

**DEVELOPING LEARNER AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: A STUDY IN
THE THAI EFL SECONDARY SCHOOL CONTEXT**

BY

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Abstract

Learner autonomy, primarily defined as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3), has gained much research interest in the field of language learning and teaching due to its potential contribution to effective language learning. Although the concept of learner autonomy has been extensively discussed in the literature, little research has empirically investigated how this concept is realized in language classrooms.

This research explored learner autonomy and its development in the Thai secondary school context. The research was structured in two phases. The first phase of the study was an exploratory phase conducted to identify the Thai teachers’ perspectives towards learner autonomy and how their classroom practices prepared learners for autonomous learning. Data were collected through class observations, teacher interviews and learner group interviews. The findings revealed that although the teachers shared positive views about learner autonomy and regarded it as a useful concept, they did not sufficiently promote autonomous learning in their classroom practices. Learners’ accounts of their learning experiences also indicated that their classrooms did not prepare them methodologically and psychologically to take responsibility for their own learning. Findings from the exploratory phase indicate that the teachers’ use of the teacher-led teaching method as well as the learners’ lack of skills and confidence in their ability to direct their learning process could pose significant challenges to learner autonomy development.

Building on findings from the first phase, the second phase of the study featured a strategy-based intervention program designed to promote learner autonomy. This intervention phase involved 30 learners from an intact class in which the strategy-based instruction program was implemented, and 32 learners from a comparison class who received regular English lessons. Data regarding the intervention’s impacts on learners’ development of knowledge and skills to direct their learning were obtained from learner group interviews and weekly learning journals while the intervention’s influence on learners’ language proficiency was observed through reading think-aloud sessions and three sets of reading tests.

Findings revealed that strategy-based instruction was an effective means to raise learners’ awareness of their learning process and foster autonomous learning. First, the intervention lessons significantly contributed to learners’ gradual development of knowledge and skills to independently direct their learning process. Secondly, learners’ learning experiences during the intervention also motivated them to create learning opportunities in

which they can interact purposefully and creatively with English. Furthermore, learners' strategic approaches to learning appeared to have led to their increased scores in English reading.

In sum, this study indicates that learner autonomy is a viable goal in the Thai educational context. It also provides empirically-grounded insights into the process of developing learner autonomy in language classrooms and reveals factors that can mediate the process. Findings from this study contribute to the current understanding about learner autonomy in language learning and offer practical implications for teachers in creating a learning space to promote autonomous learning.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

As a language learner and a language teacher, the process of language learning and how one acquires a foreign language have always interested me. Growing up in a rural district of Thailand, I did not have many opportunities to learn and use English. The only place for me to learn English was at school. The main goal of learning English was to get high score in the midterm and final exams as a high test score is perceived as an indicator for good achievement. Throughout my school years, I paid great attention to learning English, making sure that I remember all the grammar rules and tense forms my teachers taught me in class. I always managed to get high scores on the school's English exams and I was proud of myself. It was not until my junior year of high school when I became an exchange student in the US that I realized what I had been learning at school did so little in preparing me as a competent English user.

My confidence was shaken on the first day of school in Maine when I could not understand what my teachers and classmates were talking about in class. During the first few months in the US, I could not understand what the school's daily announcement wanted me to do, what the 'cool' kids were talking about or whether the kind ladies at the school cafeteria wanted me to return my plate after lunch. I could only detect some simple words. These experiences made me realize that I had to do something to improve my English skills so that I can communicate more effectively with other people. So, I started to come up with a plan to get more exposure to English. I asked to join the school's women soccer team, thinking that it was the kind of team sport with the largest number of players and that at least one of them would want to talk to me. I also bought a lot of CDs and listened to them repeatedly until I could make out what the singers were saying. Every night, I tuned in to a local "Dear-Abby" type radio program and listened attentively for at least 1-2 hours to the callers' problems and the host's words of wisdom. I also noted down some strange-sounding words I heard and looked them up in my dictionary. During my free hours at school, I would go to the school library, sat down and read as many books as I could just to learn more new words and sentences. My efforts finally paid off. I could eventually communicate with my teammates, participate in classroom discussions and keep up with the academic demand at school. Most importantly, I managed to regain my confidence and started to develop strong interest in language learning and teaching.

Years later, I started my career as a teacher of English at a university in Thailand. I noticed that many of my learners, despite spending a great amount of time studying English, still struggled to find ways to improve their own English skills. Some even believed that they would never be good at English and decided to drop out of my class. This prompted me to think of how I can help my learners. I began to reflect on my own learning experiences and realized that my exponential development during that year in the US was partly due to my independent attempts to seek out more learning opportunities for myself each day and how I made use of the learning resources available to me at the time. These personal experiences made me aware that language learning does not only happen in class. In fact, much of foreign language development can also take place through learners' independent learning effort outside of class.

My view was later confirmed as I was sorting through several research articles on how to help my learners learn better. I discovered the concepts of learning how to learn (Little, 1991), learner autonomy (Benson, 2011) and the roles of teachers and learners in developing autonomous learning (Little, 1995). I was captivated by the idea that learning can take place everywhere as long as the learners know how to recognize and strategically capitalize on the many learning opportunities available to them. These new ideas also led me to question whether learner autonomy is a viable concept in my English classrooms. As a teacher, I was particularly interested in how I can integrate this concept into my teaching to develop Thai learners who can independently learn and continue to improve their English skills by themselves. These questions later became the starting point of the present research.

1.2 Research context

English is a foreign language in Thailand. This means that apart from learning and using English at school, Thai learners have very limited exposure to English in their day-to-day lives. This, in turn, may be one reason for Thai learners' low English proficiency (Watson Todd & Shih, 2013). The 2019 EF English Proficiency Index classified Thailand among the countries with very low English proficiency (Education First, 2019). When compared with other countries in Asia, the result is even more disappointing. Despite investing a massive amount of its annual budget in improving the quality of English education and learners' English proficiency, Thailand is still ranked at the very bottom of the list (17th out of the 25 listed Asian countries).

Improving English proficiency has long been a central concern in the Thai educational policy. This has resulted in the implementation of several innovative ideas which aim to

transform English teaching and learning; learner autonomy (LA) is one of such ideas. After its first mention in the National Education Act of 1999, the concept of autonomous learning and making learners the director of their own learning continues to recur in the subsequent amendments and reforms. Over the past two decades, it has also been associated with several innovative concepts which permeate the Thai educational sphere, such as child-centered learning, learner-centered learning, life-long learning and most recently, 21st century learning skills. The concept of autonomous learning is also included in the National Scheme of Education B.E. 2560-2579 (2017-2036). According to the scheme, one of educational institutions' responsibilities is to promote and support learning activities both inside and outside the classroom to develop self-learning skills, discipline and public consciousness of learners (Office of the Education Council, 2017). These visions not only show the Ministry of Education's commitment to the goal of improving Thai learners' learning outcomes but also suggest the need for formal and informal education to nurture learners' skills for autonomous learning.

However, Watson Todd, Darasawang, and Reinders (2015, p. 161), in their discussion of innovative practices in the Thai educational context, caution that the implementation of innovative educational ideas needs to be accompanied by arguments for "why and how the innovation will lead to an improvement". If LA is considered an important goal for Thai learners to achieve, then it is necessary to investigate the possibilities and challenges in promoting autonomous learning in the Thai classrooms as well as whether and how this initiative could improve learners' English proficiency and facilitate their development as autonomous and effective learners.

Existing LA studies in the Thai educational context are mostly exploratory; they are limited to surveying teachers' and learners' overall perceptions about LA (Duong & Seepho, 2014; Rukthong, 2008; Rungwaraphong, 2012a; Tapinta, 2016; Tayjasantant & Suraratdecha, 2016). These studies, although providing useful insights into LA in the Thai context, did not adequately address the key issues of why and how promoting LA can lead to improvements in learners' learning process and outcomes.

1.3 Research aims

The purpose of this research is to provide a detailed understanding about LA and the process of developing LA in the Thai secondary school context. It begins by exploring the status of LA in Thai secondary school classrooms through the perspectives of teachers and learners. This exploratory phase of the study seeks to identify the teachers' understandings of

LA, their approaches to fostering LA in their English classes and the extent to which their attempts prepare their learners for autonomous learning. In doing so, I hope to uncover factors that can support and hinder the development of LA in the Thai secondary school context.

This research also aims to develop LA in a Thai secondary English classroom by means of strategy-based instruction. Building on the findings from the exploratory phase, the second phase of the study introduced a strategy-based intervention program into an English course. More specifically, it investigates the effects of the intervention on learners' development of their capacity for autonomous learning and how this development can potentially lead to improved learning outcomes.

Despite the growing emphasis on developing learners' ability to learn autonomously, empirical research on LA and its development, especially in Asian EFL contexts, remains scant (Barnard & Li, 2016; Benson, 2011). Moreover, while LA is often associated with effective language learning, there is still uncertainty as to how exactly LA can be developed, what kind of teaching and learning activities support its development and how developing LA contributes to better language learning (Benson, 2016). This intervention study is a timely response to these issues as it seeks to clarify the process of developing LA in language learning. Classroom-based evidence from this study can provide language teachers in the Thai and other similar educational contexts with theoretical understanding of LA and its process of development. The findings can also provide practical examples of how teachers can integrate principles for LA into their day-to-day teaching to help their learners develop into autonomous and successful language learners.

1.4 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of 8 chapters. Following this introduction chapter, Chapter 2 reviews related research literature that motivates the current study and frames the research questions. It clarifies the concept of LA and its development in the context of language education and considers key findings from LA research from both the Thai EFL context and other international ESL and EFL contexts. Then it identifies gaps in research literature on LA in language teaching and learning. Chapter 2 concludes with a working definition of LA in this study.

Chapter 3 details research methodology for data collection and analysis. It also provides detailed descriptions of the research instruments, research site, participants, the intervention and methods for ensuring research reliability and validity. Chapter 4 reports

research findings from the exploratory phase of the study which looks at the status of LA in Thai secondary school classrooms. It examines how the Thai teachers of English perceived LA and adopted this concept in their classroom teaching. This chapter also looks at how classroom learning experiences prepared learners methodologically and psychologically to direct their own learning.

Chapter 5 presents findings from the intervention phase of the study. This chapter looks specifically at the impacts of the intervention on learners' development of knowledge and skills to direct their own learning. It also provides detailed accounts of how such knowledge and skills gradually improved over time. In addition, this chapter further explores the influence of the intervention on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning.

Chapter 6 continues to investigate the impacts of the intervention on learners' language proficiency. In this chapter, findings from the intervention class learners' pre-, post- and delayed reading tests are presented. Differences between scores of learners from the intervention and the comparison classes are also observed through statistical analysis. The second part of this chapter examines how the intervention affects learners' approaches to reading English. Finally, evidence of learners' developed positive perceptions towards English reading and their transfer of strategies to autonomously regulate other learning activities is presented and discussed.

Key findings that emerged from the two phases are discussed in Chapter 7. The chapter begins by considering findings regarding teachers' perceptions and practices in promoting LA, Thai learners' potential for autonomous learning and the influence of Thai cultural values on LA development. Then, it continues to discuss the shifts in teaching and learning goals, roles of teacher and learners in the learning process and the classroom context and how the interaction between these components contributed to successful development of LA in this study.

Chapter 8 concludes the research by presenting the theoretical, pedagogical and methodological contributions of the research to the field of language education. This chapter also addresses research limitations and provides suggestions for future studies on LA.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses theoretical and practical issues concerning learner autonomy (LA). The chapter begins by exploring the theoretical aspects of LA which include its definitions, its importance in the field of language education, versions of LA, degrees of LA and cultural concerns in promoting LA. The chapter then turns to practical aspects of LA which concern measuring LA, approaches to developing LA and promoting LA through strategy-based instruction. The next sections then present an overview of LA in the Thai educational context and the chapter concludes with the operationalized definition of LA in this study. Table 2.1 outlines the contents of the literature review chapter.

Table 2.1

Summary of the Literature Review Chapter

Sections	Contents
2.2 Learner autonomy	Origins of the concept Defining LA in language learning Misconceptions about LA
2.3 Why do we need LA?	The ideological/ philosophical argument The psychological/ pedagogical argument The economic/ practical argument
2.4 Versions of LA	Technical, psychological and political versions Narrow and Broad versions of LA
2.5 Degrees of LA	LA is a matter of degree
2.6 Capturing LA	Problems Existing solutions
2.7 LA and cultural concerns	Concerns about the cultural appropriateness of LA
2.8 Approaches to developing LA	Learner-based approaches to developing LA
2.9 Learning strategies and LA	Definitions of learning strategies Categorizations of learning strategies Relationship between learning strategies and LA Learner training as a means to develop LA
2.10 LA in the Thai educational context	The 1999 Educational reform English language teaching in the Thai secondary school context

2.11 LA in this research

Metacognitive regulation of learning

Attitudes for autonomous learning

2.2 Learner autonomy**2.2.1 Origins of the concept**

Autonomy is a concept which originated in the field of political philosophy. The central concern of autonomy lies in the development of free-thinking, self-governing individuals who are active and responsible members of their society (Benson, 2010a, 2012; Benson & Huang, 2008; Benson & Voller, 1997; Smith, 2008). Autonomy in this sense refers to personal autonomy and being autonomous indicates one's ability to shape one's own life.

At the end of the 1960s, autonomy was brought into education through the adult education movement, which viewed adult education as a way to improve quality of life and help individuals become self-directed learners and responsible members of their society (Holec, 1981; Little et al., 2017; Merriam, 2001). Autonomy as an educational ideal was promoted in Europe in the 1970s through The Council of Europe's Modern Language Project which aimed to support the learning needs of adult migrant workers in response to the political interest in minority rights in Europe at the time (Gremmo & Riley, 1995). The advancement of technology and increased demands for foreign language learning have also contributed to the spread of autonomy and the proliferation of materials for self-directed learning. In its early years, autonomous language learning was often associated with learning in self-access centers or individualized learning in which learners could choose for themselves what, when and where to learn.

However, a new understanding has subsequently emerged; although self-access centers can provide learners with opportunities to make use of language learning resources, self-access or self-instruction as a mode of learning cannot guarantee learners' development of autonomy. In the 1980s, researchers started to conceptualize autonomy as learners' capacity to take charge of their learning. In addition, it was believed that learner training is a necessary means to enhance this capacity. Therefore, practices in fostering autonomy in the 1980s and 1990s were associated with developing learners' skills in managing their learning process and were largely influenced by work in the field of learning strategies. By this time, the concept of autonomy had also been less associated with personal autonomy or adult education and become more associated with the relationship between learners and their learning process, hence the term learner autonomy (LA).

LA, characterized as learners' ability to take charge of their learning, has garnered global interest and led to efforts to promote autonomous learning in language classrooms. Despite the growing interest in the concept which has resulted in numerous studies and publications, Benson (2011) and Crabbe (1999) note that there is a diversity in the way LA is interpreted and that studies of LA in language education are far from coherent. This was partly due to the lack of consensus on the definition of LA and its components. The following section examines definitions of LA.

2.2.2 Defining LA in language learning

Although LA is perceived as an important component for successful language learning, to date, there is no single agreed definition of LA and of what it entails. Due to the lack of an authoritative definition and its multifaceted nature, the implementation of LA in the context of language learning and teaching can be problematic (Benson, 1996; Benson & Voller, 1997; Reinders, 2010).

LA is defined differently by different researchers. For example, LA is viewed as learners' ability (Holec, 1981), capacity (Benson, 2011; Little, 1991, 1994), attitude (Dickinson, 1994), and learners' qualities (Breen & Mann, 1997). LA is also further described in terms of its potential components. Wenden (1991), for instance, defines LA as a construct that involves learners' strategies, metacognitive knowledge and attitudes which allow learners to put their strategies and metacognitive knowledge to practice independently, flexibly and confidently. Dam (1990, 1995, 2001) describes LA as learners' readiness to take responsibility for their learning and elaborates that this readiness can be defined by learners' capacity and willingness to act independently and cooperatively with responsibility. Similarly, Littlewood (1996) views LA as learners' ability and willingness to take responsibility for their learning. Sinclair (1999) argues that LA should be viewed in terms of learners' metacognitive awareness of self, subject matter and learning process. For Benson (1996, 2003a, 2003b, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2013), LA is associated with learners' control over the learning content, learning management and cognitive process.

Although the meaning of LA remains an on-going topic for discussion, different conceptualizations of what LA is can be complementary. Researchers agree that arriving at one authoritative definition may not be necessary (Benson, 2009; Holec, 2009; Legenhausen, 2009; Little, 1991; Oxford, 2003; Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). The following sections review key definitions of LA which, to a great extent, have helped establish a broad scope of LA within the field of language education.

2.2.2.1 LA as ability or capacity

One of the most cited definitions of LA to date is from Holec (1981, p.3) who defines LA as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. According to Holec, this ability involves learners “determining the objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the procedure of acquisitions, and evaluating what has been acquired”. Holec further explains that this ability is not inborn but can be developed naturally or deliberately in the context of formal education with learners’ willingness to take charge of their learning. Autonomy, according to Holec (1981, p.3), is not a behavior but learners’ “potential to act in a given situation”. That is, learners can learn autonomously when they have the ability to do so in a learning situation that allows them to exercise their autonomy. Subsequent definitions tend to replace “ability” with “capacity”. “Taking charge of” is also replaced by phrases such as “Taking control of” and “taking responsibility for”.

Benson (2006, 2011) and Little (2007) observe that while Holec describes LA in terms of learners’ ability or what learners can potentially do to organize their learning, he does not explicitly identify the cognitive process underlying learners’ autonomous learning behaviors. This is important to language learning because, in order to enhance learners’ ability to take charge of their own learning, it is necessary to know what LA is and what constitutes LA (Benson, 2007).

While agreeing with Holec’s definition in terms of what autonomous learners are capable of doing, Little (1991, p. 4) emphasizes that LA also involves learners’ cognitive processes. He describes LA as:

“a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts”

Little’s description suggests that LA also depends on learners’ psychological attributes that facilitate their exercise of autonomy and enable them to transfer their autonomy to other contexts in life. This definition adds the cognitive dimension of learning to Holec’s definition whose primary focus is on the technical side of LA.

Likewise, Benson (2011, p. 58) also views LA as learners' "capacity to take control over learning". He elaborates that in order to be autonomous, learners should be able to take control of learning management, cognitive processes and learning content. This definition is similar to Little's (1991) conceptualization of LA in that it addresses both the behavioral and psychological aspects of learning. However, Benson's definition also emphasizes that learners' control over their learning situation, which is represented through their control over the learning content, is another important dimension of LA.

Nevertheless, Benson notes that learners' complete control over the learning content may not be possible in every learning situation. As learning rarely takes place in isolation, it may not be possible for learners to attain full control of what to learn, especially in a formal learning context. Thus, based on Benson's definition, the situational aspect of learning can determine the extent to which learners can exercise their autonomy and learners' control over content is likely to depend on their negotiation with others (Benson, 2012).

It can be noted that LA, which was initially viewed in terms of learners' ability to take actions to manage their own learning, has accumulated its cognitive and social dimensions over the years. The broadened scope of interpretation has prompted further discussions on other constructs that could possibly constitute LA. Such constructs include willingness to take responsibility for learning and attitudes about learning.

2.2.2.2 LA as ability and willingness

LA is also defined as learners' capacity which involves learners' ability and willingness to take responsibility for their learning. This view is represented in the Bergen definition of LA which was developed during a conference on developing LA in Bergen, Norway (Dam, 1995, p. 1):

"Learner autonomy is characterized by a readiness to take charge of one's own learning in the service of one's needs and purposes. This entails capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a socially responsible person"

The Bergen definition identifies capacity and willingness to take charge of one's learning as the two important components of LA. According to this definition, autonomous learning encompasses learning which is carried out individually and cooperatively through

interactions with other people. This definition, thus, highlights the independent and interdependent nature of LA.

Littlewood (1996) also views LA as a concept that involves both learners' ability and willingness to make informed decisions for their learning. He points out that ability in learning management alone does not necessarily reflect learners' potential to learn autonomously. This ability, he argues, has to be accompanied by learners' willingness to put the ability into action (Littlewood, 1996, 1997). According to Littlewood, the notion of ability includes learners' knowledge and skills necessary to organize and manage their learning while willingness concerns learners' motivation and confidence in their ability in doing so.

Likewise, Sinclair (2000, 2009) maintains that willingness to take responsibility for learning, which can be reflected through learners' beliefs, metacognitive knowledge about learning and their attitudes towards making decisions in their learning, is vital to autonomous learning. The notion of willingness to take responsibility presented in the Bergen definition of LA and discussed in Littlewood (1996, 1997) and Sinclair (2000, 2009) is also congruent with Wenden's (1991) perspective of LA. According to Wenden (1991), learners' willingness to take on responsibility in their learning is an important indicator of learners' potential for LA. The introduction of willingness as a separate component such as in Littlewood's (1996) definition helps emphasize that besides having the practical abilities for self-direction, learners should also be psychologically prepared to take an active role in directing their learning.

2.2.2.3 LA as attitude

LA is also seen as learners' attitude (Dickinson, 1993, 1994; Usuki, 2003). For example, Dickinson (1994, p. 2) defines LA as "an attitude to learning". This attitude influences learners to assume responsibility for decision-making, defining learning objectives, selecting learning materials, using appropriate strategies, monitoring and evaluating their own learning. Dickinson adds that teachers can facilitate the development of attitude which enables learners to actively and independently take charge of their own learning process in several ways. For example, teachers can legitimize independence, reinforce learners' beliefs that they are capable of learning independently and teach learners how to use appropriate strategies in their learning. Developing LA, according to Dickinson, is a process that requires initial guidance from teachers as well as teacher-learners cooperation. Dickinson's conceptualization of LA is similar to Little (1991) and Benson (2011) in that it

regards both learners' ability to take charge of their learning and their psychological attributes as important components of LA.

In addition to describing what LA is, attempts have also been made to further clarify misconceptions about LA and explain what it is not.

2.2.3 Misconceptions about LA

First, LA is not learning in isolation or complete self-instruction (Dickinson, 1994; Little, 1991, 1994, 1999a). Although self-instruction and self-access centers can provide opportunities for learners to practice autonomous learning skills, simply placing learners in these modes of learning does not mean learners can self-direct their own learning. Self-instruction, in other words, does not guarantee the development of LA (Dickinson, 1994; Little, 1991).

Secondly, LA is not learning with complete freedom. Although the notion of autonomous learning suggests self-determination, independence and freedom, it does not mean learners can behave freely without any constraints (Dickinson, 1994; Little, 1991). For example, Little (1991, 1999a, 2000a) and Palfreyman (2014) view autonomous learning as a process that involves cognitive operations within individual learners and social interactions between individuals and other people in their particular contexts. This means that learning is both internal and interdependent. In this sense, complete detachment from social conditions is not autonomy and freedom will always be constrained by social conventions (Dickinson, 1994; Little, 1991, 1994; Macaro, 2008). Therefore, what is implicit in the notion of LA is not learners' absolute freedom to act in any way they wish, but the freedom to make informed decisions as a socially responsible person.

Thirdly, LA is not learning without teachers. LA is often misconceived as complete removal of teachers' control and responsibility or replacing teachers' roles with self-access centers (Dickinson, 1994; Esch, 1997; Little, 1991, 1994, 1999a). Developing LA is a process which, in fact, involves teacher-learner interaction and collaboration. Because learners are not likely to come to class with refined knowledge and skills in making informed decisions for themselves, they need a firm ground of instruction and initial guidance from teachers to help them progress towards becoming more autonomous. It is suggested that in developing LA, teachers can play the role of a facilitator, a counselor and a learning resource (Voller, 1997). Through teacher-learner cooperation and negotiation, LA can be fostered when control in decision-making is gradually shared between teachers and learners (Benson, 2011; Dickinson, 1994; Little, 2004, 2007a; Zhang, 2016). The process of developing LA, in sum,

entails teacher-learner joint effort and power redistribution in classrooms. Therefore, teachers still play critical roles in facilitating autonomous learning.

Another common misconception about LA is that it is something teachers can give to learners (Little, 1991, 1994). Although social interactions with teachers are crucial in developing LA, Little (1991) explains that the development of LA is also an internal process which presupposes a combination of methodological and psychological preparation in learners. Thus, despite teachers' crucial roles in encouraging LA, they cannot simply transfer LA to their learners.

Furthermore, LA is neither an easily described learning behavior, nor is it a static construct that remains unchanged once achieved. LA can manifest in many different forms (Benson, 2003b; T. Lamb, 2017; Little, 1991, 1994). In addition, Little (1991) also notes that while learners' exercise of autonomous learning skills can appear encouraging, the extent to which learners can learn autonomously and the degree to which they choose to self-direct their learning can fluctuate from time to time and vary from task to task. Learners' exercise of LA can also be influenced by factors such as their age, learning experiences, their learning needs and context of learning.

It can be concluded that LA is a complex and multifaceted construct that has undergone a shift of emphasis from being a political and philosophical concept to a psychological and pedagogical one. This shift of emphasis, as Benson (1996, 2008, 2011) notes, makes LA more practical and accessible to practitioners in the context of language education.

Despite the differences in each definition's focus and terminology used, what these key definitions have in common on a theoretical level is the idea that LA is learners' capacity or potential ability instead of a set of behaviors. Moreover, the development of this capacity entails a shift in responsibility in directing learning from teachers to learners. On a practical level, autonomous learning seems to be determined by learners' ability to direct their learning, their willingness to do so and the freedom they have in exercising autonomy in the context of their learning. In addition, teachers also have an important role in preparing their learners to become active and responsible in directing their own learning.

2.3 Why do we need LA?

Despite the differences in how LA is defined, many researchers seem to share a common view that learners' active and independent engagement in their learning process can lead to more effective learning and thus, advocate LA as a desirable educational goal.

However, Dickinson (1995) points out that this is not a universally shared perspective and further suggests that convincing arguments are needed to justify the desirability of LA. This section outlines the main arguments justifying the desirability of LA as an educational goal.

2.3.1 The ideological/ philosophical argument

The first argument is that autonomy represents individuals' rights to make decisions not only in their learning but also in the broader contexts of their lives (Cotterall, 1995; Crabbe, 1993; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). This argument supports individuals' exercise of freedom to choose for themselves and direct their own learning, as opposed to accepting choices imposed on them by social institutions. The ideological argument of autonomy is represented in early work in LA (e.g. Holec, 1981) which focused on empowering individuals' agency in communicating and fulfilling their personal agendas (Little, 1994). Autonomy, in this sense, is not only associated with helping learners to take control of their learning in class but extends well beyond learners' immediate learning contexts. Developing autonomy is, therefore, helping learners to direct their lives as independent individuals (Benson, 2012; Kenny, 1993; Little, 1994; Littlewood, 1997; Pennycook, 1997).

2.3.2 The psychological/ pedagogical argument

LA is also justified based on the assumption that learners who are in charge of their learning tend to learn more effectively (Crabbe, 1993; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Little, 1991, 1994, 1995, 2007a; Littlewood, 1997; Wenden, 1991). This psychological argument, focusing on critical roles played by learners' cognitive processes in learning, is well-received within the field of language education. According to Crabbe (1993), the psychological argument for autonomy attracts attention from educationists because autonomy in the pedagogical sense does not require a radical change in classroom-based learning. Instead, this argument focuses on developing learners' internal capacity to take control of their learning process and improving the overall quality of learning.

The psychological argument is further supported by research evidence claiming the relationship between LA and language proficiency gain (Dafei, 2007; Dam & Legenhausen, 1996; L. T. C. Nguyen, 2008). For instance, a longitudinal study comparing Danish learners in autonomous language classrooms with German learners in a regular classroom has led Dam and Legenhausen (1996) to conclude that learners in the autonomous classroom outperformed their German counterparts in vocabulary acquisition. Likewise, L. T. C.

Nguyen (2008) also found a significant correlation between her measures of LA and learners' writing scores.

These empirical findings provide justification for developing LA in the field of language education. They show that successful learners are autonomous learners who are proactively motivated to learn and are able to take control of their learning through various means of self-regulation. However, while these studies involved extensive use of testing measures, the evidence and claims should be taken with caution. Although scholars (Benson, 2011; Legenhausen, 2007; Little, 2007a) seem to share the assumption that LA and improvement in language proficiency are closely related, they also note that establishing a causal relationship between the two remains highly problematic. While development in language proficiency may be relatively easier to assess, measuring LA or developing tools to assess LA can be a complex process (Benson, 2010a). Issues related to measuring LA are further discussed in section 2.6. Despite this problematic relationship, the idea that LA can help learners learn more effectively is still an important argument supporting pedagogical innovations in developing LA.

2.3.3 The economic/ practical argument

LA as an educational goal is also justified on practical grounds because educational institutions and society will not be able to sufficiently provide for individual learners' diverse and continually changing learning needs. Thus, individuals should be able to independently pursue their learning on their own outside formal learning contexts (Littlewood, 1999). Developing autonomy, therefore, is a practical and economical step towards lifelong learning.

Crabbe (1993) points out that LA is especially relevant in the formal educational setting and large classes where attention and assistance cannot be adequately and equally given to individual learners. It would be more practical if learners know how to initiate learning opportunities for themselves and make use of learning resources autonomously.

Situating language learning in a broader context of globalization, Benson (2009) maintains that autonomy is a relevant concept since it enables learners to respond effectively to challenges in the globalized world. This implies the need for educational institutions to develop reflexive, active and independent learners who are capable of self-improvement. In other words, learners in the globalized world are expected to be capable and responsible for not only learning but also re-learning. Based on these practical reasons, supporting learners to be autonomous in their learning is a justifiable educational objective.

2.4 Versions of LA

LA in the context of language learning is a concept open to question and interpretation (Benson & Voller, 1997). This has led to discussions of versions of autonomy and how these can be appropriately applied in different pedagogical contexts.

Benson (1997) classifies LA into technical, psychological and political versions. The technical version of autonomy is associated with learners' technical skills to self-direct their learning where teacher assistance is not present (Benson, 1997). Developing the technical version of LA is associated with learner training and strategies. The psychological version of LA concerns learners taking responsibility in deciding for themselves what and how to learn. An important approach of fostering LA in a psychological sense is helping learners develop abilities and attitudes that will support their capacity to make informed instructional decisions. The political version of LA, according to Benson (1997), refers to learners' control over their learning process in relation to the social, cultural and political influences in their learning context. Being autonomous in a political sense is being critically aware of the discourse and power structures that influence one's learning and life. Therefore, developing learners' agency and helping learners to find their own voice within the framing power structure are the main concerns of the political version of LA.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) introduces two complementary views of LA which he terms narrow and broad views of autonomy. The narrow view of autonomy refers to learning how to learn. The main aim of this view is to help develop learners' skills and appropriate strategies to learn and achieve their learning goals on their own. Such skills include planning, monitoring, evaluating and problem-solving. The broad view of LA sees learning to learn as a means to liberate. This view of autonomy seeks to empower learners and enhance their awareness of their own potential as an individual. This view is similar to Benson's (1997) political version of LA.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggests that whether the narrow or broad version of autonomy will be promoted depends on learners' and teachers' joint attempts in identifying the degree of autonomy that would be appropriate for their learning context. In other words, practice to promote LA depends on the extent to which teachers are willing and able to share control in the learning process with their learners. Similarly, whether the narrow or broad versions of autonomy will be fostered also depends on learners' willingness and ability to take responsibility in their learning.

In sum, different versions of LA offer complementary perspectives in theorizing LA in the context of language learning and teaching. They suggest that LA as an educational

concept can be put into practice with different aspects of emphasis, depending on learners, teachers and the context in which LA is promoted.

2.5 Degrees of LA

The view of LA as learners' capacity implies that LA is a continuum rather than an absolute construct. In other words, LA is a matter of degree which can vary and fluctuate across time and learning circumstances (Gardner, 2000; Oxford, 2008). Attaining complete LA is, thus, idealistic as the development and exercise of LA will always be constrained and influenced by various factors (Benson & Lor, 1998; Little, 1991; Sinclair, 2000). In formal educational settings, learners' degrees of autonomy can be determined by their interaction and cooperation with others (Little, 1996).

In his discussions of autonomy in language learning, Littlewood (1996) indicates that learners' degrees of autonomy can be determined by their ability to make independent decisions for their learning. In order to become autonomous, learners need to progress from making "low-level choices" which determine their specific actions in an activity to "high-level choices" which determine how the activity would be carried out. For example, learners may progress from selecting vocabulary to be used in a controlled and simple learning task (low-level choice) to determining the progression and direction of their learning task (high-level choice). Littlewood notes that teachers can help their learners become more autonomous through systematically enlarging the scope of learner decisions.

Littlewood (1999) also distinguishes two levels of autonomy: proactive and reactive autonomy. Proactive autonomy refers to one's initiation and regulation of activities in one's learning process. Reactive autonomy refers to one's ability to self-direct one's learning once the direction has been determined by others. While researchers tend to associate LA with proactive autonomy described in Holec's (1981) definition, Littlewood notes that reactive autonomy, which is developed through teacher guidance and peer collaboration, can be viewed as both a precondition for proactive autonomy and a goal in itself. The central idea in Littlewood's conceptualizations of proactive and reactive autonomy, therefore, is that there are different degrees of autonomy and that learners can progress from a lower to a greater degree of independence in their learning.

Nunan (1997) proposes a model presenting autonomy in language learning in five stages, ranging from the lower to higher degrees of autonomy, namely awareness, involvement, intervention, creation and transcendence. The learners' degree of autonomy is enhanced as they go through each stage in learning. For example, at the awareness level,

learners may become aware of their learning styles and possible learning strategies they can use to complete learning tasks. The level of autonomy can be enhanced as they become actively involved in their learning process by deciding learning goals for themselves. Ultimately, learners can develop to the highest degree of autonomy in the transcendence stage where they take on roles of a teacher or a researcher to oversee their own learning. However, Nunan notes that the boundaries of each level of autonomy are not clear cut and the development of autonomy is a nonlinear process. Learners may achieve a higher level of autonomy in one task while being less autonomous in other tasks. Nunan's (1997) levels of autonomy share a similar idea to those of Littlewood (1996, 1999) in that learners' level of LA is represented through their degree of control in their own learning.

Viewing autonomy as learners' ability to take responsibility for their learning, Scharle and Szabó (2000) also share a similar view with Nunan and suggest three progressive steps for teachers to enhance LA in their learners. These steps are awareness raising, attitude changing and role transferring. Although Scharle and Szabó's framework of developing LA was meant to be a guide for teaching practice, it also reflects their view that autonomy is a matter of degree and that learners can progress towards a greater degree of autonomy with assistance from teachers.

In sum, a common thread running through these views is that LA is a matter of degrees rather than a steady, all-or-nothing concept and that each individual learner can progress from a lower degree towards a higher degree of autonomy in their learning.

2.6 Capturing LA

If LA is viewed as a desirable educational construct that should be promoted in language learning, then it is necessary to find evidence of its development. This is to validate educational attempts that aim to promote LA and justify the effectiveness of such programs. However, capturing LA and creating tools to measure its growth are no less challenging than defining the concept.

2.6.1 Problems

Benson (2010, 2011) identifies factors that can complicate the process of measuring LA. The first factor concerns the multidimensional nature of LA. While LA is viewed as a construct that encompasses multiple observable and unobservable interrelated sub-components, there is still no definite answer to what these sub-components are (Benson, 2010a; Little, 1991; Mynard, 2006; Nunan, 1997; Palfreyman & Benson, 2018). This can

pose significant problems to measuring LA as it is necessary to first identify what constitutes LA before methods and instruments can be developed to measure the construct. Benson (2011) notes that even if a complete list of these potential components could be compiled, another problem that is likely to emerge is in deciding how many components on the list a learner needs to have in order to be considered autonomous.

The second factor which makes measuring LA a challenging task is that LA is not a set of observable behaviors. Instead, LA is viewed as learners' capacity or potential which they may or may not choose to display (Sinclair, 2008). Moreover, LA can be displayed in many different forms in different contexts. The third factor to consider is that LA is not a steady state. The degree to which learners exercise their autonomous learning capacity can vary across tasks and time (Benson, 2011; Tassinari, 2015). Taken together, the second and third factors suggest that LA is elusive in nature and thus can be very difficult to capture.

The fourth factor is what Breen and Maan (1997, p. 141) aptly term "the mask of autonomous learners". Breen and Maan caution that as learners are aware that they are being tested or measured for LA, they may choose to display autonomous learning behaviors without being autonomous. Thus, the problem lies in identifying whether the displayed autonomous behaviors are authentic and derived from learners' capacity for autonomous learning or simply simulated (Benson, 2010a).

2.6.2 Existing solutions

Researchers suggest that LA can be observed in many forms, such as learners' metacognitive awareness (Sinclair, 1999b), self-direction in the micro and macro levels of the learning process (Lai, 2001), learners' control over major aspects of their learning (Benson, 1996, 2010a, 2011), and self-initiation and self-regulation (L. T. C. Nguyen, 2012). To date, attempts to capture LA development tend to fall into two main categories: quantitative and interpretative approaches. The first approach involves quantifying and using rating scales to evaluate LA, while the second approach observes the development of LA through a combination of qualitative data gathering tools.

2.6.2.1 Quantitative approaches to capturing LA

Questionnaires and rating scales are the main instruments used in research with the quantitative approach of measuring LA. Lai (2001), for example, created two rating scales to assess LA based on the two conceptualized components of LA: process control and self-direction. Process control refers to learners' ability to set learning objectives, monitor and

evaluate their learning and strategy use. Self-direction concerns learners' management of their overall learning process. Although statistical analyses in her study led Lai to claim that these rating scales are a valid and reliable tool to assess LA, it remains unclear how the calculated scores from these scales should be interpreted.

Yang (2007) created a five-point Likert type questionnaire as a tool to measure Japanese learners' degrees of autonomy. Yang's analyses of this 56-item questionnaire reveal six factors that define tendencies for autonomous learning in the context of the study. These factors are self-initiation, making plans, taking actions, self-control, concentration, and flexibility. While Yang concluded that the Japanese learners in this study identified more with certain aspects of LA than others, she did not provide information regarding her process of interpreting the questionnaire's scores.

L. T. C. Nguyen (2012) defines LA as learners' self-initiation and self-regulation, and developed two questionnaires based on these components to measure LA in the Vietnamese EFL context. Although questionnaires were used as the main instrument to measure LA in her study, Nguyen suggests that a combination of carefully developed quantitative instruments, such as questionnaires, and qualitative instruments, such as interviews, observations, learning logs and diaries can also offer significant insights into learners' LA development. Moreover, studies that aim to measure LA should also consider data from both teachers' and learners' perspectives.

In a more recent attempt to capture LA, Murase (2015) developed a 113-item questionnaire to measure LA in language learning in the technical, political-philosophical, psychological and sociocultural dimensions. Items in the questionnaire were found to be significantly correlated which, according to Murase, suggest the interrelatedness of these dimensions of LA. Based on results from the reliability and validity analyses, Murase concludes that her instrument can be an effective tool to quantitatively measure LA. However, she notes that further research is needed in order to develop a manual for scoring and interpreting the questionnaire results.

Similarly, a questionnaire was used as a research instrument in Lin and Reinders's (2019) investigation of Chinese university teachers' and learners' readiness for autonomy. LA in their study was conceptualized as a construct consisting of learners' ability to manage their learning, attitudes towards autonomy and autonomous learning behaviors. The questionnaire used in this study is different from other questionnaire-based studies in that it involved both closed-ended Likert type questions and open-ended questions. However, learners' degrees of readiness for autonomy, categorized as ready, approaching readiness and

developing readiness, was interpreted based on their mean scores from the close-ended rating scale.

2.6.2.2 Interpretative approaches to capturing LA

Interpretative approaches to capturing LA development focus on identifying, describing and discussing evidence of autonomous learning in specific research contexts based on qualitative data. These approaches to capturing LA, therefore, incorporate research tools such as observations, learning journals, interviews and portfolios.

Sinclair (1999) proposes a three-level criterion for assessing LA based on the conceptualization that learners' metacognitive awareness can represent their levels of autonomy. According to Sinclair, teachers can gauge learners' levels of LA by asking them questions which seek to identify learners' awareness of themselves, the subject matter of their learning and their learning process. The responses can then be categorized into three levels of awareness: largely unaware, becoming aware and largely aware. The interpretation for this proposed criterion is that the higher the learners' metacognitive awareness level is, the more autonomous they become.

Ushioda (2010) proposes I-statement analysis, which is a form of discourse analysis, as a tool to systematically track learners' development of LA. The I-statement analysis can be used to examine learners' first-person narratives or statements describing their feelings, goals, actions, and attitudes. The process of I-statement analysis involves identifying in learners' journal entries statements that begin with phrases such as I can..., I think..., I believe..., I feel... and subsequently classifying them into different categories based on research purpose, focus and context. In other words, the I-statement analysis is a method of categorizing rich qualitative data from learners' spoken statements or reflective writing to observe patterns of changes in their thinking and perceptions of their learning experiences. In this sense, learners' development of LA can be interpreted from changes identified in learners' on-going reflections.

Dam and Legenhausen (2010) maintain that LA cannot be quantified or measured using traditional testing procedures. Nevertheless, it can be observed through learners' systematic and recurring self-evaluation of their learning. While this approach relies on learners' self-reported data, Dam and Legenhausen argue that data collected from learners' systematic self-evaluation over a prolonged period of time can provide valid evidence for the growth in autonomy. Teachers, therefore, should pay attention to learners' self-reflection data from learning logbooks, questionnaires, teacher-learner negotiations and learning journals.

This is because these sources of self-evaluation can provide rich evidence for learners' awareness of their learning process which, according to Dam and Legenhausen, is an important component of LA.

It can be noted from these attempts that each study only aimed at capturing some aspects of LA. Moreover, claims of autonomy could only be made based on how the concept was operationalized in each research context. Therefore, a practical solution to the problem in tracking LA development is to identify learners' development in specific aspects of LA that are the focus of the study. The operationalization of LA in this research is discussed in 2.10.

2.7 LA and cultural concerns

Although LA is a well-received concept and its promotion has been supported by many studies over the years, it has also raised some concerns, especially in terms of cultural appropriateness.

The main concern surrounding the legitimacy of LA is whether encouraging learners to direct their own learning is a universally applicable educational goal. The mainstream version of LA in the context of language learning and teaching has a strong theoretical tie to Western liberal ideas such as social liberation, individual development, democracy and rights (Benson & Voller, 1997). Therefore, an important question pertaining to the promotion of autonomy in language education is whether it is yet another form of Western ideology imposed on learners from non-Western cultural backgrounds.

Studies concerning the promotion of LA in the Asian educational contexts have presented mixed results. For example, Wang (2008) maintains that LA might not be a suitable concept in the Chinese educational context where the roles of teachers and learners are strongly influenced by the traditional Chinese way of learning. Wang further argues that factors such as Chinese learners' level of maturation, their cognitive styles, motivation, shyness and risk-avoiding personality and their learning environment may make it difficult to promote LA in Chinese classrooms. In sum, Wang's (2008) reservations are more concerned with how sharing control in learning with learners could fit in the Chinese culture of learning and Chinese learners' characteristics.

In the Vietnamese educational context, Nguyen, Tangen, and Beutel (2014) examined teachers' methods to promote LA and concluded that the concept may not be suitable for the Vietnamese learners. They found that the Vietnamese teachers in the study did not actively promote LA in their classrooms. This was due to the complex nature of LA, the lack of translation equivalence of the term 'learner autonomy' in the Vietnamese language, teachers'

limited understanding of the concept, constraints from the educational system, and insufficient professional support for teachers. In addition, it was argued that autonomy might not be easily incorporated into Vietnamese classrooms because classroom practices were heavily influenced by the inflexible syllabus and exam-oriented curriculum which were found to be characteristic of the Vietnamese educational context.

What these studies suggest is that LA may not be a suitable educational goal for some non-Western learners whose cultural and educational contexts do not predispose them to proactive approaches to learning.

However, despite concerns over cultural relevance and applicability of LA in non-Western contexts, advocates of autonomy (Aoki & Smith, 1999; Little, 1999b; Littlewood, 1999, 2000; Palfreyman & Smith, 2003; Smith, 2003) maintain that promoting LA can be a feasible goal in any learning circumstance.

Little (1991) strongly advocates LA as a universally applicable learning goal. Autonomy, in Little's view, refers to learners' ability to take responsibility for and critically reflect on their learning. These processes, he argues, involve human metacognitive capacity to think and believe, as well as to think about their thinking and beliefs. Following this line of reasoning, Little (1999) concludes that autonomy is a universal human capacity which can be enhanced through education, regardless of pedagogical and cultural settings. However, this argument does not suggest that contextual and socio-cultural factors can be entirely disregarded. In fact, the process of fostering autonomy should take into account learners' socio-cultural background and the uniqueness of each learning context (Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Little, 1999b).

Holliday (2003) also shares a similar view that some degree of autonomy already exists within learners. He notes that the culturist view in language teaching, which tends to reduce learner diversity to stereotypes based on their cultural backgrounds, often disregards different forms of autonomy. This culturist view often perceives passivity as the opposite of LA. Thus, learners who appear non-participatory in class need some form of corrective training to become autonomous. Holliday disagrees with this mainstream culturist view of LA and maintains that different kinds of LA can exist in different sociocultural contexts. He notes that what constrains learners' manifestation of LA is not their cultural background but their classroom culture. According to Holliday, learners from different cultural contexts are equally capable of developing LA in their own ways. Therefore, LA is not something that teachers can create in class. Instead, it is a capacity that teachers should learn to recognize in their learners and capitalize on in their classrooms.

In addition to theoretical discussions about LA's relevance and applicability in non-Western contexts, research from Japan (Aoki & Smith, 1999; Smith, 2001; Yashima, 2014), Hong Kong (Chan et al., 2002; Ho & Crookall, 1995), Vietnam (Humphreys & Wyatt, 2014; L. T. C. Nguyen, 2008), China (Gao, 2009), Indonesia (M. Lamb, 2004), Taiwan (N. D. Yang, 1998) and Malaysia (Ming & Alias, 2007) provide empirical evidence that developing LA can be feasible in Asian contexts and learners in Asian contexts are capable of autonomous learning.

Researchers (Aoki & Smith, 1999; Benson et al., 2003; Littlewood, 1999) question the assumption that autonomy, which is often associated with Western values such as individualism and independence, may not be applicable in non-Western contexts. For example, Aoki and Smith (1999) argue that the stereotypical view towards learners in a certain culture does not reflect individual learners' differences. Based on their classroom practices in developing LA in the Japanese educational context, Aoki and Smith found that their Japanese learners responded well to their pedagogies to promote LA. Moreover, when given opportunities to negotiate how they prefer to learn, these Japanese learners, despite being commonly viewed as passive and teacher-dependent, showed a preference toward self-directed learning arrangements. Thus, Aoki and Smith conclude that autonomy can be a valid educational goal in Japan and that the validity and appropriateness of autonomy as an educational goal depends more on how appropriately autonomy is adapted to the target context.

Similarly, in his survey of Asian and European learners' attitudes about learning, Littlewood (2000) found no significant difference between Asian and European learners' attitudes about issues such as learner acceptance for teacher authority and teacher-learner roles and responsibilities in learning. Furthermore, it was found that the common perception of Asian learners as obedient and passive learners did not represent the attitudes these learners held about their roles in learning. In fact, findings from this survey indicated that Asian learners, like their European counterparts, valued opportunities to be active and independent in their learning. Littlewood concludes that while learners' cultural background may influence their learning to a certain extent, the preconceptions about learners based on their cultural background should be treated with caution.

Another significant study that challenged cultural stereotypes and advocated LA as a cross-culturally valid educational goal is Smith's (2003) classroom research in Japan. Smith engaged his Japanese undergraduate learners in the process of their own learning with the aim of simultaneously enhancing their English abilities and their LA. Over the five-year period,

Smith relied on his insights as an insider to tailor his approach to his learners' needs and possibilities in his teaching context. He was aware that his Japanese learners were motivated to learn and willing to express their needs through writing and private discussions rather than through class discussions. Consequently, Smith asked his learners to provide ideas for self-directed learning activities through writing and then modified his teaching based on learners' input. He also provided opportunities for his learners to negotiate what they wanted to learn and encouraged them to evaluate their own learning outcomes. In this sense, the process of learning and developing LA, which was jointly developed by Smith and his learners, became relevant to the learners' needs and appropriate to their learning context.

Smith's (2003) report provides evidence that with practitioners' careful consideration of their learners' needs and knowledge of what is realistically possible in their context, a Western concept such as LA can be made appropriate in an Asian setting. Smith's study also disproves the stereotype that Asian learners are generally passive and may not be capable of directing their own learning.

Similar conclusions were also drawn in Humphreys and Wyatt's (2014) action research in Vietnam. Through examining the Vietnamese university learners' perspectives about LA and their autonomous learning practice, Humphreys and Wyatt found that the Vietnamese learners, were able to work more autonomously once provided with instructional support and scaffolding from their teacher. Despite their limited experience with autonomous learning, the Vietnamese learners in this study made effort to set their own learning goals and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in learning. The learners also expressed need for more teacher support for LA development. Based on their findings, Humphreys and Wyatt conclude that successful LA development in Vietnam is likely to be socially mediated. They further propose raising learners' awareness of autonomous learning and explicit instruction of goal setting and self-reflection skills as a first step towards LA development in their context.

It should be noted from these successful accounts of LA development that the forms of LA identified in Asian contexts tend to align with Littlewood's (1999) notion of reactive autonomy which views LA development as a process supported by interdependence and collaboration (see 2.5). These studies highlight the views that there are variations of LA and that LA does not necessarily mean learning in isolation (see 2.2.3). They also strengthen Holliday's (2003) argument that LA development is context-dependent and that learners in different learning contexts can be autonomous in their own ways.

Whether or not LA is an appropriate concept in a certain context thus depends more on how it is implemented rather than on the construct itself. Therefore, approaches to

promoting LA need to be culturally sensitive. Oxford (2008) maintains that understanding of social contexts plays an important role in understanding autonomy and how it can be appropriately promoted. She notes that autonomy in the individualist Western sense may need adjustments before being implemented in non-Western settings. Otherwise, the idea of encouraging LA could risk being viewed as a form of cultural imposition.

In sum, literature concerning the theoretical and practical aspects of LA point to the conclusion that despite the construct's strong ties with Western ideologies, LA, when promoted through a contextually appropriate approach, can be compatible with any cultural and educational tradition.

2.8 Approaches to promoting LA

Based on the idea that LA can be developed through learners' freedom to interact and experiment with learning resources, early approaches to promoting LA were associated with learners learning on their own (Little, 2007a). Approaches to promote LA in this mode of learning include resource-based and technology-based learning, such as self-access learning, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), out-of-class learning and online learning.

However, despite the common associations between LA and freedom to make decisions for learning in self-access learning contexts, it has been recognized that providing learners with easy access to learning resources and opportunities to choose what, where, and when to learn cannot automatically lead to LA (see 2.2.3). In fact, in order for learners to learn autonomously, they need to develop skills and attitudes that will enable them to critically reflect on their learning process, make informed decisions for their learning and continue to adapt their learning strategies to respond to their own evolving learning needs. Therefore, learning how to learn and reflecting on one's learning are likely to play an important role in developing LA. Little (1991) notes that these abilities can be developed through learner training.

Benson (2011) categorizes practices in promoting LA into six main approaches: resource-based approaches, technology-based approaches, curriculum-based approaches, classroom-based approaches, teacher-based approaches and learner-based approaches. Learner training is categorized as a learner-based approach to developing LA. While the focus of other approaches was on providing opportunities for learners to interact with learning resources or increasing learner involvement at the curriculum level, learner-based approaches to developing LA aim at creating behavioral and psychological changes within

learners. The focus of learner training is, therefore, to help learners develop necessary skills and knowledge to self-direct their learning process.

Central to learner-based approaches to developing LA are learner training and strategy training (Benson, 2011). Learner training, a concept associated with adult education in Europe, seeks to encourage people to become life-long learners who are capable of taking charge of their own learning. Its ultimate goal is learner autonomy. Learners are gradually trained to develop their skills in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning so that they can direct their own learning and independently pursue their learning needs which can vary throughout the course of their lives (Wenden, 2002).

On the other hand, strategy training, which is rooted in research on good language learners in North America, aims at developing successful learners who can effectively approach language learning tasks. This is often achieved through explicit strategy instruction in classrooms. Strategy training for learner development is based on the idea that learners can discover their most effective way to learn through practicing and experimenting with various learning strategies. The intended outcome of strategy training is to enhance learners' processing of learning tasks, help learners develop their own strategy repertoires and promote learners' responsibility and ability to take control of their learning process (Cohen, 2011).

Benson (2011) notes that learner-based approaches to developing LA are a combination of both learner training and strategy training. Recent LA studies have also adopted strategy instruction as a means to prepare learners for self-directed learning (Huang, 2005; L. T. C. Nguyen, 2014; Zhang, 2008). Benson (2011), however, notes that while explicit strategy instruction may lead to improved language performance, strategy instruction alone may not necessarily support learners' development of LA. Therefore, he suggests that in addition to teaching learners how to use strategies, strategy instruction should further promote learners' reflection on their learning process and raise their awareness of how they can use strategies to regulate their learning. The following section discusses learning strategies, their relationship to LA and strategy-based instruction as a means to develop LA.

2.9 Learning strategies and learner autonomy

2.9.1 Definitions of learning strategies

Learning strategies are goal-oriented, specific actions, techniques, procedures or mental processes learners use to facilitate their learning process and improve learning outcomes (Chamot, 2001, 2005; Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard El-Dinary & Robins, 1999; Cohen, 2011; Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Oxford, 1990, 2008, 2017). While some strategies can

result in specific strategic behaviors, some can remain within learners' thinking process and are thus not directly observable (Chamot, 2001; Oxford, 2017).

Strategies' values for learning are neutral. The extent to which they can be useful to learning depends on how they are used. In other words, frequency and variety of strategies used in a task do not necessarily indicate their usefulness in completing the task (Oxford, 1990). Strategies become effective when they are appropriate for tasks and are used flexibly with learners' awareness of task requirements. In addition, strategy use is individualistic and dynamic. It varies from person to person and can become more refined as learners' language proficiency and learning skills advance. Through repeated practice, strategies can become automatized and transferrable to other learning tasks (Cohen, 2011; Gu, 2007; Macaro, 2006).

2.9.2 Categorizations of learning strategies

Based on their longitudinal studies of foreign language learners, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) propose a classification of learning strategies that include cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategies. Cognitive strategies are strategies that learners need to directly process tasks. Thus, they are task-specific. Examples of cognitive strategies are repetition, grouping and summarizing information, using visual images to retain information, and linking background knowledge to new learning tasks.

Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, refer to higher order thinking that governs the execution of cognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies include planning for learning, monitoring tasks and progress and evaluating overall performance. To put it another way, metacognitive strategies are regulatory skills that learners use to oversee and direct their own learning (Wenden, 1991). Thus, metacognitive strategies are not domain specific and can be applied across various task types.

The third category of learning strategy proposed in O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) scheme is social and affective strategies. Social and affective strategies refer to a broad range of efforts learners make to facilitate their learning by interacting with other people and regulating their own feelings in learning. Examples of these strategies include asking questions for clarification, working with other learners, asking for feedback and using self-talk to reduce anxiety.

Oxford (1990) categorizes learning strategies into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are strategies learners use to learn the subject matter. Learning strategies that belong in this group are memory strategies, cognitive strategies and comprehension strategies. The functions of these strategies are similar to O'Malley and Chamot's (1990)

cognitive strategies in that they serve as a direct means to deal with learning tasks. Indirect strategies are associated with the management aspect of learning. Examples of indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective and social strategies. These strategies, which involve functions such as planning and evaluation, can support learners' management of learning. Oxford (1990) further notes that indirect strategies can be used with direct strategies to support the learning process.

Categorizing learning strategies, however, can be difficult and confusing because functions of strategies labeled in different categories can overlap (Cohen, 2011; Klingner et al., 2011; Oxford, 2017). Cohen (2011, 2018) notes that grouping strategies into certain categories is often based on the misleading idea that one strategy has exclusively one function in assisting learning. Similarly, Oxford (2017) adds that this perspective tends to ignore complexity and fluidity which are the very nature of strategies. Over the years, research has revealed substantial evidence suggesting that learning strategies operate in a dynamic, complex and fluid manner (Cohen & Wang, 2018; Gu, 2007; Macaro, 2008; Oxford, 1990, 2017). For instance, a study by Cohen and Wang (2018), which examines Chinese learners' strategic processing of a vocabulary task, reveals that strategies were often used in combinations and that one strategy can have multiple functions that could shift from one to another on a moment-to-moment basis. Cohen and Wang's findings raise an important question on whether the long-standing and widely accepted classifications of learning strategies, such as those of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990), can still represent the complex and fluid nature of learning strategies. Their findings also highlight Oxford's (2017) proposal that instead of viewing strategies and their functions in language learning according to their ascribed labels, researchers should take a cautionary perspective when trying to understand how strategies operate and the roles they play in self-regulated learning.

2.9.3 Relationship between learning strategies and LA

Learning strategies are viewed as an important part of LA and it is believed that autonomous learners are those who can flexibly and effectively control their use of strategies in learning (Chamot, 2005, 2009; Cohen, 2011; Cotterall, 1995b; Griffiths, 2013; Little, 2000b; Littlewood, 1996; Oxford, 2003, 2008, 2015, 2017; Wenden, 1991). Thus, LA, in essence, can be viewed as strategic regulation of learning.

A number of studies have provided support for the relationship between learning strategies and LA. These studies often concern effects of strategy instruction on learning

outcomes and learning management skills. For example, Simmons (1996) conducted a strategy training program to help her learners develop skills in managing their own learning and found that not only were her learners aware of their strategy preferences, they also used more strategies to manage their own learning after the training. Based on the study, Simmons concludes that strategy training could help improve learners' skills in learning management.

Nunan et al. (1999) examined three training programs in Hong Kong to determine the impacts of strategy training on learners' development in language skills and learning skills. Results from the three projects indicate that systematic training in strategies for learning management, such as self-monitoring and self-evaluation, helped raise learners' awareness of their learning process and enhanced their abilities to self-direct their learning.

Chen (2007) investigated the effects of strategy training on Taiwanese junior college learners' listening comprehension and found that in addition to enhancing learners' listening proficiency and approaches to listening tasks, the training also improved learners' abilities to organize their learning. After the training, learners in Chen's study were able to choose appropriately challenging learning materials for themselves and select strategies to make their listening more proactive and purposeful. Moreover, Chen further found that strategy training also led to an overall positive attitude towards foreign language learning.

In addition to research in EFL classroom settings, studies of language learners in the out of class learning context also identify strategic learning as an important component of autonomy development. For instance, Gao's (2010) identifies agency, motivation, beliefs and strategic efforts as the main factors underpinning successful and autonomous language learning. The study presents an impressive account of how a Chinese learner with physical disability deliberately created opportunities for herself to learn English. With strong determination and a clear goal in mind, the learner made plans for her learning, developed her own strategies to improve her English, constantly evaluated and revised her strategic efforts and established a supportive learning network for herself. The findings from this case study illustrate the process of a learner's development as a strategic and autonomous language learner in an unstructured learning context. They also highlight the interplay between context and agency in LA development.

Ding and Stapleton, (2016) explored Chinese university learners' transition to a new learning environment in Hong Kong and found that the learners adopted several strategies to cope with academic demands at their new university. Over the one-year transitional period, these Chinese learners developed their own strategic approaches to learning and improving their English proficiency outside of class. At the end of the year, they were able to take

control of their English learning in the new learning environment with confidence. These learners, according to Ding and Stapleton, have developed into successful and autonomous learners.

In sum, despite differences in terms of research methodology and research contexts, these studies provide empirical evidence indicating a link between strategic learning and LA. Furthermore, encouraging findings from these studies also indicate that strategy training or strategy-based instruction seem to be an effective means to develop learners' skills in directing their own learning.

2.9.4 Learner training as a means to develop LA

It is suggested that learner training can be a means to help learners develop control of their learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Little, 1995; Nunan, 1996; Oxford, 1999; Scharle & Szabó, 2000; Wenden, 1991). Proponents of systematic learner training for LA argue that most learners are not predisposed to making informed decisions or taking responsibility for their own learning. They further suggest that systematic training is an essential step to raise learners' awareness of factors and strategies that can facilitate their learning and help them control their learning more effectively (Cohen, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Nunan, 1996; Oxford, 2008; Sinclair, 1996).

2.9.4.1 Strategy-based instruction

In general, strategy training often refers to explicitly teaching cognitive strategies that learners can use to directly process learning tasks. Strategy training can also involve teaching metacognitive strategies that learners can use to regulate their learning process (Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Wenden, 1991). Strategic preparation for LA is often conducted through strategy-based instruction (SBI).

SBI is a practice in teaching language learning strategies to help learners approach their learning tasks strategically on their own. The ultimate aim of SBI is to promote learners' ability to effectively direct their learning (Cohen, 2011; Griffiths, 2013; Rubin et al., 2007). In doing so, the process of strategy instruction often begins by providing learners with extensive scaffolding on how to use learning strategies. This initial teacher scaffolding, however, is gradually withdrawn so that learners can practice using strategies more independently and assume more responsibility for their learning. In other words, learners' responsibility in regulating their strategy use continues to increase as they progress through the SBI instructional procedures.

Common instructional steps in SBI include 1) Raising learners' awareness about learning strategies, 2) teaching and modeling the target strategies on specific learning tasks, 3) providing opportunities for learners to practice the strategies independently and 4) evaluating strategy effectiveness and transferring strategies to new learning tasks (Cohen, 2011; Harris, 2017; McDonough, 2005; Rubin et al., 2007).

2.9.4.2 Strategy-based instruction model

Chamot et al. (1999) developed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) instructional model which integrates subject content, academic language development and explicit teaching of learning strategies as a model for strategy instruction. The CALLA model features five recursive instructional sequences which aim at enhancing learners' academic achievement and helping learners become effective in strategically regulating their learning (Chamot, 2001, 2009; Chamot & Harris, 2019; Griffiths, 2013). Instructional sequences in the CALLA model include preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and expansion. Chamot and O'Malley (1996) suggest that the five instructional sequences of the CALLA model do not follow one another in a strict and linear sequence. Instead, they can occur recursively. For example, after the preparation stage, the teacher can continue to elicit learners' background knowledge when more information is presented. Likewise, while presenting new strategies, the teacher can point out how the strategies can be transferred to other learning tasks. Thus, the five instructional stages can vary according to learners' instructional needs. The CALLA model is presented in Figure 2.1.

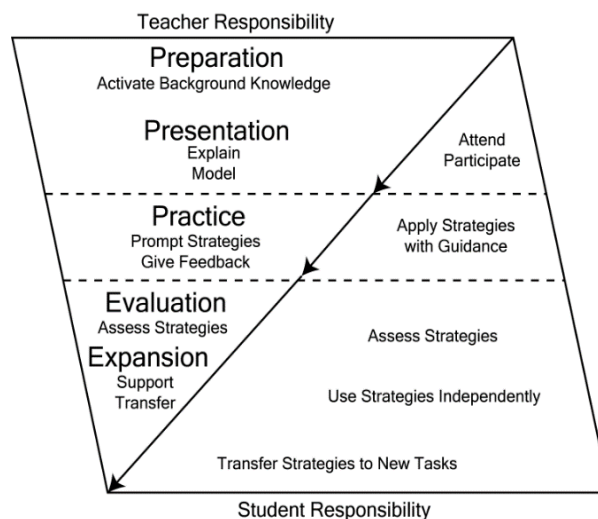


Figure 2.1 CALLA instructional model (Chamot et al., 1999, p. 46)

First, the preparation stage aims at helping learners identify strategies they are already using as well as activating background knowledge about the content to be learned. This stage prepares learners to learn by linking learners' prior knowledge to new topics of learning. Presentation is the second stage in which the teacher explains and models the use of target strategies to his/her learners through think-aloud demonstration. The purpose of the teacher thinking aloud is to make his/her strategic processing of tasks public and visible to learners. This allows learners to observe how the teacher uses strategies to respond to the tasks and to regulate his/her learning process. After the think-aloud demonstration, the teacher can ask learners to recall what he/she did in processing the tasks and further explain how and when the presented strategies can be used most effectively. As illustrated in the model, learners' main responsibilities in the first two stages are to participate and attend to the teacher's teaching.

Learners' responsibility starts to increase in the practice stage of the instructional model. The focus of this stage is to provide learners with opportunities to practice using learning strategies to complete learning tasks with guidance from the teacher. At this stage, learners can discuss their strategy use and work cooperatively with peers to develop strategic solutions for their learning problems. In the CALLA model, the practice stage is followed by evaluation. As the class progresses to the evaluation stage, learners are encouraged to reflect on their strategies and assess the effectiveness of the strategies in helping them complete the tasks. In addition, another purpose of the evaluation stage is to encourage learners to define areas that need further improvement. By evaluating themselves and their strategies, learners could develop metacognitive awareness of how they learn. Similar to practice, evaluation can be conducted cooperatively or individually. After evaluation, the final stage of the CALLA instructional model is expansion. In the expansion stage, learners are encouraged to think of ways they can transfer strategies learned in class to new learning tasks or subjects.

The CALLA instructional model can be suitable for developing LA as it guides learners towards more independence and responsibility in regulating their learning (Chamot & Harris, 2019). This model also considers learners' background knowledge and builds on learners' existing strategies, allowing learners to contribute to their learning. Another important benefit of the CALLA instructional model in promoting LA is that its explicit discussions and demonstrations of strategy use can be integrated into regular classroom lessons. In sum, this model not only allows learners to practice using strategies in a contextualized manner, but also enhances learners' metacognitive knowledge about their learning process.

Considering the theoretical tie between learning strategies and LA as well as the practicality of SBI in promoting LA, this study aims to develop LA through strategy-based instruction. The CALLA instructional model is also used to guide the strategy lessons in this study. The application and adaptation of this instructional model in the intervention phase of this research are further explained in 3.7.

2.9.4.3 SBI and Metacognitive knowledge in learning

In addition to strategy training, another equally important aspect of developing LA is to enhance learners' metacognitive knowledge about learning (Cotterall, 1995b; Cotterall & Murray, 2009; Wenden, 1991, 2001; Zhang, 2010, 2016). In order for learners to be autonomous, their use of strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning has to be contextualized. This means that learners' effective strategy use has to be informed by their understandings of why, when and how to adjust their strategies to optimize their learning outcomes (Little, 1991; Wenden, 1991; Zhang, 2016). Metacognitive knowledge, in other words, can influence learners' decisions and strategic actions they take in directing their learning. Thus, attempts to develop LA should include developing learners' metacognitive knowledge alongside their skills in using learning strategies.

Rubin et al. (2007) point out that SBI should not be viewed as only teaching learners mechanical steps in using learning strategies. Instead, SBI should also encourage reflection and evaluation so that, through learning about strategies, learners can also gain a better understanding of themselves, their learning tasks, as well as why and how strategies could help facilitate their learning process. These understandings, in turn, serve as a metacognitive knowledge base for learners' strategic regulation of their learning.

Metacognitive knowledge in the context of language learning includes person-knowledge or self-knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge (Wenden, 1991, 2001). Self-knowledge refers to what learners know or believe about themselves and their abilities as learners. This includes knowing what one's strengths and weaknesses in learning are. Self-knowledge also involves being aware of one's preferred learning styles, motivation and aptitude. Self-knowledge can be influenced by learners' learning experience.

Task knowledge is what learners know about a task in terms of its purposes, types, and demands. Wenden (2001) notes that knowledge of task demands is the most complex aspect of task knowledge. Knowledge of task demands refers to learners' ability to identify the kind of knowledge and skills that can help them complete the task at hand. It also includes learners' awareness of task difficulty and how to go about doing the task. Task knowledge is

important because it can help learners determine how to approach tasks more effectively. The third component of metacognitive knowledge is strategic knowledge or knowledge about what learning strategies are, their effectiveness, and how they can be most effectively used to accomplish task goals.

Metacognitive knowledge about learning is essential for learners' development of LA as it can influence learners' conceptions of and approaches to language learning. It can also guide learners' use of strategies (Rubin, 2005; Wenden, 2001). It is acknowledged that learners' pre-existing misconceptions about learning or erroneous beliefs they hold about themselves may affect their efforts, motivation and confidence in learning, which can eventually hinder them from developing proactive approaches to their own learning. Thus, in order to promote LA, it is necessary that these misconceptions or pre-existing metacognitive knowledge be reexamined, challenged and modified as a part of learner training (Victori & Lockhart, 1995).

This section has discussed learning strategies and their relevance to LA. Literature suggests that learning strategies and LA are closely related since autonomous learning encompasses learners' abilities to independently make strategic decisions for their own learning. Furthermore, strategy instruction can help prepare learners both methodologically and psychologically to assume responsibility for their learning. Drawing upon the relationship between learning strategies and LA, this study attempts to examine how strategy-based instruction can help develop LA in Thai secondary school classrooms. The following sections examine LA in the Thai secondary school context and present the operationalized definition of LA in this study.

2.10 Learner autonomy in the Thai educational context

Despite the proliferation of studies on LA in other educational contexts, empirical studies on LA in Thailand seem to be limited. Research conducted in the Thai EFL context to date has focused mainly on developing LA among university learners. In addition, these studies appear to share a unanimous view that developing LA in Thai EFL classrooms is a challenging task for educators. This is partly due to beliefs that Thai learners lack responsibility, confidence and motivation (Rukthong, 2008; Rungwaraphong, 2012a; Swatevacharkul, 2014; Yiamkhamnuan, 2016) or that they are passive learners who are accustomed to the traditional teacher-led approach to learning (Sanprasert, 2009; Thamraksa, 2013).

In order to obtain a clearer picture of how learner autonomy is positioned in the Thai educational context, particularly at the secondary educational level, it is worth examining how the idea was first introduced to the Thai educational curriculum and how it has been adopted in the Thai classrooms.

2.10.1 The 1999 Educational Reform

LA is a relatively new concept in the Thai educational context. The implementation of the idea as an educational aim can be traced back to the 1999 Educational Reform. In response to the demands imposed by the globalized world and the need to boost the country's competitiveness in the international arena, Thailand's 1999 Educational Reform has emphasized communicative language teaching and critical thinking within the framework of a learner-centered approach to learning (Office of the National Education Commission, 2003).

The 1999 Reform and the 2010 amendment are the foundation of Thailand's National Education Act (NEA), a guiding principle for learning and teaching in Thailand. With the broad aim of providing quality education for all learners, the 1999 NEA values developing in Thai learners integrity, self-directed learning skills and ability for lifelong learning. These aims are clearly stated in sections 7 and 22 of the 1999 NEA:

Section 7:

The learning process shall aim at inculcating [...] ability to earn a living; self-reliance; creativity; and acquiring thirst for knowledge and capability of self-learning on a continuous basis.

Section 22:

Education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development and are regarded as being most important. The teaching-learning process shall aim at enabling the learners to develop themselves at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality. (Office of the National Education Commission, 2003).

The 1999 Educational Reform introduces a novel direction in pedagogical practice as it was the first reform in Thailand to emphasize the idea of life-long learning as an ultimate goal of education (Foley, 2005; Wongsothorn et al., 2002). Section 24 of the 1999 NEA

further states that in order to achieve this established goal, educational institutions and practitioners should:

- (1) provide substance and arrange activities in line with the learners' interests and aptitudes, bearing in mind individual differences;
- (2) provide training in thinking process, management, how to face various situations and application of knowledge for obviating and solving problems;
- (3) organize activities for learners to draw from authentic experience; drill in practical work for complete mastery; enable learners to think critically and acquire the reading habit and continuous thirst for knowledge (Office of the National Education Commission, 2003).

It is clear that this Educational Reform envisages a shift from teacher-centered pedagogy to a more learner-centered and participatory one. It also encourages the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in learners. Educational institutions are also expected to increase cooperation with the private sector and communities in order to provide learning environments in which learners can gain practical knowledge through their involvement in problem-based activities outside classrooms (Darasawang, 2007).

In short, the 1999 NEA places emphasis on promoting teaching and learning processes that contribute to learners' development of self-directed, autonomous learning skills which will enable Thai learners to become lifelong learners. These changes at the policy level also imply corresponding changes at the classroom level. The following sections continue to examine how the educational policy is promoted through the Basic Educational Core Curriculum (BEC) which serves as a framework for English teaching in Thai secondary school classrooms.

2.10.2. English language teaching in the Thai secondary school context

Following the principles provided by the 1999 NEA, the Basic Education Commission devised the 2001 Basic Education Core Curriculum (BEC) which was subsequently revised in 2008 as a guideline for the teaching of the core subjects, including English at the secondary school level. According to the 2008 BEC, the main purpose of English teaching is to promote Thai learners' abilities to use English for communicative,

academic and professional purposes (Darasawang, 2007). Learners are expected to use English communicatively, understand various foreign cultures, use their English to expand their knowledge in other subject areas of their interest and use English to establish connections with others at both local and global levels (Kaur et al., 2016; Wongsothorn et al., 2002).

In terms of classroom management, each school is encouraged to adopt a learner-centered instructional approach. The 2008 BEC allows schools to select learning materials, Ministry-approved textbooks, and teaching and assessment methods that are suitable for their learners' potential and curriculum goals (Darasawang & Watson Todd, 2012; Kaur et al., 2016). In order to ensure that practices in English teaching and learning align with the overarching educational objectives stated in the NEA, the 2008 BEC presents a set of educational standards and indicators which were meant to be a guideline for classroom practices and evaluation that helps teachers “visualize expected learning outcomes throughout the entire course of study” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 3). Standards refer to broad learning objectives that learners should be able to achieve, while indicators present specific examples of what learners should be able to know and practice upon completing each educational level. Table 2.2 illustrates an example of an educational standard and its corresponding indicators for English at the upper secondary level.

Table 2.2

Example of Educational Standard and Indicators for English Subject

Standard F1.1: Understanding of and capacity to interpret what has been heard and read from various types of media, and ability to express opinions with proper reasoning

Levels	Key stage indicators
Grades 10-12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Observe instructions in manuals for various types of work, clarifications, explanations and descriptions heard and read. <li>2. Accurately read aloud texts, news, advertisements, poems and skits by observing the principles of reading. <li>3. Explain and write sentences and texts related to various forms of non-text information, as well as specify and

write various forms of non-text information related to sentences and texts heard or read.

4. Identify the main idea, analyze the essence, interpret and express opinions from listening to and reading feature articles and entertainment articles, as well as provide justifications and examples for illustration.
-

(Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2008, pp. 260–261)

English has been given a prominent status in the 2008 BEC. Because English skill is seen as a tool for Thai learners to acquire knowledge and connect with the globalized world, it was made a compulsory subject which is taught throughout grades 1-12.

Secondary school learners receive 2-3 hours of weekly English instruction depending on their levels (Darasawang & Watson Todd, 2012). Lower secondary school learners (grades 7-9) receive a total of 120 teaching hours per academic year while upper secondary school learners (grades 10-12) receive 80 hours of instruction of compulsory English courses with additional hours from their elective foreign language courses (Keyuravong, 2010). However, time allocation can be adjusted to suit each school's priorities, available resources and learners' demands (Kaur et al., 2016; Keyuravong, 2010). Table 2.3 provides an example of time allotment for foreign language learning outlined in the 2008 BEC.

Table 2.3

Numbers of Hours of English Instruction in Each Level

Levels	Hours of teaching per year	Languages
Lower primary (grades 1-3)	40 (1 per week)	English
Upper primary (grades 4-6)	80 (2 per week)	English
Lower secondary (grades 7-9)	120 (3 per week)	English
Upper secondary (grades 10-12)	80 (2 per week + electives)	English and other elective foreign languages (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Arabic)

(Adapted from Keyuravong, 2010)

The 2008 BEC emphasizes the importance of the learning process and provides suggestions for roles of teachers and learners in the process of learning (Ministry of Education, 2008). For instance, teachers are encouraged to create their lesson plans and organize their classroom activities based on their learners' interests, capacities, individual differences and their cultural contexts. They are also encouraged to create a learning atmosphere in which learners can learn with necessary support from teachers. In addition, teachers also have a role in evaluating learners' performance and provide appropriate remedial measures for their learners. In sum, the roles of teachers suggested in the 2008 BEC are of a manager, a facilitator and an evaluator of learning.

The 2008 BEC also suggests roles that learners should take in their learning. Learners are expected to take responsibility in setting their own goals, creating learning plans, seeking knowledge, finding solutions for their own problems in learning, applying classroom knowledge to broader contexts in life, cooperating with others in their learning, assessing their learning outcomes and continue to make efforts to improve their learning (Ministry of Education, 2008). These roles suggested in the 2008 BEC reflect the curriculum's expectation of developing autonomous learners who are responsible for planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning.

While the 2008 BEC provided the educational standards and indicators as a tool to help teachers specify the outcomes of their teaching, it did not provide concrete examples for what teachers should do to reach these prescribed standards and indicators. In other words, the 2008 BEC did not seem to provide sufficient information on how exactly teachers could implement a learner-centered approach in their classrooms. There was no clear guideline for specific subjects to help teachers organize their classroom activities to encourage more learner involvement in the learning process and promote learners' autonomous and lifelong learning skills. Despite the 2008 BEC's emphasis on promoting learner-centered learning and fostering self-directed learning skills, the lack of both structured support and teacher and learner preparation has led to a gap between policy and practice in promoting autonomous learning in Thai classrooms.

2.10.3 LA in Thai classrooms

Turning policy into practice is not an entirely smooth process. Since the notion of learner-centeredness and LA has only emerged in the 1999 Educational Reform, most teachers were not adequately prepared for the change. They seem to lack thorough understandings of the concepts they are required to implement in their classes.

Several studies (Akaranithi & Panlay, 2007; Kantamara et al., 2006; Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006; Thamraksa, 2013; Wongsothorn et al., 2002) report problems concerning the practical application of a learner-centered approach and self-directed learning in Thai classrooms. It appears that the implementation of the new curriculum causes much confusion and skepticism among teachers and learners. Although teachers are aware of this new policy, most of them did not receive professional training in using a learner-centered approach and communicative language teaching. The implementations of this learner-centered approach to promoting autonomous learning and learner responsibility thus rely heavily on schools' and teachers' interpretations of the concept which in turn caused frustration among learners (Darasawang, 2007; Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006; Thamraksa, 2013).

For example, Nonkukhetkhong et al. (2006) investigated teachers' perceptions of a learner-centered approach to teaching English and their actual practices in classrooms. Drawing on self-reported questionnaire and classroom observations, their study reveals that while teachers agreed that developing learners' ability to take more responsibility for their learning was a good idea, they were unsure about how they could involve their learners in the learning process. The teachers also thought that implementing the learner-centered approach in their classes can be challenging due to learners' low motivation, the schools' limited learning resources, insufficient teacher training and large class sizes. Consequently, they still chose to adhere to the traditional teacher-directed approach to teaching English in their classes.

Prapaisit de Segovia and Hardison's (2009) study also reveals that the lack of sufficient training, resources and professional support can pose significant challenges to teachers' implementation of communicative language teaching and a learner-centered approach in their classroom practices. Moreover, this problem was found to have been further compounded by learners' low proficiency in Thai and English and their lack of interest in learning English. Therefore, while the teachers in this study were aware of their role as a facilitator of learning and were willing to adopt the new approach in their teaching, the idea of promoting learner-centered learning may not be easy to realize.

In addition to teachers' confusion or insufficient understandings about autonomous learning, the promotion of learner autonomy in Thai classrooms also seems to be influenced by teachers' readiness to share control in learning with their learners and learners' readiness to accept responsibility for their own learning.

Rungwaraphong's (2012b) survey of Thai university teachers' beliefs and practices in promoting autonomous learning reveals that although the teachers strongly advocated the

idea of developing learner responsibility in learning, their actual practices in classrooms might not provide sufficient opportunities for their learners to exercise autonomous learning skills. This was because the teachers were not confident in their learners' capacity to take charge of their own learning.

A similar conclusion was also drawn in Duong and Seepho's (2014) study of university teachers' perceptions and practices in promoting LA. Findings from their questionnaire and interviews indicated that although the teachers were aware of helping their learners assess their learning progress and make decisions for their own learning, in practice, the teachers still took charge of determining what to learn inside and outside of class, as well as evaluating their learners' performances. Moreover, these teachers were not confident in their learners' ability to select appropriate learning materials for themselves and evaluate their own learning.

Thamraksa (2013) observes that teachers' reluctance to share responsibility in learning with their learners may also be influenced by the Thai cultural values regarding roles and responsibility in learning. Thai culture is viewed as a culture of high power distance where people belong hierarchically to one another (Sattayanurak, 2008). Being a member of a hierarchical society also means that each person has their clear roles and status (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000). In the context of education, teachers are usually perceived as a "righteous guru" (Thamraksa, 2013, p. 62) or someone of a higher status to learners. Hence, the roles of teachers are to impart knowledge and evaluate their learners while learners are expected to take the role of obedient and respectful knowledge receivers (Darasawang & Reinders, 2015; Foley, 2005; Kantamara et al., 2006; Thamraksa, 2013). Considering these cultural values which influence teacher-learner relationships in Thai classrooms, the ideas of promoting learner decisions and sharing responsibility in learning management with learners can sometimes be perceived negatively as a threat to teacher's authority in class. This negative perception, in turn, can cause reluctance or resistance among teachers towards adopting new roles in promoting LA.

The exam-driven nature of the Thai educational context is also identified as another factor that can hinder the promotion of LA in Thai classrooms. All Thai learners who plan to go to university are required to take examinations such as the Ordinary National Education Test (ONET), the General Aptitude Test (GAT), the Professional and Academic Test (PAT) and other equivalent tests. Darasawang and Watson Todd (2012) note that these multiple-choice examinations can have a strong influence on the process of teaching and learning. Based on their study, they found that English teaching in secondary schools was guided by

the need to prepare learners for examinations rather than by the Ministry's policies, educational standards or indicators prescribed in the 1999 NEA and the 2008 BEC. Teachers had to adapt their lessons to accommodate learners' immediate and pressing needs to pass the high-stakes examinations which focus mainly on grammar rules, vocabulary and reading. This situation, therefore, did not leave much room for classroom practices that focus on learning process and learner development.

A similar view is shared in Tayjasanant and Suraratdecha's (2016) interview study which examined Thai EFL secondary school teachers' and learners' beliefs and readiness for autonomous learning. They found that in addition to the Thai learners' tendency to rely on their teachers and the lack of conceptual clarity in terms of what autonomous and lifelong learning entail, the outcome-based nature of the Thai educational system could also affect Thai teachers' and learners' readiness for LA.

What these studies in the Thai educational context reveal is the disconnection between the policy and practices in developing LA. It is evident that some Thai teachers were struggling to promote learner-centered learning and autonomous learning in their classrooms. These studies also suggest that the Thai cultural values, to a certain degree, may undermine the promotion of LA in the Thai educational context. However, they may not be the main factors that determine whether Thai learners can or cannot learn autonomously. In fact, these studies seem to indicate that success in promoting LA appears to have been influenced by affordances and constraints specific to each teaching and learning context.

The aim of this section was to provide an overview of the Thai educational context and how LA has been introduced and promoted within this context. The introduction of concepts such as learner-centered learning, autonomous learning and lifelong learning was based on the policymakers' intentions to increase Thai learners' chances to compete academically, socially and economically with the globalized world. However, the idea of promoting learner-centered learning with an aim of developing autonomous and lifelong learners, to most practitioners, remains a challenging concept to put into practice.

2.11 LA in this research

As discussed in 2.3, regardless of how differently the concept is defined, there seems to be an agreement that LA entails a shift in responsibility in directing learning from teachers to learners. It is also agreed that autonomous learning involves learners' ability to carry out learning independently as well as their willingness to take responsibility for their own

learning (Huang & Benson, 2013; Little, 1991; Littlewood, 1996; Sinclair, 2000, 2008; Wenden, 1991).

The operationalized definition of LA in this research is guided by Little's (1991), Littlewood's (1996) and Wenden's (1991) conceptualizations of LA which view LA in terms of learners' capacity to direct their own learning. Therefore, promoting LA, in this sense, focuses on enhancing learners' capacity to interact meaningfully and purposefully with their own learning process.

This research investigates LA and how it can be promoted in the Thai secondary school context. Based on a review of the literature and careful consideration of the research context, LA is operationalized in this research as learners' capacity to direct their own learning. This capacity involves two key components which are learners' metacognitive regulation of their learning and learners' attitudes for autonomous learning (see Figure 2.2). The first component, metacognitive regulation of learning, includes learners' abilities and knowledge in regulating their learning process. The second component, attitudes for autonomous learning, concerns learners' willingness to accept responsibility in directing their own learning and their confidence in doing so. The following section discusses these components in detail.

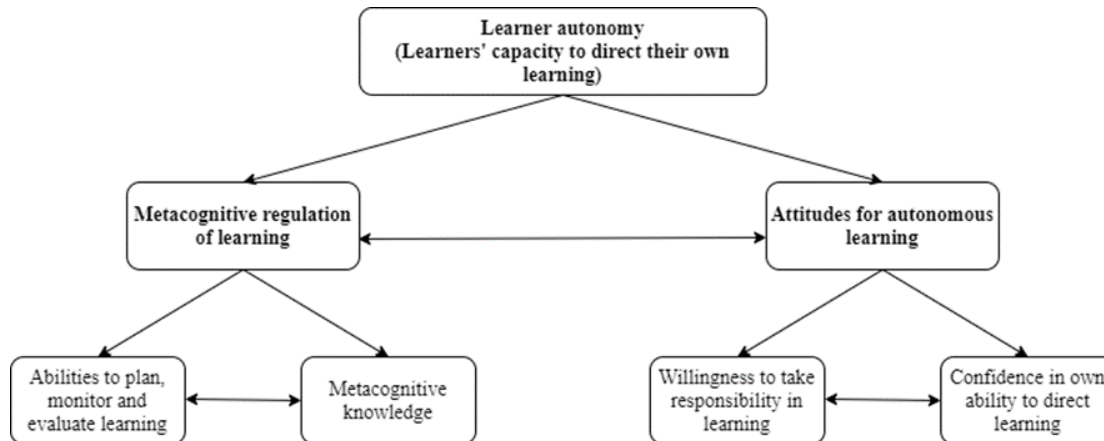


Figure 2.2 Operationalized definition of LA in this study

2.11.1 Metacognitive regulation of learning

In this research, metacognitive regulation of learning refers to learners' abilities to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning with metacognitive insights of how they learn and how they could learn more effectively.

Planning refers to actions learners take in order to prepare for their learning. This could involve determining goals, selecting what to do to achieve their goals, setting time for learning and deciding how to achieve their goals. Because planning allows learners to better

prepare for effective task completion, this process can take place before and while tasks are being carried out. Planning can also take place after task completion for the purpose of further improvements. While pre-task planning is influenced by learners' analysis of tasks, post-task planning is influenced by learners' monitoring and evaluating of their learning outcomes.

Monitoring is a process in which learners track their progress and identify difficulties in learning once they start the learning tasks. At this stage, learners can observe how they learn, ask themselves what causes difficulties in their learning and how these difficulties can be resolved and decide to make necessary adjustments to improve their performances. Monitoring can take place both at a task level while learners are processing a single task and at a broader learning context such as when learners try to manage their overall learning process.

The third important component of metacognitive regulation of learning is evaluation. Evaluation is learners' reflection on or judgment of their learning outcomes, performance and strategy use. For instance, in evaluating their learning, learners may mentally assess how much they have learned from doing the selected tasks and whether the strategies they used have helped them successfully reach their learning objectives. To put it another way, evaluation is a process in which learners assess the results of their efforts in learning based on externally defined or self-determined criteria.

Learners' abilities in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning cannot lead to effective regulations of learning if learners' use of these abilities is not informed by their metacognitive knowledge about themselves, their learning process and learning strategies (see 2.9.4.3). In other words, when planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning, learners need to understand how, why, when and under which conditions these self-regulation skills can effectively facilitate their learning.

2.11.2 Attitudes for autonomous learning

Learners' metacognitive regulation may not necessarily lead to autonomous learning if learners lack attitudes which enable them to take responsibility for their learning (Sinclair, 2000; Wenden, 1991). In this research, attitudes for autonomous learning refer to learners' willingness to accept responsibility and their confidence in their own abilities to learn and manage their learning process.

Learners' willingness to take responsibility for their own learning is viewed as an important component for autonomous learning (Littlewood, 1996; Wenden, 1991). In order

for learners to be able to learn autonomously, they first need to be aware that their active involvement in learning can contribute to success. They also need to be willing to take on responsibilities which traditionally belong to the teacher, such as determining learning plans, monitoring difficulties, solving problems and evaluating learning outcomes.

In addition, learners' attitudes for autonomous learning can be influenced by how they see themselves and their capability to learn and manage their own learning. It is suggested that learners who believe that they are capable of directing their own learning process are likely to be more motivated to take responsibility for their learning than those who do not (Littlewood, 1996; Wenden, 1991).

Littlewood (1996) points out that skills and knowledge learners have in making decisions for their learning and carrying out their learning independently can make them feel confident in their abilities to direct their learning. Likewise, learners' confidence in their abilities to direct their own learning can also stimulate learners to put their metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation skills to practice. The mutual influence between these components and their subcomponents is represented by the double-headed arrow which links learners' metacognitive regulation of learning and their attitudes for autonomous learning (see Figure 2.2).

This section has presented the operationalized definition of LA in this research. While it is acknowledged that LA is a multifaceted construct whose subcomponents may not be limited to what has been proposed in this study, this operationalized definition is based on the central idea that learners' ability and willingness to make decisions for their own learning are at the core of LA (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991, 1995; Littlewood, 1996; Wenden, 1991).

The operationalization of LA in this study enables me to create a practical framework to study LA and its developmental process in the present research context. This operationalized definition also guides the research design, data collection and data analysis procedures (see Chapter 3).

2.12 Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature related to the theoretical aspects of LA and practical issues in developing LA. First, it can be concluded from literature related to definitions, versions and degrees of LA that LA is a multifaceted construct that comprises many different components and thus making it approachable from different angles. Literature on cultural concerns in promoting LA, approaches to develop and capture LA as well as LA and learning strategies also indicates that LA is a contextually variable construct and that

there can be no one-size-fits-all approach to LA development. Yet, promoting strategic learning skills appears to be a promising avenue to foster autonomous approaches to learning.

However, it can be noted that although LA has gained prominence in the field of language learning and teaching, little empirical research has been conducted to study the process of developing LA and its impacts on the quality of language learning (Palfreyman & Benson, 2018). Moreover, most researchers tend to focus on studying LA in adult or tertiary level learners. Not many studies have investigated how LA can be promoted in the secondary school level. This tendency is particularly true in the Thai educational context where most LA studies have focused on university level learners and only a limited number concerned implementing LA in classrooms (Tapinta, 2016). LA research in Thailand is still lacking in terms of scope and methodology. Existing studies to date are predominantly exploratory in nature and relied mainly on questionnaire or interview data. Moreover, these studies often focused on exploring LA from teachers' perspectives. While these studies provided initial understandings of LA in the Thai educational context, there is still the need to enrich the current understandings through empirical studies that investigate LA and its process of development through the perspectives of both teachers and learners.

This study attempts to fill these gaps in research literature by first exploring the current status of LA in the Thai EFL classrooms through teachers' and learner's perspectives. Then it aims at developing Thai secondary school learners' capacity for autonomous learning through the implementation of a strategy-based intervention program. Five research questions are raised to explore whether LA has been actively promoted in classroom practices as well as whether and how strategy-based instruction can contribute to learners' development of LA and improvement in language proficiency.

1. How is LA perceived and promoted by teachers in the Thai secondary school context?
2. How do classroom learning experiences prepare learners for autonomous learning?
3. To what extent does the intervention affect learners' metacognitive regulation of their learning?
4. What are the perceived effects of the intervention on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning?
5. Does the training in reading strategies affect learners' reading?

The following chapter details research methodology and how strategy-based instruction (SBI) is integrated into an English course in a Thai secondary school classroom as a means to promote LA among Thai secondary school learners.

Chapter 3 Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides details regarding the research approach and design of this study. It also describes my roles in the study, the research context and participants, data collection and data analysis methods, the intervention as well as procedures taken to ensure validity and reliability of the research. Table 3.1 summarizes Chapter 3's contents.

Table 3.1
Summary of the Research Methodology Chapter

Topics	Contents
3.2 Research approach	Mixed methods approach
3.3 Research design	Phase 1: The exploratory phase Phase 2: The intervention phase
3.4 My roles in the study	Influence of my experiences on the research My roles in Phase 1 and 2
3.5 Research context	Research participants Research site
3.6 Instruments for data collection	Video-recorded class observations Semi-structured interviews Weekly learning journals Reading tests Reading think-aloud
3.7 The intervention	Contents and lesson plans Lesson structure
3.8 Data analysis	
3.9 Validity and reliability	
3.10 Data presentation	Data translation Transcription conventions
3.11 Ethical considerations	

3.2 Research approach

Approaches to inquiry or strategies of inquiry refer to “types of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods design or models that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design” (Creswell, 2009, p. 11). Approaches of inquiry can be influenced by factors such as research questions, researchers' personal experience and

philosophical world views. This section describes rationales for the use of mixed method approach in this research.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018, p. 5) describe a mixed methods study as a study in which the researcher “collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data rigorously in response to research questions and hypotheses, integrates (or mixes or combines) the two forms of data and their results, organizes these procedures into specific research designs that provide the logic and procedures for conducting the study, and frames these procedures within theory and philosophy” . The purposes of combining quantitative and qualitative methods thus are: 1) to attain a more complete understanding of the issue of investigation, 2) to triangulate or verify findings from different data sets to enhance research validity and 3) to reach audiences who do not subscribe to a particular approach of inquiry (Creswell, 2009; Dörnyei, 2007). In sum, complementary data from a range of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods can provide breadth and depth to the findings, offering fuller insights into the research problems than using one single research method.

Based on the operationalization of LA as learners’ capacity to direct their own learning, and the idea that LA development is a contextually-mediated process, this research adopted a mixed-methods approach to explore the development of LA in Thai secondary school context. While qualitative methods which focus on understanding subjective experiences of research participants appear to be fundamentally incompatible with quantitative methods whose focus was on studying objective reality, the mixed-methods approach situated this research between the two ends of the epistemological continuum and helped generate contextualized and systematic understandings of LA and its complex developmental process.

Qualitative method was used in the first phase of the study to explore the participants’ perspectives of LA and investigate how their perspectives influence the promotion of autonomous language learning. Following this phase, the study aims to develop LA through strategy-based instruction and investigate its impacts on learners’ learning process and outcomes. This requires qualitative analysis of learners’ learning journals and interviews as well as a combination of a quantitative measure of their reading test scores and qualitative data from their reading think-aloud sessions. Gathering both qualitative and quantitative data thus enables comprehensive understandings of LA and deeper insights into its development in the present research context.

In addition, a mixed methods approach is a preferred strategy of inquiry in this research as the triangulation of data collected from qualitative and quantitative measures can

enhance validity of the research findings. To illustrate, quantitative data from learners' reading test scores, while offering details on how learners' reading scores changed after the intervention, has limited power to explain the qualitative changes in learners' reading process over time. In this case, qualitative data from learners' reading think-aloud sessions and learner group interviews can complement the test score findings by offering specific insights into learners' approaches to regulate their reading process. At the same time, these qualitative findings could help verify changes in reading test scores. Likewise, reading test scores can also provide evidence for development identified from the reading think-aloud sessions and learner group interviews. Thus, the mixed method approach, which allows data collection from a range of research instruments and procedures, is suitable to researching LA in the present research context.

3.3 Research design

This research consisted of two phases. Phase 1 is the exploratory phase which mainly explored the research context and how LA is promoted in the research context. Following the exploratory phase, the second phase of the study implemented strategy-based intervention to promote LA and explored the impacts of the intervention on learners' development of autonomous learning skills and reading competence.

3.3.1 Phase 1: The exploratory phase (November 2017 – February 2018)

In exploring the research context and the status of LA in the Thai secondary school English classrooms, Phase 1 of the study addresses the following two research questions:

1. How is LA perceived and promoted by teachers in the Thai secondary school context?
2. How do classroom learning experiences prepare learners for autonomous learning?

For research question 1, data were collected from 13 sessions of video-recorded class observations (see 3.6.1) and seven sessions of teacher interviews (see 3.6.2.1) to uncover the teachers' perspectives about LA and the promotion of LA in their classes. Data from teacher interviews were triangulated with class observation data to generate understandings on how LA is promoted in the Thai secondary school classrooms.

In addition, data regarding how LA is promoted in the research context were also obtained from learner perspectives through learner group interviews (see 3.6.2.2). Research question 2 investigates learners' experiences in their English classrooms. It focuses on uncovering learners' perceptions of how their English lessons were usually conducted and how these lessons prepared them for autonomous learning.

Findings from class observations and interviews with teachers and learners were triangulated to formulate detailed understandings of the research context in relation to promoting LA. Findings from Phase 1 further provided useful information informing the intervention in Phase 2. Apart from collecting data for research questions 1 and 2, I also piloted the reading tests in Phase 1 of the study (see 3.6.4.1).

3.3.2 Phase 2: The intervention phase (May – September 2018)

Phase 2 of this study is an intervention phase in which a 10-week strategy-based instruction program (see 3.7) was implemented in an English classroom as a means to promote LA among a group of Thai secondary school learners. The intervention phase aims to answer the following research questions:

3. To what extent does the intervention affect learners' metacognitive regulation of their learning?
4. What are the perceived effects of the intervention on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning?
5. Does the training in reading strategies affect learners' reading?

In the intervention phase, data were collected from weekly learning journals completed by the intervention class learners throughout the 10-week intervention period, learner group interviews, class observations in the comparison class, reading tests and reading think-aloud sessions.

Research question 3 explores how the strategy-based instruction has enhanced learners' abilities and knowledge in regulating their learning. Thus, I encouraged learners to document their out of class learning activities and reflections on their learning experiences on a weekly basis in their journals (see 3.6.3). In addition, learner group interviews were also conducted with four groups of intervention class learners to obtain further information on how the learners developed their knowledge and skills to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning.

Apart from investigating how learners developed abilities to regulate their learning, this phase continued to explore the intervention's influences on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning as indicated in research question 4. Data were collected from the same learner group interviews conducted to answer research question 3. For research question 4, I focused on understanding how the intervention has helped learners develop a sense of responsibility for learning and confidence in their abilities to learn and improve English skills on their own.

LA is operationalized in this research as a concept involving learners' capacity to regulate their learning process and their attitudes for autonomous learning. Therefore, taken together, findings from research questions 3 and 4 offered a complementary view on learners' process of developing LA after the intervention.

While research questions 3 and 4 focused on the intervention's impacts on learners' capacity to learn autonomously, research question 5 investigated whether the intervention which aimed at developing LA also affected learners' proficiency in reading. Data were obtained from the pre-, post- and delayed reading tests (see 3.6.4) administered at the beginning of the semester, after the last intervention session and five weeks after the intervention respectively to observe changes in learners' reading test scores. In addition, I also conducted 12 pre- and 12 post-intervention reading think-aloud sessions (see 3.6.5) with 12 learners from both classes to obtain detailed findings on learners' strategic approaches to English reading. Details for data analysis are provided in 3.8. The design of this research is summarized in Figure 3.1.

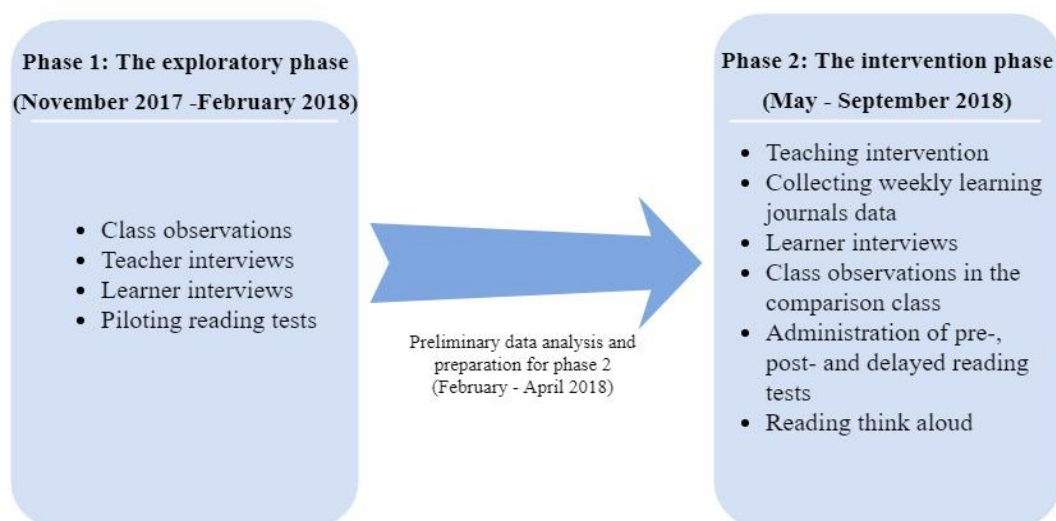


Figure 3.1. Research design

3.4 My roles in the study

Researchers in qualitative studies should clarify, at the outset of the inquiry, experiences, preconceptions, values and biases they may bring into the study (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this section, I clarify how my personal and professional experiences may influence the qualitative aspect of this research. Then I provide details of my roles during both phases of the study.

Although I have never taught at a Thai secondary school, I am familiar with the Thai secondary school context and the implementations of educational policies to encourage autonomous learning in the secondary school level.

First, as a Thai person, I had direct experiences of learning English in Thai secondary schools. During my years as a learner, I was able to observe first-hand the teaching and learning of English in the Thai secondary school classrooms, the teacher-learner classroom interactions, the Thai cultural values embedded in these interactions, the effects of high-stakes exams on teaching and learning of English and the teachers' struggles to implement new educational concepts such as task-based learning, project-based learning, critical thinking and learner-centered learning in classrooms. In other words, my previous role as a learner at the receiving end of Thai educational policies helped provide a strong foundation in the research area.

Secondly, my professional experience as a teacher of English at a Thai university also allowed me to further develop understandings of the context from a teacher's perspective. My role as a teacher of foundation English courses for first- and second-year university learners provided valuable opportunities for me to observe learner's transitions from secondary school learners to maturing university learners with increasing awareness of their own responsibilities in learning. As a teacher, I could also observe how diversified learners' approaches to learning English are and yet how surprisingly similar their problems in learning English can be.

Thirdly, I grew up in a family of teachers. Growing up with both parents in a teaching profession made me aware, from a young age, of the importance of education, independence and individual potential to grow independently as a learner and as a person. Throughout the years, I have witnessed how my father, as a secondary school principal, responded to new educational policies for learner development from an administrative point of view and how my mother, as a secondary school English teacher, managed to implement those innovative ideas to develop learners in her day-to-day teaching.

This study is, thus, based on my experiences and perspective that LA is an important educational concept which can enhance learners' capacity to learn more independently and effectively. I acknowledge that my background, personal and professional experiences can influence the research design, data collection, analyses and interpretations. Therefore, several procedures were used to ensure research validity and reliability (see 3.9).

In terms of involvement, I assumed different roles in the two phases of the study. In Phase 1, I interviewed teachers and learners and took a role of a non-participant observer in the observed classes. In Phase 2, I acted as a teacher/researcher who co-taught the English in Daily Life III course with teacher Sumet in the intervention class and collected data at the same time. While teacher Sumet was in charge of all forms of course evaluation and teaching the listening, writing and speaking modules of the course, I was responsible for teaching the reading modules and was not involved in any of the marking or grading. This is to minimize the potential conflicts of interest that may arise from my involvement as a co-teacher in this study. Section 7.5 further discusses my positioning in this research.

3.5 Research context

This section provides details of the context in which the research was conducted. It covers participant profiles and the school's profile.

3.5.1 Research participants

Participants in this study are Thai teachers and learners working and studying at the school where the study took place. Their participation in all research activities in both phases of this study was voluntary (see 3.11).

3.5.1.1 Teacher participants

Three Thai English language teachers (one male, two females) participated in Phase 1 of the study. All teachers hold at least a bachelor's degree and had, on average, 18 years of teaching experience at the secondary school level. These teachers teach classes of 28-35 students at the upper secondary levels (grades 10-12) and use commercial course books to guide their lessons. One of the three teachers (teacher Sumet) decided to participate in the intervention phase of the study. Table 3.2 presents details of teacher participants and their respective roles in both phases of this research.

Table 3.2
Profiles of Teacher Participants

Names*/ Genders	Age	Qualifications	Teaching experiences	Roles in the research
Sumet/ Male	Mid 40's	MA	22 years	Phase 1: Teacher in the observed class/ Teacher interviewee Phase 2: Co-teacher in the intervention class
Sara/ Female	Early 40's	BA	22 years	Phase 1: Teacher in the observed class/ Teacher interviewee Phase 2: -
Vicky/ Female	Mid 30's	MA	12 years	Phase 1: Teacher in the observed class/ Teacher interviewee Phase 2: -

*Names are pseudonyms chosen by the teacher participants

3.5.1.2 Learner participants

Learner participants in both phases of the study are Thai secondary school learners studying in M.5 (grade 11) at the school where the research was conducted. In the first phase of the study, 106 learners participated in the piloting of the reading tests (see 3.6.4.1) and 16 learners (see 3.6.2.2) participated in learner group interviews. In Phase 2, the total number of learner participants are 62. Thirty learners were from the intervention class while 32 learners were from the comparison class. All learners were assessed by the school's in-house midterm and final exams.

Table 3.3
Profiles of Learner Participants in Phase 2

Classes	Number of learners	Genders (Male/ Female)	Years of learning English (average)
Intervention	30	7/23	10 years

Comparison	32	10/22	10 years
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Because this research was conducted at a school with learners already assigned to their classrooms, random selection of participants was not applicable. The use of learners from two intact classes could present a threat to research validity (Loewen & Plonsky, 2016). Thus, I minimized this potential threat by administering a pre-intervention reading test (see 6.2) to ensure that learners from both classes were not statistically different in terms of their reading scores before the intervention.

3.5.2 Research site

This research was conducted at a large urban secondary school in the northeastern part of Thailand during the academic year of 2017-2018. In the 2017 academic year, the school had 4,176 students studying in Matthayomsuksa (abbreviated M.) 1-6 which is equivalent to grades 7-12 (ages 13-18 years). In terms of class size, each class at the school consists of 32-45 students. All classrooms have two white boards, rows of wooden desks and chairs, and a pair of speakers. Some classrooms are also equipped with air-conditioning, a projector and a projector screen.

Every student has to take courses in core subjects which include mathematics, sciences, Thai language, social studies, arts, physical education and English. The students are also able to take classes in one additional foreign language. Due to its size and funding, the school is able to provide elective courses in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, French and Spanish to its students.

The school's foreign language department comprises 36 full-time teachers. Additionally, in the 2017-2018 academic year, the foreign language department also hired foreign teachers and supervised pre-service teacher trainees. There is a Study English Access Room (SEAR) and a language lab with audio and video equipment for language learning.

3.6 Research instruments and piloting

Research instruments used in this study are video-recorded class observations, semi-structured interviews, weekly learning journals, reading think-aloud procedures and the reading tests. This section provides rationales for each research instrument and details how the research instruments were piloted before data collection.

3.6.1 Video-recorded class observations

Observations can be used to obtain in-depth data in language learning research. For classroom research, observations can be a particularly useful means of data collection as they enable researchers to see what participants do in class, instead of relying solely on their self-reported accounts of what they do (Dörnyei, 2007). Moreover, observations also provide opportunities for researchers to observe classroom activities as a phenomenon influenced by several interacting contextual factors.

Because classroom events can be episodic, a combination of observations, field notes as well as the use of recording devices can help researchers collect classroom data more systematically. Repeated observations can also help researchers accumulate understandings of the observed classrooms and participants (Mackey & Gass, 2005). However, the presence of a researcher and recording equipment in class may distract teachers and learners from their lessons. Furthermore, participants' awareness of themselves being observed can also influence their behaviors (Dörnyei, 2007). These factors can affect the validity of research data. It is suggested that researchers minimize these potential problems by providing explanations about their presence and the use of recording equipment in class to help teachers and learners feel more familiar and comfortable with the research procedures (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

Video-recorded class observation was a means to collect classroom data in both phases of the study. The general purposes of video recording in this research are: 1) to capture the fast-paced and dynamic classroom procedures and 2) to provide permanent records of such procedures for subsequent data analyses.

In Phase 1, video-recorded class observation was used to obtain understandings regarding how the three teachers promoted LA in their English classes. I also took notes of key instructional procedures in each observed session. Aspects of classroom practice observed and noted include types of activities used in class and task design, class organization, material used, and teacher-learner interactions. In addition, dates, times, numbers of learners, teachers' names, class layout, unit number, classroom number as well as learning resource availability were also documented. The observation notes, however, were not limited to capturing major classroom procedures. Interesting incidents, questions and other emerging points that required further elaboration were also noted and subsequently pursued through follow up interviews with the teachers. In Phase 1, a total of 13 sessions were observed and video-recorded. Prior to actual recording, I attended each class twice with

video recording equipment to inform learners about class observation procedures and to familiarize learners with my presence in class.

Each class was observed for one unit which covered four to five teaching hours. All class observations in Phase 1 were conducted before teacher interviews. Class observation videos were transcribed before coding. Findings from video-recorded class observations were triangulated with data from my notes and interviews with the teachers. Table 3.4 details schedules of class observations in Phase 1.

Table 3.4
Schedules of Class Observations in Phase 1

Sessions	Teachers	Dates	Time	Locations	Number of students attended
1	Vicky	14/11/2017	10.15 -11.15	Room 141	34
2	Sara	14/11/2017	14.15 - 15.15	Room 143	30
3	Vicky	16/11/2017	11.15-12.15	Room 141	34
4	Sumet	16/11/2017	13.15 - 14.15	Room 341	29
5	Sara	17/11/2017	8.15 - 9.15	Room 143	33
6	Sumet	17/11/2017	14.15 - 15.15	Room 341	29
7	Vicky	21/11/2017	13.15 – 14.15	Multimedia room	34
8	Sara	21/11/2017	14.15 - 15.15	Room 143	30
9	Vicky	23/11/2017	10.15 – 11.15	Room 141	34
10	Sumet	23/11/2017	13.15 – 14.15	Room 341	24
11	Sara	24/11/2017	8.15 - 9.15	Room 143	30
12	Sumet	24/11/2017	14.15 – 15.15	Rom 341	29
13	Vicky	28/11/2017	11.15 – 12.15	Room 141	34

In Phase 2, video-recorded class observations were also used in both the intervention class and the comparison class. The purpose of video recording in the intervention class was to check if all intended aspects of the intervention lessons has been covered in each session and to obtain additional classroom data for further analyses. The main purpose of observing and video recording the comparison class, on the other hand, was to observe how reading modules were taught in the comparison class and to ensure that the comparison class teacher taught in his usual way despite being aware of the intervention. In other words, class observations in Phase 2 were conducted primarily to ensure research validity. I also took

notes of classroom procedures in the comparison class. Schedules of video-recorded class observations conducted in Phase 2 are presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5
Schedules of Class Observations in Phase 2

Sessions	Teachers	Dates	Time	Locations	Number of students attended
1	Sumet	24/05/2018	15.15-16.15	Room 341	32
2	Sumet	22/06/2018	13.15-14.15	Room 341	30
3	Sumet	05/07/2018	15.15-16.15	Room 341	32
4	Sumet	30/08/2018	15.15-16.15	Room 341	32

3.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are one of the commonly used data collection tools in second language research. Due to their interactive nature, interviews can provide opportunities for researchers to elicit more data to complete participants' initial responses which may not always be sufficient or clear.

Semi-structured interviews are a type of interview used to obtain qualitative data. They allow researchers to investigate the issues of interest within the research framework and at the same time expand on participants' responses or issues that may arise during the interviews. In other words, semi-structured interviews can provide both structure and flexibility for collecting unobservable data, such as self-reported perspectives, beliefs and attitudes. (Kvale, 1996; Mackey & Gass, 2005).

Mackey and Gass (2005) caution that accuracy of interview responses can be affected by factors such as cultural differences which may lead to miscommunications between researchers and interviewees, interviewees' selective recalls and memory loss. Moreover, interviewees can also give answers they thought the interviewer wanted to hear. To address these drawbacks, Mackey and Gass (2005) suggest that in addition to having communicative and interpersonal skills, researchers should be aware of the participants' cultural backgrounds and research contexts. Researchers may also conduct multiple interviews and use open-ended questions to obtain additional data and enhance data accuracy.

Semi-structured interviews were used in both phases of this research with teacher participants and learner participants. While teachers were interviewed individually, learners were interviewed in groups. Each session was guided by a list of open-ended questions that were designed to encourage participants' discussion of their teaching and learning

experiences (see Appendix 2-4). The following section provides details on teacher interviews and learner group interviews.

3.6.2.1 Teacher interviews

Benson (2010) points out that teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning influence their practice in class. Thus, the three teachers whose classes were observed and video-recorded were invited to participate in teacher interviews in Phase 1. In total, seven semi-structured interview sessions were conducted after class observations to obtain data concerning teachers' perspectives about LA and their pedagogical practices to encourage autonomous learning in their classrooms (see Appendix 2 for guiding questions used in teacher interviews).

Of these seven interview sessions, four were follow up interview sessions which took place either immediately after class observations or later on the same day. The purposes of these 15-20-minute follow up interviews were to clarify notable issues observed in class and to identify the teachers' motivation and beliefs underlying certain pedagogical decisions they made in class. Therefore, in addition to being asked to describe what they did in class during the follow up interviews, the teachers were also encouraged to reflect on their practices and explain rationales behind their classroom decisions. Moreover, I also showed class observation videos during follow up interview sessions that were not immediately conducted after class observations to stimulate teachers' recall of events and enhance data accuracy.

After all sessions of teacher follow up interviews, I conducted three more main interview sessions with the three teachers to explore their perceptions of LA and the promotion of LA in their respective classrooms. All main interview sessions were deliberately scheduled to follow class observations and follow up interview sessions to minimize the effects of research agendas on teachers' classroom practices. Unclear responses and interesting ideas were further explored through probing questions. Every teacher interview session was conducted in Thai and was audio-recorded. Each interview was transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

Table 3.6
Schedule of Teacher Interviews

Session numbers	Teachers	Interview types	Dates	Time
1	Vicky	Follow up 1	14/11/2017	13.00-13.45
2		Follow up 2	21/11/2017	15.00-15.15

3		Follow up 3	23/11/ 2017	13.00-13.35
4		Main	29/11/2017	14.15-14.50
5	Sara	Follow up 1	24/11/2017	9.25-9.45
6		Main	29/11/2017	9.30-10.10
7	Sumet	Main	27/11/2017	14.00-14.35

3.6.2.2 Learner group interviews

Group interviews were conducted with learners in both phases of the study. In Phase 1, the interviews were conducted to explore how LA is promoted in the research context from learners' perspectives. Guiding questions for learner group interview in Phase 1 can be found in Appendix 3. Two groups of learners volunteered to participate in learner group interviews in Phase 1 to discuss their general experiences in learning English and discuss problems they often had in learning English.

Table 3.7
Schedules of Learner Interview in Phase 1

Groups	Dates	Time	Numbers of participants
1	21/12/2017	14.00-15.00	7
2	22/12/2017	14.00-15.15	9

Learner group interviews in Phase 2 of the study, on the other hand, focused specifically on investigating the intervention class learners' perceptions of their learning process and their proficiency after the intervention (see Appendix 4 for guiding questions used in Phase 2 learner group interviews). In total, four groups of intervention class learners (22 out of 30 learners) decided to participate in the interviews. Every learner group interview was conducted in Thai and audio-recorded with the consent of all learners. All audio files were transcribed verbatim.

Table 3.8
Schedules of Learner Group Interviews Phase 2

Groups	Dates	Time	Numbers of participants
1	6/08/2018	16.00-17.00	6
2	7/08/2018	16.00-17.00	5

3	8/08/2018	16.00-17.00	5
4	10/08/2018	16.00-17.00	6

3.6.3 Weekly learning journals

Weekly learning journals are another research instrument used in Phase 2 of this study. They were used both as a learning tool to help learners reflect on their learning experiences during the intervention and as a research instrument to collect qualitative data on how learners engaged in and managed their self-directed learning outside of class.

In general, learning diaries or learning journals can be used to promote effective language learning as they can enhance learners' metacognitive awareness of their strategies and learning processes (Rubin, 2003). Documenting learning experiences in learning journals allows opportunities for learners to reflect on their learning and recognize their problems. Reflective journals can also help stimulate learners' practice in planning for their learning, monitoring their learning difficulties, solving problems and evaluating their overall learning progress (Chamot, 2004; Little, 2007b; Murphy, 2008; Rubin et al., 2007).

Benson (2011) indicates that learning journals are a common tool in researching LA. This is because learning journals can provide first-person accounts of learning experiences and reveal how learners develop and exercise their capacity for autonomous learning. Journals can also capture several unobservable aspects of learning, such as learners' attitudes, feelings, rationales for learning decisions learners make and their metacognitive development. In addition, learning journals can provide important insights into learners' development of their target language proficiency and their identities (Little, 2007b). Learning journals, therefore, could be a useful tool in promoting and researching LA.

Guided weekly learning journals (see Appendix 5) were introduced to the intervention class learners in the first week of the intervention as a tool for learners to document their self-initiated learning activities and reflect on their strategy use. Therefore, the main purpose of using weekly learning journals is to direct learners' attention to their learning process. Each journal entry consisted of two main parts with prompts and guided questions. The first part was for learners to state their weekly learning goals, record what they did and strategies they used in their selected learning activities and evaluate how the strategies they used have helped them to achieve their goals. The second part of the journal consisted of questions asking learners to reflect on their achievements and challenges encountered in their learning activities. One of the prompts also asked learners to use their reflections to plan for follow-up

actions. In addition, space was also provided for learners to write questions or comments they may have and requests for what they wanted to do in the following session.

Although the learning journals did not contribute to course grades, I tried to encourage intervention class learners to complete and submit their journals every week. I also showed samples of good learning journals to the class in order to enhance learners' awareness of how to reflect on their learning. For every submitted entry, I wrote encouraging comments, answered learners' questions, provided suggestions or asked probing questions to further provoke learners' reflections on their learning. In this sense, apart from being a tool to promote learners' abilities to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning, the weekly learning journals also created space for teacher-learner dialogues about learning.

3.6.4 Reading tests

Pre-, post- and delayed reading tests (see Appendix 6) were used in Phase 2 of the study to observe changes in learners' reading test scores after the intervention. The structure and content of all three tests were based on the reading section of the school's midterm and final English exams for M.5. The reading sections on the school's exams consisted of different types of English texts, including a short text with an illustration, a short announcement, a short news report and a long expository text. The purpose of the reading section was to test learners' skills in reading comprehension, locating information, identifying pronoun references, inferring word meanings and summarizing main ideas. This test design followed the learning standards and indicators stated in the curriculum.

I selected 45 items from the reading sections in the school's English exams and compiled them into three sets of 15-item multiple choice reading tests. The structure of the three reading tests and skills tested are shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9
Reading Test Structure

Sections	Number of items	Text types	Skills tested
1	2	Comic strip or short text with illustration	Inferring
2	3	Short notice/ Announcement (≤ 100 words)	Information locating Summarizing Inferring
3	5	Short news report (150-180 words)	Information locating

			Summarizing
			Identifying main ideas
			Inferring
4	5	Long expository text (350-380 words)	Information locating
			Summarizing
			Identifying main ideas
			Inferring

All test items were reviewed by Sumet, Vicky and Sara. In addition, five learners were invited to review and give feedback on the three tests' length, text size, and difficulty levels. Content, fonts and text size were subsequently modified based on comments from the teachers and the learners before piloting.

3.6.4.1 Piloting the reading tests

In Phase 1, all three sets of tests were trialed among 106 learners sharing similar characteristics with the real participants. Each test was administered in the school's grand hall which can accommodate all 106 learners at the same time. Four teacher-trainees at the school assisted in proctoring each pilot session which took place seven days apart from one another. All tests were paper-based and all answer sheets were corrected by an OMR (Optical mark recognition) machine. Total test scores of each participant across the three tests were computed, using One-Way ANOVA in SPSS version 25. The results are presented in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10
Pilot Test Results

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Test1	106	6.9340	2.18771	.21249	6.5126	7.3553	3.00	13.00
Test2	106	7.2358	1.72683	.16772	6.9033	7.5684	3.00	11.00
Test3	106	6.8585	3.01248	.29260	6.2783	7.4387	2.00	14.00
Total	318	7.0094	2.36761	.13277	6.7482	7.2707	2.00	14.00

ANOVA

Scores						
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Between Groups	8.453	2	4.226	.753	.472	
Within Groups	1768.519	315	5.614			
Total	1776.972	317				

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Score

Tukey HSD

(I) Tests	(J) Tests	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Test1	Test2	-.30189	.32547	.623	-1.0683	.4645
	Test3	.07547	.32547	.971	-.6910	.8419
Test2	Test1	.30189	.32547	.623	-.4645	1.0683
	Test3	.37736	.32547	.478	-.3891	1.1438
Test3	Test1	-.07547	.32547	.971	-.8419	.6910
	Test2	-.37736	.32547	.478	-1.1438	.3891

The average scores for test 1, 2 and 3 are 6.93, 7.24 and 6.86 respectively. There is no statistically significant difference among the three tests as determined by One-Way ANOVA ($F(2, 315) = .753, p = .472$). In sum, results from One-Way ANOVA show that these three tests are not statistically different and thus can be used as pre-, post- and delayed tests in Phase 2 of the study.

3.6.5 Think-aloud procedure

Chamot (2001) suggests that both qualitative and quantitative measures should be used in order to observe effects of strategy instruction on language learning outcomes. Therefore, in addition to the reading tests, the think-aloud procedure was used in Phase 2 of the study to explore how learners' strategic processing of English texts developed over the intervention period.

Think-aloud procedure is a process of verbalizing out loud one's thinking process while performing a task (Chamot, 2001; Hartman, 2001; Mackey & Gass, 2005). For instance, the process of thinking aloud when reading could involve externalizing one's

feelings or thoughts when answering questions, solving problems and reflecting on one's own performance (Hartman, 2001).

In language learning, think-aloud procedure can be used in examining learners' approaches to certain academic tasks and diagnosing learners' problems in those tasks. In addition, it can be particularly useful in teaching learners how to use learning strategies. For example, teachers can demonstrate to their learners, via thinking aloud, the strategic processes involved in completing learning tasks. In this sense, think-aloud demonstration of strategies can provide opportunities for learners to observe how their teacher approaches academic tasks and reflects on their own thinking process (Hartman, 2001). Furthermore, think-aloud procedure can be a useful research tool as it can offer insights into learners' task-specific strategy use (Chamot, 2001, 2005; Macaro, 2006; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Although think-aloud procedure can provide rich insights into learners' cognitive processes, it is also necessary to be aware of some factors that may affect think-aloud responses. Chamot (2001), for example, points out that the presence of a researcher during think-aloud and the artificial situation created by the research may influence how learners perform on a given task. Likewise, Hartman (2001) observes that factors such as learners' familiarity with the think-aloud procedures and task content, their beliefs as well as their cultural background can make them feel hesitant in revealing their thoughts. In their discussion of think-aloud procedures used to study self-regulated learning Hu and Gao (2017) note that think-aloud procedures may not capture complete and accurate thinking processes. Therefore, in order to enhance the accuracy of research evidence and strengthen research rigor, it is necessary to carefully design the think-aloud tasks and provide research participants with training and clear instructions before actual think-aloud administration. In sum, when these issues are properly addressed, think-aloud procedure can be considered a reliable and effective method in eliciting learners' thinking processes and strategy use (Chamot, 2005; Gu, 2014; Hu & Gao, 2017; Zhang & Zhang, 2020).

3.6.5.1 Conducting reading think-aloud sessions

A total of 24 think-aloud sessions were conducted in Phase 2 of the study, 12 sessions before and 12 sessions after the intervention, to explore learners' strategic approaches to English reading. The think-aloud sessions were also used to track how these approaches change over the intervention period among learners in the intervention and comparison classes. Six learners from the intervention class and six learners from the comparison class participated in the pre- and post- intervention reading think-aloud sessions. These learner

participants were grouped into low-scores and high-score groups based on their pre-intervention test scores. Among the six learners in each class, three learners whose pre-test scores were between 0-5 represented low-score learners while those who scored between 11-15 represented high score learners.

Texts used in the reading think-aloud sessions for both phases were expository and of general-interest topics. They were 175-190 words long. I selected each text based on the types and lengths of English passages learners would encounter in their English coursebook. These selected texts were first profiled using VocabProfilers (Cobb, n.d.) to ensure that vocabulary levels of both texts were relatively comparable. Both texts were also reviewed by the three teachers to ensure that the texts' difficulty levels matched learners' proficiency levels. In addition, think-aloud texts were piloted with two Thai EFL learners to estimate time taken for each session before actual administration in both phases.

All think-aloud participants were given preparation sessions (two hours) to learn about think-aloud procedures at the beginning of the semester. In these preparation sessions, I informed learners about the process of the think-aloud session and demonstrated to learners how to verbalize their thinking process while reading an English text. Learners were then offered opportunities to practice thinking aloud with sample texts until they felt comfortable with the process. All questions about think-aloud procedures were clarified in the preparation sessions.

Both the pre-and post-intervention reading think-aloud sessions followed the same procedures. At the beginning of each session, after giving learners instructions and answering questions learners had about think-aloud procedures, I gave learners a short expository text to read and think-aloud. Texts used in the pre-and post-intervention think-aloud sessions were "Gifted students" and "Ig Nobel Prize" (see 6.3.1 and 6.3.2). Markings were provided at the end of each sentence of both texts to remind learners to verbalize their thoughts while reading.

In addition, learners were also reminded that they could take their time and verbalize their thoughts either in English or Thai. All participants chose Thai. During each session, I took notes and reminded learners to say their thoughts out loud with prompts such as "what are you thinking?", "what is going through your mind?", and "please keep talking" when I noticed a lapse in learners' verbalization. At the end of each session, I asked learners for further explanations on noted incidences. Each reading think-aloud session lasted 30-40 minutes. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

Table 3.11
Schedules of the Pre-and Post-Intervention Reading Think-aloud Sessions

Classes	Names*	Dates for participation in the pre-intervention reading think-aloud	Dates for participation in the post-intervention reading think-aloud
Intervention	1. Aon	16/05/2018	3/08/2018
	2. Mind	5/06/2018	2/08/2018
	3. GI	16/05/2018	1/08/2018
	4. Som	8/06/2018	1/08/2018
	5. Naa	23/05/2018	1/08/2018
	6. NN	23/05/2018	3/08/2018
Comparison	7. FL	24/05/2018	2/08/2018
	8. Mon	24/05/2018	2/08/2018
	9. NT	24/05/2018	6/08/2018
	10. JB	31/05/2018	6/08/2018
	11. Emma	31/05/2018	7/08/2018
	12. Noon	31/05/2018	7/08/2018

*Names are pseudonyms chosen by the participants

3.7 The intervention

This research proposes strategy-based instruction as a means to promote LA in a Thai secondary school English classroom. In Phase 2 of the study, I conducted the intervention in the reading modules of the English for Daily Life III class for M.5 learners. The purposes of the intervention were to both develop learners' capacity for autonomous learning and enhance their reading proficiency.

Strategy-based instruction was chosen as a means to develop LA in the intervention phase of the study not because it provides hard-and-fast prescriptive autonomous learning techniques to learners, but because of its potential in developing autonomous learners who understand their own learning process and can strategically plan, monitor and evaluate their learning to achieve their learning goals. Instead of treating the learning process as an implicit element in classroom lessons, strategy instruction allows the learning process to be made visible to learners through explicit discussions and modeling of the strategic process involved in task completion and learning management. In other words, strategy-based instruction provides opportunities for learners to gradually cultivate essential knowledge and skills to

plan, monitor and evaluate their learning with initial guidance and continuing support from teachers. This section outlines the structure of the lesson plans used in the intervention phase of the study.

3.7.1 Content and structure of lesson plans

The intervention consisted of 10 lessons which were taught to learners in the intervention class across the 10-week intervention period. The purpose of implementing strategy lessons in the intervention class was to introduce learners to strategies they can use for planning, monitoring and evaluating their English reading as well as solving problems that they may encounter in their reading tasks. Strategies included in the intervention lessons were selected based on course content, course objectives and findings from learner group interviews in the exploratory phase. The original strategy list included setting goals, preparing for reading, taking notes, imagery, self-questioning, making inferences, analyzing text structures, summarizing and goal checking.

The list was presented to Sumet, Vicky and Sara. The teachers were asked to consider whether the strategies selected would be suitable for learners and the content of the English in Daily Life III course. While the three teachers approved of the original list, they suggested that analyzing text structure could be omitted because this strategy has already been taught in other compulsory English courses. The strategy list was further refined and lesson plans were constructed based on the teachers' suggestions.

However, I decided to add another session on guessing word meanings from word parts to the original lesson plans after the fifth week of the intervention. This decision was based on learners' requests and feedback for the course given directly to me in class and through learners' weekly learning journals. Table 3.12 presents the finalized version of the lesson plans used in the intervention.

Table 3.12
The Lesson Plans

Weeks	Lessons	Descriptions
1	Setting goals	Setting goals for English learning and reading
2	Preparing for reading	Previewing, using background knowledge and making predictions before reading
3-4	Taking notes	Taking notes from long expository texts
5	Imagery	Using imagery in reading folktales and fables

6	Self-questioning	Using self-questioning to help understand a short story
7	Making inferences	Making inferences using contextual clues
8	Guessing word meanings from word parts	Using prefixes, suffixes and other clues to guess word meanings
9	Summarizing	Summarizing main ideas from expository texts
10	Checking goals	Checking goals set in week 1

3.7.2 Lesson structure

The structure of each lesson was guided by the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) model for strategy instruction (Chamot, 2009). The original CALLA instructional model comprises five recursive steps namely, preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and expansion (see 2.9.4.2). However, while the preparation, practice, evaluation and expansion stages of the intervention lesson followed the CALLA instructional model, an adaptation was made in the presentation stage in which the teacher presents and models learning strategies to learners. In the intervention lessons, this presentation stage was adapted to “exploring the target strategies”. The presentation stage in the CALLA model involves the teacher informing learners what the strategies are, when to use them and why and modeling how to use strategies by thinking aloud. I made an adaptation to this stage by including learners in the discussions of strategies, when to use them and why. I also involved learners in the think-aloud strategy demonstration. Table 3.13 presents the structure of a strategy lesson implemented during the intervention.

Table 3.13

Structure of the Intervention Lessons

Stages	Time	Purposes
1. Preparation	5 minutes	To activate learners’ background knowledge about the target strategies through class discussion or warm-up activities
2. Exploring the target strategies	10 minutes	To discuss and model the target strategies
3. Practice	20 minutes	To practice the target strategies on reading tasks
4. Evaluation	10 minutes	To evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used and discuss problems encountered

5. Expansion	5	To review the lesson, assign homework and discuss how the learned strategies can be applied to homework and other learning tasks
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The following section explains each instructional stage of the intervention lessons in detail. An example of an intervention lesson and learning materials can be found in Appendix 7.

3.7.2.1 Preparation

Each intervention lesson began with short classroom discussions about the target strategies. After presenting the strategy names on the board, I asked learners to share with the class what they thought the strategies were, how the strategies could be useful in reading and whether learners have used the strategies before. Alternatively, learners were introduced to the target strategies through warm-up activities which required their strategic problem-solving skills. While doing these activities, learners were encouraged to discuss with their peers what they would do to solve the presented problems. The purposes of using problem-solving activities in the preparation stage was to encourage learners to analyze the problems and to raise their awareness of their own strategies. These warm-up activities also provided learners opportunities to learn about other strategies from discussing the tasks with their peers.

After week 4 (see 5.2.4.2), the preparation stage also involved short reflective classroom discussions about issues which emerged from learners' weekly learning journals. Before moving to the next stage, I informed learners of the lesson objectives and what learners would achieve at the end of the lesson.

3.7.2.2 Exploring the target strategies

The second stage was to explore the target strategies. This stage involved classroom discussions of the target strategies and the modeling of how to use the target strategies in reading. First, I introduced the target strategies and involved learners in discussing the strategies in terms of what they are, why and when they can be used to facilitate reading. This step set up a condition for learners to actively construct their own understandings of the target strategies through exchanging ideas with peers and the teacher. My role in this stage, therefore, was not to give lectures on what the target strategies were, but to facilitate learners' explorations of rationales for using the target strategies and to give additional input about the target strategies via think-aloud demonstration.

While class discussion in what strategies are, why and when to use them stimulates learners' declarative and conditional knowledge about strategies, the think-aloud further stimulates learners' procedural knowledge of how strategies can be used in reading. The purpose of think-aloud was to demonstrate to learners how the target strategies can be used to facilitate the reading process and solve problems in the given reading tasks. In other words, the think-aloud made visible to learners what went on in my head when I read.

Apart from solving problems in reading, the think-aloud also demonstrated how learners can use the target strategies for metacognitive functions. During each think-aloud demonstration, I engaged learners in discussing how the target strategies can be used when planning before reading, monitoring for comprehension while reading and evaluating whether comprehension has been achieved after reading. This instructional stage aims to make the process of exploring strategies interactive to learners. Therefore, during the think-aloud, I would sometimes make intentional mistakes, verbalize my confusion and frustration, ask myself aloud how the problems could be solved and ask learners for strategic solutions to the problems. In this case, instead of listening to my think-aloud, learners were not only directly involved in the process of strategic problem-solving but also in the process of regulating negative emotions caused by difficulties in reading. In sum, the think-aloud modeled both cognitive skills in using strategies to tackle specific problems in reading and metacognitive skills in regulating the overall reading process.

3.7.2.3 Practice

In this stage, learners practiced using the strategies they learned in groups, in pairs or individually. Materials used for practices were worksheets adapted from the course's workbook. Apart from worksheets, games and other creative activities, such as quiz and drawing, were also used to stimulate learners' practice of strategies learned in class. I walked around class during the practice stage to monitor learners' practices and evaluate their understandings of the strategies. I also answered questions, gave more examples of how to use the strategies learned and gave feedback to learners.

3.7.2.4 Evaluation

After strategy practice, I led learners into the evaluation stage in which learners discussed what they learned, what they did well, what their difficulties in reading and using the target strategies were, as well as how the strategies they learned helped facilitate their reading.

3.7.2.5 Expansion

At the end of class, I assigned homework and reminded learners to use strategies learned in class with their homework to consolidate their understandings of the strategies. In addition, learners were also encouraged to experiment using the strategies in other classes and in their independent learning activities. I also reminded learners to document and reflect on their learning experiences in the weekly learning journals.

In order to minimize interference from other factors on research findings, intervention class learners were told not to share learning materials used in all intervention lessons with their peers in the comparison class.

3.8 Data analysis

3.8.1 Statistical analysis of reading test scores

Quantitative data from the reading tests were subjected to statistical analysis in SPSS version 25. The purpose of the analyses was to evaluate changes in learners' reading test scores on the pre-, post- and delayed reading tests and compare the scores of learners from both classes after the intervention. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted in SPSS to compare test scores of learners from both classes. The test results are presented in 6.2.

3.8.2 Coding

Coding is a form of data analysis which involves assigning meaning or labels to a portion of data for the purpose of capturing important content or essence of the data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). Miles et al. (2014) suggest that coding is used to condense qualitative data into meaningful and manageable categories for deeper analysis. In addition to facilitating data organization and retrieval, coding also assists in constructions of themes and patterns.

3.8.2.1 Data preparation for coding

After data collection, transcripts of class observation videos, audio transcripts of teacher and learner interviews, weekly learning journals and transcripts of reading think-aloud sessions were processed before coding in NVivo version 12.

The process of data preparation before coding involved turning written data from learners' weekly learning journals into word documents. Videos from class observations and audio files from all interviews and reading think-aloud sessions were transcribed word-for-

word. During data preparation, I read all transcripts and watched all class observation videos several times to formulate general understandings of the research data before coding. All processed files were stored in password-protected digital folders according to data sources. Each folder was then subsequently imported to NVivo for coding. Although data coding in this research was an iterative and non-linear process which varied slightly depending on data type, it was guided by the following general steps.

3.8.2.2 Coding process

Step 1: First, after importing data sets into NVivo, I reviewed the data several times, took notes of interesting and recurring incidents and turned them into free nodes (codes). Free nodes or codes were created in forms of short phrases or words. The main purpose of this step was to obtain initial impressions from the data.

Step 2: After creating free nodes based on the data, I then reviewed the data set again for the second time and created more free nodes with specific focus on the research questions. Using research questions to guide coding in the second step provided a framework for data analyses and allowed me to focus on data that were relevant to the study's research questions.

Step 3: Free nodes were compiled to create lists of codes. At this stage, all codes were categorized into meta-codes which contained several sub-codes. This process provided structure for the code lists and revealed hierarchical relationships among sub-codes within a code list.

Step 4: Adjustments were also made in the fourth step to remove repetitive codes and to ascertain that the code lists were essence-capturing while maintaining adequate space for interesting data-driven nuances to emerge.

Step 5: The fifth step was to revisit the data, and revise the code lists by adding, removing, merging and rearranging codes as the process of data analysis continued. I continued revising the code lists until I could identify conceptual unity from the codes and feel that the codes could satisfactorily capture the essence of the data.

Step 6: The finalized code lists were turned into themes for data presentation.

Figure 3.2 summarizes the data coding process.

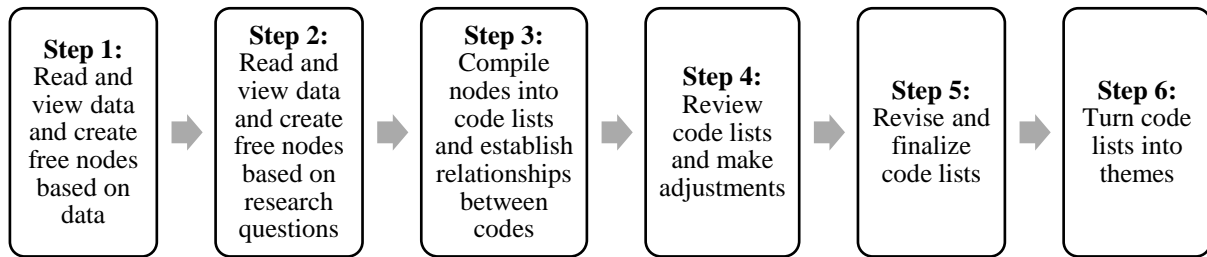


Figure 3.2. Coding process

3.9 Validity and reliability

Research validity refers to the accuracy of the research while reliability refers to the consistency of the research approach (Gibbs, 2007). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that validity and reliability can be addressed through careful and ethical processes of data collection, data analysis, data interpretations, and findings presentation. This section details procedures used to ensure validity and reliability of this research.

3.9.1 Validity

Several procedures which can be used to check research validity include triangulating findings from different data sources, member checking with research participants, providing thick descriptions of research settings, clarifying the researchers' bias, presenting contrary information, spending prolonged periods of time in the research context, using peer review and using external auditors (Creswell, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Before arriving to conclusions, I triangulated findings from multiple data sources. For instance, findings on learners' metacognitive regulation of their learning and their attitudes towards autonomous learning were obtained from weekly learning journals and learner group interviews. Likewise, conclusions on learners' development of reading proficiency were drawn from a combination of their pre-, post- and delayed reading test scores as well as their reading think-aloud sessions.

Validity of this research is also enhanced by my prolonged engagement in the research context. I spent four months (November 2017 – February 2018) collecting data in the first phase and five months (May – September 2018) in the intervention phase. During the nine-month period at the school, I was able to gain in-depth understandings about the research setting, the participants, course designs and how English classes were conducted at the school. I also established good working relationships with teachers, learners and other

administrative staff. This prolonged engagement provided opportunities for me to observe what went on in the research context and compare data from the participants with my own observations.

My time at the school also provided opportunities for member checking. At the end of both phases, I presented transcripts and summaries from class observation notes and discussed preliminary findings with the teacher and learner participants. Participants' confirmations of the transcripts helped determine data accuracy and enhance the overall validity of the findings.

In addition to triangulation, prolonged engagement in the research context and member checking, an audit trail was also used to enhance research validity. Throughout the data collections and data analysis process, I logged my research activities and recorded my ideas, reflections, questions, and other comments in the form of analytic memos. These analytic memos helped me trace the research procedures, verify decisions made in each step of the research and check how my interpretations evolved over time. I also reported my research progress and discussed research findings with my supervisors who helped provide constructive questions on the research procedures and critically examined reports from each stage of the research.

3.9.2 Reliability

Reliability measures involve transcription checking, checking consistency of codes, including other researchers and cross-checking codes from different members on the research team (Gibbs, 2007).

Throughout the data collection and data analysis processes, I listened to all recorded interviews, watched all class observation videos and re-read all transcripts to check for accuracy of the transcripts. This process allowed me to be familiar with the data. In addition, during the coding process, I created definitions of each code in the code lists and documented all definitional updates of all codes in NVivo. As the analyses progressed, my understandings of data evolved, and so did the codes and their definitions. Definitions of early codes were modified to accommodate new interpretations. Thus, constantly checking codes and documenting every update on code definitions and structures of code lists helped guard against inconsistencies between codes generated at different stages of data analysis.

I coded all interview, classroom observation and think-aloud transcripts three times; immediately after the sessions, one month after the sessions and three months after the sessions. In addition, a second coder (a PhD colleague with experience in learning strategy

research) were asked to code four think-aloud transcripts to ensure consistency of the findings. I presented the code list (see Appendix 8) to the second coder, clarified the description of each code, explained the process of coding and trained the coder how to use the code list to code the think-aloud data. The percentage of inter-coder agreement was assessed in NVivo based on the following method (QSR International, 2018).

Percentage agreement is the percentage of the file's content where the two users agree on whether the content may be coded at the node. For example, if the file is a document with 1000 characters, where:

- 50 of these characters have been coded by both users
- 150 of these characters have been coded by only one of these users, and
- the remaining 800 characters have not been coded by either user

then the percentage agreement is calculated as $(800 + 50) \div 1000 = 85\%$.

The percentage of inter-coder agreement for the four transcripts are reported in Table 3.14.

Table 3.14

Percentage of Inter-coder Agreement

Transcripts	Percentage of inter-coder agreement
Transcript 1	81.94%
Transcript 2	90.97%
Transcript 3	92.46%
Transcript 4	88.74%

The average percentage of inter-coder agreement was 88.52%, indicating an acceptable degree of agreement between both coders (Miles et al., 2014). In addition, differences in both coders' analyses were discussed until the final agreement (100%) could be reached for each transcript.

3.10 Data presentation

3.10.1 Data translation

Unless indicated otherwise, extracts from interviews, class observations and learners' written weekly learning journals presented in the finding chapters were translated from Thai. After translating the data from Thai to English, I asked a Thai bilingual former colleague to back-translate the transcripts into Thai to check for translation accuracy. I met with the

colleague to compare the original transcripts with the back-translated versions and discussed the differences between the two versions. After some minor corrections, the colleague and I agreed that the translated transcripts could accurately represent the original data.

3.10.2 Transcription conventions

In presenting the data from interviews and class observations, I decided to include pauses, sentence fillers and explanations of non-verbal actions to represent the interactive nature of the spoken discourse in the interviews and classroom talks. In addition, some irrelevant information was omitted from the extracts to retain research focus and readability.

Table 3.15

Transcription Conventions

Symbols	Explanations
Uh..., Hmm...	Sentence fillers were used by the speakers to maintain continuity of their responses and the conversations.
[...]	Data irrelevant to the research focus are omitted from the extracts.
...	Pause indicators signal the speakers' pauses during the conversations with or without interruption from other speakers and when the speaker's voice trailed off at the end of their utterances.
[]	Explanations of non-verbal actions are presented in brackets to provide additional information and clarify the speaker's intention.
()	Explanations of interview responses or terms are presented in parentheses to clarify the speakers' points.

3.11 Ethical consideration

This research project is approved by Victoria University of Wellington's Human Research Committee (see Appendix 1).

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was granted from the school. Participants were provided with information sheets and consent forms detailing research procedures and their participant rights. I also coordinated with the school's English department throughout the data collection period in both phases of the study to ensure that the school and its staff members were well-informed about the research procedures.

Research data were stored in password-protected digital folders to ensure participants' anonymity and confidentiality. All names presented in this research are pseudonyms selected by the participants.

3.12 Summary of collected data

Phases/ dates	Research Questions	Research Instruments	Data collected	Data analysis methods/ tools
Phase 1 Exploratory Nov 2017 – Feb 2018	1. How is LA perceived and promoted by teachers in the Thai EFL secondary school context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher interviews (with 3 teachers) • Class observations (13 sessions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 interview transcripts (3 main + 4 follow ups) • 13 videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding/ NVivo (version 12)
	2. How do classroom learning experiences prepare learners for autonomous learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner group interviews (with 2 groups/ 12 learners in total) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 transcripts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding/ NVivo (version 12)
Phase 2 Intervention May-Sep 2018	3. To what extent does the intervention affect learners’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner group interviews (4 groups) • Weekly learning journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 interview transcripts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding/ NVivo (version 12)

metacognitive regulation of their learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 246 journal entries over 10 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same data set as research question 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same data set as research question 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding/ NVivo (version 12)
4. What are the perceived effects of the intervention on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same data set as research question 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same data set as research question 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding/ NVivo (version 12) 	
5. Does the training in reading strategies affect learners' reading?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-, Post-, Delayed reading tests (30 learners from the intervention class/ 32 learners from the comparison class) • Pre-and post-intervention think-aloud (6 learners from the intervention class and 6 learners from the comparison class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 think-aloud transcripts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MANOVA/ SPSS (version 25)

Chapter 4 The Exploratory Phase

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from Phase 1 of this research which aims at generating understandings of the present research context in relation to developing LA. This exploratory phase of the study addresses the following research questions:

Research question 1: How is LA perceived and promoted by teachers in the Thai secondary school context?

Research question 2: How do classroom learning experiences prepare learners for autonomous learning?

Research question 1 examines the teachers' perceptions and practices to promote LA in their English classrooms. Findings on teachers' perceptions of LA were obtained from seven sessions (three main sessions and four follow-up sessions) of audio-recorded teacher interviews. All teacher interview sessions were conducted in Thai (see 3.6.2.1 for the schedule of teacher interviews). In addition to perceptions of LA, research question 1 also investigate how the perceptions influence practice in the Thai secondary school classrooms. Thirteen teaching sessions from the three teachers' classes were observed and video recorded to find out whether and how the teachers support LA through their classroom practices (see 3.6.1 for the schedule of class observations in Phase 1). All class observation videos were transcribed for further analyses.

For research question 2, audio-recorded group interviews were conducted with 16 learners from two classes to find out about their experiences in learning English (see 3.6.2.2 for the schedule of learner group interviews in Phase 1). Learner group interviews in Phase 1 focused on exploring learners' perceptions of their English classes, their English proficiency, teacher-learner relationships in class and teacher-learner roles and responsibilities in learning.

All audio files from teacher interviews, learner group interviews and video files from class observations were transcribed and coded in NVivo version 12 to discover emerging themes for each research question (see 3.8.2.2 for details on data coding procedures). Finally, findings from teachers' and learners' perspectives were triangulated in order to obtain detailed understandings of the research context in relation to developing LA. All interview excerpts presented in this research are translated from Thai while some of the excerpts from class observations were presented in their original forms. All names presented in this report are pseudonyms chosen by the participants. The researcher is represented by the letter R in all

interview excerpts.

4.2 How is LA perceived and promoted in the Thai secondary school context?

This section reports teachers' perceptions of LA in language learning. The findings include teachers' definitions of LA, their perceptions of roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners in fostering LA, and teachers' perceptions of what can constrain and support LA development in their classrooms.

4.2.1 Teachers' definitions of LA

The teachers referred to LA as learning independently on one's own and learning in collaboration with others. This kind of learning, according to the teachers' views, is based on learners' genuine curiosity, willingness to make conscious effort to learn and abilities to sustain their own motivation in pursuing their learning goals.

Table 4.1
Teachers' Definitions of LA

Themes	Numbers of recordings	Numbers of references
Learning independently and/or in collaboration with others based on one's styles and preferences	1	1
Learning based on one's personal curiosity, aspirations and motivation	3	8

Teacher Sumet, for example, viewed LA as a process of learning which can take place independently and interdependently depending on individual learner's competence levels and their preferred learning styles.

Sumet: Learner autonomy? It is that each learner has their own learning style. In my opinion, this is because of their different levels of competence and their skills to acquire knowledge. Some students might enjoy learning in class with friends and from friends while some might prefer studying alone. So, learner autonomy is a diverse concept. It can be learning from or with other people as well as learning on one's own.

In comparison, Sara and Vicky defined LA as learning which is influenced by learners' curiosity, personal aspiration and motivation.

Sara: Learner autonomy means learning that comes from determination and curiosity. Learners have to have the need to learn. They can start by learning in class with the teacher's guidance and then they will be able to further their learning beyond what's taught in classrooms.

R: You mean that personal determination is very important because it leads learners to learn more by themselves?

Sara: Yes. If they don't want to know and we tell them to find knowledge on their own, it becomes learning just to fulfill teachers' objectives. Once they want to know, they will be able to get much more than classroom knowledge. They will be able to learn more by themselves. That is learner autonomy.

Similarly, Vicky also mentioned that LA is realized when learners are motivated by their needs to acquire more knowledge and achieve their personal goals.

Vicky: They want to know. They must have that eagerness to know. We need to consider what kind of motivation they have, what drives or even pressures them to want to know more and go forward. They need to have something that drives them whether it be the need to pass the university entrance exams, getting into a good career or being able to talk in English. There needs to be a drive.

The teachers viewed LA as a desirable educational concept because it enables learners to actively create more learning opportunities for themselves and encourages them to become life-long learners. This view is shared by Sumet and Sara.

Sumet: It is very important because no matter how good we are as teachers, learning won't take place if learners don't want to find opportunities for themselves to learn.

Sara: Learner autonomy is important because what is taught within the four walls of a classroom according to the educational indicators is supposed to provide the learners with only basic knowledge. They should want to learn more and know more. It could start from what they are interested in or what they are already good at. Then they go and explore further. In fact, being able to learn autonomously is very important.

The teachers emphasized that LA is important because it encourages learners to continue learning and pursue their personal goals without support from teachers.

Vicky: Teachers won't be there for them forever. Everyone, learners or teachers, has different goals in life. One teacher will be in her learners' lives for a short and limited period of time. So, the rest depends on the learners' effort. They can keep learning on their own.

Findings indicate that the teachers had different views of the concept. While Sumet defined LA as modes of learning and learner preferences, Sara and Vicky characterized LA as learners' personal attributes. Despite these differences, all three teachers' perspectives towards LA are positive. They agreed that LA is important for their learners' education.

4.2.2 Perceptions of roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners

The teachers viewed developing LA as a process that involves teacher-learner collaboration. They identified their roles in promoting LA as a facilitator, a motivator and a knowledge provider. They thought that their learners' responsibilities should include acquiring fundamental English knowledge and creating learning opportunities outside the classrooms.

4.2.2.1 Teachers' roles and responsibilities

First of all, the teachers agreed that their main responsibility is not to tell learners what to do, but to provide guidance and support. The teachers also noted that as a facilitator of learning, they should be sensitive to learners' diverse needs and allow learners a certain degree of freedom to decide what to learn.

Table 4.2
Teachers' Perceptions about their Roles and Responsibilities

Themes	Numbers of recordings	Numbers of references
Teacher as a facilitator	7	53
Teacher as a motivator	7	50
Teacher as a knowledge provider	7	35

Vicky: Learners should be free to create their pathways to their goals based on their preferences. They should be able to do whatever they enjoy doing. Our job is to facilitate this by giving them some freedom. We need to know that each learner is different and that they may want different things. We need to know what their needs or inner thoughts are and then build our lessons from those. If they don't like certain learning activities, they can decide to work on something else. We should not force them to do this or that.

Vicky also pointed out that by assuming the role of a facilitator rather than a lecturer, teachers can help learners develop understandings of their own learning process which, in her view, can influence autonomous learning.

Vicky: When learners participate and make decisions for themselves, they get more active and enthusiastic about learning and this kind of process will stick in their memory. We need to get them engaged because the more effort they put in, the deeper their understanding of the learning process will be. I think sometimes we need to step back and let them take the lead.

The second role the teachers thought they should be taking in fostering LA is to motivate learners to learn and use English inside and outside the classroom. The teachers believed that they could motivate their learners to use and learn English by focusing on learners'

participation and engagement in classrooms instead of focusing on achieving accuracy. This view is reflected in Sara's comment.

Sara: I made use of time in my classroom. I told them to speak more English in class and pick one of the three days we meet each week as an "English Day". I made an agreement with them that we speak English as much as we can on that selected day. This practice is a way to motivate them to keep on learning and using English [...] Complete accuracy is not the focus of my teaching. I want to motivate my learners to speak up and express what's on their minds. I want them to try to speak or use English. Just try first. Being right or wrong is not the main focus because we can always fix that.

In addition to being a facilitator and a motivator of learning, the teachers stated that they should also be a knowledge provider. This role includes teaching and making sure that their learners acquire essential fundamental English knowledge. All teachers stressed that basic skills in reading, listening, writing and speaking are prerequisites for autonomous language learning.

Vicky: If the goal is to encourage them to be autonomous, we need to know where to start from and what the following steps are. Spelling, pronunciation, reading, listening...we need to check what they have already mastered or what their background knowledge levels are. Then we can build on their background knowledge. This will strengthen their knowledge foundations. I think having a strong foundation is really important in learning English because if they have a solid foundation, they will be able to go on autonomously.

The teachers explained that their role as a knowledge provider further includes designing and selecting learning activities, deciding which aspects of learning or skills to focus on in class, as well as assigning out of class learning activities for their learners.

Sumet: We also design tasks and activities for our learners to help them learn better. We need to consider whether those tasks will contribute to their learning in a way that we need them to.

Teachers' responses point to the fact that in order to help their learners to be autonomous, they need to facilitate learners' decisions in determining learning agendas, motivate learners to use and learn English and ensure that their learners have established strong fundamental knowledge of English. In other words, findings suggest that the teachers perceived themselves responsible for preparing their learners to learn autonomously by both supporting and directing their learners' learning. Teachers' perceptions of how to foster LA in their classrooms are presented in 4.3.

4.2.2.2 Learners' roles and responsibilities

The teachers also shared their views about learners' responsibilities in learning. According to the teachers, learners should acquire fundamental English knowledge in class and actively create opportunities for themselves to learn and improve their English skills outside of class.

Table 4.3

Teachers' Perceptions about Learners' Roles and Responsibilities

Themes	Numbers of recordings	Numbers of references
Pay attention to learning in class	1	1
Actively seek learning opportunities outside of class	5	11

First, the teachers pointed out that understandings of grammatical rules and basic language structures can serve as a foundation for learners' future autonomous learning endeavors.

Vicky: Before they can go out and learn on their own, they need to pay attention to what they learn in class. They need to make sure that they get the core concepts such as grammar and structures first. Then they should be able to apply these concepts to new situations. That's it.

That's the focus of my teaching. [...] Once their basic knowledge of English reaches a certain point, it will be easier for them to improve their proficiency by themselves.

Apart from learning grammar rules in class, learners were also expected to actively create learning opportunities for themselves outside of class, using available mobile technology and online learning resources.

Sumet: These days there are smartphones, websites and other useful technology. They need to use technology to support themselves, making learning happen. [...] They should integrate technology into their studies.

Vicky: There're plenty of mobile applications that learners can use to practice their English in their free time. I asked them to try some out and share with their friends how they learned from those apps. I think, if they can do this, they're independent learners.

The teachers' perceptions of learners' roles and responsibilities imply their expectations for their learners to be active and responsible for the process of their own learning. These expectations also align with their overall perceptions of LA as a learner-initiated and teacher-supported approach to learning. It can be concluded from the interview findings that although LA is believed to be originated within learners, the process of developing LA is viewed as an interdependent process between teachers and learners. While expecting their learners to be active agents of their own learning, the teachers still report feeling very much responsible for providing them with the necessary language knowledge base and guidance on choosing learning materials.

4.2.3 Perceived constraints of LA

When asked further what they perceived as constraining factors for LA development, the teachers mentioned three main types of constraints. These can be grouped into curriculum-related, learner-related and teacher-related factors, and all three can have negative impacts on the development of LA.

Table 4.4
Teachers' Perceived Constraints of LA

Themes	Numbers of recordings	Numbers of references
Curriculum-related factors	2	8
Learner-related factors	4	6
Teacher-related factors	3	5

4.2.3.1 Curriculum related factors

The teachers admitted that the need to follow curriculum requirements and achieve curriculum prescribed learning goals can give them pressure which further affects their decisions in promoting LA in their classrooms.

Sara: The problem is that I have these standards hovering over my head. Also, we teachers feel pressured by the standards and indicators because we are required to follow such and such which are mostly unclear and confusing. If we're not happy with what we do as teachers, how can we make our learners happy and want to learn? How can we make time to teach them to be independent?

In addition, the teachers mentioned that although autonomous learning and life-long learning was valued as one of the education goals, the curriculum did not provide teachers with clear guidelines on how to promote autonomous learning skills. They further note that the prescribed learning materials were not originally designed to model problem-solving skills which they perceived as a very important component for autonomous learning.

Vicky: The curriculum did not clearly tell teachers how to design tasks so that learners can really learn the skills they need for independent learning. There is no task in the book that pushes learners out of their comfort zone in learning. There is not enough pushing learners to solve problems in learning or using English on their own. So, it's on us teachers to create additional learning activities that would

emphasize problem-solving skills. It demands a lot of brainpower and time from us.

Teachers' interview responses suggest that the need to follow curriculum requirements, unclear instructional guidelines and the lack of suitable learning materials put a strain on their teaching and distracted them from focusing on fostering LA.

4.2.3.2 Learner-related factors

The teachers said that autonomous learning cannot occur if learners lack awareness of their learning objectives, their learning process and their own roles in managing their learning. They noted that most of their current learners did not seem to have a clear purpose for learning. To learners, English was viewed as another school subject which may not be relevant to their lives outside of school.

Sumet: It (promoting LA) can be difficult because most learners might not see the importance of learning, because their goals in learning are still vague.

R: They didn't know what they are learning English for?

Sumet: From what I observed, they didn't know how learning English can benefit their lives. At the moment, they have no idea why they're learning English.

Apart from not having objectives in learning, another learner-related constraining factor for LA, according to the teachers, is learners' lack of awareness of their learning process and their own roles and responsibilities within the process. This view is clearly explained in Vicky's comment.

Vicky: I think there are very few learners who could get a sense of what English language learning is and how they should go about doing it. To be honest, even if they know, I still doubt whether they could really use such knowledge to their advantage, though. Because learning is sort of like a trial and error process and they need a lot of experimentation before they can find their most effective ways of

learning. The point is that first, they need to be aware of their job in learning.

Based on the teachers' responses, although the teachers previously stated that developing LA demands effort from both teachers and learners, it appears that the teachers may not feel entirely confident in their learners' abilities to oversee their learning process.

4.2.3.3 Teacher-related factors

The teachers noted that certain methods of teaching may also constrain the learners' development of autonomous learning skills. They explained that the traditional teacher-fronted approach of teaching can limit learners' active participation and contribution in class. This view is captured in Sara's response.

Sara: I think it also depends on the teacher. For me, sometimes I might act like a lazy teacher who is not teaching. Sometimes I would tell them I had forgotten the answers. They will then try to find the answers by themselves. On the other hand, if we prepare everything or teach like we know everything, they will just sit and copy whatever we say or listen without thinking and then forget everything the minute they leave the room. It has to do with our ways of teaching, too.

Vicky shared the same view as Sara and observed that their reliance on the traditional teacher-led approach could have come from their limited exposure to other alternative teaching methods.

Vicky: I'd like to add that teachers are not always good at every teaching technique. We all have strengths and weaknesses and it would be better if we could share these with each other [...] If we had experienced teachers or researchers coming in often and sharing ideas on how to teach to promote autonomy or tell us whether what we've been doing is right or wrong, it would have helped our methods of teaching a lot. When we get professional help, we can then help our students.

Teachers' comments on factors that could constrain LA development suggest that developing LA in their current instruction context can be a challenging task for both teachers and learners.

4.3 Perceived means to promote LA

Despite the perceived challenges, the teachers stated that they could foster LA in their classrooms by encouraging learner decisions, promoting self-evaluation and teaching problem-solving skills.

Table 4.5
Teachers' Perceived Means to Promote LA

Themes	Numbers of recordings	Numbers of references
Encouraging learners' decisions	4	5
Encouraging self-evaluation	4	8
Teaching problem-solving skills	2	4

4.3.1 Encouraging learner decisions

The teachers believed that the first way to promote LA in their learners is to encourage learner decisions through in class learning and out of class assignments. They mentioned that allowing learners to make decisions for in class learning activities can stimulate learners' sense of responsibility and make them feel more in control of their learning. Learners' effective management of their learning, in turn, can benefit overall class management. This view is explained in Sara's comments.

- Sara:** I think one way to help them become responsible and autonomous is to let them think for themselves. For example, I sometimes let my learners choose how much time they need in completing certain activities in class. [...] I want them to feel that they can decide for themselves. I also want them to feel in control of how they are going to work in class. It reduces tension and the learners will feel happier.
- R:** How is being in control important?
- Sara:** First, they won't be stressed out and they would also be more punctual. Because they have decided themselves how much time they

need, they would have to be responsible for their own decisions and try to finish on time. This also helped my teaching. I could control my time more easily and the lesson would go as planned. The thing is that when they get to plan, they know how to manage their time better.

In addition, the teachers believed that learners could develop a sense of ownership of learning through their independent work outside of class. They maintained that out of class learning activities can provide opportunities for learners to practice making their own decisions, planning what to do and solving problems by themselves.

Vicky: One of the tasks I asked them to do was online chatting with foreigners. The idea behind it was to push them to use class knowledge in real life and decide for themselves what to do. [...] There were many things that they had to manage on their own such as social interactions, solving unexpected problems that came up, and deciding whether they should continue talking with certain people. All of those were their own decisions, their own process of thinking and learning. They would eventually know how to manage it.

These examples indicate the teachers' intentions to let their learners explore and manage their own learning process in class and on their own outside of class. The teachers' responses also reflect their perceptions that learners' decision-making is essential for learners' development of ownership in learning. Furthermore, they felt that teachers should encourage learners' decision-making and provide opportunities for learners to develop decision-making skills.

4.3.2 Encouraging self-evaluation

Apart from encouraging learner decisions, the teachers agreed that their learners should have the ability to evaluate themselves and their learning process. The teachers pointed out that self-evaluation can make learners aware of their problems in learning and help them determine future learning plans.

- R:** Previously you mentioned that you asked your learners to summarize what they learned in class. Why did you decide to use this activity? How does it help your learners to be autonomous?
- Sara:** I think it's very important if they want to be autonomous because first, they will know themselves and what's best for them in terms of learning. Initially, it's the teacher who plans what to learn in class. But this summarizing activity will let them think about themselves, what they know and are already good at, what they need help with or what their future actions should be.

While Sara's explanation highlights the importance of self-evaluation in helping learners become aware of their success and difficulties in learning, Vicky's comment suggests that self-evaluation can help learners make appropriate decisions for their learning.

- Vicky:** When learners have to choose something for themselves, they need to know what level their proficiency is. If they jump to using some advanced-level materials, they will certainly be discouraged. They need to evaluate themselves first and then choose suitable learning materials. If they can't do it, teachers have to help them.

What the teachers said in the interviews shows their understanding that in order for learners to independently make decisions for their own learning, they should be able to take an evaluative look at themselves and how they learn. In addition, the interview responses also reflect the teachers' perception of evaluation as a process that usually belongs to the teacher's domain of responsibilities and expertise. Therefore, the teachers perceived themselves as responsible for helping their learners develop self-evaluation skills.

4.3.3 Teaching problem-solving skills

Apart from encouraging more learner decisions and promoting self-evaluation, the teachers also believed that autonomous learners should be capable of solving problems in learning on their own. The teachers mentioned that learners can learn problem-solving skills through working on challenging learning activities.

Vicky: I push my learners to think and solve problems on their own. When I gave them assignments or projects, it was giving them a problem to work on. They need to find whatever means or strategies that work for the given tasks. I intended to press them to think how they could achieve the task goals by themselves.

Although Vicky firmly believed in the benefits of the problem-solving process, she noted that designing appropriately challenging learning activities for learners demands additional preparation from teachers. Furthermore, she commented that the curriculum guidelines the teachers had to follow were insufficient in helping teachers prepare their learners to be independent problem-solvers. As a result, the teaching and modeling of the problem-solving process and learning strategies have rarely been a part of regular classroom procedures.

Vicky: First, we need to analyze our learners and then we also have to think about which kind of activities will really push them or challenge them to think hard. The thing is that our curriculum and textbooks we use didn't have specific guidance or learning activities that will push the learners to solve problems. It demands a lot from us because we need to follow these (educational) indicators and be innovative at the same time. [...] At the moment, no one is telling us how and it's far from teachers' priorities and concerns.

Vicky's comment on teaching problem-solving skills represents the teachers' view that autonomous learning requires learners' abilities to independently manage their own difficulties in learning. However, at the same time, her comment also reiterates what the teachers perceived can constrain their attempts to promote LA.

4.3.4 Summary of teachers' perceptions of LA

Two conclusions can be drawn from teacher interviews regarding their perceptions of LA in the present research context. First, the findings reveal the teachers' conceptualization of LA and their overall favorable attitudes towards fostering LA in their classrooms. According to the teachers' understandings, LA is rooted in learners' genuine curiosity, willingness and ability to learn by themselves and for themselves with and without help from teachers. Moreover, the teachers also shared a common view in encouraging their learners to

be autonomous. They agreed that developing LA is a process that involves collaborative effort from teachers and learners. This understanding is clearly reflected in the teachers' comments on teacher-learner roles and responsibilities.

The second illuminating finding from teacher interviews came from their comments on means to develop LA. The teachers' suggestions on encouraging learner decisions, self-evaluation and problem-solving skills reflect their conceptualization of autonomous learners. To the teachers, autonomous learners are those who understand their learning process and are capable of planning for their learning, monitoring their progress, managing learning difficulties and evaluating their own learning outcomes. These two emerging understandings obtained from teacher interviews are significant because they indicate the teachers' acceptance of learners' active roles in directing their own learning and provide insights into the teachers' framework in developing LA in their classrooms.

While the first half of research question 1 investigates how LA is perceived in the present research context, the second half of this question continues to explore the extent to which LA was promoted in teachers' actual pedagogical practices. The following sections report findings from 13 sessions of class observations conducted across three different English classes in a Thai secondary school.

4.4 Classroom practices in promoting LA

English in Daily Life II classes taught by Vicky, Sara and Sumet were observed and video-recorded in Phase 1 of the study in order to find out how LA is promoted in the Thai secondary school context and how the teachers' classroom practices align with their understandings of LA. Therefore, class observation findings are reported based on the same themes identified from teachers' interview responses regarding their perceived means to promote LA. This section, thus, focuses on practices supporting learners' development of knowledge and skills in decision-making, self-evaluation and problem-solving.

All observed classes were large classes with 29-34 students sitting in rows, facing the whiteboard. This seating arrangement remained unchanged throughout the observation period. While Sara's classroom had a projector and a screen, the classrooms in which Sumet and Vicky taught were not as technologically equipped. Most sessions took place in classrooms without the use of multimedia equipment. There was only one session in which Vicky moved her class to the school's multimedia room and showed videos to her learners. It can be observed that classroom atmosphere in general was positive. When learners spoke up

or answered questions, the teachers often used compliments such as ‘very good’, ‘good job’, ‘give yourself a big hand’ and ‘well done’ to motivate their learners.

Class observations reveal two broad types of approaches to organizing classroom lessons. The first approach was found to be strictly textbook-based. This approach was characteristic of Sumet’s class. All learning activities used and sequencing of activities were from the textbook. No additional materials or learning activities were introduced.

The second approach, found in Vicky’s and Sara’s classes, was textbook-guided. The teachers selected topics from the textbook but did not strictly follow the prescribed lesson structure in the textbook. Vicky and Sara organized their own lesson sequences and occasionally used supplementary activities, exercises, videos and games in their classes. Despite the differences in terms of activity selection and sequencing, most lessons were delivered in the traditional teacher-fronted fashion, characterized by the frequent use of choral drills, explicit teaching of grammar points, memorizing and reciting vocabulary. In addition, the teachers used whole class activities more often than individual work, pair work and group work.

While the teachers emphasized the need to encourage learner decisions, self-evaluation and problem-solving in class to foster LA, class observations indicate that classroom procedures in general may offer few opportunities for learners to develop such skills. The following sections examine classroom practices in promoting learner decisions, self-evaluation and skills to solve problems in learning.

4.4.1 Decision-making in class

The teacher mentioned in the interviews that encouraging learners to make their own instructional decisions is a way to promote LA. This is because learners’ decisions can help develop a sense of responsibility and ownership of learning in learners. According to the teachers, learners should be able to select or negotiate with teachers what they want to learn and how they want to work on their self-selected learning activities. However, incidents representing negotiations and learner decisions did not occur frequently in all observed sessions. Table 4.6 presents types of decisions made in the observed classes.

Table 4.6
Decision-Making in Class

Themes	Number of video recordings	Number of references
Teacher decisions	26	121
Negotiated decisions	6	13

Class observations indicate that most of the instructional decisions for in class and out of class learning were made by the teachers. It was found that learners were only occasionally involved in classroom decision-making.

This section presents four illustrative examples of decision-making in the observed classes. While examples 4.1 and 4.2 present teacher decisions observed through teacher talk in classrooms, examples 4.3 and 4.4 represent negotiated decisions and learner decisions respectively. Examples 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4 are presented in their original English form. The classroom dialogue in example 4.3, however, was originally in Thai and subsequently translated to English for presentation.

Example 4.1: (Sumet's class, Day 2/ minutes 16.45-17.16)

In this first example, after reviewing new words in the lesson, Sumet decided that the next learning activity was to have his learners check if they have learned how to use new words correctly in context.

Sumet: Look at page 49, Self-test. I give you five minutes to finish item A and item B. Five minutes to complete the test.

The next excerpt provides another example of the teacher making decisions in class. In this example, Sara decided to use gap-filling as an activity for her learners to review new vocabulary items.

Example 4.2: (Sara Day 2/ minutes 31.26-33.16)

Sara: OK time's up and next is the most important activity to check your understanding about your drama vocabulary. I have some documents for you all. You can read the questions or the sentences and fill in the gaps with the words in your documents, OK? You have two papers. You have 10 minutes to write...to fill the gaps. OK, start.

The two classroom scenarios captured the typical process of teacher-made decisions found across all observed classes. It was found that the teachers often determined what to learn, selected learning activities, organized activity sequences and decided how much time should be used on each activity.

In contrast, learners seemed to have limited opportunities to negotiate with their teachers or make their own decisions on what to learn. Example 4.3 shows teacher-learner negotiation and example 4.4 presents data showing learners' opportunity to choose their learning activity.

Example 4.3: (Sumet's class, Day 4/ minutes 3.51-5.08)

In this session, Sumet asked his learners to form groups of three and create video-recorded conversations based on a lesson they learned in class. This dialogue between Sumet and his learners presents how decisions on a task were reached through negotiation.

- Sumet:** Your homework is to make a video about saying sorry. You have to make a group of three.
- M:** So, you mean we need to make up a situation?
- Sumet:** Correct. The situation has to be something about you saying sorry to someone.
- M:** How many situations, teacher?
- Sumet:** Up to you.
- J:** There could be as many as we want?
- Sumet:** One situation and each person has to have a role.
- M:** The conversation can be about anything, right?
- Sumet:** Right. You record it and send it to me.
- M:** Only one situation. When is this due?
- Sumet:** Let me think.
- M:** Can we submit it after the exam?
- Sumet:** No. One week before the exam.
- M:** The exam is next month.
- J:** Can we do it in pairs? I want to do it in pairs.
- Sumet:** What's that? Two people? OK. Whatever works for you.

The above example presents how learners negotiated with their teacher on the design of their assignment and the amount of time needed for this assignment. These kinds of

negotiations also occurred in Vicky's and Sara's classes. Overall, class observations reveal that negotiations between learners and their teachers in all observed classes were brief and infrequent.

Similarly, incidents of learner decisions were also infrequent and were only found in Sara's class as illustrated in the following example.

Example 4.4: (Sara's class, Day 2 part 1/ minutes 25.20-25.59)

This incident, showing learner decision making, took place during a dictation activity in Sara's class. In this activity, Sara put words into several different categories. Then she selected and read each word aloud for her learners to write down on their notebooks.

- Sara:** The last one. Are you ready?
- Class:** Yes.
- Sara:** OK, you can choose the category of word for the last one. Which category do you want to write on the board? Which one? People, physical things, concepts, or verbs?
- Class:** People, people.
- Sara:** People. OK?
- [Learners nodded]
- Sara:** People, people group. OK people group. And the last word is...people who watch a play...

Class observations clearly show that classroom agendas were determined by teachers. The teachers determined learning objectives, decided what to do in class and led their learners through completing a series of pre-planned learning activities. As shown in the examples, learner decisions mainly concern minor aspects of learning activities which may not significantly affect the overall process of their learning. It is also worth noting that incidents showing discussions of learners' responsibilities in making decisions for their own learning outside classrooms were not present in any of the observed sessions.

4.4.2 Self-evaluation in class

Class observation videos and transcripts of classroom dialogues were examined in order to explore how classroom practices supported learners' development of knowledge and skills in self-evaluation. Interestingly, although self-evaluation was viewed as vital to

learners' development of LA, there was only one incident found across all 13 observed sessions that represents a self-evaluation process.

Table 4.7
Self-Evaluation in Class

Themes	Number of video recordings	Number of references
Self-evaluation	1	1

Sara's attempt to engage her learners in self-evaluation took place after learner presentations. In the presentations, the learners were required to read selected parts of the play script, *Romeo and Juliet*. After reading the script, each group of learners was asked to select a scene from the script and perform their selected scenes in front of the class. After every group performed their selected scenes, Sara asked her learners to think about their own performances. The following classroom dialogue is presented in its original English form.

Example 4.5: (Sara's class, Day 4 part 3/ 27.19-29.29)

Sara: What is our problem? At first, the time. You had 20 minutes. It's not...it's not enough to remember...to memorize your script...to memorize your lines. OK. Then about your feeling...What about your feeling? It's like a straight line [speaking in monotone] "I die. Stop, stop. Don't do like that" Like this. It's like a...

N: Zombie.

[laughter]

Sara: Zombie. Yes. But I think it's not your big problem if you have enough time, OK? But now you have only 20 minutes, but you can do it. It's very good. Only 20 minutes you can do it. And next I think you can... you can do it by your feeling...by your heart and you can show your emotions. Before your presentation, before your performance, you will understand the dialogues...your lines. What does it mean? What about your feeling? Sad? Happy? Angry? or other feelings, OK? And next, we will study about this...about emotions. Today you did your best. Everyone is very good. OK. Thank you.

In this brief episode of evaluating her learners and guiding her learners to evaluate themselves, Sara neither specified which aspects of the presentation her learners should reflect on nor what criteria learners should apply when evaluating their own performances. It is possible to interpret that Sara might have expected her learners to take more time to memorize their lines and express a wider range of emotions during their presentations. However, since these expectations were not made salient in her comments, the most her learners could do in this situation was to listen to her evaluation and assume what was expected of them or what criteria they should evaluate their performances against. Moreover, it is also possible that Sara's use of English as a language for evaluation may have deterred her learners from fully engaging in self-evaluation.

It can be noted from the low occurrence of self-evaluation in class that self-evaluation may not have been viewed as an integral part of a learning cycle. If this assumption holds true, it can further offer a possible explanation for the absence of explicit modeling of the self-evaluation process in class. Because the self-evaluation process was not originally included in the lesson plans, the teachers may not have thought that it was necessary to engage their learners in discussing and reflecting on their own learning experience. Thus, the current practice in self-evaluation may not effectively prompt learners' awareness of their responsibility in evaluating themselves. The absence of self-evaluation also means that learners will not have tools to monitor their own performance. Therefore, it is likely that they have to rely greatly on their teachers for feedback on their learning.

4.4.3 Problem-solving in class

The teachers viewed autonomous learners as learners who could initiate learning opportunities and deal with problems in learning on their own. They believed teaching problem-solving skills in class could be a means to help their learners become autonomous. However, no incident representing the teaching of problem-solving skills was found in class observations.

Table 4.8
Problem-Solving Process in Class

Themes	Number of video recordings	Number of references
Teaching problem-solving process.	0	0

Despite the absence of classroom practice supporting learners' development of problem-solving skills, it is worth exploring how problems in learning were raised and how they were addressed in class. An analysis of classroom transcripts and videos indicate that learners would not raise their questions or express difficulties in learning unless they were invited by their teachers. Problems mentioned in class can be categorized as content-related and process-related. Content related problems were problems learners had about the language aspects of the lessons. Examples of content-related problems found in the observed class include difficulties in spelling words, matching words to meanings, using words in correct context and understanding the contents of lesson materials. The second type of problem was process-related. This kind of problem concerned process or strategies in achieving task goals. Common process-related problems raised in class were how to memorize vocabulary and how to summarize classroom lectures. Examples 4.6 and 4.7 show how each type of problem was addressed. These excerpts were originally in English and presented as is.

Example 4.6: (Sumet's class, day 1/ minutes 9.38-16.13)

In this session, Sumet began his reading lesson by playing an audio file of the story Snow White to his learners. In this example, learners appeared to have difficulties understanding the story they listened to.

Sumet: Do you understand when you listen to the story, students?

Learners: No.

Sumet: No?

[Learners mumbled mixed responses of yes and no]

Sumet: Uh, I would like you to read together again OK. Read together, one, two, three...

[Learners read aloud the story Snow White in their textbooks from the beginning to the end]

Sumet: Very good. I'll let you listen again one more time. Pay attention to words you couldn't pronounce and try to listen if your pronunciation is similar to the audio.

It is worth noting from this exchange that the learners' problem was not directly acknowledged. The teacher did not allow time to discuss what could have caused this problem or what learners can do to solve it. Instead, the teacher decided to proceed with

reading aloud. This activity was assigned to learners without explanations on how or why it could help resolve the learners' existing problem which is to understand the story. In this case, the learners had to follow the teacher's instruction and move to the next activity without carefully thinking about their problem from the previous activity.

It is possible to interpret the teacher's choice in using the reading aloud activity as a way to address learners' comprehension problem. However, if this is the case, the teacher's process of analyzing the problem and deriving a solution was not made known to his learners. The use of reading aloud may have led the teacher to believe that the learners' comprehension problem was solved. Yet, since the teacher did not clarify the purpose of this activity in relation to the learners' existing problem, it is unlikely that his learners would have understood the intended purpose of reading aloud as a solution to their comprehension problem. In other words, the teachers' decision to skip discussing the learners' problem and proceed immediately to the solution may have downplayed the importance of the problem-solving process in learning.

The next example, taken from Vicky's class, presents how a process-related problem was managed through teacher talk. At the beginning of the session, Vicky asked if her learners could remember words from their previous vocabulary assignment. Some learners mentioned that they could not remember the words they learned.

Example 4.7: (Vicky's class, Day 2/ minutes 2.24-4.03)

Vicky: And also, the new words that I assigned you to take photos of, do you remember?

Class: No.

NK: How to do?

Vicky: You can't remember. You took the photos yourself. Can you remember? Every day you walk to school. You see many things. Try to look at the things you walk past...you try to think in English...the word will be in your long-term memory. It's a very good way to remember vocabulary. You have to begin at the word around you...at your school...at your home. Everywhere you go...You see anything...you try to think in English and find the meaning. OK?

The learners' problem in this example seemed to be about finding ways to help them memorize words. The teacher responded to this problem by suggesting connecting words to their physical representation as a strategy for vocabulary retention. This brief mention of a strategy, although appearing useful, cannot guarantee that learners would pick up the strategy and develop strategic approaches to solving learning problems on their own. It can also be noted that the way problems are dealt with in Vicky's class shares a similar pattern with the one identified in Sumet's class. That is, when problems were raised by learners, the common subsequent step in both classes was for the teacher to suggest solutions.

The absence of opportunity to discuss problems in learning as a part of class procedures in general did not provide learning conditions within which problem-solving could be brought up and practiced in class. Since the process of problem-solving is intrinsically tied to problem-identification, the absence of one will inevitably affect the other. In conclusion, these examples indicate that although there were classroom incidents that could provide opportunities for learners to learn problem-solving skills, these opportunities were not fully exploited through classroom dialogues and practices.

4.5 Summary and discussion of research question 1

Findings from teacher interviews and class observations reveal a mismatch between the teachers' perceptions of LA and their classroom practices in developing LA. The teachers perceived LA as an important educational concept which can be promoted in their classrooms through means of encouraging decision-making, self-evaluation and strategic problem-solving. However, class observations reveal that actual classroom practices remained largely teacher-led and did not provide many opportunities for learners to be actively involved in their own learning process. Although the teachers appeared receptive to LA, their practices seemed to be constrained by their need to adhere to their syllabus and fulfill the curriculum requirements.

The teachers acknowledged in the interviews that the curriculum they used could have powerful influence on their classroom practice. Because their instructional context is exam-driven and outcome-oriented, the teachers may have felt obligated to prioritize teaching what would be on the exam over developing autonomous learning skills. This can explain why they focused on teaching language content such as grammar rules and structures of tenses in their classes.

Another possible explanation for the disparity between the teachers' perceptions and their classroom practices in developing LA may be that autonomous learning, although

included in the educational policy, was not made an explicit learning goal in the curriculum. As a result, there was no training or clear teaching guidelines to support the teachers' classroom practices. What LA is and how it can be promoted in classrooms depend on teachers' interpretations as evident in the teachers' different definitions of LA. The lack of conceptual clarity also made promoting LA appear overwhelming to the teachers. This is reflected in Vicky's comment of having to make extra time and effort to prepare learning materials that she believed could stimulate autonomous learning skills. Therefore, considering other competing priorities and the teachers' already busy work schedules, the unclear status of LA in the curriculum and the lack of professional support may make it difficult for the teachers to remain committed to their personal goals in promoting LA.

Despite the mismatch between teachers' perceptions and practices in developing LA, one encouraging finding is that the teachers seemed to show acceptance towards the idea of learners taking active roles in learning. The teachers' ideas to promote LA by encouraging learner decision-making and self-evaluation, as well as enhancing learners' strategic problem-solving skills, in essence, indicate their willingness to share control in the learning process and responsibilities in learning management with their learners. This shift of control and responsibilities, however, is not likely to take place automatically if learners are not prepared to assume responsibilities for their own learning.

In examining the potential of classroom instructions in promoting autonomous learning, Crabbe (1993) suggests that classroom dialogues about tasks and task design should promote learners' understandings about their own learning process and model autonomous learning behaviors. This means that classroom discourse about tasks should clarify to learners what the purposes of the activity are, as well as what problems are being presented and addressed in certain learning activities. Likewise, if learners were expected to learn autonomously, classroom activities should model how learners can carry out learning and tackle learning problems on their own.

The findings from class observations in Phase 1, in fact, indicate that the current classroom practice is unlikely to foster autonomy in any direct and observable way. This is due to the apparent lack of classroom discussions about learning and modeling of autonomous learning behaviors. Class observation findings reveal that the way lessons were structured did not provide conditions for discussions about learning to take place between teachers and learners and between learners and their peers. In order to fulfill their predetermined lesson objectives, the teachers often divided their lessons into several small activities for learners to complete back-to-back within the limited class time. This practice,

therefore, allowed little time for the teachers to clarify activity purposes and for learners to reflect on their learning experiences or discuss problems encountered in learning. The lack of discussions about learning problems also reduced opportunities for learners to engage in important autonomous learning skills that the teachers wished to promote, such as self-evaluation and problem-solving. In other words, class observation findings point to the fact that the teachers remained in control of the learning process. In addition, since the process of planning what to learn, monitoring learning progress and evaluating learning outcomes was not shared with or made transparent to learners through classroom dialogues and practices, it would be difficult for learners to recognize their roles and responsibilities in directing their learning.

While research question 1 explores perceptions and practice of LA in the present research context through teachers' perspectives, research question 2 investigates learners' English learning experiences and offers complementary understandings about LA in the research context.

4.6 How do classroom learning experiences prepare learners for autonomous learning?

The primary aim of research question 2: How do classroom learning experiences prepare learners for autonomous learning? is to further investigate how LA is promoted in the Thai secondary school context through learners' perspectives. Group interviews were conducted with 16 learners (nine females and seven males). The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and coded. This section reports findings from learner group interviews. All interview excerpts presented in the findings are translated into English for presentation.

4.6.1 Learners' general attitudes towards English

Findings from learner interviews in Phase 1 suggest learners' positive perceptions towards English. They reported that they like learning English and wanted to be good at learning and using the language.

Table 4.9

Learners' General Attitudes towards English

Themes	Numbers of groups	Number of references
Positive attitudes	2	11
Neutral	2	3
Negative attitudes	0	0

Most learners stated that they enjoyed learning English because the language is useful to them. It allows them to learn more about the world and explore their interests.

FK: I like English because it can offer new experiences to me. It opens my world and makes me know more about things. I like to read blogs and stories that foreigners wrote. If I know English, I can learn so much more about those things. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

Aon: I like learning English because we can use it in many ways. We can use it to learn more about things we never knew about. And when we use the language that is not our mother tongue, it can give us a sense of joy. We feel proud. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Some learners reported that they enjoy learning English simply because they like the language.

NT: It feels fun to learn. I just like it. It's fun when I get to speak in English. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

BT: I already like the language. My family is supportive of me speaking English. They support me in learning English and I like it. I like learning it. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

While most learners have positive attitudes towards English and learning English, a few learners stated they neither liked nor disliked English. They mentioned that they learned English because it was a compulsory subject at their school, so they needed to pay attention to learning it.

Som: It didn't make sense to me at first. I just learned it. Then I realized that I might need it, so I have to start understanding it. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Some learners stated that they were not interested in learning English because of their previous learning experiences with their former teachers. However, they started to develop an

interest in the subject when they learned English with teachers who could make the subject understandable to them.

CP: When I was in M.1 (grade 7), the teacher I got in the second semester of that year wasn't good at teaching and making us understand what she taught. She was also a bit impatient. If we couldn't answer her questions correctly, she would get mad at us. Then when I got to M.3 (grade 9), the new teacher was OK, but she spent a lot of time going over exam answers. It's not like in M.4 (grade 10) with teacher Vicky. She was like a tutor to us. She could make us understand English better, so I started to pay more attention in her class. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

While most learners share positive attitudes towards English, interview findings reveal that they did not necessarily feel confident in their English proficiency.

4.6.2 Learners' perceptions of their English proficiency

The interviews also uncovered learners' perceptions of their English proficiency and what they perceived as their strengths and weaknesses in learning English. Despite learning English for many years, most learners did not think they were good at English. Only a few learners thought their English proficiency was of average level.

Table 4.10

Learners' Perceptions of their English Proficiency

Themes	Numbers of groups	Number of references
Good	0	0
Average	2	3
Poor	2	14

Most learners mentioned that their English knowledge was limited and would only allow them to use the language for the most basic communicative purposes. As a result, they were not confident in learning and using English.

Aon: For me, I don't think my English is good enough. I think I may be able to have basic, short conversations with foreigners, but I don't

think my sentences or grammar are perfect. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Som: I think my English level is very low [...] I have problems in understanding foreign teachers when they talk to me. I don't feel that I can be good when I have to speak in English. I have difficulties when I have to read things on the exams or long stories we learned in class. I can only understand some words but not the whole sentence, the whole thing. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

A number of learners were also aware that their English was not as good as others' their age and realized that they needed to improve their English skills.

PN: At the moment I think my English is not good enough because other people my age could do a lot better. They could do more advanced stuff. I feel like I'm not really catching up with other people and I want to improve my English. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

However, although they wanted to improve their English skills, learners' perceived low proficiency in English appeared to make them doubt their abilities to learn English and work on improving their English proficiency on their own. These views are represented in Naa's and Andrew's comments.

Naa: I can't say that I'm good at English. I think we didn't have enough basic knowledge and then we didn't really pay attention to it. When we got to secondary school, we were still confused. We didn't really understand what we learned and this confusion seems to continue. I'm not sure how I can be better at English. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Andrew: I'd say my English is not good at all. It's because I didn't really enjoy learning it in elementary school, so I didn't bother memorizing anything. I forgot most of what I learned. Now I'm in secondary school and I realize how that has affected me. You know, when you

don't have a solid foundation and you keep learning, you won't be able to go far. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

4.6.3 Learners' perceived problems in learning English

When probed on what aspect of English skills they thought they needed help with the most, most learners agreed that their most immediate concerns were to read more effectively and to improve vocabulary skills.

Table 4.11

Learners' Perceived Problems in Learning English

Themes	Numbers of groups	Number of references
Reading	2	16
Vocabulary	2	6
Grammar	1	2

They further explained that reading is included in their current English courses and it also constitutes a major part in every high-stakes examination they have to take before entering universities. The learners' concerns about their reading skills are presented in PN's and JB's comments:

PN: For now, I want the teacher to teach me some techniques to read. I think it would be better than me trying to figure it out myself. For example, I want to learn how to understand phrasal verbs and idioms I see in passages in the book. I know that there will be reading parts on the GAT (General Aptitude Test) and half of the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) is reading. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

JB: I don't think I am good at English because I didn't have a solid foundation. I always dread English exams especially the vocabulary and reading parts. They are very difficult for me. I still have no idea how I can pass the exams we need to take before going to university. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

When asked to describe how reading lessons were usually carried out, learners observed that the focus of reading lessons in their classes was on translating passages from English to Thai and reading aloud to practice the pronunciation of words, instead of reading for comprehension. JB's description of reading lessons in her class gives a vivid picture of learners' experiences of English reading at their school.

JB: When there's a text in the book, most teachers would ask the whole class to read aloud either together or with the teachers. Once we finished, they translated for us, telling us what the text meant and then asked us to do exercises. That's it. They didn't teach us how to read. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

Translation appeared to be the main method in reading lessons. Most learners shared a similar experience in relying on Google Translate to help understand what they read.

Noon: We weren't taught much about reading in M.1-3 (grades 7-9). Our teachers normally let us use Google Translate to look up word meanings and translate words in the texts we read. They didn't really let us read that much. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

Some learners noted that they found reading lessons more comprehensible when they were taught how to read. However, they pointed out that their teachers usually focused on pronunciation practices instead of teaching reading strategies.

CP: Most teachers in this school teach reading by teaching us how to pronounce English words. Based on what I see, not many teachers made time to teach how to read and how to group parts together so we can understand better. Teacher Vicky used to tell us to go bit by bit, to divide a long paragraph into small sentences and read them. She told us that we can group those sentences together so that it would be easier for us to understand. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

Learners' descriptions of their reading lessons suggest that little attention was given to directly teaching learners how to comprehend texts. The interview findings also indicate that

learners seemed to be aware that not knowing how to read and understand what they read could cause difficulties in reading. In order to improve their skills in English reading, most learners mentioned that they need guided practice from teachers.

Som: I don't want my teacher to tell me everything. I'd prefer them to teach me how to read and understand what I read because I'm not sure how to do it by myself and if I do it wrong, it could waste my time. The teachers don't need to translate everything. I guess teaching steps in reading would be better than focusing on making us get high scores on everything. That was stressful. I want to learn ways to understand things or to solve problems rather than ways to score high on a test. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Moreover, some learners also pointed out that learning how to read can make reading English a more enjoyable experience.

JB: I think if we learn how to read...I mean how to make sense of what we read, it will be more fun. Reading English is difficult for us, but it can be made more fun. I guess one way is to go over steps or methods we can use. If we just sit there and read quietly or listen to the translations from the teacher, it is boring. Sometimes I think we should link what we read to things we know or our life experience. We can also act out what we read. That would make reading in English less daunting for me. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

4.6.4 Learners' perceptions of their English classes

Interestingly, learners' responses in the group interviews reveal that most learners shared similar learning experiences in learning English at school. Most of them noted that their English classes were not very stimulating.

Table 4.12
Learners' Perceptions about their English Classes

Themes	Numbers of groups	Number of references
Repetitive and non-challenging content	2	5
Lack of learner involvement	1	3

When asked what they learned in their English classes, learners mentioned that their English lessons mainly concerned English grammar and sentence structures.

PN: From kindergarten to now, it's been present simple tense and past simple tense. These are the only two main things we learn. I think the lessons should have been made more challenging to prepare us for our final years. This year we have to learn English idioms and other things that we weren't prepared for. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

In addition to repetitive grammar lessons, some learners commented that other language content presented in class was not challenging. They also mentioned that the way the content was delivered to learners was non-stimulating.

Que: I don't think I am good at English. In elementary school, my teachers didn't really teach anything else besides grammar patterns and some easy vocabulary such as 'car', 'bird' and other basic words that we already knew. My teachers would start lecturing and telling us to memorize patterns and words but not how to put them into sentences. Memorizing patterns and words was quite boring. Then when I moved to high school, I don't understand anything. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

When asked to describe their typical English classrooms, learners' responses point to the idea that their English learning at school was product-oriented in nature and did not encourage much learner involvement. They explained that the focus of their English classrooms at their school was on preparing learners to pass English exams instead of stimulating learners to think for themselves in terms of what to learn. Therefore, these learners were used to having their teachers determine for them what they should learn in their English class. Learners concluded that they were familiar with following the teachers' direction. This view is captured in Som's comment.

Som: Our shortcoming is that we're used to the teacher figuring out everything for us and telling us what we need to learn. Learning English has been like this since we began school. It's about grammar

rules and sentence structures...things on the exams. We weren't taught how to think and ask ourselves what we're interested in learning. Everything was planned for us and we only need to pass exams or to get good grades so that we could go to university. It's all about outcomes. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Some learners further noted that their involvement in class was also constrained by their learning context which did not encourage learners to think differently from their teachers.

Bam: I don't do well because I'm stubborn. I'm too stubborn. It (English class) wants 'Thai' thinking. I can't use foreign ways of thinking.

R: Can you explain more?

Bam: We can't do it differently from the teachers' ways.

(Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Aon also shared a similar view as Bam. He explained that because the Thai way of teaching in general did not stimulate creative thinking or learner initiatives, learners often had to follow their teachers' directions.

Aon: They like to make a system for us to follow.

R: What do you mean?

Aon: It's like counting numbers 1, 2, 3. We can actually do 3, 2, 1 or 1, 3, 2. But our system wouldn't allow it. It has to be one way: 1, 2, 3. Thai students spent a lot of time studying and what followed is a lot of homework. Our brains don't have time off to even understand what we learned or what we're told to do. So, I guess we just need to follow.

(Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

It can be noted from Bam and Aon's responses that although the learners may not fully enjoy their teacher-centered lessons and wanted to express their ideas, they often decided to accept the teachers' authority in determining learning agendas, instead of asserting their opinions or showing disagreement with the teachers' decisions. These responses highlight the learners' awareness of their limited power in class and their awareness of the cultural values that

invisibly conditioned classroom interactions.

4.6.5 Learners' understandings of roles and responsibilities in learning English

In addition to providing insights into learners' perceptions of their learning abilities and concerns in learning, learner group interviews also reveal their understandings of roles and responsibilities in learning.

Table 4.13

Learners' Understandings of Roles and Responsibilities in Learning English

Themes	Numbers of groups	Number of references
Learner responsibilities	2	8
Teacher responsibilities	1	8

In general, most learners considered putting effort into learning as their primary responsibility. For example, when asked what they thought they should be responsible for in their learning PN commented that he should make time for practice.

PN: I guess that we should make time to practice. Vocabulary, reading and listening...do a lot of these. I think if we practice a lot, we can get better. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Learners further mentioned that they have tried to improve their English by doing several learning activities on their own.

JB: When I moved to this school, I had to work even harder to understand English lessons. I have been trying a lot to improve my grammar, vocabulary and reading skills, but it wasn't enough to pass the exams. Sometimes I felt lazy and just wanted to ignore it because it's too difficult. I guess I need to study harder.

R: What did you mean when you said you have tried a lot?

JB: I listened to English songs and tried to read more about vocabulary and grammar. I bought a grammar book. It helped, but not by much. Then I stopped and did something else.

(Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

However, the interviews reveal that although learners reported doing several learning activities outside of class, they did not seem to have a specific and clear goal for doing the activities they chose. Instead, learners' decisions to initiate learning opportunities outside of class appear to be influenced by their general perception that they were not good at English and thus they had to improve their English. When asked to explain what they did to learn English on their own, most learners only reported their learning activities but did not specify why they chose to do them or what purposes these learning activities had in relation to their need to improve their English.

Que: I felt that I haven't really understood English that much since grade 7. But I'm trying. I searched for English songs and other things to listen to. I keep reading. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

Naa: I sometimes look at news articles on the internet or newspapers...and just listen to music and stuff. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

In addition, although learners said that they should make effort to learn English, they also reported having problems in maintaining their effort in independent learning.

BB: I like watching movies. I watched the Harry Potter movies in their original English versions and I tried to read the subtitles. Sometimes I watched cartoons. But I didn't do it for long. I often got tired and wanted to fall asleep. I don't know why. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 1)

Similarly, BT also mentioned that even though she wanted to work on improving her English, her motivation to learn was short-lived.

BT: I know I must work more if I want to better my English. I tried by listening to songs and reading English stories.

R: How often did you practice? What specifically did you try to improve?

BT: Not often. I practiced when I felt like doing it and quit when I got bored. [laughter] I didn't think much of it. I don't know the principles, so it's more like a trial-and-error process.

(Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

In terms of teachers' roles and responsibilities, most learners mentioned that while they expected their teachers to provide suggestions on what they should do, they also wanted their teachers to occasionally involve them in selecting and designing some learning activities. This view is captured in Som's account of learners being allowed to make decisions in a science class.

Som: The teachers can make decisions on some parts and they also need to ask whether we want this topic or other topics. Sometimes, if we get to decide all by ourselves, what we choose may not be what is going to be on the tests. Teachers should select some topics that they know we need to learn. Our teachers should also involve us in some activities.

R: How? Can you explain?

Som: For example, my science teacher asked us what we wanted to do in our science lab. She let us take part in designing experiments and also let us plan for our own experiments. I really enjoyed that because we didn't have to follow the teacher's theories. When we got to do it by ourselves, we didn't have to try hard to remember the theories because we already learned them through real practice.

(Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Moreover, a few learners found their exam-oriented learning environment particularly stressful. Thus, they commented that they wanted their teachers to guide them through the process of how to learn and solve problems in their learning, instead of teaching them to get good grades.

Som: Sometimes I can't understand everything my teachers teach me in class. So, I want them to maybe assign us an exercise and then teach us methods or how to work on that exercise. Then we would be able

to practice on our own. I don't want them to create tension by giving us scores on every assignment. I want them to teach us to really understand the thing we learn. (Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

Learners also seemed to be aware that teacher-learner relationships can influence their motivation and effort to learn. They expected their teachers to support their learning by being more accepting of their ideas.

Aon: I want teachers to be more approachable and learners to have more courage to express their opinions to teachers. If the teachers are open-minded and willing to accept our opinions, we'll learn more happily. We won't have to worry if what we say will make our teachers angry. We'll like the teachers more and pay more attention in class.

R: You mean you want your teachers to be more relaxed and friendlier?

Aon: 50-60% of what we gain from class also depends on how we feel about the teachers. If we like them, we'll pay extra attention and will want to do more. I like my math teacher because I can talk to her about my ideas. I can ask her a lot of questions and I can make her laugh at my jokes. I really enjoy the lessons and do a lot of practice at home.

(Learner interview, Phase 1, group 2)

4.7 Summary and discussion of research question 2

This research question has sought to understand Thai secondary school learners' experiences in learning English in order to gain more understandings of LA and how it is promoted in their English classrooms. Three key issues emerged from the findings. First, it is clear that the teacher-centered learning arrangements that learners have been engaged in since the beginning of their English education did not seem to promote much learner involvement. Secondly, learners' attempts to learn and improve English skills on their own appeared to lack focus. Thirdly, the current approach to teaching English reading, which involves mainly teachers giving translations of English texts to learners, may not be conducive to developing learners' autonomous reading skills.

First of all, findings from learner interviews indicate that learners' typical English lessons and their teachers' teaching methodologies did not seem to provide a supportive

learning environment that promotes learners' active involvement. This is because teachers often took charge of managing learning and deciding what should be learned in class. Learners' experiences with teacher-led methodology can affect their development of LA because they can inhibit learners' desire to actively participate in their learning and affect learners' confidence in their own abilities to learn independently (Cheng, 2000; Littlewood, 1996). Moreover, it is worth noting that teachers' control in class may inevitably deprive learners of their opportunities to learn about their own learning process and what they could do to direct the process. Therefore, based on learners' accounts of their learning experiences, it is understandable that they were not confident in their abilities to learn and improve their English skills.

The second important issue that emerged from learner interview findings is that learners' effort in independent learning appeared to be unfocused. It is interesting to note that while learners felt that they should seek more opportunities to learn and practice English on their own outside of class, they did not seem to have clearly defined purposes for their independent practices. As shown in the interview excerpts, most learners named several activities they did outside class time, but they could not explain how these activities could contribute to any particular aspect of their English learning. In other words, their self-directed learning effort seem to lack clear goals.

Furthermore, it is worth noting from learners' reported experiences in trying to improve their English outside of class that their process of self-directed learning only included selecting what to do. None of the learners mentioned monitoring their progress or evaluating whether their effort has helped improve their English skills. Learners' accounts of switching from doing one activity to another or quitting entirely are clear evidence of their difficulties in tracking their learning progress and directing their own personal learning plans due to the lack of clear learning objectives.

The third interesting issue revealed in learner group interviews is how English reading was usually taught in class. Learners' accounts of their reading lessons indicate that the common process of English reading taught to learners consisted mainly of learners reading texts aloud and teachers providing them with translations of the texts. In this case, it is clear that the process of reading and comprehension construction was not explicitly taught in class. Consequently, learners' opportunities to engage in the process of meaning construction and exploring strategies to facilitate their comprehension were very limited. Learners' limited understandings of how to read and make meaning from English are likely to affect their

confidence in English reading. Therefore, considering learners' experiences in their reading lessons, their concerns about their reading skills are justifiable.

Despite learning English for many years, most learners reported that they neither had adequate knowledge nor essential strategies to tackle their current learning and future academic demands. Findings from learner interviews also indicate that learners did not feel confident in their English reading skills and abilities to improve their English reading on their own. This is likely the result of the teacher-led approach to teaching and learning which did not seem to promote learners' metacognitive awareness of their learning process nor encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning. Considering the limited involvement learners have in class and their limited exposure to processes involved in self-direction, it can be concluded that these Thai secondary school learners were not sufficiently prepared for autonomous learning.

4.8 Conclusion of the exploratory phase

The first phase of this study addresses teachers' perspectives and practices in fostering LA in their classrooms. It also uncovers learners' conceptualization of their abilities, roles and responsibilities in the learning process through accounts of their previous learning experiences. Together, these multi-perspective findings provide detailed and contextualized understandings of LA and its status in the present research context. This section summarizes key findings from research questions 1 and 2 and discusses potential challenges in promoting LA in the Thai secondary school context.

First, findings from teacher interviews and class observations reveal that although the teachers shared positive views about LA and about promoting LA in their classes, their classroom practice did not allow for learners to actively take charge of their own learning process. This finding is further supported by findings from learner group interviews. It appears that learners' previous learning experiences in the teacher-led classrooms neither helped them establish metacognitive understandings about their own learning process nor familiarized them with steps involved in directing their learning.

Despite their reported attempts to learn and improve English skills on their own, learners were uncertain how they could regulate their independent learning process and maintain their motivation to learn and practice English by themselves. These findings are important to the development of LA in this research because how learners perceive themselves and their capacity to learn can influence their learning behavior (N. D. Yang, 1999). It is suggested that learners who believe that they can learn and work to improve their

own learning tend to adopt a more proactive and strategic approach to learning. In other words, they are more likely to learn autonomously (Cotterall, 1995; Fisher et al., 2007; Littlewood, 1996; Riley, 1996; Wenden, 1991; White, 2008). One encouraging finding from the exploratory phase, however, is that most learners still expressed their need to be more involved in their learning process. As presented in the learner interview findings, learners preferred their teachers to support and guide them through the process of learning instead of telling them what to do.

Collectively, findings from the exploratory phase suggest the possibility of promoting LA in Thai secondary school classrooms. At the same time, they also reveal potential challenges that need to be addressed.

Firstly, the teacher-centered teaching method evident in class observations can pose challenges to the process of transferring responsibilities in learning from teachers to learners. As reported in the findings, although the teachers were in favor of developing LA, their lack of practical experience in fostering LA and concerns about the need to follow curriculum regulations eventually influenced their decisions to maintain their teacher-fronted method and their traditional role as a manager of learning in their classrooms. In other words, the teachers were still responsible for key areas of learning management. This decision, in turn, left learners with limited opportunities to develop essential knowledge and skills to direct their own learning.

Another challenge in developing LA in the present research context is learners' perceptions of what they can and should do as learners. Findings suggest that although some learners showed interest in taking active roles in their learning, this interest seemed to be constrained by their limited understandings of their own learning process and the beliefs that they did not have enough knowledge and skills to direct their learning. As a result, they tended to adopt passive approaches to learning and believed that they should follow the teachers' direction. In sum, these findings suggest the need for a form of classroom intervention to help learners develop not only the skills for autonomous learning but also productive beliefs about themselves as learners.

Considering teachers' classroom practices in promoting LA and learners' beliefs about their abilities to direct their own learning process, it is reasonable to conclude that LA was not effectively promoted in Thai secondary school classrooms in this study, and that Thai secondary school learners were not prepared either methodologically or psychologically to assume responsibility for their learning. Therefore, this study proposes to address these challenges by means of encouraging learners' active involvement in their own learning and

developing learners' skills in regulating their learning process via strategy-based instruction (see 3.7).

It is believed that by enhancing learners' understandings of their learning process, modeling strategic learning behaviors and providing learners with opportunities to practice using strategies to direct their learning activities, strategy-based instruction can help learners develop autonomous approaches to their learning. Chapters 5 and 6 present findings from the intervention phase of the study.

Chapter 5 The intervention phase

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the intervention phase of this study in which strategy-based instruction was implemented in a Thai secondary school English classroom with the purpose of promoting LA. During the 10-week intervention period, strategy-based lessons were integrated into the reading modules of the English in Daily Life III class for M.5 (grade 11) learners. Based on the assumption that LA is instrumental to effective language learning (Cotterall, 2000; Little, 1995, 2007a; Little et al., 2017), the intervention conducted in Phase 2, therefore, aims at developing LA among the Thai secondary school learners and enhancing their English reading.

Findings from the intervention phase of the study are presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 presents findings regarding the intervention's impacts on learners' development of LA which is operationalized as consisting of learners' metacognitive regulation of their learning and their attitudes for autonomous learning. Therefore, Chapter 5 addresses the following research questions:

Research question 3: To what extent does the intervention affect learners' metacognitive regulation of their learning?

Research question 4: What are the perceived effects of the intervention on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning?

Chapter 6 continues to explore the intervention's impacts on learners' development of English reading. It addresses research question 5.

Research question 5: Does the training in reading strategies affect learners' reading?

5.2 To what extent does the intervention affect learners' metacognitive regulation of their learning?

This research question examines the intervention's effects on both learners' abilities to plan, monitor and evaluate their self-initiated learning activities, and on their development of metacognitive knowledge about their learning process.

5.2.1 Data analysis

Data for this research question were collected from 246 entries of learners' weekly learning journals and four learner group interviews with 23 intervention class learners. Learners' hand-written journal entries were turned into Word files and all audio-recordings of the group interviews were transcribed verbatim.

All journal entries and interview transcripts were coded in NVivo 12 to generate themes related to how the intervention influenced learners' development of abilities and knowledge to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning of English reading (see 3.8.2.2 for data coding procedures). Section 5.2.2 addresses learners' abilities to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning based on findings from the weekly learning journals. Then detailed findings regarding learners' knowledge of these processes are presented through excerpts from learner group interviews in 5.2.3.

5.2.2 Learners' abilities to independently regulate their learning

The analysis of journal entries reveals that learners engaged in 449 self-initiated learning activities during the observed period. These selected learning activities served several purposes in helping learners improve their English and each of them often has more than one learning purpose. Based on the purposes learners provided for each activity, these learning activities were coded into skill-based categories. Activities with unclear or no stated objectives were coded as unspecified.

Table 5.1
Categories of Activities

Categories	Examples of activities from journal entries	Number of references
1. Vocabulary	Keeping vocabulary notebooks, playing vocabulary games on mobile phones, memorizing new words	205
2. Reading	Reading passages from textbooks, reading short stories, reading movie reviews, reading online articles	128
3. Listening	Listening to music, listening to podcasts, listening to English conversations	104
4. Unspecified	Watching movies, singing karaoke songs, watching workout videos on YouTube	47
5. Pronunciation	Listening to English songs and practicing pronouncing words, reading English passages aloud	40

6. Speaking	Speaking English with teachers at school, speaking English with friends in class and on the phone, practicing speaking skills using mobile applications	14
7. Grammar	Doing grammar exercises, memorizing tense forms	6
8. Writing	Taking notes in English, writing personal diary entries	2

The findings reveal that, overall, learners were quite active in working to improve their reading skills and other English skills on their own outside of class. It can be noted that learners chose to engage more in learning activities related to improving their vocabulary, reading and listening skills while focusing less on practicing skills related to pronunciation, speaking, grammar and writing. The learners' choice in improving their receptive skills rather than productive language skills is understandable since most of the compulsory English courses at their school focus on enhancing learners' receptive skills in reading and listening. In other words, these are the skills they will be assessed on. Only a few courses involve speaking and none was dedicated exclusively to writing. Therefore, when given the opportunity to choose what to work on, most learners tended to gravitate towards activities that are relevant to their current learning needs. Learners' decisions to work more on improving their vocabulary can also be explained by their comments that one of their main problems in reading was that they did not understand words in the passages they read (see 4.6.3).

In addition to revealing self-initiated learning activities learners engaged in outside of class, the weekly learning journals also reveal what learners did to plan, monitor and evaluate their independent learning process.

5.2.2.1 Planning

Findings from weekly learning journals indicate that learners made plans for their reading practice and other activities that they carried out to improve their English skills. Common steps involved in planning included defining learning goals for the week, selecting learning activities and learning materials, deciding when to practice and how much time is needed and thinking of what to do in the following weeks.

Table 5.2
Planning

Themes	Number of weeks	Number of references
1. Defining weekly goals	9	217
2. Selecting activities, materials and assigning time for practice	9	449
3. Making plans for the following weeks	9	217

In making plans for their own learning, learners were first prompted to define their learning objectives for the week. Below are examples of learners' statements for weekly learning goals.

Examples 5.1:

I want to be able to read English passages, learn new vocabulary and be able to spell them correctly. (Reference 1, Week 2)

I want to learn 30 new words this week. (Reference 6, Week 3)

I want to learn new vocabulary and practice my reading skills on English articles. (Reference 4, Week 5)

I want to learn new words from what I read and practice asking questions when I read English texts. (Reference 5, week 6)

I want to be able to guess meanings of new words in the texts I read. (Reference 5, Week 8)

I want to be able to read short English articles and summarize main ideas. (Reference 16, Week 10)

Learners then considered their learning objectives and selected learning activities that matched their objectives. They also chose learning materials that suited their interests, decided what they would learn from the activities they chose and how much time they would spend on each learning activity.

Examples 5.2:

Read the article “Mud soccer” 1 hour (Reference 1, Week 2)

*Find 50 new words in articles and try to remember at least 30 of them
(Reference 6, Week 3)*

Read short English articles for 30 minutes every day (Reference 4, Week 5)

Read fables and question what goes on in the stories (Reference 1, Week 6)

*Read short articles in English and write down interesting vocabulary/ 30
minutes (Reference 6, Week 8)*

*Read textbook in English and write summaries of main ideas (30 minutes)
(Reference 10, Week 10)*

Finally, after considering what they did well and what their problems were, learners also made plans to continue improving their reading and other skills in the following weeks.

Examples 5.3:

Search for more videos and articles (Reference 7, Week 2)

Allocate more time to reading passages (Reference 2, Week 3)

*Continue to practice reading and try to avoid using the translation apps
(Reference 19, Week 5)*

*Try asking myself more questions while I read and try finding answers for
my own questions. This will help improve my thinking process. (Reference
10, Week 6)*

*Watch more movies and note down words I don't know. (Reference 15,
Week 7)*

*Try to read and summarize main ideas from texts, so I can answer my
questions better. It will also help when I take the exams and when I want to
tell my friends what the articles are about. (Reference 7, Week 9)*

These journal extracts clearly indicate learners' abilities to decide what to do, determine the purposes of their independent learning activities, select learning content and decide how to work to improve their reading and other English skills by themselves.

5.2.2.2 Monitoring

In addition to planning for themselves what to work on each week outside of class to improve their English reading, learners also monitored their self-initiated practices and overall progress. Each week learners were able to identify problems they had encountered while doing their selected learning activities. Based on data from weekly learning journals, problems learners identified were related to their reading skills and their learning management skills. Reading-related problems include difficulties in comprehension and understanding vocabulary while problems in managing reading practice involve difficulties in managing time, staying focused and finding learning resources.

Table 5.3

Monitoring for Problems Related to Reading

Themes	Number of weeks	Number of references
1. Problems in comprehension	9	36
2. Problems in understanding vocabulary	9	75

First, learners observed that when they tried to read English on their own, they often had difficulties in understanding the texts they read and vocabulary they found in the texts. In addition to pointing out what their problems were, learners could also identify what could possibly have caused the problems, strategies they have already used to solve the problems and other alternative strategies they could use to overcome their problems. In this sense, learners were actively monitoring their problems and their strategy use at the same time. The following sample journal entries indicate learners' abilities to monitor both their difficulties in reading and their strategic efforts to overcome these difficulties.

Examples 5.4:

Reading short stories is what I couldn't do well because I didn't know what it was about. I fixed the problem by continuing to read and I will have to make time to read more often. (References 4, Week 3)

I didn't understand what I read and this made it hard to predict the situation in the stories. I will try to learn more vocabulary. (Reference 1, Week 4)

My problem is that I couldn't understand the whole paragraph yet. I decided to infer the story from some other words that I knew and tried to connect parts of the story together. (Reference 4, Week 5)

Some passages are more complicated than others, so I need to go slowly and make sure I understand each part before going to the next. (Reference 3, Week 9)

There were words that I didn't know or couldn't read. I fixed the problem by writing them down, reciting and memorizing them so I can recognize these words when I see them again in the future. (Reference 5, Week 1)

There were a few words that I didn't know and they made my prediction incorrect. (Reference 6, Week 3)

Some words are really difficult because I have never seen them before. This is really a problem. (Reference 29, Week 6)

I couldn't make out some words and I tried to break them down into parts just like what I have learned in class. If that didn't work, I would look up meanings and try to remember them. (Reference 2, Week 8)

Apart from monitoring their problems and strategic efforts in reading, learners also mentioned difficulties in managing their own out of class reading practices. They identified problems in managing time for practice, staying focused and finding resources.

Table 5.4
Monitoring for Problems Related to Management of Reading Process

Themes	Number of weeks	Number of references
1. Time management	7	18
2. Staying focused	8	14
3. Finding learning resources	4	7

Due to the amount of homework they had and other competing priorities, learners noted that making time to practice reading could be difficult.

Examples 5.5:

I need to make time for it because I'm not good at managing my time. There is also homework and other stuff I had to do. (Reference 1, Week 2)

I don't have much time to practice and learn because of the exams. I felt tired and didn't want to study. (Reference 2, Week 10)

They also pointed out that sometimes they found it difficult to focus on their practices and stay committed to their learning plans.

Examples 5.6:

When I watched a series, I sometimes felt sleepy and forgot to read the English subtitles like I planned to do. Because series are long, I tried to watch one episode per week and tried to understand it. This made me less sleepy and more motivated. (Reference 2, Week 3)

I can't be diligent like this every day. Sometimes I forgot. Sometimes I was lazy. So, there were times when my efforts lacked continuity. (Reference 2, Week 4)

Reading long texts made me feel tired and lazy. (Reference 10, Week 6)

The third problem noted by learners in their journals was that they could not always get access to learning resources such as their teachers and the internet. They also mentioned that finding appropriately challenging learning materials for themselves could be difficult.

Examples 5.7:

I wanted to have English conversations with my teachers, but sometimes they were too busy. (Reference 3, Week 2)

My problem is that I don't have internet access at home. I will try accessing it through my phone. (Reference 1, Week 4)

I could find few good articles to read. (Reference 1, Week 5)

Learners' on-going observations of their difficulties and acknowledgment of their problems indicate their abilities to monitor their independent learning efforts. Moreover, their commentaries on the possible causes of their problems and their strategy use are evidence of learner's abilities to critically and continually examine their own learning process with learning objectives in mind.

5.2.2.3 Evaluation

Apart from planning and monitoring, analyses of weekly learning journals show that learners also engaged in self-evaluation. First, they evaluated their learning experiences in terms of what they had gained from their independent weekly practice. Secondly, they also evaluated the effectiveness of strategies used in their learning activities each week.

Table 5.5
Evaluation

Themes	Number of weeks	Number of references
1. Evaluating language gains	9	217
2. Evaluating strategy effectiveness	9	187

Examples 5.8:

I could read and understand more. I also feel that I want to try more.

(Reference 11, Week 2)

When I listened to English songs I felt that I could understand more because I have learned some new words and try to remember more while listening.

So, I got used to those words and could recognize them easily. (Reference 3, Week 3)

I listened to the “We have to talk” podcast and watched YouTube videos about film cameras and could understand what they were talking about because I have background knowledge and I am especially interested in film cameras. (Reference 15, Week 10)

It can be noted from the journal entries that learners further evaluated how their learning experiences and their achievements made them feel.

I could learn words in my house. I walked around and pointed at things and thought about what they are called in English. It worked for me and I could see the results when learning words this way. I felt happy when I did it.

(Reference 4, Week 8)

I could guess word meanings more accurately and quickly. I felt good because it helped me save time in reading and doing exams. (Reference 9, Week 8)

What I could do really well is reading game instructions. I could understand the game more and I could learn more things from reading. It was fun to read. (Reference 3, Week 9)

Furthermore, data from weekly learning journals show that learners evaluated their accomplishments by comparing their weekly learning experiences to their performances in the previous weeks.

When I read English articles, I felt that I could understand better than the weeks before. (Reference 1, Week 7)

I noticed that when I listened to English songs, I could understand the songs better than last week. (Reference 3, Week 10)

Apart from evaluating their improvement, learners further demonstrated abilities to evaluate their strategy use. That is, they could evaluate how useful the strategies they used were in helping them accomplish their goals. In general, learners found that their selected strategies could help them manage their independent reading practices more effectively.

Examples 5.9:

Taking notes and memorizing made me remember the ideas better. If I couldn't remember, I could go back to my notes. (Reference 8, Week 3)

When I chose to work on the songs I like, I could work on those songs longer and I could understand them well. I could remember many words. (Reference 8, Week 4)

Listening to songs and reading the song lyrics at the same time helped me learn vocabulary. (Reference 10, Week 6)

Reading 2-3 pages per day made my objectives clearer. I knew exactly what I needed to do. (Reference 1, Week 7)

Listening and reading subtitles while watching movies helped me catch the main ideas in sentences more easily. (Reference 10, Week 7)

Asking questions when reading helped train me to think and it also made me want to try to understand articles more. (Reference 11, Week 9)

In sum, data from weekly learning journals indicate that learners could look back at their learning process and evaluate whether their strategic efforts to improve their English reading skills have been worthwhile. Learners' abilities to evaluate their learning, in turn, helped them formulate plans for improvement by themselves. It is apparent from the findings that throughout the intervention period, learners were able to actively plan, monitor and evaluate their reading practices and other learning activities they carried out to improve their English skills. Learners' abilities to regulate their learning, however, did not operate alone. In fact, these abilities were supported by their developed metacognitive knowledge about their learning process.

5.2.3 Learners' metacognitive knowledge about their learning process

While findings from weekly learning journals clearly show that learners in the intervention class have developed abilities to make plans for themselves, monitor their problems and evaluate their performance and strategies, findings from learner group interviews suggest that the intervention also helped learners develop metacognitive understandings about these processes. By the end of the semester, they could understand how and why planning, monitoring and evaluation can make their learning become more effective.

5.2.3.1 Knowledge about planning

Findings from learner interviews reveal that learners found planning a useful step in helping them manage their learning activities. Most learners mentioned that planning is important because it helped guide their decisions in learning. They explained that having plans is important because it helped them determine more precisely and confidently what they should do to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Mind: Having a clear plan and recording it weekly is like having a focus on what we want or intend to do. We will know how well we have done and what more we need to do. Making plans also helped me choose what to practice. (Learner interview group 1)

They reported that although they were not familiar with documenting their learning experiences and making their own plans, their practice in planning and self-reflection during the intervention have helped them establish a useful learning habit.

Fern: I haven't done anything like this before. I didn't have clear plans or things I would want to work on. Then when I started recording my plans and what I did each week and looked at what I have learned, I think it's a good thing to do. I like doing it and now I'm used to doing it. (Learner interview group 4)

Because the weekly learning journal was a new element introduced in their reading lessons, some learners admitted that initially they felt skeptical about the practical value of writing weekly learning journals and making weekly plans. However, as they continued to practice making plans for themselves each week, they started to discover that making learning plans and reflecting on their learning are necessary steps towards effective management of their learning process. This view is elaborated in Som's response.

Som: The weekly journals taught me to plan and manage how I would practice reading and do other learning activities on my own and it has become my habit now. First, I questioned its value and thought it wouldn't really help me much. Later on, I began to pick activities I wanted to do and planned by myself what I would do for the week. Then if my plan turned out to be a success, I would do it again. Or if the plan didn't work out, I avoided repeating it. (Learner interview group 4)

Som's skepticism about making learning plans was understandable. Since her previous learning experience did not make planning and other components in the learning process explicit to her, the idea of deciding for herself what to learn could appear questionable or irrelevant. When asked what she thought she gained from making her own learning plans, Som was able to understand how this practice had enhanced her overall learning process.

Som: I think my learning has become more systematic. I need to practice planning and thinking in advance what I should do each time. It

doesn't necessarily have to be written down. I could still have the weekly goals and plans laid out in my head, telling myself I'd do this thing today. It made everything easier because there're clear steps I could see. (Learner interview group 4)

Like many of her other classmates who started making plans for their learning and documenting their learning activities in their weekly journals, Som indicated that planning has been a useful part of her learning routine. What Som said also suggests that planning for learning has become more than just listing what to do in her journal entries. In fact, her response indicates that she could critically reflect on her learning process and create her own learning plans based on her reflections. More importantly, it appears that planning has become a natural and integrated part of her learning.

5.2.3.2 Knowledge about monitoring

Learners also developed knowledge about why they should take responsibility for monitoring their own learning. They stated that regular self-monitoring was important because it helped them precisely identify what their problems were.

NN: Observing ourselves is useful in that it helped make us aware, despite our limited knowledge, that we had problems, where exactly the problems were and which areas needed more practice. (Learner interview group 3)

Knowing what their problems were also made learners think about what they could do to solve their problems. Moreover, learners mentioned that by monitoring their own improvement each week, they could also direct themselves towards their goals more easily.

GI: It started from the goals I set for myself in the first week. As time went by, I started to notice that I hadn't come any closer to my goals. Then each week I looked back at what I wrote in the journals. I looked at the problems I had and when I saw those problems, I could think of ways to fix them. When we pay attention to fixing these problems and achieving our small weekly goals first, we will know our path to the bigger goals. (Learner interview group 1)

It is apparent that the intervention has helped learners understand their learning process and the need to monitor their learning. Moreover, learners also explained that they could observe and inspect how they learn whenever they want by themselves with or without the weekly learning journals.

Mind: When we started to write the journals was also when we started to see our problems. Even when I didn't have to write the journals I'd ask myself why I can't be good at reading English even though I tried hard or why I can't see improvement. Sometimes I felt discouraged[...]It was when I really thought about how I practiced each passing week that I knew I needed to learn more on certain topics. It is very important and necessary that we know what we were doing. (Learner interview group 1)

These interview findings confirm findings from weekly learning journals that learners in the intervention class actively monitored their learning. It appears that not only were learners able to keep track of their progress, but they were also able to accumulate knowledge in terms of why they should monitor their learning and how self-monitoring could help improve their reading practices and enhance the overall quality of their learning. Moreover, as exemplified in Mind's comment, learners were also able to monitor their emotional responses to the perceived lack of progress. These unprompted incidents of learners reflecting on their learning goals, identifying problems and solutions for their learning and inspecting their learning methods also suggest that learners have accepted monitoring as an essential part of their learning process.

5.2.3.3 Knowledge about evaluation

Learners agreed that self-evaluation helped them develop realistic perceptions of themselves and their abilities to learn. It helped them understand what they could and could not do well. They also stated that self-evaluation is useful because the process helped them adjust their weekly learning plans and make effective changes to their learning goals.

Wan: I realized I needed some adjustments. The goal I set was a little bit beyond my ability. I changed it, reducing it to something I can actually

do. I think my weekly goal in the first week was to be able to read novels in English. I learned that my current level was not enough for me to do this well. I then changed the goal to reading short stories in English instead. This boosted my confidence. (Learner interview group 2)

Apart from refining their short-term weekly learning plans, learners added that self-evaluation also led them to reconsider their long-term learning goals. After evaluating themselves and reflecting on how they learned, many learners reported adjusting their goals to be more suitable to their proficiency levels, learning preferences, and strategies. This view is represented in PL's comment.

PL: I wrote at the beginning of the semester that one of my big goals for this semester was to understand every English text I read. Then I changed my goal to understanding short paragraphs. I'd better start with shorter texts first.

R: What made you change your goal?

PL: I think if I start from reading short paragraphs, I won't get as bored as when I read long English passages. When I read short paragraphs, analyzed each part and arranged my ideas together, I could see what the text was saying. Also, another reason why I changed to reading short paragraphs was that most of the short paragraphs I read often had pictures with them. There were pictures to help me understand what those texts were all about. Then I could understand easily. I knew I could understand more. (Learner interview group 4)

Most learners pointed out that their regular practice of self-evaluation in class and in learning journals enables them to realistically assess their own abilities. Through self-evaluation, they could make effective changes to their goals and plans. As a result, they felt more in control of their learning process.

Mind: I have made a big change too. My goals were very big at first, including speaking, listening, reading and writing. Then I read your comments and looked at them again and realized that the goals were

too broad. I decided to change and just focus on improving one or two small aspects at a time. I wanted to emphasize small aspects first, so I reduced my goals and made new plans. I felt a lot better. (Learner interview group 1)

While learners thought they were capable of evaluating themselves and how they learned, learner interviews suggest that they also valued evaluation from teachers. Most learners indicated that evaluative feedback from teachers is necessary because it can be a source of motivation.

NN: When teachers evaluate us, it's different from when we evaluate ourselves. When we evaluate ourselves, we know more. We have more information about ourselves than our teachers do because we have a record of what we did every week. We know in our hearts whether we did well or not. But evaluation from teachers can also motivate us to work better or to get higher scores, too. (Learner interview group 3)

Some learners further acknowledged that sometimes their self-evaluation could be biased and thus they needed teachers' expertise and objective feedback in order to have a balanced view of their abilities. Therefore, evaluation from teachers is also necessary.

ST: If we evaluate ourselves every time, we tend to be biased. We won't really consider our shortcomings. So, we need teachers to point them out for us. (Learner interview group 2)

Mind: We aren't as experienced as our teachers. We might be able to see some of our problems, but that's not enough. We also need others to evaluate us so that we can see what's really going on. We also trust the teachers. (Learner interview group 1)

What is evident from learners' interview responses is their developed metacognitive knowledge about themselves, their learning process and learning strategies. First, their experiences in making their own learning plans, monitoring their progress and evaluating their

learning outcomes made learners become increasingly aware of their abilities and how they learn most effectively. Secondly, these experiences also made learners aware that autonomous learning is a process that requires their active involvement and constant reflection. Finally, the interview findings also indicate that learners have developed knowledge of how to use several strategies they learned in class to facilitate their self-initiated learning outside of class. This enhanced metacognitive knowledge about learning provides a strong foundation for their gradual development of skills to regulate their own learning as illustrated in 5.2.4.

5.2.4 Learners' gradual development of skills in regulating their learning

A closer examination of learning journals further indicates that learners' development of knowledge and abilities to regulate their learning was a gradual process that varied in terms of pace and degrees among different learners. Despite these differences, the findings suggest similar patterns of development over time. The following section presents examples from a learner's learning journal entries across three different time points during the intervention. These examples are from Fern's journal entries completed at the beginning of the intervention (weeks 2-4), in the middle of the intervention (weeks 5-7) and in the final weeks of the intervention (weeks 8-10). Fern's examples are representative of the intervention class learners' gradually developed abilities to purposefully create learning opportunities for themselves and strategically manage their independent learning activities.

5.2.4.1 At the beginning of the intervention

Early entries from weeks 2-4 reveal learners' confusion towards the idea of setting goals, making learning plans and reflecting on their own learning experiences. As a result, these early entries were permeated with vague descriptions of learning goals, as well as statements of learning plans and lists of strategies that appeared irrelevant to the goals. These issues are illustrated in Fern's week 3 journal entry.

Example 5.10: Fern (Week 3)

My goal for this week: Write in English 10 words a day			
Activities	Purposes	Strategies used	How did they help?
Read short passage “Coco”	To do homework and practice reading	Underline words I don’t know	Try to memorize more words I don’t know
<p>1. What went well? How did you know? Writing vocabulary. Because it is enjoyable and I could do it every day.</p> <p>2. What did you find difficult and what did you do to solve the problem? Reading the passage because I don’t know meanings of words.</p> <p>3. Based on your experience this week, how do you plan to improve your learning next week? Learn more.</p>			

The first common issue found in learners’ early entries is that they tended to set broad and unclear learning goals. This lack of focus in learning goals inevitably affected their choices of learning activities and strategies as presented in the above example.

It was unclear whether Fern’s stated goal, “write in English 10 words a day” concerned writing English words to practice spelling or to memorize new words, or a combination of both. Moreover, Fern’s record of her learning plan which detailed the activity she chose, its purpose and strategy she used appeared irrelevant to her overarching learning goal.

The second common issue found among early entries is learners’ abilities to assess the effectiveness of the strategies they used. As shown in Fern’s week 3 example, Fern’s answer “Try to memorize more words I don’t know” is not relevant to the given prompt which asked how the strategy she chose had helped her complete the selected activity and achieve her goal. Fern’s answer suggests her confusion and unfamiliarity with the process of reflecting on her learning.

Like Fern, many of the intervention class learners often failed to reflect on their strategy use and assess the effectiveness of their strategies. Instead, they either provided more descriptions on the strategies they used or left the column unanswered.

The lack of focused learning goals, relevant learning plans and critical reflection of the learning process often led to the third issue which is learners’ ability to precisely define their plans for the following weeks. As presented in the example, Fern briefly wrote “Learn

more” as her future learning plan. This short statement did not clearly specify what she wanted to learn more about and what purposes it served in helping her improve her English skills. Despite question 3’s prompt that encouraged her to consider her learning experience before setting future learning plans, Fern did not seem to be able to reflect on her learning experience and make informed decisions for her future learning.

In sum, at the beginning of the semester, learners tended to set unfocused goals which often resulted in irrelevant and uninformed learning plans. Their ability to select strategies and evaluate strategy effectiveness also appeared to be limited. Analyses of journal entries, particularly from weeks 2 and 3, indicate that most of the intervention class learners were not familiar with thinking about their own learning, reflecting on their learning strategies or planning how to improve learning on their own.

5.2.4.2 In the middle of the intervention

After reviewing learners’ journals from weeks 2 and 3, I started to notice the persistent problems that most learners had and decided to take active measures to help learners understand how they could effectively solve their problems and reflect on their learning experiences. At the beginning of each class, starting from week 4, I led a short reflective discussion in which learners were encouraged to share their learning experiences from the previous week.

The discussions were guided by the problems learners identified in their journals and prompts in the journals. During these short discussions, learners discussed ways to solve the problems or shared with their classmates how they set goals and made plans for their learning activities. They also commented on their plans, strategies and the outcomes of their learning plans and strategy use. These short discussions later confirmed my observation that some learners were not familiar with taking active roles in regulating their learning. They were unsure of how to address their difficulties in learning, reflect on their learning or use their reflections to further improve their learning plans. I occasionally selected examples of good journals from each week, presented them to the class and asked the journal writers to explain to their classmates how they set their weekly goals, created their plans, chose activities and used strategies to solve problems or complete their learning activities. These learners were also asked to comment on the results of their plans and how they reflected on their learning experiences in their journals. In addition, I also answered learners’ questions to clarify the purposes of using the weekly learning journals.

These short reflective sessions proved to be useful in helping learners understand the processes involved in their learning. This enhanced understanding, in turn, seems to have helped learners improve their approaches to regulate their learning outside of class. Evidence from the weekly learning journals reveals that learners started to demonstrate improved abilities to manage their learning and think of ways to use strategies they learned in class to solve their problems from week 5. After receiving comments on their journals for the first three weeks, learners appeared to have a better grasp of their learning process and how to create feasible and relevant learning plans to enhance their reading skills. Moreover, evidence of self-monitoring started to emerge in most learners' weeks 5-7 entries. This development is presented in Fern's week 5 entry.

Example 5.11: Fern (week 5)

My goal for this week: I want to understand more from what I read			
Activities	Purposes	Strategies used	How did they help?
Read short English articles (20 mins)	To understand the articles and create pictures of the stories from my imagination	Imagery, making pictures in my head based on the articles I read/ Draw some pictures	I can quickly get what the articles said.
<p>1. What went well? How did you know? Guessing and making pictures from my imagination. I think I understand the story because I made pictures in my mind.</p> <p>2. What did you find difficult or think you could have done better? I didn't understand some words in the article. I used a dictionary to help.</p> <p>3. Based on your experience this week, how do you plan to improve your learning next week? Think about ways to get word meanings without using the dictionary</p>			

Compared to week 3, Fern's learning plan for week 5 seems more purposeful and more aligned with the goal she set for herself. In order to improve her comprehension skills and practice a strategy she learned in class, Fern decided to allocate 20 minutes of her time to reading short articles in English. She also reported using "imagery", a strategy she learned earlier in the week, to facilitate her reading practice.

The most noticeable improvement found during weeks 5-7, however, was learners' abilities to reflect on their learning and make use of their reflection in creating plans for the

following weeks. As can be seen in Fern's week 5 entry, her plan to "think about ways to get word meanings without using the dictionary" appeared to have been informed by her awareness of the persistent problem she had in understanding words and having to rely mainly on a dictionary for word meanings. Considering this problem, her plan to find alternative strategies was a logical step in managing her own problem. Learners' abilities to identify their problems and generate corresponding learning plans were significant emerging themes in their weeks 5-7 entries. These findings indicate their gradually developed self-monitoring and self-evaluation skills, and their enhanced knowledge of how to use their reflections to formulate plans for improvement.

5.2.4.3 In the final weeks of the intervention

Throughout the remainder of the intervention period, I continued to use short discussions at the beginning of each session to reinforce learners' understandings of their learning process. Comments given to learners' journal entries were often used to encourage learners' exercise of strategic learning skills.

It was found that learners' ability to regulate their out of class learning seemed to be more refined as they progressed towards the final weeks of the strategy-based intervention. For instance, journal entries from weeks 8-10 show that most learners were able to set focused learning goals and select learning activities that were both suitable to their levels and relevant to their goals. Moreover, evidence from their weekly records also suggests that they could choose appropriate strategies for their learning activities and thoughtfully evaluate how their strategies had helped them carry out the selected activities.

Another interesting and significant change captured in learners' journals during the final weeks is their ability to select reading materials that matched their reading purposes and interests. Data from weeks 8-10 show learners' observable progression from mainly selecting highly structured texts with simplified content, such as passages from their course book, to working on less structured texts with increasing variety in terms of text types, topics and complexity. Examples of reading texts learners selected to work on during weeks 8-10 are song lyrics, online comic strips, instructions for mobile games, online news articles, short stories and other informative articles covering topics of their interest. These improvements are exemplified in Fern's week 10 entry.

Example 5.12: Fern (week 10)

My goal for this week: Reading textbooks in English			
Learning activities & time spent	Objectives	Strategies used	How did they help?
Read Biology textbook in English (1 hour)	To study Biology and learn new English words about Biology	Take notes of important ideas, write down words I don't know and guess from other parts	Notes helped make study faster. / I could use the list of words I made to help with memorizing words.
<p>1. What went well? How did you know? Reading the textbook. I could concentrate well and understand the ideas.</p> <p>2. What did you find difficult and what did you do to solve the problem? Guessing word meaning. Some words can have many meanings. I should memorize them.</p> <p>3. Based on your experience this week, how do you plan to improve your learning next week? Make notes whenever I read long paragraphs or textbooks to get important ideas</p>			

Fern's week 10 entry shows noticeable improvements in her ability to regulate her learning compared to her earlier entries. Fern's decision to read a Biology textbook in English for one hour in order to study Biological concepts and Biology-related vocabulary in English was informed by her goal. This decision also reflects her ability to create purposeful and meaningful learning opportunities on her own.

Furthermore, there are also observable improvements in Fern's abilities to select strategies to facilitate her self-initiated reading practice and solve her existing problem in reading. In order to remember key concepts in her Biology textbook, Fern took notes of important ideas while she read. She also tried to overcome her problem in understanding unknown words by inferring word meanings from context. These strategies were purposefully chosen based on Fern's awareness of her objectives in reading. This awareness, which led to successful reading practice, is likely a result of Fern's on-going monitoring of how she read and what her problems in reading were. Learners' strategic approaches to English reading are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Another area of improvement found in Fern's and other learners' weeks 8-10 journal entries was their ability to assess the effectiveness of strategies they used. In Fern's example, while she could not clearly explain in her earlier entries how the strategies she chose had

helped facilitate her reading practice, her week 10 answer: “Notes help make study faster” reflects her clear understanding of the strategy’s value on her reading. In a similar vein, her comment: “I could use the list of words I made to help with memorizing words” also suggests that not only could she understand the value of her strategy, but she could also link her own strategic efforts to her successful learning outcomes. Based on this enhanced awareness, Fern subsequently made a conscious decision to continue using this strategy in her future reading practice, as indicated in question 3 of the same entry.

In addition to planning and selecting strategies, learners also demonstrated an improved ability to reflect on their learning. Entries from weeks 8-10 indicate that learners were able to identify what contributed to their improvements and what hindered their progress in reading.

Fern’s self-evaluation in question 1 suggests her emerging understanding that her success in reading and understanding what she read depended not only on effective strategy deployment but also on her ability to concentrate on the task. In addition, although Fern found making inferences a useful strategy, she was also aware of its limitations. Her comment for question 2 which read, “Some words can have many meanings. I should memorize them” reflects her knowledge of an alternative strategy that could potentially contribute to successful task completion.

Compared to what Fern did in weeks 3 and 5, Fern’s week 10 entry indicates that her learning has become more organized, personalized and purposeful. It is clear that Fern has gradually developed the necessary skills to regulate her own reading practices. She was able to make informed learning plans for herself, monitor her progress and problems, use strategies to solve her problems, as well as evaluate her strategy use and overall performance in reading. Similar patterns of improvement were also identified in other learners’ journals. Findings from learners’ weekly entries suggest that while most learners tended to show signs of improvement and started exercising control over their reading practices from week 5, a few learners took longer to develop the skills to regulate their learning. Despite these differences, it was found that by the end of the intervention, most of the intervention class learners were able to make informed decisions for their learning and exercise their strategic learning skills to regulate their own learning process. In other words, they are progressing towards autonomous approaches to learning.

5.3 Summary and discussion of research question 3

In sum, findings from weekly learning journals and learner group interviews indicate that the strategy-based intervention has successfully enhanced learners' metacognitive regulation of their own learning. Over the intervention period, learners gradually developed abilities in selecting materials for their reading practices, organizing learning activities, tracking their own success and difficulties, integrating strategies learned in class into their independent learning activities and evaluating their progress in reading practice against their learning goals. At the same time, they have also established an essential metacognitive knowledge base which supports their ability to make informed decisions to direct their independent practices each week.

The learners' ability to regulate their reading practice is likely the result of the strategy-based lessons which clarified and scaffolded the strategic processes involved in English reading. Apart from engaging learners in discussions about strategies and explicitly modeling strategic learning behaviors to learners, each lesson also provided opportunities for learners to practice using the target strategies to plan for reading, monitor comprehension, solve problems in reading and evaluate the outcomes of their reading. These classroom activities, which allow learners to rehearse the process of self-regulated reading, are likely to help learners develop the strategic ability to take on their English reading more autonomously.

While learners' exercise of their strategic abilities to plan, monitor and evaluate their reading process could be attributed to the intervention lessons, their metacognitive knowledge about their own learning process appears to have developed from both the reflective discussions in class and the use of weekly learning journals. Through talking about their learning at the end of each lesson and documenting their learning experiences in the weekly learning journals, learners were constantly prompted to carefully examine their learning process. This on-going reflection of how they learn, their achievements and difficulties, in turn, have made learners become increasingly aware of what they could do differently to make their learning more effective. In other words, reflection appeared to trigger changes in learners' metacognitive knowledge and strategic approaches to learning.

These findings suggest that the strategy-based lessons and regular reflections could facilitate the productive interactions between learners' metacognitive knowledge and their strategy use. Learners' practice of strategies and reflection appeared to have helped learners modify their understandings about their learning process. This enhanced metacognitive

knowledge, in turn, helped learners adjust their strategies and adopt a more proactive approach towards their learning.

Findings regarding the interactions between learners' understandings of their learning process and their actions in managing the process are in line with Little's (1991) view of autonomous learners as learners with the abilities to critically reflect on their learning and make necessary adjustments to improve their learning process. Furthermore, the findings also confirm other researchers' claim (e.g. Cohen, 2011; Cotterall, 2000; Wenden, 1991) that effective use of strategies and metacognitive understandings of the learning process play an essential role in helping learners learn autonomously. Taken together, these findings present a successful account of LA development in a language classroom.

It can also be noted from the interview findings that while learners seemed confident in making learning plans and monitoring their success and shortcomings, they did not appear as confident in evaluating themselves and further expressed the need for teachers' assistance. Among the possible factors that could have contributed to learners' confidence in planning and monitoring their learning process may be their enhanced self-knowledge obtained through weekly reflection. Because learners regularly reviewed their old journal entries, they could develop the feeling that they knew themselves and how they learn better than the teachers do. It is possible that these understandings made them feel more in control of deciding for themselves what to learn outside of class and how they should monitor their progress. On the other hand, learners expressed needs for evaluative feedback from teachers could be due to their lack of sufficient linguistic knowledge and professional expertise to evaluate the accuracy and overall quality of their performance against the course criteria.

Learners' needs for teachers' help in self-evaluation, however, should not be immediately interpreted as their lack of capacity for autonomous learning. As LA does not necessarily imply total independence, it is common for autonomous learners to perceive their teachers as a resource for learning and choose to rely on them for some aspects of learning (Griffiths, 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Little 1991).

Therefore, the learners' acceptance of teachers' expertise in evaluation can also be interpreted as the very sign of LA. Their expressed need for additional expert, unbiased evaluation from teachers, in fact, suggests learners' realistic assessment of their ability and metacognitive awareness in terms of what they lack. It also suggests learners' ability to compensate for their perceived insufficiency. Since learners were aware of their limited experience and expertise in evaluation, choosing to rely partially on teachers' expertise in evaluating their learning was a logical and well-informed choice.

This research aims at developing LA in the Thai secondary school context through strategy-based instruction. It observes learners' development of LA in terms of their metacognitive regulation in learning and their attitudes for autonomous learning. While research question 3 concludes that the intervention successfully enhanced learners' abilities and knowledge in regulating their learning, research question 4 continues to address the intervention's impacts on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning.

5.4 What are the perceived effects of the intervention on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning?

5.4.1 Introduction

While findings from research question 3 indicate that learners have developed knowledge and abilities to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning, whether or not they will act on these autonomous learning skills also depends on attitudes they hold about autonomous learning. Attitudes for autonomous learning in this study refers to learners' willingness to take responsibility for their learning and confidence in their ability to direct their own learning process. Research question 4, therefore, explores whether and how the intervention has influenced learners' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in learning. It also observes the impacts of the intervention on learners' confidence in their capacity to learn autonomously.

5.4.2 Data analysis

Data were collected from the same post-intervention learner group interviews conducted to answer research questions 3 and 5. Interview transcripts were coded for themes relating to learners' willingness to take on responsibility in their learning process and their perceived confidence in their abilities to manage their own learning. All interview extracts presented in this section are translated from Thai for data presentation.

5.4.3 Learners' willingness to take responsibility for learning

In Phase 1 before the intervention, learners broadly stated that their main responsibility in learning was to make an effort to learn. Nevertheless, learners' notion of making an effort to learn only covered selecting what to do, but not monitoring their learning process or evaluating their learning outcomes.

After participating in the intervention, learners appeared to have developed a clearer understanding of their learning process. They reported that their hands-on experiences in

making their learning plans, monitoring and evaluating themselves during the intervention had helped them understand what they could do to make their learning more effective. These experiences triggered changes in how learners perceived their roles and responsibilities in learning.

Findings from group interviews in Phase 2 suggest that learners saw themselves as having important roles in taking the initiatives to learn, manage their problems, sustain their motivation to learn and knowing themselves.

Table 5.6
Willingness to Take Responsibility for Learning

Themes	Number of groups	Number of references
1. Taking initiatives in learning	4	37
2. Managing own problems	3	15
3. Sustaining own motivation to learn	4	11
4. Knowing oneself	2	3

5.4.3.1 Taking initiatives in learning

Learners mentioned in the interviews that their experiences in managing their learning made them realize that aside from paying attention in class, they should be actively seeking out opportunities to learn and improve their reading skills and other English skills outside of class. They agreed that they should be responsible for selecting learning activities for themselves and learn from those activities.

NN: When we're in class we should listen carefully and ask friends if we don't understand the lessons. When I go home, I will study, read and find things that I like, and I should learn from them. For example, searching for a language game to play. (Learner interview, group 3)

It was found that practices in strategic learning and learning management during the intervention made learners aware that their effort can make a difference in their learning process and outcomes. As a result, they wanted to make more effort and invest more time to

create their own learning plans, select learning materials and make time to learn on their own outside of class. This view is summed up in Mind's comment.

Mind: Learning independently means that I don't have to rely so much on other people. I can start making my own plan for learning. For example, I can prepare in advance for what I'll learn. Just because I am in M.4 (grade 10) doesn't mean I can only learn stuff for M.4. During the semester break, I can also start learning content for M.5 (grade 11). Then, when I go to M.5, I can learn content for the second semester of M.5. If I do this, I can have more time to do other things. I can learn in class and then I'll have time to look up things that I don't understand from class. Or I can ask my teachers. (Learner interview, group 1)

Regular self-reflection also made learners aware that their classrooms can only provide them with basic knowledge which may not allow them to develop a good command of English. Therefore, learners stated that they should be active in expanding their opportunities to learn and improve their English skills.

Mind: I think classroom content is mostly introductory. What we need to do is to learn more by ourselves outside the class, apply classroom knowledge to real situations and seek real experiences in learning and using languages. These things that we do by ourselves perhaps might give us more knowledge than what the teachers selected for us and taught us in class. If we rely only on classroom knowledge, we certainly won't know much beyond that. (Learner interview, group 1)

In addition, some learners mentioned that classroom knowledge alone will not sufficiently prepare them for future changes. Thus, they have to continue learning on their own when teachers' help is no longer available.

BT: It's our job to want to learn more because English doesn't end with you or the other teachers. There're many more things we can learn, so we need to be active and not lazy. We need to do our best for now. In the future, the world language may change from English to something else.

Then we still need to be able to learn it. We still have to work for that.
(Learner interview, group 4)

Most learners observed that the strategy lessons and the weekly learning journals made them aware that in addition to being active in seeking opportunities for learning, they should also be responsible, strategic and reflective.

FG: I agree with your way of teaching us how to read and how we can search for more knowledge by ourselves. I think that we have to use techniques when we do that. For example, if we read and see pictures, we should look at the pictures. When we read a long passage, we can underline some key information first. Also, we can make learning journals and write down what we did. It really works. It's something we can do on our own. (Learner interview, group 3)

In sum, the interview findings suggest that the intervention has heightened learners' awareness of their responsibility in both initiating learning opportunities for themselves and directing their own learning. This enhanced awareness further stimulated learners' willingness to learn more autonomously.

5.4.3.2 Managing problems in learning

The intervention has enhanced learners' knowledge about self-monitoring (see 5.2.3.2). Learners further stated that they should be particularly aware of areas that need improvement in their learning. After participating in the intervention, most learners mentioned that they should manage their own learning problems and track their overall learning progress.

JJ: I think we should be able to point out our own problems. When we think about what we couldn't do well, we also start thinking about what to do or what strategies can improve the situation. (Learner interview, group 4)

Mind: It's like we have to keep moving forward. When we see other people moving, but we aren't catching up, it's when we know we have to know our own problems and fix them. (Learner interview, group 1)

Learners added that when they identified their own problems, they could find timely solutions for the problems by themselves. They did not have to wait for their teachers to help them.

BK: We should know what we can't do well. I think it's quicker than waiting to ask the teacher in class. For example, if we know we don't have enough vocabulary, we can start reading more when we have time or we can choose to study certain words immediately. We must do this by ourselves. (Learner interview, group 1)

Compared to what learners said about their roles and responsibilities in Phase 1 before the intervention (see 4.6.5), it appears that the intervention has not only deepened learners' understandings of their learning process but also broadened their visions of what they could do to overcome difficulties in their learning.

5.4.3.3 Sustaining motivation to learn

Another dominant theme that emerged from the interviews was learners' expressed willingness to regulate their negative emotions and maintain their motivation to learn. While most learners agreed that regular practice and determination can lead to success, they also felt that they should work on managing their own stress levels and making their English practice more enjoyable. They reported using several affective strategies, such as taking breaks, reassuring themselves of their abilities and using positive self-talk to reduce stress and maintain their motivation.

Som: If we can motivate ourselves, we will want to continue learning, right? If we feel tired, we can take a break. Listen to music or do something that we can enjoy and learn from it at the same time. Or we can choose to do something that matches our abilities so learning can be fun. (Learner interview, group 4)

They added that another useful way to keep themselves motivated during difficult times in learning is to focus on their achievements and remind themselves of their abilities to succeed.

Naa: I feel that my responsibilities are to first take care of my homework and then try to improve my English. I need to work hard, but I also need to

make sure I don't overwork either. If I can do this, I can continue learning for a long time. I should also reflect on how I did, so that I know I can do it. A little bit of improvement can make me feel happy and motivated. (Learner interview, group 4)

There was also a general consensus among learners on using positive self-talk to boost their confidence and motivation in learning.

Wan: The main thing is that we need to try...uh...try to understand that we can do it. We need to motivate ourselves. Even though we can't be 100% successful, we can tell ourselves that we can at least achieve something. (Learner interview, group 1)

Mind: For me, I think I need to try harder, be more active and enthusiastic. I feel that these are my responsibilities although I can't do them well now. But I'm trying. I tell myself that I need to motivate myself to want to learn. (Learner interview, group 1)

Learners' perceptions of their roles in regulating their emotions and keeping themselves motivated are findings that only emerged after the intervention. Before the intervention, learners admitted that despite trying to do many learning activities, they often lost interest and had problems in maintaining their motivation to learn on their own. (see 4.6.5). Learners' responses in the post-intervention interviews clearly indicate that they have developed their own strategies to independently overcome their problems and maintain their interest in learning. More importantly, learners' elaboration on strategies they have used and ways they regulated their emotions show that after the intervention, they have also developed a sense of responsibility and control over the affective dimensions of their learning process.

5.4.3.4 Knowing oneself

Learners' experiences during the intervention and their weekly self-reflection have made them aware of the need to discover for themselves not only in terms of who they are as a learner but also who they are as a person. This view is first captured in Mind's comment.

Mind: Before this, I didn't really pay much attention to how I learn or how I would be. This (the intervention) made me realize that as we grow up, we need to know what we want in life and what life will give us. We need to be able to live without having to rely on our parents. We must help ourselves. So, we must know what our goals are. We don't need anyone to tell us. We must be able to manage our lives. So, we need to have plans and goals for each thing we do, both in learning and in life.
(Learner interview, group 1)

In addition to knowing their goals and being able to manage their own lives, learners also stated that their experiences during the intervention have made them aware of their roles in discovering their own potential to develop as a person. This view is summed up in Naa's response.

Naa: I want some teachers like you who can understand us and help us understand our own goals clearly. You made us think that we should go on and achieve whatever we want to do. For example, if PL likes singing, she should practice and use whatever strategies that could help her sing and understand the songs better. Or for BT who loves writing, she can use strategies with her writing practice. When she knows how to practice effectively on her own, she can be good and be a real writer one day, right? It (the intervention) made us know our own paths. (Learner interview, group 4)

Similar to their perceived responsibility in regulating emotions and motivation in learning, learners' perceptions of their responsibility in exploring and realizing their own potential are findings which emerged after the 10-week intervention. Considering the intervention's effects on learners' development of attitudes for autonomous learning, these views are particularly encouraging as they are evidence of learners' intentions to independently interact with English outside their classrooms. The findings also reflect learners' willingness to create their own personal learning situations in which they can engage meaningfully and creatively with the language.

In sum, learners agreed that strategy lessons and weekly reflections practiced during the intervention were effective in helping them become more aware of their responsibility in

their own learning process. Through the intervention, learners could understand how their strategic effort in regulating their learning can influence their learning outcomes and their overall learning process. As a result, they were willing to accept responsibility in creating learning opportunities for themselves, managing their problems in learning and regulating their motivation to learn.

5.4.4 Learners' confidence in their abilities to direct their own learning

Another important component of learners' attitudes for autonomous learning explored after the intervention is their confidence. Findings from learner group interviews indicate that after the intervention, learners viewed themselves as capable of learning and improving their English skills on their own.

Table 5.7

Confidence in Abilities to Direct Learning

Themes	Number of groups	Number of references
Confidence in abilities to manage their current learning	4	38
Confidence in abilities to continue directing their own learning in the future	4	8

5.4.4.1 Confidence in abilities to manage their current learning

Learners agreed that their experiences during the intervention made them more confident in their abilities to make decisions in several key aspects of their learning. First, they stated that they could confidently set their learning objectives and decide for themselves what to do to improve their English on their own outside of class.

Mind: I am certain that I can direct myself to learn, uh, I think after I learned these techniques, I can do much more on my own and I can make my own plans. (Learner interview, group 1)

Mew: I can manage what I do because now I am motivated and I know I can set goals for myself. I know how to set goals and make plans to work on my English. (Learner interview, group 1)

In addition to being able to set their own objectives, most learners also mentioned feeling more confident in their abilities to select learning materials and activities according to their needs, interests and proficiency levels.

NF: I'm more confident because I can select what I want to learn from. I know how to choose things that will make me more interested in learning. I know what to look for. (Learner interview, group 3)

FG: I'm quite confident that I can choose things that would help me learn English. I choose to work with things I enjoy doing, such as songs and stories. Doing this will at least help me learn the language and I know what I chose to do worked well for me. (Learner interview, group 3)

Learners further explained that this confidence originated from self-reflection they had practiced each week during the intervention. By thinking and writing about how they learned and what contributed to their success, learners were able to precisely identify their shortcomings and make plans for improvement.

Fern: I feel more confident because I know my weaknesses. I know which areas I have to work on improving. Writing the journals made me understand. (Learner interview, group 1)

Som: I know what to do, how to fix my own problems and that made me feel more certain about what to do next. (Learner interview, group 4)

Some learners further observed that the effort they spent learning independently outside of class also contributed to their in-class performance. This perceived success confirmed their views that their effort can significantly influence their learning outcomes. The perceived improved classroom performance as a result of their independent practice also reinforces learners' beliefs in their decision-making abilities and their skills in solving problems independently. This view is represented in MG's and NN's comments.

MG: I think I feel more confident in my abilities to get through some of the difficult stuff on my own and perhaps be good at English. I feel I

learned a lot from what I chose to do every week outside of class. Movies, music... those things are really useful. I learned a lot of new vocabulary from them and I can use the new words in class to help me understand things better. I also started to understand how to manage my learning well. (Learner interview, group 3)

NN: Very confident. I read and studied vocabulary, took notes, learned from movies and songs in my free time. These made me feel confident when I came to class. When the teacher asked questions in English, I could instantly recognize those words. I could understand the questions and answer them well. (Learner interview, group 3)

Learners were well aware that classroom knowledge may not be sufficient for their diverse and evolving learning needs and that they should be responsible for developing their own strategic approaches to learning (see 5.4.3.1). When asked if they were confident in their abilities to do so, learners stated that their hands-on experiences in solving their own problems in learning, making their own learning plans and deciding for themselves what to do on a weekly basis have helped them develop understandings of how they learned. These understandings made them feel confident in their abilities to identify more learning opportunities and seek more knowledge on their own.

Wan: We all have things we want to learn more about and now I know what I should really focus on. I can use the techniques I learned from class to help me gain more understandings about the things I want to know. I know how to search for information and choose information. (Learner interview, group 2)

Mind: I can learn more on my own. I know how to. I can go on and work on what I want to improve and choose to learn about things I am interested in. It's exactly like what we have been doing in our journals. (Learner interview, group 1)

Based on the learners' interview responses, it appears that the intervention has successfully helped learners establish a sense of confidence in their abilities to make decisions

for their own learning. As illustrated in the findings, learners were confident that they could manage their learning process and effectively respond to their current learning needs.

5.4.4.2 Confidence in abilities to continue directing their own learning in the future

Findings indicate that learners' familiarity with the self-regulation process has also strengthened their confidence to continue working independently to improve their English skills after the intervention.

PN: I think I can continue with this practice because I already know the way. It helped me improve easier. I can do the same thing again in the next semester (Learner interview, group 4)

Wan: I'm sure I'll continue with self-management. I know what to do with my free time. I can do things like reading short stories or work more on things I couldn't learn well. I know how to choose what to do to improve myself. (Learner interview, group 2)

Furthermore, learners also believed in their abilities to prepare themselves for future academic challenges after they finish secondary school. For instance, they mentioned that although the preparation for the upcoming high-stakes exams they have to take before going to university can be challenging and demanding, they still felt confident in their own abilities to handle these challenges.

Mind: For me, I feel more confident and better prepared than before. When I started to think about the big exams and planned to do things by myself, I realized that what I learned in class was just the basics. So, I looked up the GAT (General Aptitude Test) and the PAT (Professional and Academic Aptitude Test) exams from previous years and went through them on my own. Doing this made me feel much more confident that I can prepare for those exams in advance. (Learner interview, group 1)

Interestingly, a few learners who initially reported feeling uncertain about their abilities in learning English appeared to also have benefited from their classmates' enhanced

sense of confidence. Observing their classmates working confidently to improve their English helped these less confident learners feel motivated to start taking responsibility for their learning. In addition, seeing their friends' success also helped these less confident learners feel more confident that they could develop the same skills in learning management.

PW: I had never thought that I could do things to manage how I learn, but now I feel that I can. I never had any plans. But this semester, I want to make my learning more systematic like my friends did. Because I was never good at managing time, I want to manage my time better, just like my friends did. (Learner interview, group 2)

PL: I think I got better at managing myself. Before this, I used to feel lazy most of the time, but now I have my own motivation. I feel that I really need to start paying more attention. When I saw that my friends could do it, I began to question myself why they could do many things and improved a lot but I couldn't. What was it that made them more successful? I want to succeed, too. Whatever they could do, I wanted to be able to do those things, too. I think I can be like my friends. (Learner interview, group 4)

Interview findings clearly indicate that the intervention has substantially enhanced learners' confidence in themselves as learners of English. They believed in their own abilities to learn and to continue improving their English skills with less reliance on their teachers.

5.5 Summary and discussion of research question 4

Developing LA is a process that involves enhancing learners' abilities to regulate their own learning. It also involves developing in learners the kind of attitudes that allow them to put their abilities to practice. The aim of research question 4 has been to investigate the intervention's impacts on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning, which are characterized in this study by learners' willingness to take responsibility for their learning and their confidence in their own abilities to learn autonomously. Learner group interviews indicate that after participating in the strategy-based instruction, learners have expressed their willingness to take on responsibility in regulating and improving aspects of their learning process. They also appeared confident that they could successfully direct their own learning

after the intervention. Learners' overall positive attitudes towards autonomous learning are likely the result of their developed understanding about what they could do to manage their learning and how their active role in the learning process could lead to improved learning outcomes.

First, learners' understandings of their learning process, and what they can do to improve their learning, play an important role in helping learners accept responsibility for their learning. Before the intervention, despite expressing concerns about their English skills, learners were not certain about what they should do to improve their English on their own. When asked what they thought their responsibilities in learning were, learners broadly described that their main duty was to put more effort into learning English (see 4.6.5). After participating in the strategy-based instruction, however, they were able to elaborate that "putting more effort" into learning entails taking initiatives in learning, managing their learning difficulties, sustaining their motivation to learn and developing their own potential as a person. This developed understanding in turn motivated learners to accept responsibility in setting their own weekly learning goals, monitoring and solving their problems and evaluating their performance each week. These findings are in line with other researchers' view (Cotterall, 2000; Hu & Gao, 2018; Littlewood, 1996) that learners are more likely to accept responsibility in their learning process if they know what is involved in the process and what they can do to make the process more effective.

The second factor that reinforced learners' positive attitudes for autonomous learning in this study is learners' realization that they have the ability to improve their learning process and outcomes. This emerging understanding is the result of self-reflection practiced through the use of weekly learning journals. The weekly learning journals required learners to carefully examine their learning activities, set their personal learning goals, make relevant learning plans, develop their own strategies for learning, monitor their progress, solve problems and evaluate their learning results. Findings reveal that while reviewing their journal entries, learners became more aware of how the activities they chose had helped them achieve their personal learning goals. They also became aware of how the strategic learning skills practiced in class could fit into their independent learning outside of class. More importantly, they could also see the gradual but steady progress they had made since the beginning of the semester. These positive learning experiences helped learners make connections between the effort they put into their learning and their improved learning outcomes (Dörnyei, 2001). As a result, they became more confident in their ability to learn autonomously and more determined to pursue their own learning goals.

It can be concluded that the intervention has contributed to a shift in learners' expectations about their roles in learning and changes in their beliefs about their abilities to learn autonomously. In other words, the intervention helped learners perceive themselves as active agents of their own learning. This emerging understanding, in turn, motivated learners to accept responsibility for their learning with confidence. A number of researchers (e.g. Chan, 2001; Cotterall, 1995; Gan, 2004; Rungwaraphong, 2012; Tayjasant & Suraratdecha, 2016; Wenden, 1991) have identified learners' perceptions of their roles in the learning process, attitudes towards autonomous learning and beliefs in their ability to direct their own learning as important indicators of readiness for autonomous learning. Findings on learners' confidence and willingness to take responsibility for their learning are encouraging as they clearly indicate learners' manifestation of LA.

5.6 Conclusion

Chapter 5 has sought to explore the intervention's impacts on learners' development of LA which is operationalized in this research as a construct that involves learners' metacognitive regulation for their learning and their attitudes for autonomous learning.

Taken together, findings from research questions 3 and 4 provide portraits of autonomous learners who can engage proactively and reflectively with their English reading and English learning in general. After participating in the intervention, learners in this study have developed metacognitive knowledge and the necessary skills to regulate their learning process (see 5.2). They have also acknowledged their roles in the learning process, expressed commitment to their responsibility and shown confidence in their abilities to independently initiate and regulate their learning. In conclusion, the intervention was successful in helping transfer responsibility for directing important aspects of learning from teachers to learners. Because the intervention lessons were integrated into the reading modules of the learners' English course, another important question to address in this research is whether and how the strategy-based intervention implemented as a means to promote LA has also led to gains in English reading. This question is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 6 The Intervention Phase (part 2)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings for research question 5: *Does the training in reading strategies affect learners' reading?* This research question investigates the effects of the intervention on the intervention class learners' reading in terms of comprehension and approaches to English reading. In addition, learners' perceptions of their reading abilities, perceived usefulness of the intervention lessons, motivation and attitudes towards reading as well as their transfer of reading strategies to other learning tasks were also observed.

To observe the effects of the intervention on learners' comprehension of English texts, pre-, post- and delayed tests were administered in the first week of the semester, immediately after the conclusion of the teaching intervention and five weeks after the intervention (See 3.6.4 for details on the reading tests). All test scores were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) in SPSS version 25. In addition to quantitative findings, effects of the intervention on learners' approaches to reading were also explored qualitatively through two separate sessions of audio-recorded reading think-aloud conducted at the beginning of the semester and after the intervention. Six learners from the comparison class and six from the intervention class participated in both sessions, producing 24 audio recordings of reading think-aloud in total. All recordings were transcribed verbatim and coded in Nvivo version 12 for evidence of strategic processing of reading. Finally, audio-recorded group interviews were conducted with four groups of learners from the intervention class at the end of the semester. Interview recordings were transcribed and coded to uncover learners' overall perceptions of their improvements in reading over the intervention period.

6.2 Reading test scores

Sixty-two learners, 32 from the comparison class and 30 from the intervention class, completed the reading tests. The average scores for both classes' reading tests are summarized in Figure 6.1.

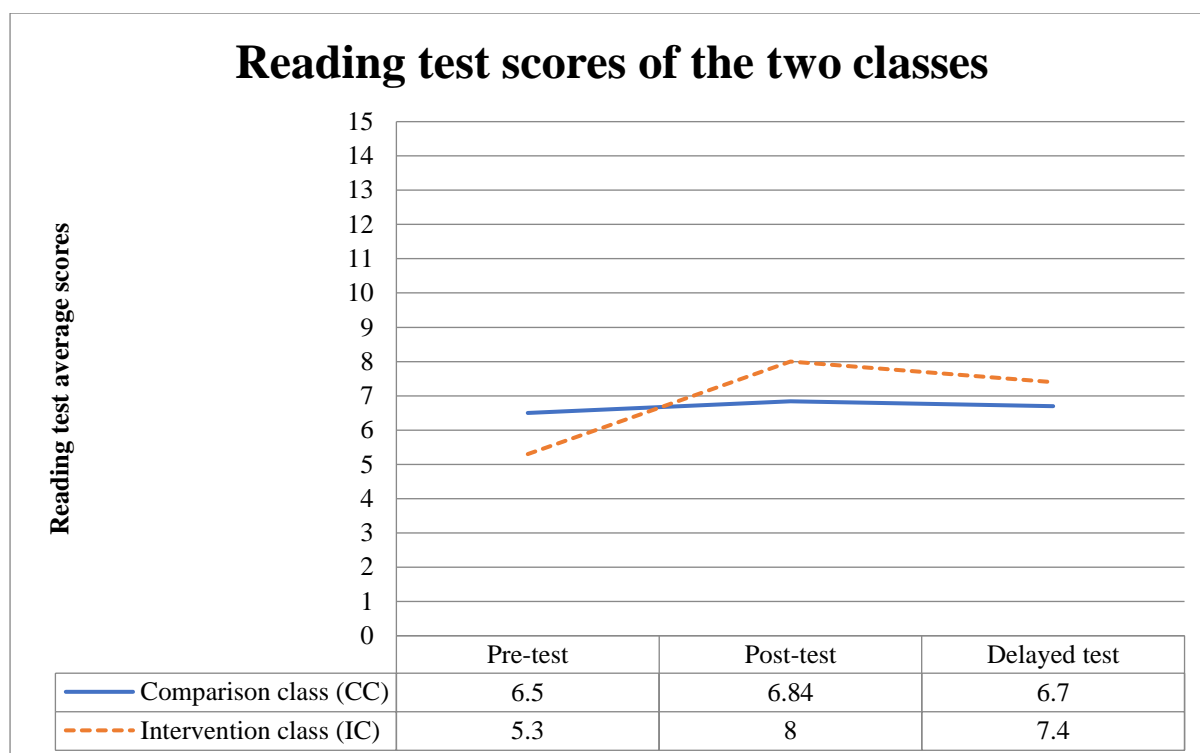


Figure 6.1. Reading test scores of the two classes

As illustrated in figure 6.1, while the average score of the comparison class remained almost unchanged from 6.5 to 6.84 and 6.7, a significant score improvement across the three tests can be observed in the intervention class. Over the intervention period, the average test scores of learners in the intervention class increased from 5.3 in the pre-test to 8 in the post-test, and slightly dropped to 7.4 in the delayed test. Detailed analyses of each test are presented in the following sections. The comparison class is represented by CC and the intervention class is represented by IC.

A MANOVA was used to determine differences between the CC's and the IC's pre-, post- and delayed reading test scores. Multivariate tests show that, overall, there was a statistically significant difference between the test scores, $F(3, 58) = 6.66$, $p = .001$, Wilks' $\lambda = .744$, partial $\eta^2 = .26$.

Table 6.1
MANOVA Results

		Multivariate Tests ^a					Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^c
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.			
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.927	246.944 ^b	3.000	58.000	.000	.927	740.832	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.073	246.944 ^b	3.000	58.000	.000	.927	740.832	1.000

	Hotelling's Trace	12.773	246.944 ^b	3.000	58.000	.000	.927	740.832	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	12.773	246.944 ^b	3.000	58.000	.000	.927	740.832	1.000
Class	Pillai's Trace	.256	6.656 ^b	3.000	58.000	.001	.256	19.967	.965
	Wilks' Lambda	.744	6.656 ^b	3.000	58.000	.001	.256	19.967	.965
	Hotelling's Trace	.344	6.656 ^b	3.000	58.000	.001	.256	19.967	.965
	Roy's Largest Root	.344	6.656 ^b	3.000	58.000	.001	.256	19.967	.965

a. Design: Intercept + Class

b. Exact statistic

c. Computed using alpha = .05

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III		Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^d
		Sum of Squares	df						
Corrected Model	Pre_Test	24.598 ^a	1	24.598	3.562	.064	.056	3.562	.459
	Post_Test	20.701 ^b	1	20.701	4.165	.046	.065	4.165	.519
	Delayed_Test	7.186 ^c	1	7.186	1.564	.216	.025	1.564	.234
Intercept	Pre_Test	2202.663	1	2202.663	318.930	.000	.842	318.930	1.000
	Post_Test	3411.668	1	3411.668	686.409	.000	.920	686.409	1.000
	Delayed_Test	3086.541	1	3086.541	671.793	.000	.918	671.793	1.000
Class	Pre_Test	24.598	1	24.598	3.562	.064	.056	3.562	.459
	Post_Test	20.701	1	20.701	4.165	.046	.065	4.165	.519
	Delayed_Test	7.186	1	7.186	1.564	.216	.025	1.564	.234
Error	Pre_Test	414.385	60	6.906					
	Post_Test	298.219	60	4.970					
	Delayed_Test	275.669	60	4.594					
Total	Pre_Test	2659.000	62						
	Post_Test	3717.000	62						
	Delayed_Test	3363.000	62						
Corrected Total	Pre_Test	438.984	61						
	Post_Test	318.919	61						
	Delayed_Test	282.855	61						

a. R Squared = .056 (Adjusted R Squared = .040)

b. R Squared = .065 (Adjusted R Squared = .049)

c. R Squared = .025 (Adjusted R Squared = .009)

d. Computed using alpha = .05

Tests of between-subjects effects indicate that the two classes' pre-test scores were not statistically significantly different, $F(1, 60) = 3.56, p = .064$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. This means that despite the CC's average pre-test score (6.5) being higher than that of the IC (5.3), learners in the two classes were not significantly different in terms of their performances on the pre-intervention reading test. However, after 10 weeks, the IC's average post-intervention test score was 8 while the CC's was 6.8. The two classes' post-test scores were statistically significantly different, $F(1, 60) = 4.17, p = .046$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. In other words, the IC significantly outperformed the CC in the post-intervention reading test. The IC also outperformed the CC in the delayed test despite the difference between the two classes' scores not being statistically significant $F(1, 60) = 1.56, p = .216$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$.

The slight decrease in the IC's delayed test scores and the lack of statistical difference between the two classes' scores in the delayed test could possibly be due to the duration and intensity of the intervention. While the strategy-based instruction could lead to immediate gains in reading test scores, one hour of scaffolded strategy practice may not be enough for these learners who have relatively limited experience with strategic learning (see 4.6.4) to master and maintain their strategy use. In fact, learners' strategic processing at the initial stage of strategic learning may not always be efficient (Gu, 2007). In this case, more hours of strategy practice may be needed before stronger and longer-term effects of strategy instruction on learning outcomes can be observed (Plonsky, 2019). Apart from the duration and intensity of the instruction, the five-week interval between the post-test and the delayed test might have caused some learners to forget about or stop using strategies. In this case, future research into factors that lead to strategy retention and the lack thereof could shed some light into how learners' strategic learning changes over time and how such change can affect their learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the statistical analyses of the reading test scores show that after participating in the strategy-based lessons, learners in the intervention class showed significant improvement in their reading. They also outperformed the comparison class learners in the post-intervention and the delayed reading tests as well. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the strategy-based instruction has influenced the intervention class learners' improvements in reading.

6.3 Learners' approaches to English reading

In addition to the reading test scores, effects of the strategy-based instruction on learners' reading were also further observed through two separate think-aloud sessions. The

purposes of the reading think-aloud were to: 1) identify learners' strategic approaches to reading English texts and 2) observe changes in these strategic approaches over the intervention period (see 3.6.5.1).

Think-aloud transcripts were first coded inductively to allow all strategies used by learners to emerge. Each strategy was subsequently defined using Chamot's (2009) and O'Malley & Chamot's (1990) strategy descriptions as well as Zhang et al.'s (2008) coding scheme.

In this study, think-aloud transcripts were segmented into units of analysis. A unit of analysis contains "a comment or set of comments on the same core sentence or group of sentences as well as the reading behaviors associated with those comments" (Coté et al., 1998, p. 14). Oftentimes, multiple strategies could be identified from one unit of analysis. For example, a statement such as, "*I am looking at the title. This one is about Nobel Prize. Nobel Prize, I have heard about this before, so I think this story should be about a prize for scientists*", was counted as one unit of analysis. This unit contains one reference of the selective attention strategy, one reference of the relating to personal experience strategy and one reference of the prediction before reading strategy (see 3.9.2 for inter-coder agreement on think-aloud codes)

Despite being derived from a small group of learners (12 learners), the findings provide useful information on learners' patterns of strategy use in reading before and after the 10-week strategy instruction.

Table 6.2

Strategies Identified in the Pre- and Post-Intervention Think-Aloud Transcripts

Strategies	Classes	Number of references: Pre-intervention	Number of references: Post-intervention	Differences over time
1. Translation	IC	35	22	-13
	CC	43	44	1
2. Wild guessing	IC	29	7	-22
	CC	34	30	-4
3. Identifying problems	IC	22	37	15
	CC	30	30	0

4. Summarizing	IC	21	36	15
	CC	18	15	-3
5. Making inferences	IC	14	50	36
	CC	17	22	5
6. Self-questioning	IC	11	20	9
	CC	15	24	9
7. Evaluating self	IC	7	11	4
	CC	8	0	-8
8. Selective attention	IC	6	22	16
	CC	4	4	0
9. Analyzing word parts	IC	3	5	2
	CC	6	8	2
10. Repetition	IC	2	1	-1
	CC	6	1	-5
11. Evaluating product	IC	2	11	9
	CC	6	2	-4
12. Comprehension reconstruction	IC	3	5	2
	CC	3	0	-3
13. Evaluating text difficulty	IC	0	1	1
	CC	5	1	-4
14. Previewing whole text before reading	IC	3	0	-3
	CC	4	1	-3
15. Asking if makes sense	IC	2	6	4
	CC	3	2	-1
16. Relating to personal experience	IC	1	7	6

	CC	2	1	-1
17. Analyzing structure	IC	2	5	3
	CC	1	1	0
18. Prediction (before reading)	IC	0	1	1
	CC	1	2	1
19. Evaluating text length	IC	0	0	0
	CC	1	2	1
20. Evaluating strategies	IC	0	4	4
	CC	1	1	0
21. Imagery	IC	0	8	8
	CC	0	0	0
22. Prediction (while reading)	IC	0	7	7
	CC	0	0	0
23. Self-talk	IC	0	1	1
	CC	0	0	0

Note: IC = intervention class, CC = comparison class

Table 6.2 shows references of the 23 strategies identified in the two classes' pre-and post-intervention think-aloud transcripts. It also shows the differences in both classes' strategies use over time. Overall, the findings show that both classes were not very different in terms of their strategy use before the intervention. Strategies frequently used by both classes in the pre-intervention think-aloud include translation, wild guessing and identifying problems.

However, there are considerable differences in both classes' strategy use in the post-intervention think-aloud. After the intervention the two classes contrasted greatly in their frequency of using the making inferences, wild guessing, translation, summarizing and selective attention strategies. The comparison class learners appeared to rely on the same strategies (translation, wild guessing and identifying problems) to process the post-intervention think-aloud text. The intervention class learners, on the other hand, used the

making inferences strategy, identifying problem strategy and summarizing strategy to facilitate their reading. Think-aloud findings are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

6.3.1 Pre-intervention Think-aloud

This section presents four pre-intervention think-aloud excerpts that represent common approaches to English reading found among learners in both classes. Excerpt 6.1 gives a clear picture of a high-score comparison class learner's limited use of strategies and his lack of comprehension monitoring while excerpt 6.2 shows ineffective uses of the summarizing and making inferences strategies by a low-score learner from the same class.

Excerpts 6.3 and 6.4 are taken from two intervention class learners. Excerpt 6.3 illustrates how a high-score learner from the intervention class read without monitoring her comprehension. It also shows her ineffective attempts to summarize and make inferences. Excerpt 6.4 presents how a low-score learner from the same class relied mainly on direct translation to understand the text. The think-aloud excerpts show learners' reading of the text in italics while their verbalized thinking process in Thai was translated and presented in non-italics. Each learner is represented by a pseudonym and the researcher is represented by the letter R.

Text 1: Gifted students

Many educators work hard to make students feel that the classroom is a place of learning, and that means making mistakes and learning from mistakes. Based on Stanford psychologist's work on growth mindset, teachers encourage students to see their intelligence as something malleable that changes and grows, not a fixed asset given at birth.

Stanford professor Jo Boaler has been very supportive of growth mindset, particularly in math education, where students often have fixed mindsets about their abilities. Boaler says she has seen the damage in adults and students who believe they don't have "math brains" or that they'll never be good at math. Through talking with her students, Boaler began to see how being seen as "gifted" or "smart" as children negatively affected even bright and successful young people. It's not uncommon for gifted students to fear failure more than other students because they feel they have more to lose.

To counteract these negative messages, Boaler encourages teachers to use open-ended, visual math tasks, and to mix content with mindset messages. She's also created a website, YouCubed, with videos, research, and classroom activities to help teachers get started.

Excerpt 6.1: Mon (Comparison class, high score)

The first excerpt presents examples of how Mon, a high score learner from the comparison class read the text. Throughout the think-aloud session, Mon appeared to be confident in his vocabulary knowledge as he did not identify any vocabulary problems in reading.

Mon: *Boaler says she has seen damage in adults and children who believe that they don't have math brains or that they'll never be good at math. Boaler says that adults who believe that children who cannot do math will not be good at anything math-related. Through talking with her students, Boaler began to see how being seen as gifted or smart as children negative affected...uh...even bright and successful young people. So, the person talked to their children. Boaler thinks that she/he gave gifts for students' intelligence...Then negative affect might mean their children have negative thoughts about successful young people.*

Mon's main strategy in reading this text was translation. He proceeded to translate one sentence to the next swiftly without seeing the need to connect them to construct meaningful idea units. He continued reading the rest of the text by translating and guessing. As a result, despite his apparent confidence, Mon's understanding of the story is incomplete and inaccurate.

R: So, the text talks about...

Mon: Boaler did a research on smart and weak students. Boaler did the research and found that most children's levels of intelligence were not equal. This led him/her to provide options for teachers to understand their students better...adding videos and contents.

While the previous example shows a high-score learner's limited use of strategies and his lack of comprehension monitoring in reading, excerpt 2 shows how Emma, a low-score learner read the same text. Wild guessing and limited use of strategies are more evident in this example.

Excerpt 6.2: Emma (Comparison class, low score)

- Emma:** *Stanford...Stanford...this...professor...professor Jo Bo...Jo Boaler has been...been...very... supporting of ground. This might be ground mindset...pass...parti...particularly in math education where students often have fixed midset about their...ab...abili... abilities.*
- R:** What are you thinking?
- Emma:** Uh...Stanford...it's about...it might mean math. It might mean math subject. It is often studied. They might be asking us if we study often. Study often because...I don't know this.
- R:** Who studied often?
- Emma:** They might say that students and...*students often*...it might ask us if we study...study often. Have *fix midset* about...about their abilities...They might say that students studied math subject. This is six. *Midset*, this word I'm not sure. It might mean periods?

Unlike Mon who seemed to read with confidence, Emma, appeared to have several difficulties in her reading. Her first problem was in recognizing words. She misread 'mindset' and 'fixed' as 'midset' and 'six'. These miscues led to misinterpretation of the text as shown in the example. Moreover, these miscues were neither noted nor modified. As she continued on to the subsequent parts, Emma also commented that she could not understand what the text was about. The second part of this example illustrates how Emma tackled her comprehension problems.

- Emma:** Uh...this person might be a student. She...she probably...*who believe they don't have math*...she might...she might...*or they good at math*...might be good at studying math. *Through talking with her students and began to see they*...the girl or smart girls are children. I don't know. *Successful young people* might be people who are young. *It's not u...uncommon...for girl students*. They...it doesn't...I don't know. Tell students to...her because...
- R:** So, there's one kid who is good at math?
- Emma:** Perhaps yes. It's like kids who are good at math...might be about kids who are good at math. Then there's someone telling them they were good *because they feel they have more to lost*. I don't know this one.

As can be seen from the example, Emma did not tackle her comprehension problems unless she was prompted to. Although she noticed her difficulty in connecting ideas together, she did not address it directly. Similar to Mon, Emma chose to make guesses using some words she recognized from the passage. Emma's problems represented how most low-score learners processed the text. Similar patterns of strategy use in reading can also be noticed in the intervention class.

Excerpt 6.3: Mind (Intervention class, high score)

Mind: After reading the whole text, I think there's a person who is not good...not good at anything. The person is not good at math...not good at anything. He doesn't have math brains. *Students...Boaler be...* This person named Boaler...Boaler might be a person's name. This person started...uh...this person...like...*seen gifted or smart as children negative...* The person has seen smart students. Is it smart students? *Negative* is not...negative might mean not so smart students. *Children negative...* it's like comparing weak students and their efforts to study these things.

In attempting to summarize the text, Mind, a high-score learner from the intervention class made several guesses from words she could translate in the sentences and asked herself a question relating to the text. However, she did not seem to be aware of the need to find information to justify her guesses or to answer her own question. Furthermore, she did not identify any problems in her comprehension and continued focusing on direct translation.

R: What made you think that?

Mind: The paragraph above said *Stanford*. I think it is a stage for competition and then I looked at the next one *Stanford pro...* This one...I don't know its meaning. *Boaler has been very supportive of ground midset in math education...education*. I don't know this either.

Mind did not seem to notice miscues, such as 'midset' and 'ground' in her reading. She attempted to tackle the parts she could not understand by making inferences based on certain words she selected from the paragraph. However, these inferences were not revisited

or supported with contextual evidence. This resulted in an incomprehensible summary and she eventually gave up solving the identified problem.

Mind: *Talking...it said this math education. This should be about mathematics. Boaler says she has seen. This one I don't know. Adults and students who believe they don't have math brain. People who had ideas? Ideas? thoughts or dreams that they are not good at math. They don't have brains for math...not good at all at math. Don't think that. Boaler started to see children...gifted...smart students or not smart at all. It's not uncommon for gifted students to...This part here I have no idea what this part here is about. Because they feel they have more to lose. I'm still a bit bothered with this part because they have more to lose.*

Reliance on direct translation, ineffective use of inferences and summarizing strategies as well as lack of comprehension monitoring are more evident in low-score learners. As illustrated in the following excerpt, Som, a low-score learner from the intervention class, struggled with unknown words and miscues throughout her reading. As a result, she was unable to formulate a coherent understanding of the text.

Excerpt 6.4: Som (Intervention class, low score)

Som: Since the beginning, it might be about...it started talking about students in class *making...read...students...intelligence...intelligence* means very smart? And then in the above sentence, I don't know, but then I later saw 'math' or maybe it's about students in gifted classrooms, students who are really good at math in the gifted classrooms. It's like *students...teacher...teacher* came to teach this class and there was someone so good at math. Yeah...must be right. *Even bright and successful students...more than other students because...because.* Students who have a lot of math knowledge in the gifted classrooms are specialized in math. Then the teacher opened a website about math or showed videos in class, helping her explain so that students can understand. I think it should be about this.

Similar to Mind, Som approached the text by translating each word. She also related the word ‘math’ and ‘gifted’ with her real-world knowledge about gifted classrooms (a special type of classroom for learners with giftedness in mathematics and sciences at the school) and inferred that the text was about studying math in a gifted classroom. With this assumption, she continued to read and guess based on what she knew.

- R:** So, you’re saying that it is mainly about...
- Som:** People who are good at math and study in the gifted classroom. They are intelligent and have talents for math and the teacher saw their talents...something like that.
- R:** OK and you said something about mixing content?
- Som:** And *mix content*...based on my understanding, it might be mixing together *content with message*...messages that are combined or adjusted or changed in forms so that they are more understandable. Like, summarizing it, so it can be understood.
- R:** Summarizing what?
- Som:** Uh...it’s like the contents given by teacher about math...they are combined with...*mix content with...mid...messenger*. Uh...*mix content with messenger*...message given from teacher combined together, mixed together or perhaps mixing their own knowledge and the teacher’s knowledge together. Combining knowledge of teacher and this student...

When being prompted to reconsider her comprehension, Som based her inferences largely on her real-world knowledge which, unfortunately did not align with the text content. Although the use of prior knowledge is a necessary part of comprehension, Som could not make effective use of this strategy in her reading. Without attending to contextual clues, her integration of prior knowledge distracted her comprehension process instead of helping her understand the text.

The pre-intervention think-aloud findings indicate that reading in English was not an easy task for the learners from both classes. Learners struggled to understand what they read. The pre-intervention think-aloud excerpts show that the learners’ readings were permeated with miscues and guesses. Their reported understandings were vague and lacking in detail. Based on their performances on the pre-intervention reading think-aloud, the main observable

difference between high- and low-score learners seemed to be the ability to recognize word meanings. High-score learners tended to recognize more words compared to their low-score counterparts. However, this difference did not seem to play a role in helping them understand the text. Although several strategies were used, only a few were used repeatedly, and, those frequently used strategies did not lead to successful comprehension of the text. It could be argued that the main barriers to successful comprehension, apart from limited vocabulary knowledge, are the learners' limited task knowledge, strategic knowledge and their orientation to reading.

The first possible explanation for learners' difficulties in reading is their lack of task knowledge. As illustrated in the four examples, learners appeared to read without a clear idea of what reading entails. Instead of seeing reading as an iterative process of meaning-making, learners seemed to perceive it as mainly a translation task. With this understanding in mind, most learners focused on translating the text word for word.

The learners' choices in using translation were likely informed by their experiences in learning reading (see 4.6.3). The way their teachers taught reading by translating texts may have led them to believe that by being able to translate each word, they would understand the whole text. Furthermore, this assumption could possibly hinder them from trying to use other strategies to comprehend the text. The learners' perceptions of reading English as a translation process and their overreliance on the translation strategy is a clear reflection of their inadequate knowledge in terms of what reading is and how it should be done.

Learners' approaches to reading also indicate their inadequate strategic knowledge. In other words, their knowledge and skills in using strategies to overcome problems in their reading and to construct comprehension appeared limited. Their strategy combinations did not lead to successful reading outcomes. Although some learners noticed that their interpretations of the text did not make sense, they did not seem to be bothered by the incomplete comprehensions.

Even when problems were detected, the learners either decided to ignore the identified problems altogether or managed them with poorly coordinated strategies. For example, when learners encountered parts that they could not fully understand, they often chose to make inferences to solve their comprehension problems. Inferences, however, were made based on single words they recognized from the text rather than meaningfully connected contextual information. Once inferences were made, they were rarely verified. This shows that the learners were not aware of how the inference strategy can be effectively used. As a result, learners' inferences turned out to be restatements of the text.

Another example of the learners' lack of strategic knowledge is their use of the problem-identification strategy. This strategy is frequently used by learners in both classes in the pre-intervention think-aloud. However, identified problems were rarely strategically pursued. After a few attempts at guessing and restating sentences they could not understand, learners would stop trying and move on to other parts of the text. Evidence from the think-aloud indicates that the learners' strategic knowledge seems to be declarative rather than procedural. That is, they knew that strategies might help them read, but they did not know how to use them effectively. Therefore, despite using several strategies, learners were not able to coordinate strategies to benefit their reading.

In addition to the lack of task and strategic knowledge in reading, learners' strategy choices and uses in the pre-intervention reading think-aloud are also indicative of their orientation to reading. The learners' frequent use of the translation strategy suggests that learners' main approach to reading was on translating each word in isolation rather than constructing meaning from what they read. This is supported by Phase 1 class observation and learner group interview findings (see 4.4.3 and 4.6.3). Class observation findings reveal that the majority of reading lessons were not comprehension-oriented. Comprehension construction received marginal attention in class time and this process has always been the teachers' duty. Learners' roles in reading lessons were often limited to reading passages aloud together, listening to the teachers' translations, answering vocabulary questions and completing text-related exercises assigned by their teachers. Therefore, it is unlikely that learners will see themselves responsible for comprehension construction. As a result, learners tended to proceed quickly through the text without trying to connect sentences and ideas together or monitoring if comprehension has been achieved.

However, after the 10-week intervention, there are noticeable changes in the ways learners read. Details regarding the changes are presented and discussed in the following section.

6.3.2 Post-intervention Think-aloud

Not only did the two classes differ in terms of frequency of strategy use, post-intervention think-aloud findings further show that the use of strategies in reading among learners also differs qualitatively. This section presents four post-intervention think-aloud excerpts that are representative of how learners in both classes read after the intervention.

Text 2: Ig Nobel Prize

Each year, the Ig Nobel Prizes are given out to the funniest, most unusual research produced from around the globe. The Ig Nobel has been held at Sanders Theatre at Harvard University since 1991. The prizes have been awarded every autumn to celebrate 10 unusual or trivial achievements in scientific research. The awards have been given out to "researchers" whose research may first make people laugh, and then make them think.

The 2016 Ig Nobel in Biology had two independent winners; however, the two men's work share some remarkable things in common. Both Charles Foster and Thomas Thwaites are UK scientists who spent lengthy periods of time living as animals in order to get a better understanding of our animals' lifestyles.

Foster spent time as a badger, an otter, a deer, a fox, and a bird, eating as each creature would eat and living as it would live. Thwaites created prosthetic extensions for his arms and legs in order to walk on the hills among goats. Both men wrote books about their experiences, and both were honored this year for their service to interspecies relations.

Excerpt 6.5: Mon (Comparison class, high score)

Mon: *Each year Ig Nobel prizes are given out to the funnest more unusual research product from around the globe. This means...uh...every year, the Ig Nobel prizes are given to products, weird or funny products. These products are made for something around the world. The Ig Nobel...held at Sanders Theater at Harvard University since 1991...have been awarded every autumn to celebrate 10 unusual or trivial achievement and scientific research. It is that the Ig Nobel prize has been kept at Harvard since the year 1991 and then awarded every autumn...it's like...uh...as a celebration for...uh...scientific products...something like that.*

Mon's approach to reading this passage was similar to that at the beginning of the semester. He processed the text mainly by translation. His approach was to restate what was mentioned in the text rather than extract the meaning from the paragraph.

Mon: *The awards have been given out to researchers whose...whose research may first make people laugh and then make them think. It is given to the creator...the creator of the product and then to the first person to make*

people laugh. Hm...laugh...*then make them think*...uh...kind of making people happy.

Although Mon could eventually produce a partially accurate summary of the text, his example represents a common pattern of reading among learners in the comparison class. The learners read through the passage quickly and used translation as their main strategy to reading English. Due to their proficiency levels, Mon and his comparison class high-score peers could still manage to get a broad idea of the passage with their strategies. The reliance on direct, word for word translation is more evident in the low-score learners.

Excerpt 6.6: Emma (Comparison class, low score)

Emma: *Foster spent time as a...badger, an otter, a deer, a fox and a bird, eating as el... contru would eat and living as each would live. Thwaites....cr...is it crow? pros--prosthetic exten...extension of his arms and legs in order to work...to walk out...walk walk on...walk on the hills hills among among...goats Both men wrote book about their expe...experiences and both were hon...hon...hon...honred? this year for their service to in...interspecial relation.*

R: What are you thinking?

Emma: I know this is about animals. They are deer...and...

R: OK. What made you think that?

Emma: There's fox, bird...in this part it said something about animals and food. Then it might be about food that they like?

Emma's approach to English reading did not seem to significantly change in the post-intervention think-aloud. Her reading was still permeated with several guesses, which led to her inaccurate understanding of the text. Additionally, Emma seemed to skip parts she could not understand and only addressed the problems she had when encouraged to.

R: Which part made you think it's about food?

Emma: It's eating...uh...eat and living. This one I'm not sure. I know arms...arms and legs. Walking on...I'm not sure...Charles...Thomas Thwaites. Hm...and then men wrote books. It might be about things...uh...wonderful things about animals? What else...

R: Who did what in this story?

Emma: Who...who...who...hm...*This year the Ig Nobel had...to who? Did what? Who? It might be who? The...where...have been awarded...autumn...10...is it about movies, too? Given out...make them be...be something about science, too?*

The second part of this excerpt clearly shows how Emma tried to use translation and guessing to solve her comprehension problems. When asked to give reasons to support her guesses, Emma constructed her understanding of the text from individual words she recognized. There was no evidence of an approach to reading the passage as a connected whole. Moreover, her low comprehension seemed to prevent her from summarizing for global ideas. Emma continued with translation and guessing without connecting ideas together. Emma's approach to reading English was not unique. In fact, the findings from post-intervention think-aloud sessions indicate that direct translation and guessing without comprehension monitoring were typical among other comparison class learners regardless of their proficiency levels identified in the pre-test.

While the comparison class learners often read without comprehension monitoring, the intervention class learners were more active in their attempts to connect parts of the text together to form meaningful stories. After learning about strategies and practicing reading strategies for 10 weeks, the intervention class learners performed considerably better in their post-intervention think-aloud sessions. Their comprehension of the text were more accurate and more detailed.

Excerpt 6.7: Mind (Intervention class, high score)

Mind: *Foster spent time as a badger...hm...a badger...spent time as a badger. I feel like I have seen this. Maybe it's an animal? Fox...this one and this one are animals. Eating as each it would eat and living as it would live. Hm. It should be an animal.*

Compared to her performance in the pre-intervention think-aloud, Mind appeared to handle unknown words more effectively after the intervention. In the above example, she was not sure what 'badger' meant. Instead of guessing, she incorporated a number of strategies to make out the word's meaning. First, she reread the phrase and then tried to activate her prior experience of the word. She then guessed what 'badger' could mean. Mind immediately

confirmed her guess by considering the surrounding words which are types of animals. She finished reading the sentence and came to a well-supported conclusion that the unknown word, badger, is a name of an animal. As she continued reading the text, Mind was constantly troubled by her insufficient vocabulary knowledge. However, she tried coordinating many strategies to facilitate her comprehension.

Mind: This person...it seems like he spent time copying animals? He went to live with animals and eat with them. Living as they would live...*create pros*...I don't know this word...for. Ah, there's arm. This is related to the second person. In order to walk...I don't know this either. This one is sheep...goats...goats. *Both men wrote book*. Write...write book about...about what? I don't know. *And both were...hon...hon...hon* something *this year for their service to interspecial relation*.

In this part of the text, Mind misread 'interspecies' as 'interspecial' and met a new unknown part 'prosthetic extensions of his arms and legs'. Although she knew the word 'arms', her understanding of the whole phrase was still clouded. However, her comment, 'This is related to the second person' shows her strategic attempt to connect ideas in the text together. After finishing the paragraph, Mind was still unsure of what 'prosthetic extensions' could mean. Nevertheless, without prompts, she tried to figure out the unknown part by making inferences from words she knew and then summarized the whole story.

Mind: To sum up, it said in 2016 there were two recipients of the Ig Nobel Prize in Biology. The winners were the men named Charles and Thomas. The person named Charles lived with animals to kind of imitate how animals live. He lived and ate like animals. For the person named Thomas, hmm...I think I have seen this word before (prosthetic). Hold on. I think I read...I'm sure *create* means to build. He built equipment? Because of the words *arms and legs*...The person named Thomas must have built some equipment to imitate those of animals. *Goats...goats walk*, actually...OK, this makes sense now.

In the process of summarizing, Mind retold the story in her own words. She also selectively attended to contextual clues, 'create', 'arms and legs', 'goats' and 'walk' to help narrow

down the possibility of what the unknown part, ‘prosthetic extensions’, could mean. As a result, she was able to make a rather accurate guess based on her effective strategy combination. Mind also evaluated her understanding at the end of her summary.

This example clearly illustrates the use of comprehension monitoring strategies and strategic problem-solving skills found among intervention class high-score learners after the intervention. Evidence of effective strategic problem-solving in reading was also found among low-score learners in the same class. In fact, the findings suggest that the intervention seemed to have a great influence on the low-score learners. Their performances in the post-intervention think-aloud demonstrate marked qualitative changes in their approaches to reading as shown in the following example.

Excerpt 6.8: Som (Intervention class, low score)

Som: *The...I don't know this one either. The Nobel...hel...what is it? I'm going to skip for now and I'll get back. At Sander I don't know. I can't read this word (theatre). At Har...Harvard...Harvard...Harvard University. Ah. Harvard University...what about it?*

In the above excerpt, Som decided to skip the sentence she could not understand and identify more comprehension problems as she read. However, she tried to address her comprehension problems by asking herself a question. As she continued on to the second paragraph of the passage, she encountered similar problems. Her strategies were to focus her attention on keywords and use them to help make inferences.

Som: *The 2016 Nobel in Biology has two independent winners. How...ever, the two men's work share some...what? Remar...remarkable things in common. Common...I have heard this word, but I can't remember what it means. Skip. Foster and Tho...mas? Yes, Thomas are UK scientists...scientists who spent lengthy...I don't know this one (period) of time...living as animals in order to get a better understanding of animals life..life..lifestyle. This sentence, there is a new word added 'Biology'. It's about...and animals. It is about living things and animals. I don't think I know many words in this sentence, but I think it's like they studied living things, animals.*

Apart from making inferences from keywords, Som also monitored her comprehension by summarizing what she read from each paragraph. In her summary, Som used her own words to retell the story. She concluded that the studies were about animals' lifestyles and justified her conclusion with ideas from the text. She noted a word that she could not understand but decided not to find out its meaning because perhaps she did not see it as a keyword. Thus, not knowing what it meant would not affect her understanding.

Som: In the third paragraph, they gave animals' names and talked about 'eat' and then there's a long sentence that I don't know. Then they talked about 'arms' and 'legs'. They tried to understand how animals eat and move because it said they want to know about animals' lifestyles. Then, they made a book...book about their *ex...experience*. I really want to know what this word means. Then they won the awards. I think that's about it.

Without prompting, Som constantly summarized what she read and relied on her accumulated knowledge of the text gained from her summaries of each paragraph to fine-tune her comprehension. Eventually, she was able to construct a coherent and rather accurate story. Interestingly, despite her seemingly very limited vocabulary, there was no evidence of wild guessing in her post-intervention think-aloud.

Compared to their pre-intervention think-aloud, the intervention class learners seemed to take a more flexible and strategic approach to English reading. For instance, instead of fixating on translating each word they did not know, learners often decided to skip and return to the unknown parts later with more contextual information and strategies to help them solve their comprehension problems. The learners' flexible strategic processing of reading, thus, is evidence of their refined task knowledge and strategic knowledge after the intervention.

In terms of task knowledge, learners appeared to have a better understanding of reading. Their use of strategies to construct, repair and confirm their comprehension throughout the reading process indicates that their main goal in reading was to understand the text as much as possible. The intervention class learners' approaches to reading in the post-intervention think-aloud provide illustrative examples of the learners' reconceptualization of the task. To these learners, reading in English is no longer a simple translation task but a meaning-making process that requires them to actively engage in planning what they can do to achieve task goal, monitoring and evaluating their comprehension and strategy

deployment.

The learners' refined task knowledge also prompted their strategic knowledge revisions. Since the task purpose for the learners has changed from translation to comprehension, their approaches in reading in the post-intervention think-aloud have also shifted from translating each word to be more meaning-driven. The intervention class learners' deliberate regulation of strategies to clarify their confusion and monitor their overall comprehension clearly shows their conscious efforts and procedural knowledge in reading; this was rarely evident in the pre-intervention think-aloud. The post-intervention think-aloud findings show that the intervention class learners have developed understandings of how they should read as well as why, when and under what conditions their strategic resources could most benefit their comprehension. These changes in strategic processing of text were particularly noticeable among low-score learners in the intervention class.

In order to obtain more understanding regarding positive changes in learners' reading abilities, it is crucial to explore their perceptions of English reading and their own abilities to read English captured in the post-intervention learner group interviews. These aspects of the findings are worth investigating as they are useful in constructing a holistic view of the learners' improvement after the intervention. All interviews were conducted in Thai and translated to English for finding presentations.

6.4 Perceptions of reading abilities

Learners in the intervention class perceived that their reading abilities had improved after the intervention. According to learners, this perceived improvement made them feel more confident.

- R:** Do you feel that your abilities in reading have changed at all this semester?
- BT:** I think there are differences between what I learned from other teachers and you. Other teachers always follow the textbook but you taught us strategies. Strategies or things we can do in reading. I think I have improved in the way I guess word meanings which helped me with my exams.
- PL:** From your class, I get more knowledge about reading paragraphs...long ones, long passages with pictures. I know how to observe those pictures and try to guess what the texts will say. Then I learned to look at the

topic, the biggest topic that will tell me what the text is going to be about. Then I started looking at vocabulary. Vocabulary...I do just like you taught us how we can get the meanings. These steps helped me understand more from the passages.

(Learner interview group 4)

Additionally, the intervention class learners were able to further provide reasons to justify their perceived improvement in reading.

R: So, you feel that reading is more enjoyable now because you can do it better. How do you know if you have really improved?

Som: I felt it when I did your exercises and assignments. When I used the techniques you taught, they really worked. Then I tried them in the other English course and I could get a sense of what it is going to be about. I think the techniques you taught are effective.

Pin: Hm, when I took the midterm exam, I felt that I understood more because I have methods of guessing and asking questions to myself. I used the things you taught us with the exams.

(Learner interview group 4)

Learners further stated that their perceived improved abilities made them feel more confident when reading English. Although English reading was still viewed as a challenging task, learners' overall comments indicate that this challenge has become more manageable.

Wan: I don't feel afraid anymore. I can read...read and understand main ideas. Even if they are long sentences, I can still read and summarize what they are about. Now, I won't say I feel super confident in my skills. But compared to what I was able to do at the beginning of the semester, it's definitely better. (Learner interview, group 2)

NN: I still feel a bit nervous, but I'm not scared anymore because I practiced guessing word meanings, making good guesses. I looked at pictures. I could understand more and could answer more questions compared to the beginning of the semester. (Learner interview, group 3)

Overall, the intervention class learners reported feeling more confident in their abilities in reading English. The learners' responses clearly show that their perceived improvement in reading skills and their confidence were from knowing what strategies to use and how to use them to help construct meanings from what they read. Learners attributed their perceived development to the strategy-embedded reading lessons taught during the intervention. Their appreciation for the lessons is presented in the following section.

6.5 Appreciation of strategy lessons

Learners found the reading lessons in the intervention enjoyable and useful in helping them tackle difficulties in their reading. Learners, particularly those with low pre-intervention test scores commented that learning about strategies gave them a sense of direction in reading. To these learners, reading in English was often perceived as a demanding task. However, the lessons helped them navigate through the task more easily. These views are represented in Naa's and JJ's comments.

Naa: I feel more OK with it when you taught us. When other teachers...other English teachers taught...uh, it made me feel that they were not being specific. There were no clear ways of thinking. When you taught us, I found it easier to work with passages and other reading assignments. You gave us something to read and then you always showed us some techniques such as making inferences or predictions or guessing meanings from word parts. This made me feel better.

JJ: I also want to know more about strategies. Normally, when our teachers assigned us some exercise after reading, we would translate words with a dictionary because we had no clues about other ways. But now, we know some techniques to do it. We can think of other ways to find a way out. We don't always have to go to the dictionary. It's more convenient and I will continue using strategies when I read.

(Learner interview, group 4)

What is interesting from Naa and JJ's comments is the learner's ability to appreciate strategy lessons beyond their surface values. Rather than seeing strategies as a set of ready-made techniques they can use to instantly improve their reading, these comments suggest that the learners viewed strategies as 'principles' that can guide them to develop their own 'clear

ways of thinking'. In other words, apart from viewing strategies as useful tools in reading, the learners perceived strategy lessons useful in helping them become strategic thinkers and problem-solvers.

6.6 Motivation and positive attitudes towards reading

The effects of the intervention on learners' reading can also be observed in terms of their motivation and changing attitudes towards reading. The intervention class learners elaborated in their interviews that their perceived improvements in reading abilities motivated them to read more in English. This perceived success after the intervention also changed their attitudes towards reading English and learning English in general.

Som: I think I am motivated. When I know I can understand more and I can be good at reading. I want to continue learning. Because I understand it, I have become more interested in it. I also pay more attention in class because I feel happy when I learn and because I can understand. (Learner interview, group 4)

Manao: I am more motivated. For me, my motivation increased. It's like when you know those strategies can be used to make it easier to read, you kind of enjoy it more. If reading is hard, then we wouldn't want to do it. Now I think I can get along with it (English reading) better. (Learner interview, group 2)

It is apparent from the interview findings that success in reading and the learners' perceived abilities to read helped create positive attitudes, which further fueled their effort in learning to read English.

Mew: Initially I disliked reading, but now I feel more confident because I can read. I learned how to catch the main ideas. I know more ways to do it, so I think I should be able to read better. Before this, when I saw long passages on exams, I didn't even read them. When I learned some strategies, I know the principles and I want to try them. I want to try strategies I learned in class and see if I can read and understand English texts. (Learner interview, group 1)

The following interview excerpt shows how a learner's attitude towards reading and learning English has dramatically changed over the intervention period. In the following excerpt, Wan, an intervention class learner reported that after learning about strategies in the intervention, she viewed herself as a capable learner who enjoys learning English and finds learning English challenging.

Wan: I think I want to learn more because I started to know the way. I like learning English now because it's more exciting. I must think all the time to solve problems and find answers for myself.

R: You wrote in your journals that you were not going to learn English anymore.

Wan: Yes, I did. Before this, I didn't like English at all, but now I like it a lot more.

(Learner interview, group 2)

Wan's account of her attitudinal changes gives illuminating insights regarding how the intervention affects not only her reading skills but also her perspective towards English reading and learning English in general. To Wan, reading in English has changed from something she disliked to a challenging problem-solving task whose success depends on her responsibility. In other words, learning to read in English has become more relatable and meaningful to her.

6.7 Transfer of strategies to other learning activities

Besides practicing strategies in class, the intervention class learners also reported transferring their strategy use to their independent reading and out of class practices in improving other English skills.

GI: I like reading English articles to practice my own reading skills. Oftentimes, there are words that I didn't know. I used the prediction strategy and I could also use my background knowledge. Then when I read on, I was able to infer their meanings and tell myself what the articles were talking about. (Learner interview, group 1)

JJ: I used strategies when I read long English articles. Normally, I would have some difficulties in getting the main ideas or arranging ideas together in my head when I read. I then used self-questioning to help me. For example, I would ask myself questions, something like, how does that character relate to the story? Yes, asking myself questions helps me find answers in what I couldn't understand. Then I could arrange ideas better. (Learner interview, group 4)

Mind: I like listening. Sometimes I listened but wasn't sure what it was about. I did like you used to teach me with reading. When I didn't know the meanings of words, I went back to relisten to the parts before it or I went forward to listen to the following parts. Then I connected them all and I got the message. (Learner interview, group 1)

Interestingly, the transfer of strategic knowledge and skills obtained from the intervention lessons was not limited to learning English. Learners reported using strategies to facilitate their understanding of hobby-related materials and other school subjects.

ST: Mine is reading stories from games. Because there are many types of games I play, so I used my background knowledge to help me understand the stories of each game. (Learner interview, group 2)

Fern: I like reading Biology in English because it's more direct. It's straightforward. It's not indirect like in the Thai version. It's not like the Thai version in that we don't need to translate some academic terms to simple language. I tried using reading strategies. For example, I used summarizing strategy. I tried this strategy and summarized each paragraph or each chapter as I read. Then I used my background knowledge to help too. Then I would understand the content and I also took notes of some important information. (Learner interview, group 1)

PL: I tried it with math. We learned to read and then we must analyze the text or we can make a mental picture of what it might be about. In math, there are math problems that talk about, for example, an isosceles triangle or

an isosceles trapezoid, I needed to read the questions and then visualize those shapes in my mind. I made pictures of what they are and their internal angles then I looked at what the questions ask for. When I think like this, I can do it easily. (Learner interview, group 4)

Learners' unprompted transfer of strategies to other tasks and their creativity in adapting them in fulfilling task goals clearly demonstrate their increased awareness in strategy use and their confidence in their own strategic problem-solving skills.

In sum, learners perceived that their abilities in reading English have improved over the semester. According to the learners' personal perspectives, positive changes in their reading skills, confidence and motivation can be attributed back to the knowledge and skills developed during the intervention. Findings from learner group interviews help consolidate reading test findings and think-aloud findings, confirming the positive effects of the strategy lessons on learners' reading. The following part discusses these impacts in relation to their development of LA.

6.8 Summary and discussion of research question 5

Research question 5 investigates the effects of the intervention on learners' reading. Considering quantitative data from reading test scores, and qualitative data from reading think-aloud sessions and learner group interviews, it can be concluded that the intervention had positive effects on learners' reading as evident in the learners' improved reading test scores, refined approaches to English reading and their overall perceptions of themselves and English reading.

First, findings from the intervention phase indicate that there was a significant increase in the intervention class learners' reading test scores. Despite the non-significant difference in the pre-test scores between the two classes, learners in the intervention class significantly outperformed their comparison class counterparts on the post-intervention test. The intervention class learners also outperformed the comparison class in the delayed test. Secondly, the intervention class learners' improved performances in reading were confirmed by their approaches to English reading which became more strategic and flexible in the post-intervention think-aloud. Most importantly, they were able to transfer knowledge and skills obtained in class during the intervention to other courses at school and to various independent and self-initiated learning situations. The intervention class learners' strategic solutions to their problems in reading think-aloud and their other independent learning activities are

evidence of their developed strategic thinking process and abilities to regulate their own learning, an indicator of LA.

The third aspect of improvement that can be observed after the intervention is learners' sense of self-efficacy or the way learners perceived their abilities in performing certain tasks (Bandura, 1997; Dörnyei, 2001). As presented in learner group interview findings, learners said they felt more confident in their abilities to read English. They also reported feeling more engaged in their reading lessons at school and continued to explore English reading on their own outside class. These findings are important to LA development because they reflect the learners' motivation to commit to their learning goals and willingness to put effort into pursuing their goals.

Moreover, findings from learner group interviews after the intervention also indicate that learners' perspectives towards reading have shifted from viewing English reading as a teacher-directed translation task to a self-directed interactive problem-solving process. Instead of relying on their teachers for comprehension, learners are willing to work on constructing meanings from what they read by themselves. The increased reading test scores, learners' strategic approaches to reading and their enhanced understandings of their responsibilities in the reading process also confirm findings from research questions 3 and 4 that the intervention has successfully prepared learners for autonomous learning.

What contributed to these positive outcomes is the use of the flexible instructional method that allows the reading process to be transparent and accessible to learners. Steps in reading and constructing meaning from texts were clearly demonstrated to learners through think-aloud strategic processing of texts during the intervention. In addition, the instructional procedures used in the intervention also provided suitable conditions for participatory learning. Instead of reading the text aloud together and waiting for translations from teachers, learners were encouraged to explore the process of reading by themselves during the five instructional stages of each lesson (see 3.7.2). Learners' hands-on experiences in using strategies in planning before reading, monitoring and evaluating their comprehension and strategy use during and after reading have significantly promoted their understanding of reading as an iterative process of meaning construction rather than simply translating English texts to their language. It can be concluded that the strategy-based instruction helped promote learners' strategic regulation of their reading which, in turn, led to better comprehension of English texts.

It should be noted, however, that while learners were enthusiastic in practicing most strategies presented in the intervention lessons, they appeared to have difficulties with the

taking note strategy. This resulted in an additional session in week 4 for this strategy. The learners' difficulties in understanding and using this strategy could possibly be due to their unfamiliarity with the habit of taking notes while reading. Because learners were used to reading aloud and having texts translated to them, they may not have perceived the need to write down information from what they read. Therefore, they may need more time to understand how taking notes can facilitate their reading and practice applying this strategy in their reading tasks.

This study sets out to develop LA among a group of Thai secondary school learners through strategy-based instruction. The purpose of integrating strategies into reading lessons was not to prescribe a set of strategies for learners to use in reading. In fact, it aims to encourage learners to become strategic thinkers who can independently initiate and regulate their learning. Learners' improved reading abilities, their enhanced understandings of the reading process and their abilities to independently and strategically approach their English reading on their own strongly indicate that the intervention was successful in both developing learners' reading and their capacity for autonomous learning.

Chapter 7 Discussion

7.1 Introduction

Chapters 4 to 6 report findings from the exploratory phase and the intervention phase of the study. This chapter revisits key findings from each phase and discusses major themes that have emerged from the present study in the light of previous research to formulate an understanding of how LA can be effectively promoted in a language classroom. This chapter also discusses researcher positioning in this study.

7.2 Research focus

This research focuses on developing LA in the Thai secondary school context. The first phase of the study aims to explore LA and how it is promoted in Thai secondary school English classrooms through a combined perspective of teachers and learners. The research questions addressed in this exploratory phase are:

- 1) How is LA perceived and promoted by teachers in the Thai secondary school context?
- 2) How do classroom learning experiences prepare learners for autonomous learning?

The second phase of the study involves an implementation of a strategy-based intervention program to promote learners' capacity for autonomous learning. It aims to answer the following research questions:

- 3) To what extent does the intervention affect learners' metacognitive regulation of their learning?
- 4) What are the perceived effects of the intervention on learners' attitudes for autonomous learning?
- 5) Does the training in reading strategies affect learners' reading?

This chapter discusses six issues (7.3.1-7.3.3 and 7.4.1-7.4.3) which are grouped under the two interrelated major headings: LA in the Thai secondary school context (7.3) and developing LA in the Thai secondary school context (7.4). Together, these six emerging themes provide insights into the process of developing LA in language learning.

7.3 LA in the Thai secondary school context

The fostering of LA in language learning is subject to affordances and constraints in the target learning context. This research reveals important factors that can potentially mediate Thai secondary school learners' development of LA. These factors are the mismatches between teachers' perceptions and practices in promoting LA, learners' potential for autonomous learning and the influence of Thai cultural values on LA development.

7.3.1 The mismatches between teachers' perceptions and practices

Findings from Phase 1 reveals that the teacher participants in this study conceptualized LA in different ways. Sumet defined LA in terms of modes of learning and learner preferences. Sara and Vicky viewed LA as learners' personal attributes which involve learners' curiosity, personal aspiration and motivation (see 4.2.1). Despite their different definitions, all teacher participants viewed LA as an important concept. They believe that LA is a capacity that will enable their learners to create more learning opportunities for themselves and to become life-long learners who can pursue their personal goals independently.

While LA and the idea of sharing control with learners can be perceived by many teachers as a threat to their authority in class (Benson & Voller, 1997; Dickinson, 1994; Trebbi, 2008), the teachers in this study did not see LA as a threat to their role. The teachers also agreed that they could facilitate their learners' development of LA by encouraging more learner involvement in decision-making, helping learners develop abilities to evaluate and reflect on their learning, and teaching problem-solving skills (see 4.3). These findings are encouraging as they indicate the teachers' acceptance of learners' active roles in the learning process. The teachers' willingness to support learner-centered learning can be viewed as affordances for LA development.

However, findings from class observations reveal disparities between the teachers' perceptions and their practices to promote LA in their classrooms. As reported in Chapter 4, the teachers' classroom practices rarely provided opportunities for learner to make decisions, evaluate themselves or practice problem-solving skills. Most of the class time were dedicated to teaching grammar points, vocabulary items and tense structures. Class observation findings are also supported by findings from learners' group interviews, confirming the teacher-led nature of classroom practices. These findings support previous studies in both the Thai context (Rungwaraphong, 2012c; Tapinta, 2016) and other parts of the world (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017; Lin & Reinders, 2019; V. L. Nguyen, 2016) of

the mismatches between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices in promoting LA. Furthermore, the findings from this study also add to these existing studies by offering a detailed look at these mismatches.

Teacher interviews and class observations in the exploratory phase suggest that the teachers' use of teacher-led approach to teaching instead of a learner-centered one did not come from their unwillingness to share control in learning with their learners. In fact, the teachers' intention to share control in learning with their learners is reflected through their ideas of how they could involve learners in the learning process. However, turning beliefs into practices is not a straightforward process. In practice, the teachers' decisions on whether and how much they should involve learners in the learning process were constrained by the need to follow the prescribed curriculum goals, the lack of time and professional preparation, teachers' low confidence in learners' ability to learn autonomously and their uncertainty on what they should do to promote autonomous learning in their classes. These perceived constraints are clearly reflected in the teachers' interview responses. The teachers' concerns about the need to cover the prescribed curriculum, for example, is clearly reflected in Sara's conflicting feeling about promoting autonomous learning in her class and having "these standards hovering over my head" (see 4.2.3.1). Sumet's comment about his learners having "no idea why they're learning English" (see 4.2.3.2) and Vicky's desire for "experienced teachers or researchers coming in often and share ideas on how to teach to promote autonomy" (see 4.2.3.3) also reflect the teachers' perceptions of what constrained their promotion of LA.

Findings suggest that these difficulties the teachers encountered when trying to promote LA may have made them feel that what they wanted to do is somehow in conflict with what the curriculum expects them to do. This perceived conflict, in turn, may have overridden the teachers' personal intention to make their classroom practices more process-oriented and learner-centered. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) maintain that teachers' commitment to a particular goal in teaching needs to be sustained by a sense of purpose, drive and direction. While the teachers in this study appear to be personally driven to promote LA, the feeling that their personal purposes are not compatible with the immediate curriculum goal, and the lack of practical knowledge on how to promote LA may have made them feel less committed and overwhelmed. These feelings are evident in the teachers' comments that the pressure to follow curriculum standards made it difficult for them to "make time" to promote LA and that without a clear direction, promoting LA can be a process that "demands a lot of brainpower and time" (see 4.2.3.1). Since promoting LA was

seen as time consuming and overwhelming, it is understandable that the teachers decided to dedicate most of their class time to teaching what is prescribed on the syllabus rather than promoting learner involvement, self-evaluation and problem-solving skills.

The findings on teachers' perceptions about LA and practices to promote LA are consistent with findings from other LA studies in the Thai context (Akaranithi & Panlay, 2007; Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006; Swatevacharkul, 2014), confirming that the promotion of LA can be undermined by factors such as the teachers' lack of practical experiences and insufficient professional support. This study also supports previous LA studies in other contexts (Phipps & Borg, 2009; Stroupe et al., 2016) which identify high-stakes examinations, performance standards, prescribed curriculum and time constraints as factors that can determine the extent to which teachers can put their beliefs into actions.

Benson (2016) notes that while research on teachers' perspectives about LA are abundant, there is still the need for more insights into the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice. Findings regarding the disparities between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice identified in this study are highly relevant as reveal important factors that can influence teachers' commitment to promoting LA.

In sum, findings from teachers' perspectives and class observations show that despite their positive views of LA and expressed willingness to help their learners become autonomous, the teachers in this study found it difficult to stay committed to this goal in their everyday teaching.

7.3.2 Learners' potential for autonomous learning

The exploration of LA in Thai secondary school classrooms in Phase 1 also provides interesting insights into learners' potential for LA. Previous studies on Thai learners' readiness for LA (Akaranithi & Panlay, 2007; Rungwaraphong, 2012a; Wiriyakarun, 2002) tend to point to the same conclusions that Thai learners are not capable of managing their learning, not yet ready for autonomous learning or not concerned about what goes on in their learning process. Findings from this study, however, reveal that the seeds of autonomy (Benson, 2011) already exist within Thai learners.

Learners' potential for autonomous learning is reflected through their attempts to initiate some learning opportunities for themselves outside of class. Even though their independent practices did not lead to satisfactory outcomes, they still mentioned that they should continue to put effort into their learning (see. 4.6.5). Moreover, learners' expressed concerns about their low proficiency, lack of skills to effectively improve their English (see

4.6.2) and lack of involvement in classroom learning (see 4.6.4) also reflect their deeper concerns over their personal learning progress. Taken together, learners' reported accounts of their independent learning effort and their ability to reflect on their overall learning process are evidence of their potential for autonomous learning.

In addition, findings on learners' beliefs about their own roles and teachers' roles did not support findings from previous research in the Thai educational context. For instance, Rukthong's (2008) study on Thai university learners' readiness for autonomous language learning reveals that while the learners in her study displayed some facilitative beliefs for autonomous learning, they were not confident in their ability to learn autonomously and thus still believed that teachers should take control of their learning. Rungwaraphong's (2012a) survey of Thai university learners' readiness for LA also shows similar results. Learners in her study believed that their teacher should be responsible for setting learning goals, managing learning activities, initiating tasks, controlling interactions in class, evaluating learners' learning, while learners' main role was to answer the teacher's questions.

On the other hand, learners in the current study expressed strong reservation towards classroom learning which made them feel that they "can't do it differently from the teachers' ways" and that learning "has to be one way" (see 4.6.4). While maintaining their respect for their teachers, learners in this study expected their teachers to occasionally allow them to propose ideas for what to learn and guide them through the process of learning instead of telling them what to do. Learners also observed that they tended to work more effectively towards self-determined learning goals (see 4.6.5). These findings suggest learners' belief that control in learning should be shared between learners and teachers.

In sum, the findings from this study which reveal learners' concerns about their problems in learning, their unsuccessful attempts to improve English on their own and their perceived need to be more involved in their learning process are clear evidence of learners' potential for autonomous learning. These findings provide support to the ideas that the potential to learn autonomously exist within learners but may not always be fully exploited in the context of formal education (Little, 1996, 1999b; Little et al., 2017), and that it is the teachers' role to help learners transform this potential they have into ability to direct their learning in a more systematic and purposeful way (Benson, 2011; Holliday, 2003; Little, 1991, 1995). This study, therefore, indicates that what the Thai learners lacked is not the potential to learn autonomously but the guidance and opportunities to develop and exercise this potential in their learning.

7.3.3 Thai cultural values and LA

This study provides counterevidence against the claim that Thai learners are culturally conditioned to be passive and dependent on their teachers. While the Thai cultural values such as respect for seniority and tendency to depend on teachers were identified by some researchers (e.g. Rungwaraphong, 2012a; Tapinta, 2016; Wiriyakarun, 2002) as the factors inhibiting Thai learners from learning autonomously, these factors did not seem to have exerted a strong influence on LA development in the context of this study.

When asked what constrained their practices in promoting LA, none of the teachers in this study mentioned cultural factors (see 4.2.3). Similarly, while a few learners noted that the “Thai way of teaching” may discourage them from speaking up in class (see 4.6.4), most learners did not view Thai cultural values as the main factors that prevent them from taking a more active role in their learning. Findings revealed that the teachers’ use of teacher-centered method which provided limited opportunities for learner involvement and the learners’ lack of skills and confidence in their ability to direct their own learning were the main factors that constrained LA development in the context of this study (see 7.3.1 and 7.3.2).

These findings are in line with other LA studies in the Thai educational context which suggested that although the Thai cultural values may inevitably influence teacher and learner roles in class, they are only one of the many variables that can mediate LA development. Success in promoting LA in Thai EFL classrooms also depends on factors specific to each context such as learners’ levels of proficiency and interest in learning languages (Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison, 2009), class sizes and the availability of learning resources (Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006), institutional support (Vanijdee, 2003), peer reactions and classroom norms (Raktham, 2012), teachers’ confidence in their learners’ ability to learn autonomously (Duong, 2014; Rungwaraphong, 2012, Yiamkhamnuan, 2016) and pressure from the exam-oriented educational curriculum (Darasawang & Watson Todd, 2012). In other words, this study indicates that the Thai cultural values did not necessarily inhibit LA development in classrooms. Findings from this study further support the claims made by researchers in other Asian countries that LA can be a suitable educational goal in Asian contexts (Aoki & Smith, 1999; Chan et al., 2002; Gao, 2009; Humphreys & Wyatt, 2014; M. Lamb, 2004; Smith, 2003).

To sum up, multi-perspective findings from the exploration phase provide a comprehensive picture of LA in the Thai secondary school context. The findings indicate that the extent to which LA can be promoted was influenced by the interplay between affordances (e.g. teachers’ willingness to promote LA and learners’ potential for autonomous learning)

and constraints (e.g. curriculum influence, time pressure and lack of professional support) in the context. Overall, these findings suggest that LA can be a viable goal in this context. Yet, the realization of this goal requires changes in approaches to learning and teaching to circumvent the existing constraints and maximize the possibility of successful LA development (see 7.4).

Interestingly, this study also reveals that teachers and learners in the same education setting may not necessarily share the same view on what supports or hinders LA development. For instance, while the teachers thought that their learners might not be ready to learn autonomously because of their lack of a clear goal in learning, learners themselves said that the main constraint to their autonomous learning were the teachers' use of teacher-led approaches in teaching and the lack of a learning environment that allows their active involvement in learning. These classroom-based insights do not suggest that one perspective is more legitimate than the other. In fact, they indicate that any effort to promote LA should be context-sensitive. Decisions to promote LA in a particular educational context should not be based only on theories about LA or surveys of teachers' or learners' readiness alone but also on a combined perspective of teachers, learners and a careful assessment of the affordances and constraints in the target context. This study shows that a thorough understanding of the research context can help inform an intervention which led to effective changes in goals in teaching and learning, teacher and learner roles in the learning process and the learning conditions. The following section revisits findings from the intervention phase of the study and discusses key issues in the process of developing LA in the Thai secondary school context.

7.4 Developing LA in the Thai secondary school context

Findings from the second phase of the study (reported in Chapters 5 and 6) indicate that changes in the approaches to teaching and learning, which were introduced through the intervention, played an important role in helping learners develop and exercise their capacity for autonomous learning.

Learner group interviews and weekly learning journals provide strong evidence for learners' enhanced metacognitive skills in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning which enabled them to strategically and independently manage their learning process. Findings from learner group interviews also indicate that learners have developed a positive outlook towards autonomous learning. Furthermore, learners' enhanced capacity for autonomous learning also appears to coincide with their improved language proficiency.

Findings from the pre-, post- and delayed reading tests and learners' reading think-aloud sessions show that learners have made substantial gains in English reading after participating in the intervention. These improvements are results of the three important shifts that took place during the intervention: goal shift, role shift and shift in learning conditions for developing LA. Together, the reciprocal influence between these factors form a mechanism that supports LA development in this study as illustrated in Figure 7.1. The following sections discuss these shifts in detail and consider their functions in helping learners develop the capacity for autonomous learning.

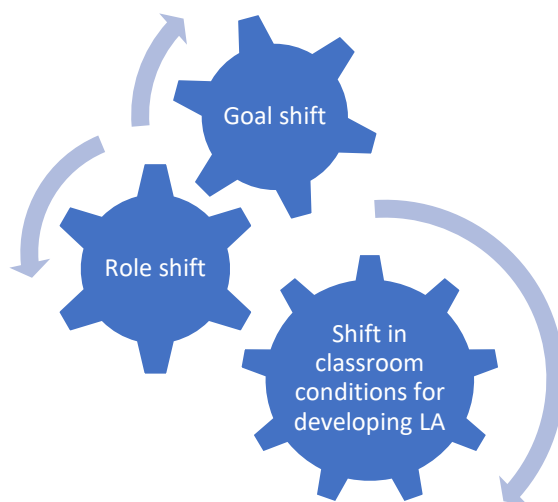


Figure 7.1 Three key shifts that support LA development

7.4.1 Goal shift

As already discussed in 7.3.1, teachers' beliefs about LA do not necessarily lead to classroom practice to promote LA. Crabbe (1993) and Cotterall (1995) maintain that in order for LA to be realized, the concept needs to be fully incorporated into classroom dialogues, learning materials, learning activities and lesson plans. In other words, it needs to be made an explicit and conscious goal in teaching and learning.

Findings from the exploratory phase suggest that while the teachers might have perceived developing LA as one of their goals in teaching, they had to subvert this personal goal in favor of the more pressing curriculum goals. This is reflected in class observation findings which show no obvious connection between the teachers' proposed means to promote LA (see 4.3) and their actual classroom practices. While teachers mentioned that they should promote LA by involving learners in decision making, encouraging self-

evaluation and teaching problem-solving skills, these principles were rarely included in their lessons, classroom talks, learning activities and materials.

Based on class observations, the teachers' main goal in teaching appears to be to transmit language knowledge and to ensure their learners' performance meet the target standards prescribed in the syllabus. When the main goal in teaching was to transmit content knowledge, the teachers are more likely to adopt the teacher-led approach to teaching. Consequently, learning becomes less learner-centered. As discussed in Chapter 4, this approach of teaching is not likely to be supportive for LA development. In sum, findings from the exploration phase indicate that while the teachers expressed supportive views of LA, they might not have considered it as an explicit goal in their teaching.

In the intervention phase, LA was made an explicit goal for the reading modules taught to the intervention class learners. At the beginning of the intervention, learners and Sumet, the co-teacher of the course, were informed that developing LA was not meant to replace the existing curriculum standards, nor was it meant to be a single goal in teaching and learning. Instead, the goal of the intervention was to both enhance learners' performance in reading and to foster their capacity to read and learn more autonomously.

This dual goal was translated into the strategy-based intervention lessons which were delivered in class through five instructional stages: preparation, exploring the target strategies, practice, evaluation and expansion. The following sections discuss how each instructional stage of the intervention lesson contributed to learners' development of LA in this study.

7.4.1.1 Preparation: Teacher's goal, learners' goal, shared goal

The preparation stage raises learners' awareness of the target strategies and how the strategies could be used to solve problems in reading. At the beginning of class, learners were introduced to the target strategies. Then, they were asked to share with their peers if they have used the target strategies before in other learning activities and how the strategies have or might help solve problems in their reading. After that, I also told learners of why I thought the strategies could help them read more effectively. These short discussions at the beginning of each lesson have proved to be very helpful in raising learners' awareness of the strategies they were already using.

Another important function of the preparation stage is to clarify the learning goals to learners. This is to help learners see how the strategy lesson relates to their learning needs. In this study, strategies were introduced to learners to address their expressed needs for a means

to improve their reading (see 4.6.3). Learners were informed from the outset that the intervention lessons were based on their needs to develop skills to read more effectively, and on my intention to help them develop such skills. In this sense, learners' goal in learning and teacher's goal in teaching became a shared goal for the intervention lessons. Based on my observations, the process of identifying goals and connecting the lessons to learners' needs seemed to further stimulate learners' active involvement in exploring and practicing the target strategies in the subsequent stages of the lesson. This finding is in line with Rubin et al.'s (2007) view that learners are more likely to accept the strategy instruction if they could perceive its values.

Having a shared goal is vital to success in developing LA in language classrooms. In fact, research on learner training for LA suggests that conflicts between teacher's and learners' goals could possibly be one of the reasons for learners' resistance to training for LA (Huang, 2006). On the other hand, if teacher's and learners' goals and needs are shared, strategy instruction is more likely to lead to the development of LA (Benson, 2011). Therefore, the preparation stage which established a clear and shared goal in learning is an important first step for LA development in classroom.

7.4.1.2 Exploring the target strategies: Making sense of how to learn

The second instructional stage in which learners were engaged in the process of exploring the target strategies through think-aloud demonstration also provides opportunities for learners to develop metacognitive knowledge and skills to manage their learning. At this stage, instead of being asked to sit quietly, wait until the teacher finishes the demonstration and recall the strategic steps taken, learners were engaged in the process of making meaning from the text. In this way, the strategic processes involved in reading, which were usually implicit in teachers' thinking as observed in Phase 1, were made explicit and accessible to learners. Learners could see clearly how they could use the target strategies to make plans before reading, monitor their comprehension and solve problems while reading, and evaluate whether comprehension has been reached after reading. In other words, this instructional stage makes learners aware of what they should and could do to construct meaning from English texts by themselves.

Crabbe (1993, p. 450) suggests that providing learners with "concrete models of action" can make them aware of how to deal with their learning more autonomously. This means that learners are more likely to exercise their learning skills to manage their learning when they understand how to do so. Findings from learner group interviews and learning

journals confirm Crabbe's (2007) assumption that when learners know what to do, they are more motivated to take charge of their learning. The impact of explicit modelling of autonomous learning on learners' motivation to learn independently is especially evident in learners' post-intervention group interviews as reported in 6.5 and 6.6.

It seems that strategies for autonomous learning modeled in class have also activated learners' sense of ownership in learning. Wan, for example, stated that when she "started to know the way", she reported feeling more motivated to "think all the time to solve problems and find answers *for myself*" (see 6.6). This shows that autonomous learning, to learners, does not only suggest the process of learning by themselves but also entails learning for their own personal purposes.

7.4.1.3 Practice: Scaffolding autonomous learning

Multiple opportunities for learners to practice using the target strategies to regulate their learning are important for learners' development of LA (Gu, 2019; Rubin et al., 2007). Such opportunities were provided in the practice stage of the intervention lessons. At this stage, learners were encouraged to practice the target strategies on a new reading task. They could decide by themselves how they would work on the given task as well as whether and when they need teacher's help. Oftentimes, learners would discuss with their peers how to most effectively work on the problem. Based on my observations, this practice stage often generates spontaneous yet interesting and constructive discussions among learners.

Classroom activities of this kind are an essential part of developing LA as they provide rich opportunities for learners to directly engage in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning activities. The hands-on strategy practices are likely to raise learners' metacognitive awareness about the strategic processes involved in their learning. They can also promote learners' exercise of strategic problem-solving skills which are important for autonomous learning (Chamot & Harris, 2019).

Apart from providing opportunities for learners to practice their strategic skills for autonomous learning, the practice stage also offers opportunities for learners to draw on support through collaboration and interaction with their peers. Cotterall (2017) and Little et al. (2017) view support as an important affordance for LA development and suggest that classrooms should accommodate LA by providing learners with appropriate kind of support. For learners who were used to having reading passages translated for them, making meaning from the text by themselves can be a challenging task (see 6.3.1). Thus, a form of support needs to be incorporated into their reading activities. The practice stage of the intervention

lesson encourages peer support among learners as it presents opportunities for learners to decide by themselves and exchange with their peers how to work on the presented problems.

While opportunities for learners to engage in problem-solving activities, discussions about strategies and supported strategy practices were rarely observed in the teacher-led lessons in Phase 1, they were important components in the intervention lessons which help scaffolded learners' development of skills for autonomous learning.

7.4.1.4 Evaluation and expansion: Looking back before moving forward

The evaluation and expansion stages of the intervention lesson also provide structure for learners to further consolidate metacognitive knowledge and skills for autonomous learning. At the evaluation stage, learners were engaged in reflecting on their strategy choices and their overall learning experiences. They were asked to share with their peers how the strategies they used contributed to successful task completion, what their main problems were and what they could do to solve the problems.

Self-evaluation plays a critical role in LA development as it can raise learners' awareness about their learning process (Little et al., 2017). In fact, Cotterall and Murray (2009) maintain that learning is unlikely to happen without reflection. Through reflective discussions about their learning experiences, learners became more aware of what they had achieved and what more they needed to do. They also became aware of their own strategy preferences as well as what supported and hindered their learning. This awareness of self, task and strategies are what enables learners to direct their learning autonomously (Wenden, 1991). Findings from this study show that learners used the evaluation stage to summarize their learning experience in terms of what they did and what they gained from the lesson.

Reflective discussions during the evaluation stage prompted learners to think about how the strategies they practiced in class could facilitate their reading process and eventually contribute to successful learning outcomes. This perceived success is likely to make learners "feel good" about the strategy instruction (Gu, 2019, p. 31) and this "feel good" effect, in turn, can motivate them to continue with their strategic approaches to learning (Rubin et al., 2007; Rubin & Rios, 2019). This enhanced motivation was evident in the expansion stage where learners often talked about how they could use the strategies practiced in class in other learning activities.

To sum up, the final stages of the intervention lessons could encourage learners to evaluate their learning experiences and use the insights from their self-evaluation to further adjust their strategies and initiate plans for improvement with less reliance on the teacher.

The joint discussions in the evaluation and the expansion stages appeared to motivate learners to further experiment with the strategies they learned and subsequently reflect on their learning experiences in the learning journals. Classroom discussions at the end of the intervention lesson, therefore, is an essential component of classroom practice to help learners to look back on their learning experiences before they can move forward with increasing independence and better insights.

7.4.1.5 Weekly learning journal: Tracking progress and making adjustment

The use of guided weekly learning journals as a learning tool to accompany the strategy-based reading lessons in the intervention class also represents the intervention's goal in facilitating learners' development as autonomous learners. The critical role of learning journals, logs and diaries in promoting autonomous learning has been emphasized by several researchers (Cooke, 2016; Cotterall, 2000; Dam, 1995; Hayashi, 2012; Kemp, 2009; Little et al., 2017; Porto, 2007; Rubin, 2003). Little et al. (2017), for example, point out that learners' continuous documentation of their learning process is instrumental to LA development. This is because learning journals can help learners reflect on their progress over time and prompt them to start managing their learning.

As reported in Chapter 5, learners in this study used their weekly learning journals to document and reflect on their weekly goals, self-initiated learning activities and strategy use, achievements, problems, their solutions to the problems and future plans for improvement. In this regard, the weekly learning journals not only presented learners with opportunities to practice their autonomous learning skills but also provided them with records of their progress towards their personal learning goals. By reviewing their old entries, learners began to identify patterns of problems in their learning. They also noticed how affective factors such as their motivation, tiredness and laziness could impact their effort to learn autonomously (see 5.2.2.2). Moreover, by using their old journal entries as a point of reference for self-evaluation, learners could see concrete evidence of their success and track how their learning progressed over the semester. Most importantly, as learners monitored their learning, they could also see the connection between their strategic efforts and improved learning outcomes. This perceived link between effort and success is particularly important for LA development as it can help learners develop a sense of control over their learning (Benson, 2011; Palfreyman & Benson, 2018). As illustrated in this study, when learners reflected on their learning experiences and found that their independent practices have led to

improvement in learning, they are likely to feel motivated by their progress and more confident in their capacity to learn autonomously (see 5.4.4.1). This perceived confidence also appears to have increased learners' willingness to take control of their learning (see 5.4.4.2).

In addition to stimulating critical reflection about learning, weekly learning journals in this study also provided additional opportunities for teacher-learner dialogues about learning which, in turn, led to learners making effective changes in their learning process. The journals provided space for learners to express their needs, communicate their concerns, propose ideas and ask questions they might not feel comfortable asking in class. At the same time, these journal entries also allowed me as the teacher to observe learners' learning process and provide regular and individualized feedback to support their development as proactive learners.

In this study, the exchanges of progress and feedback between teacher and learners which took place through weekly learning journals appear to have helped learners make necessary adjustments to their weekly learning plans and their long-term goals (see 5.2.3.3). This shows that teacher-learner dialogues and feedback generated from learning journals can empower learners to make effective changes to improve their own learning. This finding confirms other researchers' views on the essential role of feedback in encouraging changes in learners' learning process and sustaining learners' motivation to learn autonomously (Chamot & Harris, 2019; Dörnyei, 2001; Fullan & Langworthy, 2014).

While Cotterall (1995) cautions that prompts or guiding questions provided in tools for reflective writing may be seen as representing teachers' agendas rather than learners' agendas, the use of guided weekly learning journals in this study is justified on the practical and pedagogical grounds. First, since it was evident that most learners in this study were not familiar with reflecting on their own learning process (see 5.2.4.1), they would need some degree of guidance when reflecting on their learning experiences (Little, 1995). Secondly, prompts and guided questions also direct learners' attention to particular aspects of their learning process. Rubin et al. (2007) maintain that learning journals, especially when completed in a focused manner (i.e. with prompts and specific questions), can increase learners' metacognitive awareness about their strategies which enables them to regulate their learning more autonomously.

Taken together, these findings which reveal learners' enhanced metacognitive understandings about learning and increased motivation to learn also highlight the importance of learning journals as a tool to promote reflection which is essential for autonomous learning

(Benson, 2011; Cotterall, 2000; Kemp, 2009). While the strategy-based lessons in class provided learners with input about strategies and opportunities to practice strategic skills for autonomous learning, the weekly learning journals provided structured support for learners to further practice and refine such skills. This structured support not only helped learners develop understandings about how they learn but also helped them develop necessary skills to oversee their learning process and make adjustments to further their progress in learning.

The extent to which LA can be developed in a formal educational setting depends greatly on the nature of classroom practice. This means that dialogues surrounding learning activities and how teaching and learning are structured have an important role in bringing learners to the realization that they are capable of and should be responsible for directing their own learning (Benson, 2003b; Cotterall, 1995a, 2017; Crabbe, 1993, 2007; Gao, 2013a; Little, 1995). If the goal of learning is to develop LA, then classroom practice needs to represent this goal through classroom dialogues, lesson designs and task organizations. The intervention implemented in this study is an example of such a classroom practice. Learners' developed capacity to learn autonomously (see 5.2 and 5.4) and their enhanced reading skills (see 6.2 and 6.3) are evident that the shift of goal in teaching can lead to a new instructional approach, lesson structure and the use of a learning tool which are more supportive of LA and language proficiency development.

The shift of goal in teaching also influenced classroom interactions. In other words, it also triggered the shift in teacher and learner roles in class as discussed in 7.4.2.

7.4.2 Role shift

The second important shift that took place during the intervention is the shift in teacher and learner roles. As learners became more involved in their learning process, they started to assume new roles in managing their learning. As reported in Chapters 5 and 6, learners began to take responsibility for setting their weekly learning goals, selecting learning activities and strategies to complete the activities, monitoring their learning process, solve their learning problems and evaluating their overall learning outcomes. Compared to Phase 1, learners have become more proactive in managing their learning. A clear example is when they expressed their concerns and negotiated what they wanted to learn (see 3.7.1). After week 5, a number of learners reported in their journals that they had difficulties making out word meaning and wanted to learn more strategies to help them make educated guesses when they encounter unknown words. Later, they made a collective decision to ask for a session on

how to guess word meaning from context and word parts. This request resulted in an additional lesson in week 8 which learners found very useful and enjoyable.

This incident illustrates learners' ability to take active role in making informed decision for their learning. In negotiating for the extra lesson, learners not only knew what they wanted to learn, but they also knew why they wanted to learn it. Taken together, these findings indicate learners' progression from being recipients of knowledge (as observed in 4.4.3) to being managers of their learning.

As learners started to "take hold" of their learning, teachers also started to "let go" of their control (Little et al., 2017). This means that changes in learners' roles also influenced teacher's roles. At the beginning of the intervention, I started out as a teacher who provided information to learners and scaffolded their strategy practices. As learners started to become more proficient at using strategies and more confident in managing aspects of their learning, I lessened the scaffolding and adopted a new role as a facilitator who encouraged and supported learners' decisions on what, when and how to learn. In this regard, the teacher's role also shifted from providing content knowledge and informing learners about learning strategies to helping learners develop their own approaches to learning.

However, findings from this study also show that the transition of roles is not necessarily a linear or one-directional process for both teacher and learners. That is, it is possible for teacher and learners to occasionally go back to their more traditional roles while developing LA. At times, when learners were faced with challenging learning tasks, they would need to rely on the teacher's expertise for guidance and support. Likewise, although I felt that the learners could carry on their learning autonomously, I sometimes needed to 'jump in' and help them tackle their problems or readjust their goals. These findings are significant as they illustrate that the transition of roles in the context of autonomous learning does not mean a complete change of roles from one to another. It does not mean that teacher and learners have to completely abandon their traditional roles of expert and novice in learning and adopt a new set of roles. In developing LA, teachers can still maintain their role as an expert who guides learners how to learn. Likewise, learners can still rely on their teachers' expertise and support when they need to. What these findings reveal is that teacher and learner roles can change during the process of developing LA, depending on the learning situation as well as learners' progress and needs. They also support Little et al.'s (2017) view that the transfer of control and responsibility in learning from teacher to learners is a recursive and continuous process.

If teacher-learner relationship is seen as central to the development of LA (Cotterall, 1995a; Huang, 2007; Lee, 1998), then this research indicates that LA can be effectively developed when teacher and learners become partners in the learning process. Teacher-learner partnerships have been advocated as an important component in developing LA (Coyle, 2019; Fullan & Langworthy, 2014; Nunan, 2003; Tudor, 1993). Fullan and Langworthy (2014), for example, suggest that effective partnerships between teachers and learners, which are formed based on active involvement from both parties, can help accelerate learners' development of LA.

In the intervention phase, I became involved in learners' learning process not through directing them what to do but through raising their awareness of the learning process, setting up learning conditions in which learners can develop their autonomous learning skills, providing feedback on learners' development and encouraging them to discover their own approaches to effective learning (see 7.4.1). While learners developed their knowledge, strategic skills and attitudes for autonomous learning, I, as their teacher, needed to learn alongside them. That is, I needed to know, through observations, classroom dialogues and learners' journal entries, how each learner progressed over time, how they felt about the new roles and responsibilities brought by the new learning situation, what their difficulties were, and what action should be taken to solve the problems and activate each learners' learning. In this way, as learners began to adopt a new role as a manager of their own learning, the role of the teacher in the learning partnerships also extends from being an expert in the language to being an expert in learning the language (Benson, 2003b; Cotterall & Crabbe, 2008; Fullan & Langworthy, 2014; Kohonen, 1992).

The shift in roles and the formation of teacher-learner partnerships in learning in this study are likely the results of teacher-learner interactions and a sense of mutual trust established during the intervention. Class observation data from both phases indicate that classroom interactions that consist mainly of teachers giving instructions to learners and learners giving short answers to teachers' questions may not be effective in raising learners' awareness about the learning process and their roles within the process. This is because teacher-centered learning, which provides limited opportunities for learners' exploration of the learning process, is not likely to stimulate learners' agency which underpins active and autonomous learning behaviors (Gao, 2013b; Van Lier, 2010). On the other hand, classroom interactions which provide opportunities for learners to exchange ideas and directly engaged in the learning process (as discussed in 7.4.1) are more likely to make learners aware that they are expected to take part in classroom discussions and activities. These findings support

researchers' view that dialogues surrounding tasks and how learning is organized can have a profound influence on learners' expectations about their roles and responsibilities in the learning process (Benson, 2003b; Cotterall & Crabbe, 1992; Crabbe, 1993).

The shift in teacher and learner roles and the formation of learning partnerships also reveal that a sense of mutual trust is fundamental to classroom practice that aims to promote autonomous learning. In developing LA, teachers need to trust that their learners are capable enough to make informed decisions for their learning. In a similar vein, learners also need to trust that their teachers will accept their opinions and support their decisions. The above incident of the teacher adding another session based on learners' request, for example, can communicate to learners that I, as their teacher, cared about their problems, trusted their decisions and valued them as learning partners who have "legitimate voice in decision-making" (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014, p. 15). Once a sense of mutual trust is established, learners are more likely to feel empowered and more confident in taking active roles in their learning process. To illustrate this point, it is worth revisiting Naa's reflection in 5.4.3.4.

Naa: I want some teachers like you who can understand us and help us understand our own goals clearly and make us think that we should go on and achieve whatever we want to do. [...] It (the intervention) made us know our own paths.

While it is often argued that LA entails learners developing skills and readiness to take the roles and assume responsibilities which traditionally belong to the teacher (Littlewood, 1999), this research indicates that it is also equally important for teachers aiming to foster LA to adopt the role of a co-learner or a partner in the learning process. As illustrated in this study, this change in role allows the teacher to create a learning condition that nurtures learners' development of LA. When learners and teacher assume the roles of partners in learning, classroom also changed from a place for teachers and learners to impart and receive knowledge to a place where teacher and learners work together to achieve greater degree of autonomy.

7.4.3 Shift in classroom conditions for developing LA

LA cannot develop without a supportive learning environment (Lee, 1998). This means that if the goal of learning is to promote LA, the learning context needs to provide opportunities for learners to practice and develop autonomous learning skills. As discussed in

Chapter 4, classrooms which did not promote two-way, teacher-learner communication or learner involvement in learning are likely to lead to teacher-dependence rather than LA. This is because learning goals, task management and the processes of monitoring and evaluating learning were still controlled or owned by the teachers. As a result, learners in this kind of learning environment would have limited opportunities to develop essential skills and confidence in directing their own learning.

On the other hand, the transparency of goals (see 7.4.1) and partnerships in learning (see 7.4.2) established during the intervention helped turn the traditional teacher-led classroom into a 'strategic classroom' (Coyle, 2019; Takeuchi et al., 2007) which facilitates teacher-learner dialogues about learning and learner involvement in the learning process. In this study, the intervention lessons provide facilitative learning conditions for teacher and learners to set a shared goal for the course, determine how to identify problems and track progress, and to co-construct knowledge about strategic approaches to learning. When the learning goals and strategic activities in learning became transparent, the ownership of learning is shared between teacher and learners. Learning in this new learning condition, therefore, is founded on interdependence and mutual effort between teacher and learners and among learners themselves.

A learning environment in which teacher and learners can work interdependently is supportive of LA development because it allows teacher to model autonomous learning skills to learners and encourages learners to transfer the skills practiced in class to other learning situations. In order for learners to learn autonomously, they need to know how to identify, take up and create learning opportunities by themselves. This requires them to be aware of task purpose, problems presented in the tasks, how to strategically tackle the problems and how to know if their strategies work well. While these skills are fundamental to autonomous learning, they may not always be presented in or emphasized through learning tasks in classrooms (Crabbe, 2007). This point is clearly illustrated in the example from Sumet's class observed in Phase 1 (see 4.4.3).

On the contrary, the strategic classroom, which developed as a result of the intervention, treated the reading activities in class as a starting point for learners to learn and develop strategic skills for autonomous learning. As already discussed in 7.4.1.1-7.4.1.4, each instructional stage of the intervention lesson was used to set up a classroom condition in which learners could directly engaged in the process of managing learning opportunities and strategic problem-solving with support from teacher and peers. Crabbe (1993, 2007) points out that once learners are actively involved in the process of managing their learning, they

will be more aware of how to learn and are more likely to apply the strategic skills they learned in class to manage their own learning outside of class. In other words, they are more likely to learn autonomously. This view is supported by learners' accounts of their learning which shows their ability to transfer their strategic learning skills to manage their independent learning across different skill areas and task types (see 6.7).

In sum, the strategic classroom facilitates learners' development of autonomous learning skills through teacher modelling and scaffolding. The new learning condition which encourages interactions and interdependence also ensures opportunities for learner involvement in decision-making, self-evaluation, reflection and collaborative problem-solving among learners. These processes which developed as a part of the shift in the learners' learning condition function as contextual resources that enable them to develop essential cognitive and metacognitive abilities for autonomous language learning. The findings from this study thus highlight the role of contextual factors in mediating LA development. They also support the view of LA as learners' cognitive and metacognitive abilities whose development is embedded in their interactions with others in their particular learning situations (Crabbe et al., 2013; Little, 1991, 2000a; Palfreyman, 2014).

7.5 Researcher positioning

While findings from this study are derived from the teacher participants' and the intervention class learners' perspectives, it is worth noting that these findings were interpreted by the researcher (myself) who also took the role of a co-teacher in the intervention class. The researcher positioning in this study is based on my perspective that LA development can be most appropriately studied through the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). At an epistemological level, this means that understandings about LA and LA development are co-constructed through the interactions between researcher and the participants in the research context.

LA in this study is conceptualized as learners' potential capacity whose development and manifestation can be context specific and influenced by the interdependent relationships between teachers, learners and the learning context. This means that LA and autonomous language learning can be perceived differently by different participants due to factors such as their experiences and attitudes about learning. The conceptualization of LA as a contextually variable construct also means that evidence for its development should be obtained from multiple data sources and interpreted in its specific context. Thus, the methodological decisions on how LA should be approached, which resulted in the research design, methods

of inquiry and the positioning of the researcher in the research, were informed by this epistemological stance.

As a co-teacher in the intervention class, I was able to directly engage in the process of developing LA and closely observe participants' development of LA and how their autonomous approaches to learning became more refined over time. My direct involvement in this research, in other words, played a vital role in helping learners develop their capacity for autonomous learning. Working directly with the participants also enabled me to expand my understandings about LA based on the participants' voices (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Through regular conversations in class, interviews, class observations and the analysis of learning journals, I was able to understand how each participant perceived LA, how they tackled problems in their learning, how they interpreted their LA-related experiences, how they conceptualized autonomous language learning based on such experiences, and most importantly, how their perceptions and learning behaviors changed as a result of the strategy-based instruction. In this sense, my positioning as a "passionate participant" in the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 115) not only allowed me to adapt my lessons to better accommodate learners' progress and needs but also revealed valuable insights into how learners navigated their ways towards becoming more autonomous in their learning.

In addition, my on-going interactions with the participants also allowed me to research LA development as a culturally and socially shaped phenomenon. For instance, my role as a teacher/researcher and my previous experience in the Thai secondary school context helped me understand what the learners meant when they mentioned "the Thai way of teaching" and how it had discouraged them from speaking up in class (see 4.6.4 and 7.3.3). This understanding has further contributed to the design of the contextually and theoretically informed strategy-based instruction lessons which prioritized learner involvement. On the contrary, meaningful themes from participants' perspectives may not have been generated, and effective means to developing LA may not have been identified had I only approached the research from the perspective of an outsider or a non-participatory researcher.

In sum, my interactions with the participants enabled me to obtain rich, context-based data and construct reliable accounts of LA development from both the etic and emic perspectives. My positioning as a teacher/researcher in this research, therefore, aligned with the primary aim of the research as it both provided an appropriate means to obtain valuable insights into the process of developing LA in a language classroom and provided opportunities for me as a teacher to develop LA in my class.

7.6 Summary

This chapter discusses findings on LA in the Thai secondary school context and the process of developing LA in a Thai secondary school classroom. It focuses on discussing how the shifts in teaching and learning goals, roles of teacher and learners in the learning process and learning conditions in classroom helped activate and nurture learners' capacity for autonomous learning.

Key findings discussed in this chapter also reveal that teacher-learner dialogues about learning and how learning is organized in class play a significant role in transforming learning from a knowledge transmission process to a process of active and autonomous knowledge construction. If LA is the desired outcome of learning, then what goes on in classrooms needs to model learning behaviors and foster attitudes which will lead to this desired outcome. The next chapter concludes the research and offers practical guidelines on how this can be carried out in language classrooms.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This study provides classroom-based evidence showing that LA can be a practical and achievable goal in the Thai secondary school context and that strategy-based instruction can be a means to foster LA and enhance learning outcomes. Through participating in a 10-week strategy-based instruction program, the learners in this study were able to gradually develop both the abilities and attitudes which enable them to pursue their learning goals more autonomously. In addition, these learners also made sizable gains in their reading and reported increased motivation in learning English. This chapter concludes the research by presenting theoretical, pedagogical and methodological contributions of this study to the field of LA research. Then it addresses research limitations and outlines directions for future studies.

8.1 Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to the current conceptual understanding of teachers' roles in developing LA, LA and effective language learning and the link between LA and learning strategies.

8.1.1 Teachers' roles in helping learners become more autonomous

This study shows that the development of LA is a process that requires effort and cooperation from learners and teachers. In other words, it confirms the idea that teachers have indispensable roles in fostering LA (Cotterall & Crabbe, 2008; Crabbe, 1993; Little, 1995). While teachers cannot "give" LA to their learners, they can scaffold the process of LA development by providing opportunities for learners to practice their autonomous learning skills. Moreover, teachers can also provide guidance and on-going support to help learners better understand their learning process so that they can take effective control of their own learning. In this regard, instead of taking the conventional role of a knowledge dispenser, teachers help their learners become more autonomous by taking the role of a learning partner who facilitates and supports learning. Evidence from this research thus highlights the idea that the shift in learners' roles in learning cannot take place without the corresponding shift in teachers' roles in teaching (see 7.4.2).

8.1.2 LA and effective language learning

The promotion of LA in language education is often justified by the assumption that LA could lead to effective language learning (see 2.3). While LA is associated with effective

language learning, more empirical research is still needed to clarify the relationship between practices in promoting LA, development in autonomous learning skills and gains in language proficiency (Benson, 2011; Little, 2007a; Palfreyman & Benson, 2018). The present study responds to this call by presenting empirical evidence showing that increasing learners' active engagement in the learning process and fostering strategic approaches to learning can lead to improved learning process and outcomes.

Previous classroom-based studies (Dafei, 2007; L. T. C. Nguyen, 2008; Sakai & Takagi, 2009) have identified the relationship between university level learners' LA and language gains by examining statistical correlations between both constructs. This study adds to the current understanding about the relationship between LA and effective language learning by presenting new insights from a different research context.

While studies in LA tended to assume that adult learners (university level and beyond) can develop LA more effectively than younger learners due to their maturity and the less structured nature of their learning environments, (Blidi, 2017; M. Lamb, 2004; Yan, 2007), this study shows that pre-university learners are also capable of autonomous learning. By tracing evidence of LA development and improvement in English reading skills from multiple data sources across different time points, this research illustrates that these learners can independently structure their learning opportunities to improve both their learning skills and language proficiency. This research, therefore, consolidates the argument that development in LA and language proficiency are mutually supporting (Little, 2007a). It also provides research-based justification for LA development for language learners in all levels.

8.1.3 LA and Learning strategies

Literature in the fields of LA and learning strategies often associate autonomous learning with effective strategy use. Autonomous learners are those who can use their strategies appropriately, flexibly and independently (Wenden, 1991) while the purpose of teaching learning strategies is to help learners learn more autonomously (Cohen, 2011; Gu, 2019). The present study supports this idea by demonstrating that strategic learning is an important aspect of LA.

Furthermore, this study also extends the conceptual understanding of the relationships between LA and learning strategies. Findings from this study shows that while strategy-based instruction can promote LA, the teaching of learning strategies may not necessarily help learners become more strategic or autonomous in their learning if it did not lead to changes in learners' perceptions about learning. In order to promote LA, strategy-based instruction needs

to both introduce learners to different strategic possibilities in learning and enhance learners' metacognitive knowledge about their own learning process. Findings from this study show that the strategy-based instruction successfully raised learners' awareness about English reading as a process of interactive meaning-making and problem-solving instead of translating one language into another. Moreover, regular classroom discussions about purposes of each strategy in relation to learners' learning needs, explicit modelling of strategic problem-solving process along with the use of weekly learning journals had also challenged learners' beliefs and expectations about learning. This, in turn, had led to both the learners' reconceptualization about their roles and responsibilities in the learning process and their exercise of autonomous learning behaviors. Therefore, the teaching of learning strategies does not in itself lead to LA development. It is the teaching of learning strategies within the framework of metacognitive awareness raising that can help learners develop their capacity for independent problem-solving and autonomous learning. Section 8.2 details how LA can be realized in language classrooms.

8.2 Pedagogical contributions

This study shows that what goes on in class can play a significant role in helping learners develop skills and attitudes for autonomous learning. Drawing on the empirical findings from this research, this section provides pedagogical suggestions on how language teachers can create an autonomy-supporting learning condition for their learners.

8.2.1 Create a shared understanding of the learning purposes

Findings from learner group interviews and class observations in Phase 1 of the study show that the lack of clear goals in learning could hinder learners' efforts to learn more autonomously. Therefore, the first important principle to consider in classroom practice is to make learners aware of the learning purposes. This can be achieved through classroom dialogues about learning between learners and teacher. As illustrated in Phase 1 findings, the lack of classroom discussions about task purposes and about the problems found in learning gave learners little orientation to the learning activities being carried out. When learners could not see the link between the presented learning activities and their learning needs, they are not likely to perceive the values of the activities or feel motivated to engage with the activities (Crabbe, 1993). Findings from the intervention phase clearly show that explicit discussions of learning purposes at the outset of each intervention lessons can help align the

lesson objectives and teacher's expectations with learners' needs and further motivate learners to actively engage with the lessons.

Learners' awareness of learning purposes can also be reinforced through the use of learning journals. This study shows that short statements that prompt learners to think about their weekly learning goals and the purposes of their selected learning activities can provide a sense of direction for learners in their learning. This awareness helps learners select relevant learning activities, resources and strategies for themselves, making their learning more autonomous and purposeful.

Therefore, teachers can prepare their learners for autonomous learning by making them aware of not only what they learn, but also of why and what they can gain from their learning effort. It is only through this shared understanding about learning purposes can learners start to feel the ownership of their learning and meaningfully contribute to the learning process.

8.2.2 Model autonomous learning behaviors

If learners are to autonomously direct their own learning, they need to be able to effectively plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning and solve problems that may arise in their learning process. The teachers' role is, thus, to model these autonomous learning behaviors to their learners.

This study provides evidence that strategy-based instruction can make the learning process visible to learners. Through thinking aloud, teachers can demonstrate to learners the cognitive and metacognitive operations that took place in their minds while completing a particular learning task. For example, teachers can verbalize their thinking processes when they identify problems in the task, think of strategic solutions to solve the problems, monitor if the problems have been solved effectively and evaluate whether their strategic effort has led to successful task completion. In this sense, learners can clearly see what they can do to effectively carry out similar learning tasks on their own. As illustrated in this study, learners' clear understanding of what to do motivated them to initiate learning opportunities for themselves and experiment with the strategic learning process on their own outside of class. The implication for language teachers, therefore, is to structure their classroom teaching in a way that provides opportunities for their learners to learn how to learn.

8.2.3 Encourage learner involvement in the learning process

LA implies learners' abilities to make informed decisions for their own learning. Therefore, in addition to making the learning purpose and process transparent to learners, teachers should encourage learner involvement in the process of decision-making in class. In an ideal autonomous classroom, learners may decide for themselves what and how to learn, as well as evaluate their own learning outcomes (Little et al., 2017). While this degree of learner involvement may not always be possible in many learning contexts, especially the exam-driven one such as Thailand, teachers should still strive to promote learners' active involvement in learning by allowing them to make decisions in certain areas of the learning process.

This study shows that strategy-based instruction can provide a means to this end as it makes learner involvement a regular part of classroom instruction. Instead of assigning a learning activity to learners and giving them correct answers at the end of class, teachers working within the framework of strategy-based instruction can involve their learners in several aspects of the learning process (see 7.4.1). For example, through classroom discussions, teachers can encourage their learners to decide how much time will be needed for a learning activity, how to most effectively solve the presented learning problems and which strategies are most likely to be suitable for the task at hand. This method of encouraging learner involvement and delegating control in planning, monitoring, evaluation and problem-solving in the context of a specific learning task has proved to contribute to learners' enhanced understanding of their learning process (see 5.2.3). This enhanced understanding enables learners to take control of their learning with more confidence (see 5.4.4). Therefore, it is necessary for teachers aiming to promote LA to consider aspects of their classroom practice in which control can be shared with learners.

8.2.4 Provide opportunities to practice autonomous learning skills with on-going support

Developing LA is a gradual process. Therefore, learners need to be provided with opportunities to practice their strategic skills for autonomous learning with teacher support and guidance. After introducing learners to learning strategies, teachers should allow time for learners to practice using the target strategies and their own strategies on the given learning tasks either individually or cooperatively with peers. Teachers can also monitor learners' work and support their learners by giving suggestions or modeling the strategic learning behaviors learners are expected to develop.

This study shows that opportunities to practice strategic skills for autonomous learning can also be expanded through out of class learning activities. Teachers can encourage their learners to apply the strategies they learned in class to manage their self-initiated learning activities outside of class and reflect on their learning experiences in learning journals. In this way, language learning becomes a process of discovery rather than memorizing or passive listening. When reviewing learners' journals, teachers can support their learners' autonomous learning by providing written comments, informing learners what they might do to make their learning more effective. At the same time, through comments and encouraging feedback, teachers can further remind learners that their effort in independent learning is appreciated. These kinds of support are essential in sustaining learners' effort and motivation in directing their own learning. It is important for teachers to keep in mind that the main purpose of strategy practices in class and out of class is to help learners develop strategic skills for autonomous learning. Therefore, feedback and comments given should focus on learners' learning process, effort and strategies.

Providing learners with opportunities to practice using strategies would not only help consolidate learners' strategic learning skills but also help them expand their own strategy repertoire. By encouraging learners to experiment with different strategic possibilities in their learning and discussing their strategic solutions to a learning problem with peers, teachers are communicating to their learners an important idea that teacher is not the only source of knowledge. It also suggests that learners themselves are capable of independently solving problems in their own learning process, and that there can be more than one solution to a learning problem. In this sense, the teacher's role is no longer limited to teaching language content but also expands to helping learners learn more effectively and autonomously.

8.2.5 Promote reflection

Learners will not be able to make use of their learning experiences if they do not reflect on them. This study shows that learners' critical reflection on their learning experiences through the use of weekly learning journals can help them gain insights into their own learning process which is vital to LA development. By thinking about how they learn and referring to their old journal entries, learners can see their overall progress, identify what they did or did not do well and pinpoint where their problems are. These understandings can prompt them to independently find ways to enhance their learning. This study also suggests that learners who are not familiar with thinking about their own learning can benefit

significantly from prompts provided in the learning journals. Therefore, teachers can make use of weekly learning journals, learning logs (Dam, 2009; Dam & Legenhausen, 2011), diaries (Rubin, 2003) or other tools for reflective writing with similar prompts shown in this study to foster LA in their class.

However, keeping learning journals requires time and commitment from both teachers and learners. This may make learning journals less applicable in the learning contexts where teachers and learners are faced with time constraints and heavy workloads. In this case, teachers can still raise learners' awareness of their learning process by leading short reflective discussions at the end of class. Questions such as "What did we learn today?", "What did you find difficult?" and "What can you do differently next time to solve your problems?" can be a useful starting point to stimulate learners' critical reflection of their learning process. It is also important that teachers pay attention to what their learners have to say so that they can respond in a way that would help their learners become increasingly confident and independent in their learning.

In addition, it is observed that classroom discussions of sample journal entries could also draw learners' attention to their learning process and encourage them to start reflecting on how they learned. Asking the journal writers to explain his/her process of self-reflection to the class appears to have helped other learners relate to the idea of self-evaluation and reflection more easily. This study suggests that learners' explanations to their peers on how to reflect on their learning should be used to accompany teachers' explanations in promoting reflection and effective use of learning journals.

While teaching learners how to learn may be seen as taking away class time for developing language proficiency which is the ultimate goal of language teaching (McDonough, 2005), this study shows that developing LA and enhancing language proficiency can be a dual goal for language learning. It is hoped that empirical findings on the process of developing LA in a language classroom presented in this study would help teachers in becoming more effective not only at teaching the subject content but also at making their classrooms a place where LA can grow.

8.3 Methodological contributions

This section considers the study's methodological contributions by evaluating its design and data analysis approach. Then it addresses limitations of this study.

8.3.1 The two-phase, intervention research design

The study's two-phase research design and its classroom-based nature has two significant contributions to the study. First, it provides opportunities for me as a researcher to be familiar with the research context and build trusting relationships with the participants. In phase 1, I spent time observing classes and talking to teachers, school administrative staff and learners. As a result, I was able to establish preliminary understandings of how LA, as an educational ideal, was put to life in the Thai secondary school English classrooms, as well as what could potentially constrain and support its development.

Secondly, the study design which involves two phases of data collection is suitable for the research focus. A number of researchers (e.g. Dam, 1995; Little, 2007; Little et al., 2017) maintain that LA builds on the interactive and continuous process of teacher gradually letting go and learners gradually taking hold of control in learning. Thus, the development of LA is a process that takes time. Throughout both phases of the study, I was able to spend a prolonged period of time observing closely how the intervention contributed to changes in learners' understandings of their learning process as well as their roles and responsibilities within the process. In addition, I was also able to systematically document how learners' approaches to directing their learning, proficiency in English reading and confidence in themselves as autonomous learners gradually developed over time. In other words, the two-phase design allowed me to gain valuable insights into learners' process of developing LA which may otherwise be impossible to obtain in a short period of time.

In sum, this study shows that the research design which includes an exploratory and an intervention phase can be suitable to studying LA development. This is because it allows researchers to approach the issue through a problem-solution framework and respond to the challenges in developing LA with a contextually appropriate intervention plan.

8.3.2 Mixed-method approach

An important question pertaining to LA is whether it works and how its effectiveness can be proved (see 2.6). The use of the mixed-method approach in this study has made it possible to systematically analyze research data and obtain empirical proof, confirming both the feasibility and desirability of LA in the Thai secondary school context.

Sinclair (2000) highlights the need for researchers to carefully select research methods to investigate LA, and cautions that relying solely on either quantitative or qualitative research method may lead to inconclusive findings which lack both insights and credibility. The process of triangulating data from multiple sources has proved to be a useful

method to strengthen validity of the research findings. For example, findings on how LA is promoted in the Thai secondary school classrooms could have been misrepresented with teacher interview data alone. It would not have been possible for me to identify the mismatches between the teachers' perceptions of LA and their practices to promote LA without data from class observations and learner interviews. Likewise, the use of qualitative data from weekly learning journals, learner group interviews, think-aloud sessions and quantitative data from the reading tests has verified the effectiveness of the intervention on learners' development of capacity to learn autonomously and their proficiency gains over the intervention period.

In addition, the use of multiple methods for data collection can also reveal the multidimensionality of LA. For example, while findings from weekly learning journals shed light on learners' process of developing the ability to regulate their learning, learner group interviews further revealed learners' emotional reactions to both the intervention and their perceived enhanced skills in directing their learning process. Together, data from both sources helped bring different dimensions of control in autonomous learning to a sharper focus.

In conclusion, the methodological contributions of this research are its design and data analysis approach which provided a suitable means to empirically investigate LA development. This research provides evidence responding to Benson's (2006, 2011) call for more empirically-grounded LA research that seeks to confirm the effectiveness of pedagogical initiatives to develop autonomous learning. Not only did the research provide evidence to the overarching question of whether developing LA can be a practical goal in the Thai secondary school context, but it also confirms that this goal can be achieved through strategy-based instruction.

8.3.3 Limitations of the study

The first limitation of this study concerns the method of participant selection. Learner participants in this study were from two intact classes. While random sampling of research participants, in principle, could have enhanced validity and generalizability of the research design and findings, this was not possible due to several contextual constraints. However, as indicated in Chapter 3, this threat to validity was minimized by the pre-intervention reading test which shows no statistically significant difference in learners' test scores.

Secondly, because the study was conducted at an urban secondary school, the research findings might not be representative of the process of developing LA in all Thai secondary

schools. Nevertheless, the findings of this study could provide substantial evidence of how LA could be effectively promoted within the Thai educational context. In this sense, the lack of generalizability does not necessarily invalidate the findings. As already pointed out in Chapter 2 that LA can manifest differently in different contexts, the particularity of this research, its context, participants and findings could, in fact, precisely capture the contextually variable nature of LA. Furthermore, this study is among the very few studies in its context to go beyond surveying teachers' and learners' attitudes, perceptions and readiness for autonomous learning, and implement a pedagogical intervention to promote LA in a language classroom. Its design and findings could provide a basis for further empirical research for LA development in the same context or other educational contexts with similar conditions.

Thirdly, it should be borne in mind that most of the research findings, except for findings from the reading tests and class observations, derived from the participants' self-reported data. This means that they may not accurately and completely represent the participants' actual intentions, perspectives and behaviors. Although I have built positive relationships with the learners and maintained welcoming classroom atmosphere throughout the data collection period, it is still possible that, to a certain extent, my role as their teacher could have influenced some learners to report socially desirable responses rather than their genuine ideas. However, measures were taken to minimize this potential threat to validity. Firstly, learners were informed in their participant information sheet and consent form that their answers would not have any consequences to their course grades. Furthermore, self-reported findings were triangulated with data from other sources such as my classroom notes, video-recordings of learners' learning behaviors in every session, informal conversations and member checking with learners to ensure accuracy of data presentation and research validity.

Finally, another potential limitation of this study concerns learners' ability to describe their thoughts and reflections in spoken and written responses. For instance, some learners, while demonstrating significant improvement during the intervention, were not quite articulate when describing their improvement in the learning journals and learner group interviews. This could possibly leave some interesting aspects of their LA development undiscovered. In this study, unclear responses were followed up through probing during learner interviews, written feedback in learners' journals and informal conversations with learners before and after class time to ensure data quality.

8.4 Recommendations for future research

While this research has offered significant insights into the process of developing LA in the Thai secondary school context, there is still much room for future studies that could provide detailed and empirically-grounded understandings of LA and its process of development.

First of all, while this research shows that LA can be successfully promoted among the Thai secondary school learners, its findings were based on data from one large secondary school in an urban setting. Due to its size and location, this school was able to offer more language learning facilities to its learners compared to other schools in the same area. The availability of resources and academic support in this setting may have played a role in LA development. Therefore, future research can be conducted at other secondary schools with different kinds of affordances and constraints to identify whether factors such as school sizes, funding and location can affect the promotion of LA, as well as to uncover other factors that may confirm or disconfirm the applicability of LA in the Thai educational context.

In addition, more research can be carried out to investigate how different modes of learning can be used to foster autonomous learning. This research reveals that most learners attributed their skills to direct their independent learning outside of class to their classroom strategy practice. Some learners also reported that their out of class independent strategy practice also contributed to their classroom performance (see 5.4.4.1). These findings suggest the bidirectional relationship between in class and out of class learning which needs further in-depth investigations. Empirical research into this relationship can significantly contribute to the field of language learning and LA in two major ways. First, insights into the complex nature and dynamic relationship between these domains of learning can expand the current conceptual understandings of how in class learning can influence out of class learning and vice versa. Secondly, these insights can further help teachers connect their classroom teaching to learners' lives beyond the classroom and better prepare their learners for autonomous learning.

Finally, more research can be conducted to explore the effects of peer influence on the development of LA. While this research uncovers evidence suggesting that some less motivated and less confident learners appeared to have gained more confidence and motivation to direct their own learning from observing their peers' progress (see 5.4.4.2), whether and how this perceived increased confidence and motivation will lead to actual autonomous learning behaviors remains to be further explored. Studies that identify how the sharing of progress and reflections can enhance learners' awareness of learning can

potentially highlight the role of peer modeling and peer collaboration in learners' development of self-efficacy beliefs and LA.

8.5 Personal reflection

The main argument for this research has been that developing LA is a worthwhile enterprise. This research has deepened my understanding about LA and its development. The research has also broadened my view about possibilities and challenges in promoting LA in the test-driven educational context such as Thailand. Empirical findings from this research has led me to conclude that LA is not only desirable but also achievable in the context of day-to-day classroom practice.

Finally, I strongly believe that LA, despite being an educational concept from the 1980s, will continue to be as relevant, if not more, for teaching and learning in the 21st century. While advancement in technology and educational research may bring about drastic changes in how teaching and learning will be carried out, the teachers' roles are likely to be the same: to ignite learning in their learners, to help them learn better and to prepare them for future challenges. This research has demonstrated that by helping learners to become autonomous, teachers can empower their learners to be strategic problem solvers who can independently direct their own learning process and persevere in the face of challenges. It is this capacity that will allow learners to continue to learn and develop themselves to their full potential.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics approval



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MEMORANDUM

TO	Muthita Chinpakdee
COPY TO	Dr Peter Gu
FROM	AProf Susan Corbett, Convener, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	8 August 2017
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval: 25048 Developing learner autonomy in language learning: A study in the Thai EFL secondary school context

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 31 March 2020. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards

Susan Corbett
Convener, Victoria University Human Ethics Committee

Appendix 2: Teacher interview questions

1. How long have you been teaching English?
2. What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of teachers in class?
3. What does “Learner autonomy” mean to you?
 - 3.1 Do you think learner autonomy is important? Why?
 - 3.2 Do you see learner autonomy as a goal in your teaching?
4. How would you describe autonomous learners?
 - 4.1 What roles and responsibilities would these learners take?
5. What about the teacher?
6. How do you encourage your learners to learn autonomously?
7. Do you think your learners are capable of autonomous learning? Why? Why not?
8. Can you give an example of when your learners show autonomous learning behaviors?
9. What do you think are the factors that support or hinder your learners’ development of learner autonomy?
 - 9.1 If there weren’t constraints you have mentioned, would you change your way of teaching? How?
10. Do you think learner autonomy affects language proficiency? Why? Why not?
11. What the main problems found in your learners’ English skills? Can you give examples?
12. What do you think your learners could do to improve their English?
13. What do you think you could do to help?
14. Do you have any comments, suggestions or other additional ideas about learner autonomy that you would like to share?

Appendix 3: Learner group interview questions (Phase 1)

1. How long have you been learning English?
2. How do you feel about learning English at school?
3. Do you think you are good at English? Why? Why not?
 - 3.1 What do you think you could do well?
 - 3.2 What do you think are your main problems?
4. From your experience, do you think learning English is easy or difficult? Why?
5. Can you describe your typical English lessons at school?
 - 5.1 What are your roles and responsibilities in class?
 - 5.2 What about your teachers?
6. Besides learning in class, did you do anything on your own outside of class to improve your English?
 - 6.1 Can you give an example of activities you did outside of class and explain how you did it?
7. In your opinion, which English skills do you think you need to improve the most? Why?
8. What do you think the school or teachers can do to help you learn English better?
9. What do you hope to learn from your English courses this semester?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add or share?

Appendix 4: Learner group interview questions (Phase 2)

1. How do you feel about learning English at school this semester? How is it similar or different from the previous semester?
2. Do you think you have made any improvement in your English at all this semester?
 - 2.1 Which area do you feel you have improved the most?
 - 2.2 How do you know?
3. From your experience this semester, do you think learning English is easy or difficult? Why?
4. How do you feel about English reading?
5. Do you think you have made improvement in English reading?
 - 5.1 How do you know? Can you give some examples?
6. What are the new things you learned in your English class this semester?
7. How do you feel about the strategy lessons?
 - 7.1 Do you have any strategy that you prefer to use when reading?
 - 7.2 Do you use them in your independent reading practices?
 - 7.3 Can you give an example of how do use the strategies you learned in class in your independent reading practices?
 - 7.4 Were those strategies helpful? How do you know?
8. In general, do you think you read in the same way or differently from the previous semester? Please explain.
9. Do you want to learn more strategies? Why?
10. In your opinion, what do you think are your roles in responsibilities in learning?
11. What do you think are your teachers' roles and responsibilities?
12. Do you want to have more freedom to make decisions for yourself? (e.g. choosing topics, materials and activities for your learning)
 - 12.1 Do you think you can do these well? Why? Why not?
13. Have you noticed any changes in your abilities to learn by yourself?
 - 13.1 What changes have you noticed? Can you give an example?
14. How are you progressing with your study plan?
 - 14.1 Have you made any changes to your original plans? If so, describe what you are doing instead.
15. Will you continue using what you learned in this semester in the future? Why? Why not?
16. What does "learner autonomy" mean to you?

- 16.1 Is learner autonomy important to you? Why? Why not?
- 16.2 Do you think you can learn autonomously? Why? Why not?
17. If you could give suggestions to your friends on how to be good at English, what would they be?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add or share?

Appendix 5: Weekly learning journal (continued)

บันทึกการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษประจำสัปดาห์

ชื่อ: _____

วันที่: _____

เป้าหมายการเรียนรู้ของฉันในสัปดาห์นี้: _____

กิจกรรม/ระยะเวลาที่ใช้	จุดประสงค์ของกิจกรรม	กลวิธีการเรียนรู้ที่ใช้	กลวิธีการเรียนรู้ที่ใช้ช่วยในการทำกิจกรรมที่ฉันเลือกอย่างไร

1. จากกิจกรรมที่ทำ จงบอกสิ่งที่นักเรียนรู้สึกที่นักเรียนทำได้ดีในสัปดาห์นี้ พร้อมทั้งบอกเหตุผลว่าเพราะอะไรนักเรียนถึงรู้สึกเช่นนั้น



ข้อเสนอแนะ/ ความคิดเห็น/ สิ่งที่นักเรียนต้องการ:

2. จากกิจกรรมที่ทำในสัปดาห์นี้ อะไรบ้างที่นักเรียนคิดว่ายังทำได้ไม่ดีนักและนักเรียนแก้ปัญหาเหล่านั้นอย่างไร

3. เมื่อนึกถึงกิจกรรมที่นักเรียนได้ทำในสัปดาห์นี้ นักเรียนมีแผนการอย่างไรในการพัฒนาการเรียนวิชาภาษาอังกฤษของตนเองในสัปดาห์หน้า

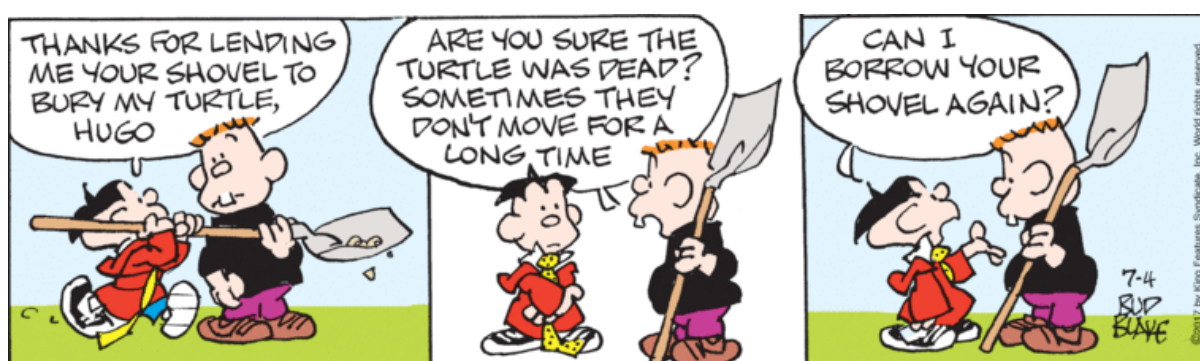
ความเห็นของครู:

Appendix 6: The reading tests

แบบทดสอบชุดที่ 1 (Pre-test)

คำชี้แจง

1. แบบทดสอบฉบับนี้เป็นแบบปรนัยชนิดเลือกตอบ 4 ตัวเลือก จำนวน 15 ข้อ 15 คะแนน
2. ให้นักเรียนเลือกคำตอบที่ถูกต้องที่สุดเพียงข้อเดียวแล้วทำเครื่องหมาย X ลงในกระดาษคำตอบ
3. เวลาที่ใช้ในการทำแบบทดสอบ 40 นาที



1. Why did the little boy want to borrow the shovel again?
 - a. He wants to bury another turtle.
 - b. He wasn't sure if his turtle was dead.
 - c. He wants to dig more holes for Hugo.
 - d. He hasn't moved for a long time.
2. From this cartoon, we learn that the little boy is _____.
 - a. lazy
 - b. pitiful
 - c. careless
 - d. hateful

Notice for Carry-on Baggage

Baggage that a Passenger may carry into the cabin shall be,

1 Personal belongings + 1 Baggage (Total 2 pieces)

***Total weight shall not exceed 10 kilograms.**

Passengers who bring **over 2 pieces** (include personal belongings and baggage) **must check-in the additional items. A checked baggage fee applies.**

Please note that passengers who do not follow this rule may not be able to travel with Peach. Failure to comply with Peach carry-on baggage rules can affect our flight schedule. Therefore, to ensure for flight safety and on-time operation, we would like to have your understanding and cooperation.



3. Where are you most likely to see this notice?

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| a. at an airport | b. at a bus terminal |
| c. at a hotel | d. at a luggage store |

4. If you want to take more than 2 pieces of baggage, you must_____.

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. add more items | b. pay extra cost |
| c. recheck the schedule | d. change your travel date |

5. A passenger who did not check in their extra baggage_____.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| a. might be fined | b. might not be allowed on board |
| c. might be moved to another seat | d. might be asked to leave the baggage |

Read the following passage and answer questions 6-10.

Passage 1

June 11, 2016---Actor Mario Maurer got injured in a car crash on Tuesday and was taken to hospital. "It was foggy. The highway wasn't well-lit and the car hit a light post. It was an accident", said his personal manager. Mario, 26, became famous from his leading role in "A little thing called love", the first Thai movie that made 10 million Baht income in its first week. "Mario has a minor head injury and would probably need a few days to recover. The doctors are taking good care of him", said manager Supachai. "It wasn't that bad. He only has mild headaches". The manager told the press that Mario's MC role at the June 19-20 Nakaraj Awards in Bangkok will be taken by James Ma, A Chinese-Thai actor. Mario's acting career started in 2001 when he first appeared in a Head and Shoulders shampoo ads. The actor put his acting career on hold for 2 years when he joined the army in 2012. After that he has since starred in several romantic comedy movies which made him one of the most well-known actors in Thailand.

6. What is this report about?

- a. Mario wining the Nakaraj Awards
- b. Mario becoming a famous actor
- c. Mario having an injury
- d. Mario working in the army

7. According to the passage, Mario is

- a. returning to work on the same day .
- b. seriously hurt.
- c. likely to recover soon.
- d. having an operation for his headaches.

8. Will Mario be able to join the Nakaraj Awards?

- a. Yes, he will be going to the event.
- b. Yes, but only for the first day.
- c. No, someone else will replace him.
- d. No, he wasn't invited.

9. The article mentioned that the actor "put his acting career on hold for 2 years". This means Mario_____.

- a. acted for 2 years and quit
- b. paused his acting career for 2 years
- c. only acts in movies every 2 years
- d. has only been acting for 2 years

10. According to this report, which of the following is **NOT** true?

- a. Mario is a famous actor.
- b. Mario served in the army before 2012.
- c. Mario is known from his roles in romantic comedy movies.
- d. Mario made his debut on TV in 2001.

Read the following passage and answer questions 11-15.

Passage 2

Robots are becoming a big part of our daily lives. A robot is a machine which can follow instructions from computers. Because it is a machine, it does not make mistakes. Robots can do difficult things without feeling tired. Nowadays robots are all around us and they are being used for many purposes. For example, big companies such as Hyundai and Toyota use some robots to make cars. Samsung and Huawei use robots in making mobile phones.

People also use robots in many other ways. For example, robots can help explore dangerous places such as volcanoes and underwater caves. In 2003, scientists in Antarctica also used robots to explore frozen oceans. People also use robots to help with their daily housework. Robot vacuum cleaners are becoming very popular in the United States as they let

you sit back and relax while they move around the house and do all the vacuuming. Some robots can even understand words. **They** can be used to help answer telephone calls.

Some robots look like humans, but most do not. Most robots nowadays just look like machines. Long ago, people imagined robots. Over 2,000 years ago, Homer, a famous poet imagined robots. His robots were made of gold. They work for humans and they can even go to wars. But Homer's robots were imaginary. Nobody was able to make a real robot at that time. People have been talking about robots since early 1900's. This was turned into reality in 1961. The first robot was called Unimate. It was used to help make cars. Unimate, like other robots we see nowadays, didn't resemble humans. It looked like a giant arm.

Scientists believe that robots in the future will be so technologically advanced that they can do what humans can't and don't want to do. They will be able to do tasks that require advanced skills such as brain surgery and organ implants. Moreover, robots will replace humans when it comes to dangerous jobs such as firefighting and finding bombs. They will help make life better.

11. What is the main purpose of the passage?

- a. To show how easy it is to make a robot
- b. To inform about robots and their usefulness
- c. To explain the differences between a robot and a machine
- d. To discuss the pros and cons of using robots in making cars

12. According to the passage, when was the first robot made?

- a. 2000 years ago
- b. 1961
- c. 1900
- d. 2003

13. What is paragraph 3 mainly about?

- a. How robots were invented
- b. Robots in ancient times
- c. How robots look
- d. A robotic arm

14. What does the word “**They**” at the end of paragraph 2 refer to?

- a. Telephone calls
- b. Words
- c. Robots
- d. Vacuum cleaners

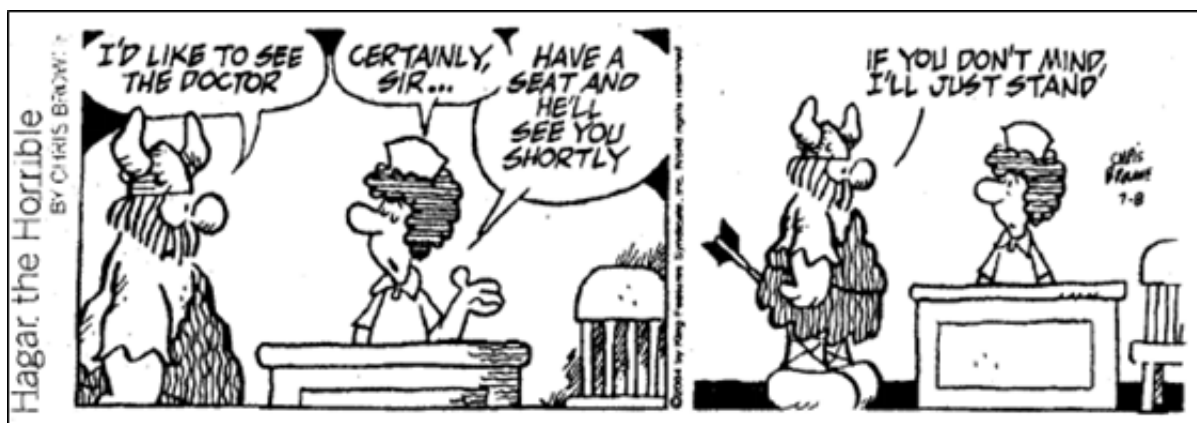
15. How does the author of this passage feel about robots?

- a. Robots are confusing.
- b. Robots are imaginary.
- c. Robots are dangerous.
- d. Robots are helpful.

แบบทดสอบชุดที่ 2 (Post-test)

คำชี้แจง

1. แบบทดสอบฉบับนี้เป็นแบบปรนัยชนิดเลือกตอบ 4 ตัวเลือก จำนวน 15 ข้อ 15 คะแนน
2. ให้นักเรียนเลือกคำตอบที่ถูกต้องที่สุดเพียงข้อเดียวแล้วทำเครื่องหมาย X ลงในกระดาษคำตอบ
3. เวลาที่ใช้ในการทำแบบทดสอบ 40 นาที



1. Where is this likely to take place?
 - a. at church
 - b. at a restaurant
 - c. at a hospital
 - d. at a night club

2. Why did the man say: "If you don't mind, I'll just stand"?
 - a. He does not mind sitting.
 - b. He prefers standing to sitting.
 - c. He can't wait to be called in.
 - d. He is afraid he might hurt himself.

Pool Hours: Mon-Fri 7 A.M. -7 P.M./ Sat-Sun 9 A.M.-9 P.M.

Rules:

Use pool at your own risk. We are not responsible for accidents or injuries.

No glass, food or drink in the pool area.

No animals allowed.

Be considerate- no yelling or other loud noises.

No running or pushing.

Management reserves the right to deny use of pool to anyone at any time.

Dive only in designated areas.

Use pool at own risk when lifeguard is not on duty.



Storage:

Pool members can use storage space in the locker room.

Non-members can contact manager for daily use. Fees may apply.

3. Which of the following is **TRUE** according to the text?

- a. The pool manager will be responsible for your injuries.
- b. You are allowed to host a party at the pool.
- c. You can bring snacks to the pool area on weekdays.
- d. The manager can tell you to leave the pool at any time.

4. When the lifeguard is not on duty, pool users should

- a. take on the duty
- b. take responsibility for their own safety
- c. take care of their pets
- d. talk to the manager immediately

5. According to the text, diving is allowed

- a. at any areas of the pool
- b. only in kids' area
- c. only in some areas of the pool
- d. only when the lifeguard is on duty

Read the following passage and answer questions 6-10.

Passage 1

Cats adopted from the local animal shelter are calming prisoners at the Lincoln County Jail in North Platte. Some prisoners had been spending time at the shelter, cleaning cages and floors, walking dogs and giving them baths.

Sheriff Jerome Kramer says he thought having a couple of cats at the jail would help prisoners pass the time and lower tensions. He says studies show that pets can help reduce stress.

The cats have been a **hit**. Kramer says the prisoners eagerly await their turns to take care of the two declawed, neutered males, Nemo and Sarge. According to North Platte television station KNOP, prisoner Guy Meyers says the cats “bring out the soft part in you, just like your kids do”.

6. What were local prisoners doing at the animal shelter in North Platte?

- a. They were looking at dogs and cats.
- b. They were looking for jobs.
- c. They were helping out.
- d. They were adopting the animals.

7. According to the article, which of the following is **TRUE**?

- a. Cats were allowed in prison to relieve prisoners' stress.
- b. The prisoners help cats live longer.
- c. Cats' tension is lowered when being in prison.
- d. Prisoners who take care of cats are likely to commit more crimes.

8. The article mentions that the cats have been a **hit**. What does this sentence mean?
- a. The prisoners hit the cats.
 - b. The cats make the prisoners uncomfortable.
 - c. The cats were well liked by the prisoners.
 - d. The prisoners were successful in declawing the cats.
9. How are the prisoners reacting to the cats' being there?
- a. They are not concerned.
 - b. They feel uncomfortable sharing their prison with the cats.
 - c. They think it causes their stress.
 - d. They seem to love it.
10. One of the prisoners thinks the cats are similar to _____.
- a. other prisoners
 - b. children
 - c. prison guards
 - d. the sheriff

Read the following passage and answer questions 11-15.

Passage 2

We still don't know who first invented paper cups. We only know that there is evidence that they were used as far back as Imperial China. Back then the Chinese people used small paper cups to drink tea. Evidence suggests that Chinese paper cups were made of thin papers and were not wax-coated. What we know about modern paper cups is that they became popular around the beginning of the 1900's when people began to realize that sharing the same cup to drink from public water faucets or water barrels also meant sharing germs.

In 1907, a Boston lawyer named Lawrence Luellen, created the “Health Kup” (which is also known as the Dixie Cup). Lawrence wanted to help improve public health because he was concerned about the use of shared cups. The first paper cups that Lawrence invented did not look like the paper cups we see today. They looked more like paper bags. They were made from brown cardboard papers and coated with wax. People could use these cups for their drinks and easily throw **them** away after use.

During the widespread of the great American flu in 1918 paper cups rapidly grew in popularity. The flu killed 50 million to 100 million people around the world, or about one of out every 20 people on Earth. In the U.S., nearly one in three people was infected, and over half a million died. More and more people started to learn that drinking from the same cups could cause them serious illness. They chose to use paper cups as a way of avoiding infection. By 1920, paper cups were widely used around the world.

Nowadays, Lawrence’s paper cup has developed from a health solution to an everyday convenience item for busy people. Each day, millions of paper cups are used so that people can take their drinks with them while they walk or travel to work. Another great use of paper cups is at large events. Beverage sellers at festivals and concerts use paper cups because they can just recycle these cups at the end of the day. Instead of having to wash every cup they use to serve their drinks to customers, disposable paper cups can be a better way to go!

11. What is the main purpose of this passage?
- a. To warn people about the great American flu
 - b. To promote paper cups and tea drinking culture
 - c. To inform about paper cups and how they became popular
 - d. To discuss health problems from using paper cups

12. According to the passage, when were the modern paper cups invented?

- a. 1900
- b. 1907
- c. 1918
- d. 1920

13. Which of the following is **NOT** true according to the passage?

- a. Lawrence was concerned about health effects from using the same cups.
- b. The Chinese used wax to coat their paper cups.
- c. Paper cups became widely used during the great American flu.
- d. Before 1900's people thought it was safe to drink from the same cups.

14. What does the word "**them**" in paragraph 2 refer to?

- a. paper cups
- b. drinks
- c. cardboard papers
- d. shared cups

15. In the last paragraph, the author seemed to conclude that

- a. Paper cups are cheaper to wash.
- b. Paper cups are very convenient.
- c. Paper cups are difficult to recycle.
- d. Paper cups are becoming less popular.

แบบทดสอบชุดที่ 3 (Delayed-test)

คำชี้แจง

1. แบบทดสอบฉบับนี้เป็นแบบปรนัยชนิดเลือกตอบ 4 ตัวเลือก จำนวน 15 ข้อ 15 คะแนน
2. ให้นักเรียนเลือกคำตอบที่ถูกต้องที่สุดเพียงข้อเดียวแล้วทำเครื่องหมาย X ลงในกระดาษคำตอบ
3. เวลาที่ใช้ในการทำแบบทดสอบ 40 นาที

Doggy Heaven



All doggies go to heaven (or so I've been told).

They run and play along the streets of Gold.

Why is heaven such a doggie-delight?

Why, because there's not a cat in sight!

1. What can we learn from this poem?
 - a. All dogs and cats go to heaven.
 - b. Dogs can be best friends with cats.
 - c. There is a lot of gold in heaven for dogs and cats.
 - d. Dogs don't like seeing cats.

2. According to this poem, heaven seems to be a _____ place for dogs.
- a. great
 - b. scary
 - c. boring
 - d. lonely

**TAKE ONE TABLET
THREE TIMES A DAY
AFTER MEALS.
FINISH THE
PRESCRIPTION.**

3. Which of the following is **TRUE**?
- a. Take three tablets a day and stop when you feel better.
 - b. Take three tablets a day until the bottle is empty.
 - c. Take three tablets at any time of the day for three days.
 - d. Take one tablet every three days.
4. Where are you most likely to see this text?
- a. in a tablet manual
 - b. on the back of a clock
 - c. in a textbook
 - d. on a medicine bottle
5. What is the purpose of this text?
- a. To invite
 - b. To comment
 - c. To inform
 - d. To complain

Read the following passage and answer questions 6-10.

Passage 1

CHINA: An 80-year-old woman who threw coins at the engine of a plane at Shanghai airport for 'good luck' yesterday (June 27) will not face charges, Chinese state media said today (June 28).

The woman, whose surname is Qui, threw nine coins at the engine while boarding the plane, with one of the coins remaining in the plane engine. She was then taken away by police after another passenger reported her behavior.

As a result, the flight to the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou was delayed for almost six hours after the incident.

Police at Shanghai Pudong International Airport said Ms. Qui was a devoted Buddhist and believed the coin offering would ensure a safe flight for everyone on board.

However the People's Daily newspaper, citing police, said that while she had broken the law and would normally serve five days behind bars, she is exempted because she is aged over 70.

6. What is this report about?

- a. Chinese police officers boarding a plane to Guangzhou
- b. Passengers celebrating Buddhist religion activities at an airport
- c. A Chinese woman throwing coins at a plane engine
- d. A Chinese woman stealing coins from other passengers

7. How did the police know about the incident?

- a. One police officer saw the incident.
- b. Ms. Qui told the police about the incident.
- c. Ms. Qui and a passenger reported the incident to the police.
- d. Another passenger told the police about the incident.

8. What is Ms. Qui's belief about the coins?

- a. She believes the coins will make the plane travel faster.
- b. She believes all passengers should bring nine coins.
- c. She believes throwing coins at an airplane will guarantee a safe trip.
- d. She believes the coins will cause a flight delay.

9. What is **TRUE** according to the report?

- a. Ms. Qui was put in prison for 5 days.
- b. The incident caused a flight delay.
- c. Ms. Qui did not break the law.
- d. The police removed nine coins from the plane engine.

10. The report mentions that Ms. Qui was a "Devote Buddhist". What does this sentence mean?

- a. She is a female monk.
- b. She does not believe in Buddhism.
- c. She is a strong believer of Buddhism.
- d. She devotes her time to throwing coins.

Read the following passage and answer questions 11-15.

Passage 2

The Coliseum is an ancient stadium in the center of Rome. It is the largest of its kind. It is very old. The Romans started building it in the year 70. It took them ten years to build this giant stadium. The Coliseum is still around today.

The Coliseum has been used in many ways. In ancient Rome, men fought each other in it. They also fought against lions, tigers and bears. Oh my! It was dreadful. But most of the people loved it. As many as 80,000 Romans would pack inside to watch the fights. These gruesome events went on until 523.

The Coliseum has been damaged several times over the years. It was struck by lightning in the year 217. This started a fire. Although much of the Coliseum is made of stone, the fire damaged the upper levels which were made of wood. This damage took many years to repair. It was not finished until the year 240.

The worst damage happened in 1349. A mighty earthquake shook Rome and the Coliseum. The south side of the building collapsed. Pieces of the arena were all over the ground. Many people took the fallen stones. Others also took stones from the seating areas. They used them to repair houses and churches.

The Romans of those days were not connected to the Coliseum. It had last been used as a castle. Before that it was a graveyard. It has been hundreds of years since the games. The damage to the Coliseum was never repaired. It's a good thing the outer wall of it still stands strong.

Today the Coliseum is one of Rome's most popular attractions. People from all over the world come to Italy to see it. The Pope leads a big march around it every Good Friday. It is a

symbol that many know. It has even appeared on the back of a coin. I guess that makes it a symbol that many people want too.

11. What is the main purpose of the passage?

- a. To promote animal shows at the Coliseum
- b. To warn tourists about some damaged areas of the Coliseum
- c. To provide general information about the Coliseum
- d. To inform when to visit and what to do at the Coliseum

12. What caused the fire that damaged the upper levels of the Coliseum?

- a. People who came to watch the events
- b. A bolt of lightning
- c. An attacking army
- d. Angry people who could not see the fights

13. What did the people do with the stones that they took from the Coliseum?

- a. They used them to repair buildings.
- b. They sold them to churches.
- c. They used them as weapons.
- d. They used them as tombstones.

14. Which of the following is **NOT** true?

- a. People fought other people in the Coliseum.
- b. The Coliseum was used as a private castle.
- c. People fought animals in the Coliseum.
- d. The Coliseum was once used as a church.

15. What is the author's view about the Coliseum according to the last paragraph?

- a. The Coliseum is only used for religious purposes nowadays.
- b. The Coliseum has its place in history, but it is not useful today.
- c. The Coliseum should be used for fighting once again.
- d. The Coliseum is a popular symbol of Rome.

Appendix 7: Example of an intervention lesson

Lesson Plan 4:

Language objective: Understand short stories

Strategy objective: Imagery

Time: 50 minutes

Materials: Textbook, PowerPoint slides worksheet 4, homework sheet 4

Procedures:

Stages (time)	activities	Materials	Notes
<p>Preparation (5)</p>	<p>- “What do you see?” Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask learners to read sentences given and draw pictures of what they see from reading the sentences (what they notice, see, feel). • Have some learners present their drawings and briefly discusses similarities and differences of their pictures. • Ask learners to discuss their use of mental pictures in the “What do you see?” Activity. <p>Purposes: Tell learners that today they are going to learn about “imagery”, a fun and easy strategy which can help them understand and remember the stories or other texts they read better. By the end of class, they will know how to use imagery to help when reading in class and on their own.</p>	<p>What do you see? PowerPoint slides</p> <p>Blank papers for learners to draw on</p>	

<p>Exploring the target strategies: Imagery (10)</p>	<p>*Input: (Involve learners in the discussion of what the strategy is, when and why they should use this strategy)</p> <p>What and when: Using imagery is creating mental pictures of what you read. You can use this whenever you read stories and you want to remember the stories better.</p> <p>Why: Creating picture in your mind will help you check if you really understand what you read. For example, if you are reading a story, it can help you remember the information and the story plot. Linking pictures to events is a natural and fun way to learn.</p> <p>Think-aloud demonstration: Now I will show you how I use this strategy to understand and remember the story I read. I will think aloud so you can follow my thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I think this is quite a long story. I have never read the story before and I wonder what it is about...” - Tell learners to look at the worksheet as teacher reads aloud the title of the story. - Before reading, try to engage learners in using pre-reading strategies (previewing, activating background knowledge and making prediction) - Read the first paragraph aloud. Stop and ask learners to close their eyes and ask them what they see as they listen to the story. (What do you see? What do you think the characters are doing in this scene?) - Ask some learners to keep their mental image in their mind while the teacher draws. - “What do you think about my drawing? Would you draw anything similar or different? Why?” 	<p>Worksheet 4: The Piper of Hamelin paragraph 1</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Now I have finished reading the first paragraph of the story, I am looking at my picture and I find this strategy useful. This is because using imagery is a useful way to help me engage with what I read and remember the information I read better. Remember that each person’s imaginary is different. Let’s try out this fun strategy and work on the rest of the story together” 		
Practice (25)	<p>*Group OR Pair practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let learners choose whether they would like to work in groups of 3 or in pairs. -Teacher walks around and give guidance and feedback - After learners finish their drawings of paragraph 2, ask them to put their drawings on the board. Compare and discuss with learners how they came up with the drawings. - Let learners continue working on the story. When they finish, ask each group/ pair to show their drawings on the board. - Tell learners to close their books and retell the story based on their drawings. - (If time permits) Go over questions from the story 	Worksheet 4 The Piper of Hamelin paragraphs 2-8	
Evaluation (10)	<p>Summary: What did you learn today?</p> <p>Class reflection:</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask learners to reflect on their experience - Use prompts to stimulate class discussion: How do you feel about using imagery when reading? Do you think it is useful? Why? Why not? How did it help you understand the story? Besides reading stories, can you think of situations when this strategy will be useful? How well did you use this strategy? Are there any problems? What would you do differently next time? <p>Discuss briefly how learners can practice the strategies when they read on their own outside of class.</p>		
Expansion (5)	Ask learners to do homework. Remind them that they can use more than one strategy to complete the task. Remind them to practice using strategies when they read on their own.	Worksheet 4 (continue from in class work)	

Worksheet 4: Imagery**Instructions:**

- 1. Read the Piper of Hamelin and draw pictures of what you see in your mind from reading the story.**
- 2. Caption each picture with 1 sentence explaining what happens in the picture.**
- 3. Answer the questions based on your understandings of the story.**

The Piper of Hamelin

1. Once upon a time, there was a beautiful town called Hamelin, located among the mountains and surrounded by beautiful fields. It had many houses covered in bright colorful flowers. All the people in Hamelin were happy.
2. One day, however, rats appeared everywhere. People couldn't eat because rats had already eaten all the food. When people felt thirsty, they couldn't drink the water from the wells because the rats had already drunk it. People couldn't sleep because the rats had crept into their beds.
3. The people of Hamelin tried everything they could to get rid of the rats, but nothing worked. Then one day an old woman told of a mysterious man with a golden flute she had met in the mountains. The man said he could get rid of the rats.
4. The mysterious man with the golden flute came to Hamelin and he said he could free them of the horrible animals. The mayor promised the man a large bag of gold if he got rid of the rats.
5. That night, the people of Hamelin heard a strange but beautiful song from the man's flute. One by one, the rats came out of their hiding places and followed the Piper as he played. He led the rats far away to a river where all the rats drowned. Everyone in town was very happy.
6. The next morning, the Piper reminded the mayor of his promise, and he asked for his gold. The mayor refused to pay. The Piper was furious, and he made a threat. He said he would play a tune that a town would never forget.
7. The Piper led the children into a mountain, and they all disappeared inside. The people of the town dug and dug, but the children were never found and never returned.

8. Soon, the people of Hamelin heard the Piper's beautiful song again. When they looked out their windows, they saw that all the children of the town were following the Piper out of town.

The people shouted at the children, but the children didn't seem to hear.

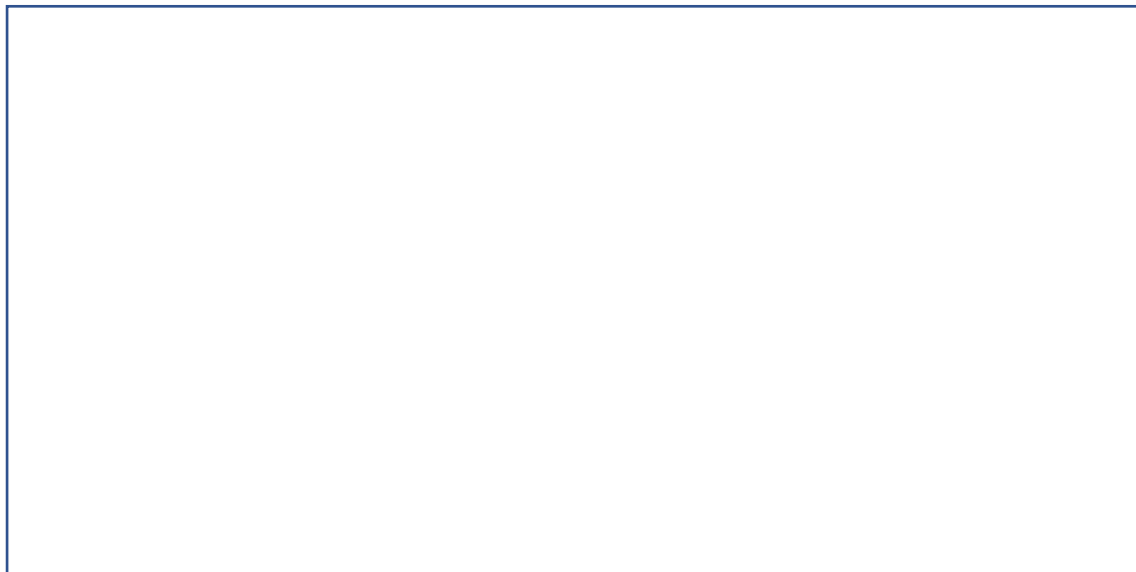


- Read paragraph 1 of the story and draw a picture of the setting.



Caption: _____

- Read paragraph 2 and draw a picture of the scene.



Caption: _____

- Read paragraph 5 and draw a picture of the scene.



Caption: _____

- Read paragraphs 6,7 and 8 and draw what you see in your mind.



Caption: _____

Name: _____

Number: _____

Name: _____

Number: _____

Questions:

1. The town of Hamelin had a serious problem with

2. What did the mayor promise to give the piper after he solves the problem?

3. How did the piper get rid of all the rats?

4. Why did the piper take all the kids from Hamelin?

5. If you were the mayor, what would you do to help the kids?

6. If your city had the same problem as Hamelin, how would you solve the problem?

Appendix 8: Code list for think-aloud data

Strategies	Descriptions	Examples
1. Translation	Translating the text into one's L1. Translation can produce either good outcomes or blunt, word for word incomprehensible outcomes.	There is a word 'product'. Product means goods (สินค้า).
2. Wild guessing	Guessing with no evidence to support one's guess	Both...both...about their experiences... and Both were honored this year for their service. I think there's a guy named Both. This guy wrote a book. A good book about his study. Right.
3. Identifying problems	Explicitly identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion or identifying problems in one's performance	I can't arrange ideas well.
4. Summarizing	Making a mental, oral, or written synopsis of new information gained through reading.	This story is about people who did research or studied something about animals.
5. Making inferences	Using contextual clues and other available information to guess word meaning or to formulate comprehension	<i>spent...periods of time...</i> " I don't know what it means...and then <i>living as animals in order to get a better understanding of animal life...lifestyle</i> . OK. Lifestyle might be about the way someone lives...time...I think it talks about people who looked at how animals live their lives and they took a long time, many hours, maybe, to look at animals...something like that.
6. Self-questioning	Asking oneself questions about the text	This part says <i>At Harvard University...since 1991</i> . Is it about a university? Or is it about science?
7. Evaluating self	Evaluating one's performance after reading	I couldn't understand this well.
8. Selective attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of the text, often by scanning for key words, concepts, and/or linguistic markers	I looked at words I know and then looked for words I don't know, and I marked them first.
9. Analyzing word parts	Trying to solve vocabulary problems using familiar affixes and root words	'Uncommon'...un means not. Not common.

10. Repetition	Imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal	Brains...brains...brains. What does this word mean? Brain...brain...brain...brain...brain.
11. Evaluating product	Evaluating one's comprehension after reading	I think about how much I know from reading this story, how my understandings of each part are connected.
12. Comprehension reconstruction	Trying to modify or elaborate one's own comprehension by rereading parts that one could not understand and retelling the story according to one's interpretation in one's own words (not verbatim).	<i>Animals...arms and legs.</i> Did they cut animals' arms and legs and then sell them? No. This doesn't sound like something dangerous. OK, one more time, <i>animals...arms and legs...to walk...hills...</i> They might have built...and lived closely with animals...to study how sheep walk or study their movement. They might have built...uh...arms and legs of the sheep for people to study. They lived with animals and studied animals and how the animals walk.
13. Evaluating text difficulty	Making an evaluation of the text difficulty	First, I think about it. I think about whether the passage is easy or difficult to read.
14. Previewing whole text before reading	Looking at the text to see its layout, illustrations, etc	I looked at the title and then I also took a quick look at the first sentence of the paragraphs or the first line before I started reading.
15. Asking if makes sense	Asking oneself if the comprehension makes sense	Hmm...why did the first paragraph has the word 'laugh'? Is it about something funny? Maybe not. It doesn't seem to fit with 'science'
16. Relating to personal experience	Connecting the text to one's own experience	Badger...what is a badger? I think I have seen this animal on TV...in cartoons. Is it something like an otter? No, not an otter. I don't know how to describe it, but I think it looks like a mix between an otter and a squirrel.
17. Analyzing text structure	Looking for the organizational aspects of text in terms of its typical structure (e.g. cause-effect, compare/contrast, etc)	I started by looking at the text. It starts with the title and then it the next parts would usually be the details of the topic. The content parts should relate to each other at some point...in each paragraph.

18. Prediction (before reading)	Looking at the text or parts of the text before reading and predict what the text might be about	Here, the title says IG Nobel. I think it's going to be about Nobel prize.
19. Evaluating text length	Making an evaluation of the text length	I look at how long the text was because then I can calculate how long I will need to read it. If it's long, I can go through it quickly first and then reread it. If it's short, I will pay more attention to each paragraph.
20. Evaluating strategies	Reflecting on how effectively a strategy was used	Thinking in picture is one good trick because it is easy to do and if I know some words, I can create pictures in my head like what I did in the last part that was about animals. It really helped.
21. Imagery	Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar or easily retrievable visualizations, phrases or locations	The text is about research. I picture in my head two people studying something about animals.
22. Prediction (while reading)	Predicting outcomes or filling in missing information while reading	<i>The awards have been given out to researchers...the awards have been...give someone a prize...researchers whose researcher may make people laugh.</i> I think this part is going to talk about scientists and big research projects.
23. Self-talk	Using self-affirmation statements to reduce anxiety and to make one feel competent to complete the task	This part is hard, but I think I can read it. OK. One more time.

(Based on Chamot (2009), O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and Zhang et al. (2008))