SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND ITS RELATION TO VIETNAMESE EFL LEARNERS' L2 LISTENING ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract: Self-regulated learning (SRL) has been well-documented in prior studies as a critical factor for academic success. While previous educational researchers have acknowledged the fact that SRL is both domain and context-dependent (Wolter & Pintrich, 1998), research examining learners' self-regulatory activities in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context is rather limited. Drawing on the SRL theory of (Pintrich, 2004; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990), this research was carried out to examine the learning self-regulation of a group of Vietnamese EFL learners and its relation to their L2 listening competence. It also probes into whether gender and listening ability had an impact on the language learners' self-regulatory learning behaviors. The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), adopted from Pintrich, Smith, Garcia and McKeachie (1991), was utilized as the research instrument which was then administered to 38 English-major students at a university in the central region of Vietnam. The participants' L2 listening ability was also assessed with an adopted listening test. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and two-way MANOVA were performed with SPSS version 22.0 for data analysis. The results indicated that participants had a moderate level of SRL, which was found to be associated with their L2 listening achievements. In particular, three aspects of SRL that were directly related to the EFL learners' listening competence were metacognitive self-regulation, effort regulation, and critical thinking. There was, however, neither gender nor ability effect on the participants' SRL. Pedagogical implications for teaching L2 listening skill, i.e., underscoring the role of higher-order thinking skills, and suggestions for future research were discussed.

***Keywords*:** Self-regulated Learning, Vietnamese EFL learners, Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, L2 Listening, Metacognitive Skills

1. Introduction

It has been found that self-regulated learning (hereafter SRL) plays a crucial role in the learners' academic accomplishments (Cong-Lem, 2018; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990). Conceptually, SRL refers to the learners' ability to self-initiate and manage their own learning, commonly involving planning, monitoring, regulating and reflecting on the learning progress (Cong-Lem, 2018; Pintrich, 2004). SRL is, however, both domain- and context-dependent (Wolters & Pintrich, 1998). In other words, the SRL strategies adopted for learning a certain subject may be dissimilar from those applied for another one. Thus, it would be more meaningful for learners and educators to be informed of insights from research that addresses SRL in their specific educational setting.

Another closely related construct to SRL is learning autonomy (Hu & Zhang, 2017). SRL and learning autonomy share common

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features, both promoting the active role of the learners in initiating and controlling their learning process, and these two terms have been commonly used interchangeably in previous studies (Hu & Zhang, 2017; Oxford, 1999). Certain existing differences in the conceptualization of the two constructs are still subject to further discussion. For example, Murray (2014) pointed to the social dimensions, encompassing emotional, spatial and pollical dimensions, as potential criteria for comparing SRL and learning autonomy. Detailed discussion regarding the discrepancies between SRL and other self-educating concepts, such as learning autonomy, is, nevertheless, beyond the scope of this study.

Although SRL has long been established as an important educational construct, SRL research in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) setting is rather inadequate. In many Asian educational contexts, such as Vietnam, the exam-centric education and power relationship between the teacher and students tend to make language teachers as the only knowledge transferrer, which could have hindered students' autonomous learning activities (Alshahrani, 2017; Le Quynh Xuan, 2013). A highly structured curriculum would also constrain students' SRL practice (Le Quynh Xuan, 2013; Zimmerman, 1989). With a paradigm shift toward constructivism and learner-centered approach (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001), EFL learners have been encouraged to adopt more SRL strategies to improve language competence. Indeed, constructivism approach places an emphasis on learner's actively constructing their own new knowledge rather than solely relying on teachers (Qi, 2012), the process in which SRL should play a critical role.

Listening skill is a much neglected skill whose research literature is particularly less prolific compared to other language skills (Vandergrift, 1997). This can be attributed to the implicit and complex nature of the skill (Zeng & Goh, 2018), making it difficult for researchers to observe or analyze. Research addressing students' SRL in L2 listening learning is particularly scarce (Zeng & Goh, 2018). The current study was conducted in order to examine whether SRL could be associated with the EFL learners' listening ability. It also attempts to find out whether gender and language proficiency have an effect on language learners' self-regulatory behaviors.

Overall, this current study was carried out to address the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: To what extent do Vietnamese EFL learners utilize SRL strategies for their L2 listening training?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between SRL strategies and the EFL learners' L2 listening achievements?

RQ3: Is there a gender and/or ability effect on the language learners' SRL strategies?

2. Literature review

2.1. Self-regulated learning and its conceptual framework

Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a branch of educational psychology whose origin can be traced back to the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986, 1997). In social cognitive theory, human behavior is considered to be "a product of both self-generated and external sources of influence" (Bandura, 1986, p.454). In other words, human functioning is a result of the interplay among behavioral, environmental and personal factors (Bandura, 1986; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). To elaborate, with

respect to an individual's learning process, SRL activities serve as mediators of personal characteristics, contextual variables and his/her actual academic accomplishments (Pintrich, 2000). The concept of SRL has long been embraced by educational researchers as an influential factor determining students' academic achievements (Boekaerts, 1997).

Previous educational researchers have defined SRL in different ways. Zimmerman (2005) conceptualized self-regulated learners as those who are "metacognitively, motivationally and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process" (p. 5). SRL can also be referred to 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" (Pintrich, 2000, p.453). Overall, previous researchers tend to agree that SRL characterizes the learners' active and self-initiated engagement in their learning process, commonly featured with the utilization of different learning strategies to realize their academic goals or improvements.

Several conceptual models have been proposed to describe the process of SRL. Pintrich (2004) proposed a popular conceptual framework for learners' SRL, comprising four main stages. In the first stage, learners plan and set goals for the learning tasks as well as activating relevant background knowledge and context awareness. In stage 2, metacognitive awareness is exercised to monitor the learning processes, whereas during stage 3, learners demonstrate the capacity to manage and regulate different aspects of their learning activities. In the fourth stage, self-reflections and follow-up actions are performed. Likewise, Zimmerman (2000) developed a recursive model, encompassing three cyclical phases of SRL, i.e., forethought, performance, and self-reflection. The forethought phase involves an individual's motivational beliefs and task analysis (e.g., goal setting) before actual learning activities are realized in the performance phase. In the self-reflection phase, learners evaluate the effectiveness of their learning activities and compare their achievements to the initial goals. While there are also other SRL models proposed by other researchers (e.g., Boekaerts, 1999), the above-mentioned models are popularly utilized as conceptual frameworks for SRL research.

It is essential to point out that in real-life learning, these four phases of SRL do not necessarily happen in a hierarchical manner as depending on the learning context, students may engage in their learning "in more tacit or implicit or unintentional ways without self-regulating their learning in such an explicit manner as suggested in the model" (Pintrich, 2004, p.389).

2.2 Self-regulated learning and foreign language achievements

Previous studies have provided a mixed support for the association between SRL and foreign language achievements. On the one hand, there have been empirical studies that lend support for the afore-mentioned relationship. For instance, in a study by Kim and Linan-Thompson (2013), EFL learners' science vocabulary acquisition was reported to be associated with their SRL performance. Zarei and Hatami (2012) also demonstrated in their study a significant connection between learners' SRL and L2 reading comprehension. By the same token, Morshedian, Hemmati, Sotoudehnama, and Soleimani (2016) found that SRL intervention helped significantly increase Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension competence.

On the other hand, several studies have

failed to corroborate the direct correlation between the two variables of interest, i.e., SRL and L2 competencies (e.g., Amirian, Mallahi, & Zaghi, 2015; Zarei & Hatami, 2012). For instance, Zarei and Hatami (2012) reported on a null finding for the relationship between SRL and participants' vocabulary knowledge. More recently, Soleimani, Aghayani, and Ashari (2018) administered a SRL vocabulary learning questionnaire and a vocabulary test to 116 EFL learners. The result indicated that there was no significant correlation between the language learners' SRL and their lexical performance.

As discussed above, the relationship between EFL learners' self-regulation and language competence is thus subject to further research. Also, while SRL has been examined in relation to reading skill and vocabulary knowledge (e.g., Morshedian et al., 2016; Soleimani et al., 2018), little research has been done to address SRL in L2 listening achievement. The current research was thus conducted to address the foregoing gaps.

2.3. Research on self-regulated learning in Vietnamese EFL context

Previous researchers have provided useful insights into Vietnamese EFL learners' self-regulation practice. For instance, Nguyen Thi Cam Le (2008) investigated the relationship between learning autonomy and Vietnamese English-major students' language proficiency and found a significant association between the participants' self-regulating ability and their English proficiency.

Le Quynh Xuan (2013) reported on a study examining Vietnamese tertiary language teachers and students' perception of learning autonomy, obstacles hindering their learning self-regulation practice in classrooms as well as carrying out an intervention program to enhance students' SRL. Findings indicated that from the participants' perspectives, learning autonomy/self-regulation meant taking the initiative in one's learning, for example, in planning and engaging in self-study activities. The intervention program helped raise students' awareness of SRL practice, i.e., utilizing language learning strategies. Finally, culture- and context-bound factors, including exam-oriented education, time constraints, stringent syllabus and power distance were factors that could impede classroom SRL.

Learning self-regulation can be inspected by examining students' use/employment of language learning strategies (LLS). Nguyen Thi Boi Hoang (2013) carried out a large-scale study, probing into the LLS employment of Vietnamese undergraduate students (N = 564), including English- and non-English majors. The results revealed that students who reported a higher frequency of LLS practice tended to possess higher self-rated English proficiency. English-major students were more active in utilizing LLSs for their language learning. Likewise, a study investigating LLS practice of Vietnamese high-school students indicated that the participants used metacognitive strategies most frequently for their English learning and social strategies the least. Gender was further found to be a factor that influenced their social-strategy employment.

Do Minh Hung and Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao (2014) studied whether training in metacognitive strategies could enhance Vietnamese EFL learners' reading comprehension ability. In their experimental study, participants in the treatment group were instructed to use metacognitive strategies, i.e., planning, monitoring and evaluating strategies, whereas the control group studied with regular textbooks. Students in the experimental group were found to achieve significantly higher reading achievements and were able to adopt

more metacognitive LLSs compared to their counterparts in the control group.

More recently, in a study by Cong Lem (2019), Vietnamese high school students were found to use language learning strategies moderately, with metacognitive strategies being the most frequently exercised. Gender was also indicated as a factor influencing their strategy employment but only in the case of social strategies.

In summary, studies about SRL practice in Vietnamese EFL context remain relatively limited with frequent employment of self-developed questionnaires. Furthermore, there have been few studies that address the relationship between SRL practice and achievement of a specific language skill. This study contributes to the overall research literature with empirical findings on the relationship between SRL and L2 listening skill.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Participants were 38 English-major students (82% females), aged around 20 years old, studying at a university in the central region in Vietnam. They were sophomore students and were enrolled in Listening 3 course, a required course in their undergraduate program. The participants have studied English for about 8 years though it may vary depending on which regions of Vietnam they come from. While there is no official data, i.e., international test scores, to determine the participants' level of English proficiency level, they are assumed to possess pre-intermediate level of English listening skill after having accomplished Listening 1 and Listening 2, the two courses prior to Listening 3.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Listening comprehension test

A listening test was utilized for the purpose of assessing the participants' L2 listening ability. It was a listening subtest, containing 18 questions, extracted from the Skill for First Certificate Book, published in 2007 by Macmillan Publisher Limited. The first section includes 8 three-option multiple choice questions, whereas the second consists of another 8 gap-filling questions. Each correct answer is worth 1 point, and the total score for the test is 18 points. The book is from the prestigious publisher, i.e., Macmillan Publisher, and was also utilized as the main material for students' listening course at the concerned institution.

3.2.2 Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire

To assess the learners' SRL, subcomponents of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) by Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, and McKeachie (1991) were adopted, probing into the learners' self-regulation strategies. The complete MSLQ further includes three motivational scales: value components, expectancy components and affective components (Pintrich et al., 1991). The motivation scales are, however, not utilized in this study for two reasons. First, prior studies have commonly found a weak correlation between these motivational scales and academic achievement. To put it another way, it is self-regulatory behaviors that are more directly and strongly associated with learners' achievements (Rotgans & Schmidt, 2012). Moreover, the main purpose of this study is to specifically examine the relationship between Vietnamese EFL learners' SRL strategies and their L2 listening achievements. It is not uncommon for researchers to adopt/ adapt only a portion of the MSLQ to serve

their research purpose (e.g., Niemi, Nevgi, & Virtanen, 2003; Ray, 2003).

The SRL strategy component consists of two major categories, namely cognitive-metacognitive and resource-management strategies. The former can be further divided into 5 subcomponents: rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking and metacognitive self-regulation, whereas the latter involves 4 sub-categories: time and study environment, effort self-regulation, peer-learning and help-seeking. A total of 50 seven-point Likert scale questions for SRL strategy component from the MSLQ were adapted as the study instrument, which is similar to Ray (2003) and Wolters (2003). The internal consistency value (Cronbach's α) for all items in the questionnaire was at .94, suggesting sufficient internal reliability of the data collection instrument. MSLQ has been extensively validated in previous literature, involving confirmatory factor analysis, and proved to possess good validity and reliability (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993).

3.3. Data collection procedure

The questionnaire was first made available online using Google Form. Then, it was administered to the participants in their second week of the L2 listening course. The participants were recruited on the basis of convenience sampling, i.e., undergraduate students from the researcher's assigned classes. They were allowed two weeks to complete the online questionnaire whenever they feel convenient. Next, data from the online questionnaire was downloaded for data analysis.

3.4. Data analysis

Data was first checked for outliers and a total of 8 outliers were discovered and thus excluded from further data analysis. Descriptive statistics were then performed before Pearson correlation was utilized to examine the correlation between SRL strategies and participants' L2 listening achievement. Finally, to address the gender and proficiency effects, a two-way MANOVA (Multivariate analysis of variance) was performed, utilizing listening-ability group (applying median split) and gender as independent variables and SRL subscales as the dependent variables. MANOVA is a statistical analysis which allows researchers to "assess the statistical significance of the effect of 1 or more independent variables on a set of 2 or more dependent variables" (Weinfurt, 1995, p.245). To elaborate, MANOVA is similar to ANOVA (analysis of variance), which is a test for the mean difference between groups of independent factors. However, while ANOVA deals with one dependent variable (mean difference), MANOVA can take into account more than one. In this study, independent variables are gender group (male and female) and listening performance group (higher and lower listening ability learners), whereas dependent variables are the nine categories of SRL strategies. Score for each scale was calculated by totaling scores of its individual question.

4. Findings

4.1 Research Question 1: To what extent do Vietnamese EFL learners utilize SRL strategies for their L2 listening training?

Descriptive statistics were firstly performed corresponding to the first research question relating to the extent to which SRL was practiced among participants. Specifically, the final score for each subscale was the average of all of its individual items (Pintrich et al., 1991). Table 1 presents the summary of descriptive statistics for all SRL subscales.

Table 1. A summary of descriptive statistics of SRL subscales

	Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Self-Regulated Learning	Elaboration (1)	4.86	1.04	3.17	6.83
	Rehearsal (1)	4.83	1.22	2.75	6.50
	Critical thinking (1)	4.73	.94	2.00	6.40
	Metacognitive SR (1)	4.71	.89	3.36	6.82
	Peer learning (2)	4.63	1.34	2.00	6.33
	Effort SR (2)	4.61	1.13	3.00	5.88
	Help seeking (2)	4.59	.93	2.75	6.00
	Organization (1)	4.49	1.04	2.00	5.75
	Time & Environment Management (2)	4.45	.72	3.00	5.88
L2 Listening Performance		7.63	4.29	1.00	18.00

Notes. SR = Self Regulation; (1) = Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies; (2) Resource Management Strategies.

As depicted in Table 1, elaboration and rehearsal are the two most employed regulatory learning behaviors (M = 4.86, SD = 1.04; M = 4.83, SD = 1.22, respectively). The two least utilized SRL strategies are organization and time and environment management (M = 4.49, SD = 1.04; M = 4.45, SD = .72). As for L2 listening performance, the mean score is 7.63 (SD = 4.29), which certainly suggests an overall below-average listening performance of the participants.

On the whole, it can be observed from Table 1 that the second group of SRL activities, i.e., resource-management strategies are relatively less utilized compared to the first group of cognitive-metacognitive SRL behaviors.

4.2. Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between SRL strategies and the EFL learners' L2 listening achievements?

Pearson correlation was performed to address the second research question concerning the relationship between the students' learning self-regulation and their L2 listening ability (see Table 2).

As shown in Table 2, among nine subscales of SRL, only three were found to be significantly correlated with the participants' L2 listening performance, i.e., metacognitive self-regulation, effort regulation and critical thinking ($r = .50$, $p < .01$; $r = .44$, $p < .05$; $r = .35$, $p < .05$, respectively). Help-seeking behaviors are, however, negatively associated with L2 listening competence though it does not reach a statistic significance level ($r = -.23$, $p > .05$). In short, the statistical findings indicate that the impact of individual SRL activities on the participants' listening ability are differential, specifically in favor of the metacognitive skills.

Table 2. A summary of correlations between SRL subscales and L2 listening performance

Correlations	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
L2 Listening Ability	.28	.27	.23	.35*	50**	.27	.44*	.17	-.23

Notes. (1) = Rehearsal; (2) = Elaboration; (3) = Organization; (4) = Critical thinking; (5) = Metacognitive self-regulation; (6) = Time & Environment; (7) = Effort regulation; (8) = Peer learning; (9) = Help seeking; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

4.3. Research Question 3: Is there a gender and/or ability effect on the language learners' SRL strategies?

With respect to the third research question, descriptive statistics (Mean and SD) are first presented for gender and listening-proficiency groups, i.e., the higher and lower listening ability groups (see Table 3). As displayed in Table 3, regarding gender difference in SRL, male students tend to employ more rehearsal, elaboration and peer learning (M = 5.17, SD = .52; M = 5.29, SD = .49; and M = 4.97, SD = .54, respectively), whereas female students showed better performance in effort regulation (M = 4.73, SD = .23).

As for the SRL discrepancy between lower and higher listening ability learners, while the former seems to utilize more rehearsal and time/environment management SRL strategies (M = 5.20, SD = .43 and M = 4.65, SD = .28, respectively), the latter performs better in effort regulation (M = 4.70, SD = .37), i.e., the ability to stay focused and fight against distractors (Pintrich et al., 1991). This may imply that more proficient learners are more capable in controlling learning effort and more persistent in their learning as well.

To further examine whether the above-mentioned differences are statistically meaningful, a two-way MANOVA was conducted. Participants were split into two groups of listening ability, i.e., high and low, utilizing the medium score (Medium = 7.0). The statistical results, nevertheless, indicated that the above-mentioned differences failed to reach a statistical significance, $F(9,18) = .70$, $p = .70$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .74$ and $F(9,18) = .72$, $p = .70$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .74$, respectively. In other words, higher listening-ability students do not differ significantly from their lower-listening ability peers in the frequency of SRL strategy practice.

In a nutshell, while there were certain differences in self-regulation activities between male and female as well as between higher and lower proficiency learners, these variations were not confirmed to be statistically meaningful and should be subject to further examination in future research.

Table 3. Self-regulated learning performance regarding gender and listening proficiency levels

SRL Strategies	Gender		L2 Listening Proficiency	
	Male	Female	Higher	Lower
Rehearsal	5.17 (.52)	4.81 (.23)	4.78 (.38)	5.20 (.43)
Elaboration	5.29 (.49)	4.81 (.22)	4.97 (.35)	5.13 (.40)
Organization	4.29 (.49)	4.55 (.22)	4.35 (.36)	4.49 (.41)
Critical thinking	4.93 (.44)	4.73 (.20)	4.79 (.32)	4.87 (.36)
Metacognitive self-regulation	4.65 (.42)	4.76 (.19)	4.76 (.30)	4.65 (.35)
Time & environment management	4.48 (.34)	4.47 (.15)	4.30 (.24)	4.65 (.28)
Effort regulation	4.44 (.51)	4.73 (.23)	4.70 (.37)	4.47 (.42)
Peer learning	4.97 (.54)	4.58 (.24)	4.71 (.39)	4.85 (.45)
Help seeking	4.42 (.39)	4.51 (.17)	4.43 (.28)	4.50 (.32)

Note. The numbers in the table are presented in the order of Mean and (SD).

5. Discussion

The first research question in this study is concerned with the extent to which the Vietnamese EFL participants exercised SRL for learning L2 listening skill. As reported in Table 1, the participants demonstrated a medium level of SRL practice. The major group of cognitive-metacognitive strategies were employed more frequently in comparison to

the second group – the resource management strategies. Specifically, four most popular self-regulatory learning strategies involve elaboration, rehearsal, critical thinking and metacognitive self-regulation, whereas the two least popular are time-environment management and learning organization. This finding suggests a lesser extent of involvement in learners' effort to organize and manage their learning resources. This result may, however, raise concern of whether the participants could utilize effectively available external resources (e.g., peers, teachers, other learning materials) for their L2 listening training.

The second purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between SRL and L2 listening performance. SRL activities were found to be significantly associated with the EFL learners' L2 listening competence, which is consistent with findings in previous studies (e.g., Daniel, Wang, & Berthelsen, 2016; Kosnin, 2007; Peng, 2012; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Nevertheless, this study is one of the very few that probes into the association between learning self-regulation and L2 listening skill.

Three SRL aspects that were specifically found to be associated with the EFL learners' L2 listening performance include metacognitive self-regulation, effort regulation and critical thinking ($r = .50$, $r = .44$ and $r = .35$, respectively). To elaborate, metacognitive self-regulation refers to the EFL learners' ability to plan, monitor and regulate their learning, whereas effort regulation concerns the capacity to control attention and learning effort against uninteresting learning tasks or distractors (Pintrich et al., 1991). Critical thinking regards one's capability to evaluate and solve problems, utilizing prior background knowledge (Pintrich et al., 1991). In short, self-regulatory performance was found to be directly related to the EFL learners' L2 listening competence, particularly those reflecting higher-order thinking skills.

The remained six SRL strategies (i.e., rehearsal, elaboration, organization, time-environment management, help seeking and peer learning) failed to connect with the learners' listening accomplishments. Specifically, help-seeking and peer learning, though commonly promoted as effective learning strategies, are not associated with the language learners' learning achievements. This may suggest a more important role from the part of an individual learner in improving his/her own L2 listening training rather than from an external factor such as their peers. On the whole, metacognitive strategies, reflecting a deeper learning approach, have a more direct and critical role in determining EFL learners' L2 listening accomplishments.

The third major finding from this study is that there was neither gender nor ability effect on the participants' SRL. In other words, a similar level of self-regulated learning was found for male and female as well as for higher and lower listening-ability EFL learners. These results lend further support for findings in Çelik, Arkın, and Sabriler (2012) and Morshedian et al. (2016). More importantly, the fact that more proficient learners do not differ from the lower ones in learning self-regulation may suggest that a stronger focus should be on the quality of SRL practice rather than the quantity of SRL strategies employed.

The current study is, to the author's knowledge, the first to utilize the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich et al., 1991) in the Vietnamese EFL context and its results help provide empirical evidence for the validity and reliability of the instrument in the concerned educational setting. Future research can employ a full-scale MSQL to further expand the examination of Vietnamese EFL learners' learning self-regulatory behaviors.

Several pedagogical implications can be obtained from the study findings. First, self-regulated learning has a direct relationship with L2 listening competence and thus should be promoted in L2 listening training. Secondly, higher-order thinking skills, i.e., metacognitive self-regulation, effort regulation and critical thinking skill should be particularly emphasized in supporting students' L2 listening practice. Metacognitive self-regulation, i.e., planning, monitoring and regulating learning behaviors, was found to be most strongly linked to the participants' L2 listening accomplishments. Also, training in critical thinking skill can enable language learners to analyze the test questions and the input they hear more effectively, thus enhancing their L2 listening proficiency.

Additionally, effort regulation, i.e., the persistence in learning despite uninteresting tasks or distractors (Pintrich et al., 1991), was found to be practiced more frequently among higher proficiency learners. It is also the factor that exerts the second strongest effect on learners' listening achievements. Thus, EFL learners should be made aware of the role of individuals' effort self-regulation in their L2 listening training. Teachers can also provide support in this aspect by varying their learning tasks or creating interesting listening games to stimulate and increase students' learning motivation in their listening classes. These activities are expected to help learners to be more concentrated as well as becoming more persistent in their L2 listening training.

One may also wonder whether the quantity or quality of SRL strategies is more important. In other words, does using more SRL strategies automatically translate into better performance? As indicated by the results in this study, only three out of nine aspects of students' self-regulation strategies were associated with their L2 listening performance. Additionally, there was no significant difference in the frequency of SRL practice between higher and lower listening-ability students. These results may suggest a more important role of the quality over the quantity of SRL strategy practice. To put it another way, it is conceivable that being able to utilize SRL strategies effectively is more important than simply trying to employ as many strategies as possible.

Furthermore, the fact that three categories of SRL strategies directly associated with the participants' listening performance are all related to metacognitive abilities (i.e., metacognitive self-regulation, effort regulation and critical thinking) should advocate for the critical role of higher-order thinking skills in L2 listening training. Language educators are thus advised to put a stronger focus high-order skill training. Also, SRL training should involve activities that help assess students' effectiveness in exercising SRL strategies. This is because simply teaching students SRL strategies, i.e., focusing on the quantity, appears to be insufficient as found in this study.

6. Conclusion

The current study was set out to investigate the EFL learners' SRL and its relation to their language competence, i.e., their L2 listening skill. It also probes into whether gender and proficiency had an effect on students' self-regulatory behaviors. As indicated by the study findings, the EFL learners demonstrated a medium level of SRL, which is significantly linked to their L2 listening performance. There was, however, neither gender nor proficiency effect on students' self-regulated learning activities. As for pedagogical implication, teachers and educators are advised to promote SRL behaviors in language classrooms as well as supporting students' higher-order thinking

skills. The scope of SRL training should not be limited to simply making language learners aware of self-regulation strategies but should be extended to monitoring the quality of students' SRL-strategy employment.

The current study is not devoid of limitations. First, due to its limited number of participants, caution should be taken when generalizing this study results. Also, qualitative method, for example, interview, can be adopted in future studies to provide more insights into how students self-regulate their language skill learning. Next, since the participants' SRL was examined with only the MSLQ questionnaire, a self-report instrument, potential bias or inaccurate judgment from the participants might have existed. The current study adopted a part of FCE listening test with 18 questions only and thus may not have captured all aspects of the participants' listening competence. A more comprehensive listening test could be used in future research to provide a more reliable assessment of participants' L2 listening competence. More research is warranted to refine our understanding of SRL practice in EFL context as well as informing educational practice.

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KHẢ NĂNG TỰ ĐIỀU CHỈNH HỌC TẬP (SRL) VÀ MỐI LIÊN HỆ VỚI KỸ NĂNG NGHE TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Khả năng tự điều chỉnh học tập (SRL) được ghi nhận là một nhân tố quan trọng cho thành công của người học trong các kết quả nghiên cứu trước đây. Mặc dù các nhà nghiên cứu giáo dục cho rằng SRL cần được nghiên cứu ở những ngữ cảnh khác nhau (Wolter & Pintrich, 1998) nhưng số lượng nghiên cứu về SRL trong lĩnh vực giảng dạy/học ngoại ngữ vẫn còn khá hạn chế. Dựa trên cơ sở lý thuyết về SRL (Pintrich, 2004; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990), nghiên cứu này được thực hiện để tìm hiểu mối liên hệ giữa SRL và khả năng nghe tiếng Anh của sinh viên học ngoại ngữ. Nghiên cứu này cũng xác định xem giới tính và trình độ nghe có ảnh hưởng đến hoạt động SRL của người học hay không. Công cụ thu thập dữ liệu nghiên cứu là bảng khảo sát Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), do Pintrich, Smith, Garcia và McKeachie (1991) xây dựng và được 38 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh trả lời. Kỹ năng nghe của nhóm sinh viên cũng được đánh giá bằng một bài kiểm tra nghe. Các thống kê mô tả, thống kê mối liên hệ (Pearson correlation) và thống kê MANOVA được áp dụng để phân tích số liệu nghiên cứu. Kết quả cho thấy nhóm sinh viên tham gia có SRL ở mức trung bình, và SRL này có mối liên hệ với thành tích bài kiểm tra nghe của họ. Cụ thể hơn, 3 nhóm hoạt động SRL có mối liên hệ trực tiếp với thành tích nghe gồm khả năng tự quản lý, giám sát việc học, khả năng điều chỉnh nỗ lực học tập, và khả năng tư duy phản biện. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu này còn chỉ ra rằng không có sự khác biệt về các hoạt động SRL giữa nam và nữ, giữa người học có trình độ nghe tốt hơn và người học chưa nghe tốt. Cuối cùng các kiến nghị liên quan về phương pháp dạy nghe và định hướng nghiên cứu tiếp theo cũng được thảo luận trong bài báo này.

***Từ khóa*:** kỹ năng tự điều chỉnh học tập, sinh viên Việt Nam học tiếng Anh, bảng khảo sát chiến lược và động lực học, kỹ năng nghe tiếng Anh, kỹ năng siêu nhận thức

APPENDIX

Self-Regulated Learning Strategies Questionnaire

(adopted from Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, Pintrich et al, 1991)

Instruction: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your learning for this course. Remember there is no right or wrong answer for this questionnaire.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

not at all true of me very true of me

1. When I study the readings for this course, I outline the material to help me organize my thoughts.
2. During class time I often miss important points because I'm thinking of other things. (REVERSED)
3. When studying for this course, I often try to explain the material to a classmate or friend.
4. I usually study in a place where I can concentrate on my course work.
5. When reading for this course, I make up questions to help focus my reading.
6. I often feel so lazy or bored when I study for this class that I quit before I finish what I planned to do. (REVERSED)
7. I often find myself questioning things I hear or read in this course to decide if I find them convincing.
8. When I study for this class, I practice saying the material to myself over and over.
9. Even if I have trouble learning the material in this class, I try to do the work on my own, without help from anyone. (REVERSED)
10. When I become confused about something I'm reading for this class, I go back and try to figure it out.
11. When I study for this course, I go through the readings and my class notes and try to find the most important ideas.
12. I make good use of my study time for this course.
13. If course readings are difficult to understand, I change the way I read the material.
14. I try to work with other students from this class to complete the course assignments.
15. When studying for this course, I read my class notes and the course readings over and over again.
16. When a theory, interpretation, or conclusion is presented in class or in the readings, I try to decide if there is good supporting evidence.
17. I work hard to do well in this class even if I don't like what we are doing.
18. I make simple charts, diagrams, or tables to help me organize course material.
19. When studying for this course, I often set aside time to discuss course material with a group of students from the class.
20. I treat the course material as a starting point and try to develop my own ideas about it.
21. I find it hard to stick to a study schedule. (REVERSED)
22. When I study for this class, I pull together information from different sources, such as lectures, readings, and discussions.
23. Before I study new course material thoroughly, I often skim it to see how it is organized.
24. I ask myself questions to make sure I understand the material I have been studying in this class.
25. I try to change the way I study in order to fit the course requirements and the instructor's teaching style.
26. I often find that I have been reading for this class but don't know what it was all about. (REVERSED)
27. I ask the instructor to clarify concepts I don't understand well.

28. I memorize key words to remind me of important concepts in this class.

29. When course work is difficult, I either give up or only study the easy parts. (REVERSED)

30. I try to think through a topic and decide what I am supposed to learn from it rather than just reading it over when studying for this course.

31. I try to relate ideas in this subject to those in other courses whenever possible.

32. When I study for this course, I go over my class notes and make an outline of important concepts.

33. When reading for this class, I try to relate the material to what I already know.

34. I have a regular place set aside for studying.

35. I try to play around with ideas of my own related to what I am learning in this course.

36. When I study for this course, I write brief summaries of the main ideas from the readings and my class notes.

37. When I can't understand the material in this course, I ask another student in this class for help.

38. I try to understand the material in this class by making connections between the readings and the concepts from the lectures.

39. I make sure that I keep up with the weekly readings and assignments for this course.

40. Whenever I read or hear an assertion or conclusion in this class, I think about possible alternatives.

41. I make lists of important items for this course and memorize the lists.

42. I attend this class regularly.

43. Even when course materials are dull and uninteresting, I manage to keep working until I finish.

44. I try to identify students in this class whom I can ask for help if necessary.

45. When studying for this course I try to determine which concepts I don't understand well.

46. I often find that I don't spend very much time on this course because of other activities. (REVERSED)

47. When I study for this class, I set goals for myself in order to direct my activities in each study period

48. If I get confused taking notes in class, I make sure I sort it out afterwards.

49. I rarely find time to review my notes or readings before an exam. (REVERSED)

50. I try to apply ideas from course readings in other class activities such as lecture and discussion.

Questionnaire Items for Each SRL Strategy Subscales:

I. Metacognitive-Cognitive Strategies:

Rehearsal: 8, 15, 28, 41

Elaboration: 22, 31, 33, 36, 38, 50

Organization: 1, 11, 18, 32

Critical thinking: 7, 16, 20, 35, 40

Metacognitive self-regulation: 2, 5, 10, 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 45, 47, 48

II. Resource Management Strategies:

Time and Study Environment Management: 4, 12, 21, 34, 39, 42, 46, 49

Effort regulation: 6, 17, 29, 43

Peer learning: 3, 14, 19

Help-seeking: 9, 27, 36, 44