36	36.0
		Intermediate	20	20.0
		Advanced	15	15.0
4	Years of learning English	Less than 3	0	0.0
		3-5	12	12.0
		6-8	46	46.0
		Over 8	42	42.0
5	Hours of self-study per day	less than 1	10	10.0
		1-3	65	65.0
		4-5	24	24.0
		over 5	1	1.0

Note: F: frequency; %: Percent.

### 3.2. Research instrument

This study employed a closed-ended questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was adapted from the Questionnaire of English SRTL Strategies (QESRLS) of Wang and Pape (2005) [30]. The questionnaire consists of two parts: part I is about participant's personal information and part II includes 55 five-point Likert scale items (from *never* to *always*). Each item describes an SRTL strategy commonly used in studying English and falls into one of the 12 categories: Self-Evaluation (items 1, 2, 3 and 4), Organizing and Transforming (items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15), Rehearsing and Memorizing (items 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20), Seeking Social Assistance (items 21 and 22), Persistence (items 23, 24, 25 and 26), Seeking Opportunities (items 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33), Record Keeping and Monitoring (items 34 and 35), Self-consequences (items 36 and 37), Goal setting and planning (items 38, 39, 40 and 41), Review of records (items 42 and 43), Use of Interpretation skills (items 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54 and 55). The context ranges from cognitive components to

generally accepted English learning strategies, including strategies such as goal-setting, making adjustment, and seeking social assistance. Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) is .842, which means the reliability of the questionnaire is very high.

### 3.4. Procedures for data collection and data analysis

With respect of data collection, 112 copies of questionnaire were administered to students, but only 100 copies were returned. It took students 15 minutes to answer the questions in the questionnaire. Regarding data analysis, the collected data were analyzed by the SPSS version 19.0 program aiming to answer the research questions quantitatively. Descriptive statistics were run to calculate mean score and standard deviations for gender, level of English proficiency and SRTL strategies, and the meaning of the mean scores is interpreted as 1-1.80: never; 1.81-2.60: seldom; 2.61-3.40: sometimes; 3.41- 4.20: usually; and 4.21 - 5.00: always.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Results

4.1.1. The use of SRTL strategies among English majored freshmen

The results Table 2 display that the total mean score of SRTL strategies was 3.34 out of 5. This means that English-majored freshmen sometimes employed SRTL strategies to improve their English language proficiency. In detail, there were 11 English language learning strategy categories with different means: *Review of records* has the least mean score (Category 10: M=3.21, SD=.82), *Self-consequences*, *Goal setting and planning* and *Interpretation skills* also have the same mean score but different to standard deviation (Category 9: M=3.29, SD=.72; Category 8: M=3.29, SD=.73; Category 11: M=3.29, SD=.53, respectively). It is seen that the mean scores of *seeking opportunities to practice*

English (Category 6:  $M=3.36$ ,  $SD=.56$ ) and persistence when faced with challenges (Category 5:  $M=3.39$ ,  $SD=.63$ ) and those of seeking social assistance and record keeping and monitoring (Category 4:  $M=3.46$ ,  $SD=.82$ ; Category 7:  $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=.73$ ) were quite close to one another. The mean score of self-evaluation is 3.30 (Category 1:  $M=3.30$ ,  $SD=.58$ ), and that of organization and transformation (Category 2:  $M=3.37$ ,  $SD=.44$ ) and rehearsal and memorization (Category 3:  $M=3.37$ ,  $SD=.69$ ) were the same but different in standard deviation. Overall, the record keeping and monitoring has the highest mean score, so they will be analyzed in the next section. This can be understood that participants used SRL strategies to record keeping and monitoring and seek social assistance more often than other purposes.

Table 2. SRL strategies among English majored freshmen

No.		N=100	
		M	SD
1	Self-evaluation	3.30	.58
2	Organization and transformation	3.37	.44
3	Rehearsal and memorization	3.37	.69
4	Seeking social assistance	3.46	.82
5	Persistence when faced with challenges	3.39	.63
6	Seeking opportunities to practice English	3.36	.56
7	Record keeping and monitoring	3.47	.73
8	Self-consequences	3.29	.73
9	Goal setting and planning	3.29	.72
10	Review of records	3.21	.82
11	Interpretation skills	3.29	.53
Total		3.34	.34

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.

As can be seen in Table 3, the mean scores of “when I finish my English composition, I have a rest and then read it again to check whether it should be revised were the biggest

factor” (item 4:  $M=3.50$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ) was relatively high, followed by “I proofread my English composition when I completed writing” (item 2:  $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=.84$ ) and “I adjust my reading speed according to the difficulty of the article” (item 3:  $M=3.29$ ,  $SD=.91$ ) which also contributed to student’s self-evaluation. It was further observed from Table 3 that students sometimes checked their English homework before turning it in (item 1:  $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=.74$ ). It is obvious that the students had the tendency to take a rest and then read the English composition again to check whether it should be revised.

Table 3. SRL strategies in terms of Self-evaluation

No.	Self-evaluation	N=100	
		M	SD
1	I check my English homework before turning it in.	3.14	.74
2	I proofread my English composition when I completed writing.	3.27	.84
3	I adjust my reading speed according to the difficulty of the article.	3.29	.91
4	When I finish my English composition, I have a rest and then read it again to check whether it should be revised.	3.50	1.07
Total		3.30	.58

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

In respect of the category of organization and transformation which consists of eleven items (Table 4), it was sometimes true that students were familiar with “writing an outline before writing English compositions” (item 5:  $M=3.56$ ,  $SD=1.00$ ), “summarizing the main idea of each paragraph when reading” (item 7:  $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=.99$ ), “considering how to say something in English in [their] mind before saying it out loud” (item 13:  $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=1.09$ ), “thinking out a composition in Vietnamese before writing it in English” (item 15:  $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ), “summarizing the theme of an English article when [they] read it”

(item 8:  $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=.98$ ), “memorizing a new word by memorizing when [they] learn” (item 12:  $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=.98$ ) and “underlining key points during [their] English reading” (item 14:  $M=3.42$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ). Additionally, it was sometimes true that the students “write an outline after reading an English article” (item 6:  $M=3.19$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ), “classify new words in order to memorize them” (item 9:  $M=3.25$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ) and “memorize English words whose

pronunciations are similar” (item 11:  $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=.96$ ). However, the students seldom “write an outline after reading an English article” (item 6:  $M=3.19$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ), and it was also the smallest factor in the Table 4. It was obvious that students had a trend to write an outline before writing English compositions and summarize the main idea of each paragraph when reading.

Table 4. SRL strategies in terms of organization and transformation

No.	Organization and transformation	N=100	
		M	SD
5	I write an outline before writing English compositions.	3.56	1.00
6	I write an outline after reading an English article.	3.19	1.06
7	I summarize the main idea of each paragraph when reading.	3.55	.99
8	I summarize the theme of an English article when I read it.	3.44	.98
9	I classify news words in order to memorize them.	3.25	1.02
10	I recite similar words altogether.	3.15	.88
11	I memorize English words whose pronunciations are similar.	3.27	.96
12	I memorize a new word by memorizing where I learn it.	3.32	.98
13	I consider how to say something in English in my mind before saying it out loud.	3.48	1.09
14	I underline key points during my English reading.	3.42	1.08
15	I think out a composition in Vietnamese before writing it in English.	3.48	1.08
Total		3.37	.44

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.

As seen from Table 5, this is the category of SRL strategies that students needed time to practice remembering or rewriting new words in order to be suitable for any English language skills. Therefore, they usually read new words repeatedly in order to memorize them (item 19:  $M=3.51$ ,  $SD=.98$ ), “when [they] cannot follow somebody’s English, [they] let him/her speak slowly” (item 20:  $M=3.50$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ). It is sometimes true that the students were likely to “write new words many times in order to memorize the spellings” (item 18:  $M=3.42$ ,  $SD=.98$ ), “review the cards of new words in order to memorize them” (item 17:  $M=3.33$ ,  $SD=.93$ ) and “recite English texts in the process of studying English” ( $M=3.24$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ). It was found out that reciting English texts in the process of studying English was the smallest factor and reading new words repeatedly in order to memorize was the biggest factor. This means that the students used this SRL

strategies less than the other ones because reciting English texts made them feel bored and not helpful for their study.

Table 5. SRL strategies in terms of rehearsal and memorization

No.	Rehearsal and memorization	N=100	
		M	SD
16	I recite English texts in the process of studying English.	3.24	1.04
17	I review the cards of new words in order to memorize them.	3.33	.93
18	I write new words many times in order to memorize the spellings.	3.42	.98
19	I read new words repeatedly in order to memorize them.	3.51	.98
20	If I cannot follow somebody’s English, I let him speak slowly.	3.50	1.02
Total		3.37	.69

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.

As seen from Table 6, the students had a trend to look for a help from their friends or try to find new solutions without needing assistance. In the seeking social assistance strategy, classmate is their main source for the students to ask first before asking their teacher (item 22:  $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=.96$ ) and sometimes the students “consult teachers when [they] encounter difficulties in the process of studying English” (item 21:  $M=3.37$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ); otherwise, “if [they] do not understand the English articles at the first time,” they would read it again and again with several times until they got the understanding in persistence strategy (item 24:  $M=3.59$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ), “keep reading when [they] encounter difficulties in English reading” (item 23:  $M=3.46$ ,  $SD=.99$ ) and “search related documents when [they] have difficulties in the process of studying English” (item 25:  $M=3.35$ ,  $SD=.93$ ). However, the students sometimes “listen to tap-recorded English several times if they cannot understand it for the first time” (item 26:  $M=3.16$ ,  $SD=.99$ ). This means that the strategies were similar to the students because the teachers gave instructions and tasks in classroom so they easily applied these strategies more often. However, the using taps to record English seemed not to be interesting in this way. Many possible reasons were that they felt embarrassed when they heard their voice in the record or even the taps were also old-fashion. Moreover, most of students did not like repeating their pronunciation although they wanted to improve it day by day (Table 6).

As seen in Tables 7 and 8, both of these strategies have many items for students to learn but the interpretation skills strategy seems to use less frequently than the seeking opportunities to practice English. In seeking opportunities to practice English, the students preferred to “send emails to friends in English on [their] initiative” (item 29:  $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=1.15$ ), “use sentence patterns just learned to make new sentences for practice” (item 28:  $M=3.43$ ,  $SD= 1.07$ ). Moreover, they also like to “try their best to find opportunities to practice [their] oral English” (item 30:  $M=3.40$ ,

$SD=1.13$ ) and “listen to English radio programs on [their] initiative” (item 32:  $M=3.40$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ). However, the students sometimes listen to “American or British broadcasts to improve my pronunciation” (item 27:  $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=.88$ ), “watch English TV programs on [their] initiative” (item 31:  $M=3.28$ ,  $SD= 1.02$ ) and “use words just learned to make new sentences on [their] initiative” (item 33:  $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ). This means that all these strategies did not help the students much for their study (Table 7).

In interpretation skills, the students often “make sure that the content of each paragraph supports its topic sentence in English writing” (item 55:  $M=3.45$ ,  $SD=.93$ ), “guess what people mean by reading their expressions and movements when watching an English movie” (item 46:  $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=1.01$ ), “make sure to write a topic sentence in each paragraph in writing” (item 54:  $M=3.42$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ).

Table 6. SRLL strategies in terms of Seeking social assistance and Persistence when faced with challenges

No.	Seeking social assistance	N=100	
		M	SD
21	I consult teachers when I encounter difficulties in the process of studying English.	3.37	1.02
22	I ask classmates when I have questions in my English study.	3.54	.96
Total		3.46	.82
Persistence when faced with challenges			
23	I keep reading when I encounter difficulties in English reading.	3.46	.99
24	I read an English article several times if I don't understand it at the first time.	3.59	.97
25	I search related documents when I have difficulties in the process of studying English.	3.35	.93
26	I listen to tape-recorded English several times if I cannot understand it for the first time.	3.16	.99
Total		3.39	.63

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.



Table 7. SRL strategies in terms of Seeking opportunities to practice English

No.	Seeking opportunities to practice English	N=100	
		M	SD
27	I listen to American or British broadcasts to improve my pronunciation	3.28	.88
28	I use sentence patterns just learned to make new sentences for practice.	3.43	1.07
29	I send emails to friends in English on my initiative.	3.44	1.15
30	I try my best to find opportunities to practice my oral English.	3.40	1.13
31	I watch English TV programs on my initiative.	3.28	1.02
32	I listen to English radio programs on my initiative.	3.40	1.04
33	I use words just learned to make new sentences on my initiative.	3.28	1.06
Total		3.36	.56

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Sometimes when somebody speaks English, the students guess what he/she will say according to what he/she has said (item 49: M=3.36, SD=1.15), “pay attention to English speaker’s tones” (item 51: M=3.30, SD=1.12), or “use the title of an English article to help understand that article” (item 48: M=3.28, SD=1.02”. Moreover, the students also “pay attention to the beginning and end of each paragraph in [their] English reading” (item 52: M=3.27, SD=1.08), “guess the meaning of new words by considering the contexts” (item 45: M=3.24, SD=.956) and “use the background knowledge to comprehend English articles” (item 53: M=3.23, SD= 1.08). However, the students sometimes “memorize meanings of words by using prefixes and suffixes” (item 50: M=3.16, SD=.98), “pay less attention to what pronouns refer to during reading” (item 44: M=3.19, SD=1.07) and “pay less attention the stressed words or phrases in order to comprehend the sentence” (item 47: M=3.19, SD=1.05). This means that the students did not

want to remember the meanings of words by using prefixes, suffixes or even pronouns during reading.

Table 8. SRL strategies in terms of Interpretation skills

No.	Interpretation skills	N=100	
		M	SD
44	I pay attention to what pronouns refer to during reading.	3.19	1.07
45	I guess the meaning of new words by considering their contexts.	3.24	.956
46	I guess what people mean by reading their expressions and movements when watching an English movie.	3.44	1.01
47	When I listen to English, I pay attention to the stressed words or phrases in order to comprehend the sentence.	3.19	1.05
48	I use the title of an English article to help understand that article.	3.28	1.02
49	When somebody speaks English, I guess what he/she will say according to what he/she has said.	3.36	1.15
50	I memorize meanings of words by using prefixes and suffixes.	3.16	.98
51	I pay attention to English speaker’s tones.	3.30	1.12
52	I pay attention to the beginning and end of each paragraph in my English reading.	3.27	1.08
53	I use my background knowledge to comprehend English articles.	3.23	1.08
54	I make sure to write a topic sentence in each paragraph in writing.	3.42	1.10
55	I make sure that the content of each paragraph supports its topic sentence in English writing.	3.45	.93
Total		3.29	.53

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.

In table 9, the students often “write down the mistakes that [they] make in the process of studying English” (item 34:  $M=3.46$ ,  $SD=.86$ ) and “take notes in English classes” (item 35:  $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=.96$ ) in the area of record keeping and monitoring. On the other hand, the students seem to “reward themselves when [they] make a progress in studying English” (item 36:  $M=3.30$ ,  $SD=.86$ ) and “have a break when [they are] tired during [their] English study” not so often (item 37:  $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ) in the self-consequences strategy. This means that most of the students liked to determine their mistakes in the studying English approaches and wrote some important information to avoid trouble or misunderstandings. Besides, the students seemed not to need the reward or have a break when they were tired.

Table 9. SRLL strategies in terms of Record keeping and monitoring and Self-consequences

No.	Record keeping and monitoring	N=100	
		M	SD
34	I write down the mistakes I often make in the process of studying English.	3.46	.86
35	I take notes in English classes.	3.48	.96
	Total	3.47	.73
	Self-consequences		
36	I reward myself when I make a progress in studying English.	3.30	.86
37	I have a break when I am tired during my English study.	3.27	1.02
	Total	3.29	.73

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.

Among four items of category of *goal setting and planning* and two items of *review of records strategy* (Table 10), it was found that both of them occupied the least mean scores in total. In goal setting and planning, the students sometimes “do not play until [they] finish [their] homework” (item 38:  $M=3.33$ ,  $SD=1.14$ ), “find a quiet place when the environment is disturbing” (item 41:  $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ), “set a goal to study English” (item 40:  $M=3.26$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ) and “make a study plan in the process of studying English” (item 39:

$M=3.24$ ,  $SD=1.10$ ). On the other hand, the students do not like to “review English texts when [they] have learned” (item 42:  $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=.91$ ) and “review the notes of English class before examinations” (item 43:  $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ). This means that the students were aware enough to set goals to study or find a quiet place when the environment was disturbing. When the students were preparing for examination, the students had a trend to study in groups or study alone in a place which was not too noisy and had more fresh air because they could review the lessons quickly and clearly. However, few students had a hatred reviewing English texts or the notes of English class before examinations.

Table 10. SRLL strategies in terms of Goal setting and planning and Review of records

No.	Goal setting and planning	N=100	
		M	SD
38	When a friend wants to play with me but I have not finished my homework yet, I do not play until I finish my homework.	3.33	1.14
39	I make a study plan in the process of studying English.	3.24	1.10
40	I set a goal to study English.	3.26	1.03
41	I find a quiet place when the environment is disturbing.	3.32	1.03
	Total	3.29	.72
	Review of records		
42	I review English texts I have learned.	3.27	.91
43	I review my notes of English class before examinations.	3.14	1.08
	Total	3.21	.82

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.

4.1.2. 2 Top ten most and least frequently used SRLL strategies.

The items that have the most and least mean score in each strategy were listed in Tables 11 and 12 in order to have a comparison among them. In Table 11, it can be clearly seen that the top ten most frequently used SRLL strategies are relatively common for students to be easy to choose them when they read. However, the top

ten least frequently used SRL strategies were strange and hard for students to choose because they did not often use or have not ever tried to use them before. This means that although students were freshmen, they had a reasonable thinking and direction to use frequently approaches for the study purposes. Some methods were simple and accepted to apply easily every day; otherwise, there were still some unconventional techniques that students rarely tried to use or use less frequently.

Table 11. Top ten most frequently used SRL strategies

Rank	Items	N=100	
		M	SD
1	24. I read an English article several times if I don't understand it at the first time.	3.59	.97
2	5. I write an outline before writing English compositions.	3.56	1.00
3	7. I summarize the main idea of each paragraph when reading.	3.55	.99
4	22. I ask classmates when I have questions in my English study.	3.54	.96
5	19. I read new words repeatedly in order to memorize them.	3.51	.98
6	20. If I cannot follow somebody's English, I let him speak slowly.	3.50	1.02
7	4. When I finish my English composition, I have a rest and then read it again to check whether it should be revised.	3.50	1.07
8	13. I consider how to say something in English in my mind before saying it out loud.	3.48	1.09
9	35. I take notes in English classes.	3.48	.96
10	15. I think out a composition in Vietnamese before writing it in English.	3.48	1.08

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.

Table 12. Top ten least frequently used SRL strategies

Rank	Items	N=100	
		M	SD
1	43. I review my notes of English class before examinations.	3.14	1.08
2	1. I check my English homework before turning them in.	3.14	.74
3	10. I recite similar words altogether.	3.15	.88
4	50. I memorize meanings of words by using prefixes and suffixes.	3.16	.98
5	26. I listen to tape-recorded English several times if I cannot understand it for the first time.	3.16	.99
6	6. I write an outline after reading an English article.	3.19	1.06
7	47. When I listen to English, I pay attention to the stressed words or phrases in order to comprehend the sentence.	3.19	1.05
8	44. I pay attention to what pronouns refer to during reading.	3.19	1.07
9	53. I use my background knowledge to comprehend English articles.	3.23	1.08
10	39. I make a study plan in the process of studying English.	3.24	1.10

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation.

#### 4.2. Discussion

This findings showed that participants sometimes used SRL strategies. The possible of this finding may be that fact that participants were in the first year, so they may not be familiar with the SRL. Consequently, their use of SRL strategies was not quite high. Salili and Lai (2003) [31] mentioned learning is influenced by a variety of contexts, one of which includes a societal level of learning established by cultural values and societal norms which are reflected in students' socialization and parents' expectations. This

finding is similar to that of Ngô Công Lâm's (2019) study which indicated that EFL students had a moderate employment of SRL strategies.

Looking through the mean scores, it can be easily seen that English-majored students usually used strategies of *record keeping and monitoring* and *Seeking social assistance*; however, they were not good at making the study plan or reviewing of records. One of the possible explanations may be school and classroom environment impact students' learning; for example, the dominant English classroom instruction pedagogy in Vietnam is still teacher-centered where students are not encouraged to develop their own strategies but instead of following teacher's words. This way of education might be beneficial for students to gain knowledge and have good performance on English examinations which focus on content knowledge (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure); however, it is not good for students to discover the freedom they might have in developing their own ways of learning. This could also explain the small effect sizes of the relationships between participants' use of SRL strategies and their performance on English exams. Besides, this finding is aligned with the results of the study conducted by Wang et al. (2012) [32] who concluded that persistence when faced with challenges and keeping records and monitoring were all significantly correlated with students' performance on the English exams. Other subcategories of SRL strategies (organizing and transforming; rehearsing and memorizing; seeking social assistance; seeking opportunities to practice English, self-consequences, and goal setting and planning) were not statistically significantly correlated with any one of the English exams.

By contrast, it was found out that students did not think they had problems with making the study plan or reviewing of records. It can be explained that English-majored students were mainly freshmen, so most the time they may not focus on learning by heart. Therefore, they may rarely have plans or review the lessons before taking examination. They may be lazy or some

of them get enough knowledge while they are studying in class, so they did not need to review the lesson. What is more, their level of English proficiency was quite low, which may attribute to this finding. Moreover, based on their experiments, the students still kept applying these strategies to study as the most frequently techniques. When every examination is getting close, they set the goals, call their friends, find a quiet place to arrange and study together. Besides, they also hated taking the notes in class or paying attention to the stressed words or phrases or remember the word meanings by using prefixes and suffixes. At that time, some students thought that it was not necessary to use or it was useless for them to use, but it may play an important role for students to learn and pronounce words correctly.

As regards the most and the least common SRL strategies used by students, it seems that students tended to employed SRL strategies relevant to Self-Evaluation, Organizing and Transforming, Rehearsing and Memorizing, Seeking Social Assistance, and Record Keeping and Monitoring, while they employed those in Self-Evaluation, Organizing and Transforming, Persistence, Goal setting and planning, Review of records, and Use of Interpretation skills. It can be explained that students may use SRL strategies most to do things which may be difficult or common to them and vice versa.

## 5. Conclusion

The findings of this study unraveled that although the overall level of university students' use of SRL strategies was moderate, students need improve their use of SRL strategies. Additionally, they preferred SRL strategies for keeping and monitoring records and seeking social assistance than other purposes. Some implications within this study are drawn. Firstly, it was found that students did not use SRL strategies at a high level, so it is advisable that English teachers should consider incorporating SRL strategies in classroom teaching and facilitate the student's

development of their own SRL strategies. According to Boekaerts and Cascallar (2006) [33], one example is to have more group work instead of lectures since small group collaboration and a social constructivist's learning environment enhance students' use of SRL strategies. Secondly, students had a tendency to use the most frequently approaches like writing an outline before writing English compositions or summarizing the main idea of each paragraph when reading without trying to find some new ways. Therefore, they need to be instructed to balance the purpose of using SRL strategies, even the least periodically ones like reviewing the notes of English class before examinations or checking English homework before turning them in, etc.

This study still bears some limitations. Participants in this study are all majored in English language, and the gender is out of balance in this field as more females than males. Only quantitative data were collected. Future studies should recruit college students in other fields of study and use random sampling method to find a closer match between research participants and the target population, and a mixed methods design should be employed for more reliable and valid results.

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