บทความวิจัย (Research Article)

พฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองของนิสิตระดับปริญญาตรี มหาวิทยาลัยพะเยา

Self-directed Learning Behaviors in English Language Learning of Undergraduate Students of University of Phayao

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยเชิงสำรวจ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาพฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองของนิสิตใน 4 ด้าน คือ 1) การกำหนดเป้าหมายการเรียนรู้ 2) การเลือกวิธีการเรียนรู้ 3) การประเมินผลการเรียนรู้ และ 4) การเลือกแหล่งและสื่อการเรียนรู้ รวมถึงเพื่อเปรียบเทียบพฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองของนิสิตที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษต่างกัน กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนิสิตระดับปริญญาตรีชั้นปีที่ 2-4 ภาคปกติ มหาวิทยาลัยพะเยา ที่ลงทะเบียนเรียนวิชาการอ่านเชิงวิชาการในภาคเรียนที่ 1/2555 จำนวน 280 คนจากประชากรทั้งหมดจำนวน 930 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลคือแบบสอบถาม วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยโปรแกรมสำเร็จรูป SPSS โดยหาค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ค่า F-test และค่าสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า

1. พฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองของนิสิตใน 3 ด้านแรก คือ การกำหนดเป้าหมายการเรียนรู้ การเลือกวิธีการเรียนรู้ และการประเมินผลการเรียนรู้อยู่ในระดับค่อนข้างต่ำ คือนิสิตแสดงพฤติกรรมเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองเป็นบางครั้งหรือเฉลี่ย 1 ครั้ง/สัปดาห์ สำหรับพฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองด้านที่ 4 คือการเลือกแหล่งและสื่อการเรียนรู้พบว่า แหล่งที่นิสิตเลือกเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษมากที่สุดคืออินเทอร์เน็ต และพฤติกรรมการเลือกแหล่งการเรียนรู้ต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .01 ด้านสื่อการเรียนรู้ พบว่า นิสิตเลือกเรียนรู้จากสื่อประเภทภาพยนตร์ หรือการ์ตูนภาษาอังกฤษมากที่สุด พฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองของนิสิตกับสื่อประเภทหนังสือเกี่ยวกับความรู้ทั่วไปภาษาอังกฤษสัมพันธ์กันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .01 และพฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองกับสื่อประเภทภาพยนตร์หรือการ์ตูนภาษาอังกฤษ หนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาอังกฤษและเพลงภาษาอังกฤษมีความสัมพันธ์กันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติระดับ .05

2. นิสิตที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษต่างกันมีพฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองในด้านการกำหนดเป้าหมายการเรียนรู้ การเลือกวิธีการเรียนรู้ และการประเมินผลการเรียนรู้แตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติระดับ .01 แต่ไม่พบความแตกต่างอย่างชัดเจนในพฤติกรรมด้านการเลือกแหล่งและสื่อการเรียนรู้

คำสำคัญ : พฤติกรรม, ภาษาอังกฤษ, การเรียนรู้ด้วยตนเอง, นิสิตปริญญาตรี, มหาวิทยาลัยพะเยา

Abstract

The purposes of this survey research were to study self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning of undergraduate students of University of Phayao in four aspects : setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods, evaluating learning outcomes and selecting learning sources and materials, and to compare self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning of students with three different levels of English proficiency. The sample was 280 students obtained from 930 students who enrolled in Reading Academic English course in first semester of 2012 academic year at University of Phayao. The research instrument was the questionnaire for self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning, and the data obtained was statistically analyzed by using the computer program SPSS for window to find percentage, means, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient, F-test and one way ANOVA.

The findings were as follows :

1. The mean of the students' self-directed learning behaviors in English learning in the first three aspects: setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods and evaluating learning outcomes was in quite low level. The students occasionally performed self-directed learning behaviors once a week. In the aspects of selecting learning sources and materials, which is the fourth aspect, most students selected to learn English via internet, and students' self-directed learning behaviors in each kind of learning source was significantly different at .01.   For learning materials, the students mostly selected to learn English using English movies or cartoons. Moreover, there was correlation between the students' self-directed learning behaviors in English learning and general English books at .01. Also, there were correlations between the students' self-directed learning behaviors and English movies or cartoons, English newspaper and English songs at .05

2. English self-directed learning behaviors in setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods and evaluating learning outcomes of the students with three different levels of English proficiency : high, average and low, were significantly different at .01, but there was no notably difference in selecting learning sources and materials.

Keywords : Behavior, English, Self-directed learning, Undergraduate students, University of Phayao

Introduction

The twenty century is the era of information and communication technology. To live in today's world harmoniously, it is essential for people to perpetually develop and improve knowledge and skills both of education and profession. Also, people should have characteristics of a learning person and should be lifelong learners. One learning method widely known as learning process which helps create a learning person is self-directed learning.

It is stated in the manual of Non-formal Education that self-directed learning is the approach promoting lifelong learning. This learning process suits current world which people should have critical thinking and problem solving skills as well as awareness of rapid change occurring all the time and should be able to adapt and apply knowledge to their real lives.

The concept of self-directed learning generated in the field of adult education [3]. Self-directed learning, sometimes called autonomous learning, learner autonomy or learning autonomy [12], is given definition by both Thai and foreign scholars. Isarawatana and Potisuwan [11] defined it as a learning process in which learners initiate learning by themselves. In the process, the learners carry out analyzing their learning needs, setting learning objectives, choosing learning sources and methods and evaluating learning outcomes with or without asking for support from others.

This is similar to definitions defined by foreign educators. Knowles [5] explained that self-directed learning is the process in which people take the initiative in finding learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying learning materials and resources, selecting appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes, with or without help from others. Furthermore, Hiemstra and Brookfield [17] stated that self-directed learning is a learning process in which learners are responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning independently or with others in order to achieve learning goals they set before starting the process.

In addition to self-directed learning, English is also crucial for daily life because it is used as a medium in many fields such as politics, economy and education, and it is mostly used as an official language all over the world [15]. Likewise Thailand, in which the transformation from agricultural nation to industrial country has been undergone, English is vital for education and profession. Recently, it becomes more important as the country is preparing for Asean Economic Community in 2015, and it is stated in article 34 of

ASEAN charter that the working language of ASEAN shall be English [1]

On the account of the significance of English and benefits of self-directed learning mentioned above, the researcher was interested in studying students' self-directed English language learning behaviors. This study focused on learning behaviors in four aspects according to the definition of self-directed learning. It comprised of setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods, evaluating learning outcomes, and selecting learning sources as well as learning materials.

The researcher believed that the finding of this study can be applied to English learning and teaching activities that help foster a love of learning in the students in order to make them become lifelong learners in the future.

Purposes of the study

The purposes of the study were as follows :

1. To study self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning of undergraduate students of University of Phayao in the aspects of setting learning objective, selecting learning methods, evaluating learning outcomes and selecting learning sources & materials.

2. To compare self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning of students with three different levels of English proficiency : high, average and low.

Scope of the study

1. Population and Sample

The population of this study was 930 individuals of 2nd, 3rd and 4th year undergraduate students of University of Phayao who enrolled Reading Academic English course in 1st semester

of the academic year 2012. Then 280 samples were randomly selected by using Taro Yamane's formula (finite population) with sampling error at .05.

In this study the researcher would like to examine self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning of the students with different levels of English proficiency: high, average and low, so after data was collected, the samples were categorized into 3 categories according to their English competence using grade point the samples earned from Fundamental English and Developmental English courses they took in 1st and 2nd semester of academic year 2011. From the responses of questionnaire, there were 69 samples with high English proficiency, 89 samples with average English proficiency and 122 samples with low English proficiency.

The criteria of categorizing English proficiency

Levels of English proficiency	Grade	Numeric Value of grade	Percentage
High	A	4.00	80-100
	B^+	3.50	75-79
	B	3.00	70-74
Average	C^+	2.50	65-69
	C	2.00	60-64
Low	D^+	1.50	55-59
	D	1.00	50-54
	F	0.00	0-49

Expected applications

From this study the results will :

1. help understand self-directed learning behaviors in learning English language of undergraduate students of University of Phayao

2. provide guidelines for English language teaching and learning which promote self-directed learning

3. provide guidelines for further research in self-directed learning in learning English

Research Methodology

This study was survey research. The methods were as follows:

1. Development of Data Collection Instrument

1.1 The instrument of this study was the questionnaire comprising three parts. Some items were adapted from the study of Songthiang & Jarernvongrayab [16] and some were created by the researcher based on the knowledge from literature review. Considerable attention was given to instrument developing in order to make all items appropriate to the samples of this study.

The questionnaire comprised of three parts as follows :

Part I : Background information of the respondents

In part one the items were presented in check list questions asking about background information of the respondents including gender, school year, school and major, grade point of Fundamental English course (001111) and Developmental English course (001112) which the samples took in 1st and 2nd semester of the academic year 2011.

Part II : Self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning of the students in first three aspects

In part two, six level rating scale was used to develop the items inquiring the frequencies of performing of English self-directed learning behaviors in first three aspects : 1) setting learning objectives, 2) selecting learning method and 3) evaluating learning outcomes. The

response options used were 6 = Always (everyday), 5 = often (every other day),
4 = sometimes (twice a week), 3 = occasionally (once a week), 2 = seldom (once a month), 1 = (very rarely or never).

The interpretations were as follows:

Means ($\bar{x}$)	Levels of English Self-directed learning behaviors
5.16 - 6.00	Very high
4.33 – 5.15	High
3.50 – 4.32	Quite high
2.67 – 3.49	Quite low
1.84 – 2.66	Low
1.00 – 1.83	Very low

Part III : Self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning in the aspect of selecting learning sources and materials

In part three, the check list items were used to interrogate types of learning sources and learning materials the students selected to learn English language autonomously. An open ended question was also used at the end of the questionnaire to ask for suggestion and additional opinion about self-directed learning.

1.2 Two experts were called for consultation about accuracy and validity of the developed instrument, then some items were revised.

1.3 The revised questionnaire was tired out on 30 students who were not the members of sample group.

1.4 The result of the tryout was analyzed to examine reliability or internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. It was shown that

alpha value was at .917, so the questionnaire was reliable.

2. Data Collection

The instrument was distributed to 280 respondents by the researcher and other lecturers teaching Reading Academic English course, and the researcher received all completed questionnaires.

3. Data Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed using following statistics

3.1 Percentage was used to analyze the respondents' background information.

3.2 Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze self-directed learning behaviors in the first three aspects, setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods and evaluating learning outcomes.

3.3 Percentage, Pearson correlation coefficient and F-test were used to examine self-directed learning behaviors in the fourth aspect, selecting learning sources and materials.

3.4 F-test and percentage were used to compare self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning of the students with three levels of different English proficiency.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study were concluded and discussed.

Results

The findings of the study were as follows :

1. The respondents' background information.

The findings shown that 60.71 % of the samples was female and 39.29% was male. For the school year, 62.14 % of them was second-year students, 36.79 % was the third-year students and 1.07 % was the fourth year students.

Most respondents were the students of the school of Information and Communication Technology (37.50 %) followed by the school of Science (35.36 %) then the School of Liberal Arts (22.14 %) and the school of Engineer (5%)

From the examination of the respondents English proficiency, it was found that 43.57 % of the samples was the low proficiency students, 31.79 % was the average proficiency learners and 24.64 % was the students with high proficiency.

2. Self-directed learning behaviors in English learning in four aspects, 1) setting learning objectives, 2) selecting learning methods 3) evaluating learning outcomes, and 4) selecting learning sources and materials

In the first three aspects, the overall mean of self-directed learning was in quite low level ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35). When the mean of three aspects was calculated separately, it was shown that evaluating learning outcomes had the highest mean at 3.53, then the mean of setting learning objectives was at 3.35, and selecting learning methods had the lowest mean at 3.21.

In the case of the fourth aspect, selecting learning sources and materials, it was found that the internet was the learning source the students selected to learn English the most (60.36 %). Then the second most-selected learning source for them was the university's main library (19.64%), and there were no one choosing to learn from radio.

For the comparison between self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning and selecting learning sources, the students' self-directed learning behaviors in each kind of learning source was significantly different at .01. the students learning English from books or materials in the library performed more English

self-directed learning behaviors than the ones learning from other sources ($\bar{x}$ =3.77).

In the view of learning materials, the majority of the students made use of English movies or cartoons (61.79 %) and English songs (59.29 %) and only 3.21 % used newspaper as English learning material.

However, there was a statistically significant correlation between the students' self-directed learning English behaviors and general English books at .01. Also, there were significant correlations between the student's self-directed learning behaviors and English movies or cartoons, English newspaper, and English songs at .05.

3. Self-directed learning behaviors in English learning of the students with different levels of English proficiency

The overall means of self-directed learning behaviors in English language learning in setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods and setting learning outcomes of the students with different English proficiency : high, average and low levels, were significantly different at.01. The students with high English proficiency performed more self-directed learning behaviors than other two groups ($\bar{x}$ =3.84), followed by the students with average proficiency and low proficiency ($\bar{x}$ =3.28, $\bar{x}$ =3.11) respectively.

Moreover, the means of English self-directed learning behaviors in each of three aspects of the students with different levels of English proficiency were also significantly different .01.

In the aspect of setting learning objectives, the high English proficiency students had the highest mean at 3.88, the average English proficiency students had the mean at 3.30, and the low English proficiency students had the lowest mean score at 3.08.

It was in the same way as the aspect of selecting learning methods, the mean of students with high English proficiency was the highest ($\bar{x}$ =3.64), followed by the student in average and low English proficiency groups ($\bar{x}$ =3.16, $\bar{x}$ =3.01) severally.

Also, in the aspect of evaluating learning outcomes, the student with high English proficiency performed English self-directed learning behaviors the most ($\bar{x}$ =4.07), next the students with average English proficiency ($\bar{x}$ =3.43), and the low English proficiency students carried out behaviors in this aspect the least ($\bar{x}$ =3.30).

In the case of the forth aspect, selecting learning sources and learning materials, English self-directed learning behaviors of the students in three groups were not so different.

For self-directed learning behaviors in selecting learning sources, the high English proficiency students mostly learned English language from the Internet (59.42 %). The second-most selected learning source for them was the university's main library (24.64%). The third-most selected source was television (8.70 %) and they learned from other sources such as sound lab the least (7.25 %).

Likewise the students with average English proficiency, 51.69 % of the students in this group generally selected the Internet as learning source. Then 24.72 % of them learned English from materials in the university's main library. 15.73% selected to learn from the television, and 7.87 % chose to learn English from other sources.

However, there was little difference in selecting learning sources of the students with low English proficiency. They chiefly chose to learn English via the Internet (67.21 %), same as the first two groups of the students, but the second-most selected source was television (13.93), while the university's main library was in the third rank (13.11%), and they learned English from other sources the least (5.74 %).

On the account of selecting learning materials, the students with high English proficiency chose to learn English from English songs the most (76.81%). Then they selected to learn from English textbooks and English movies or cartoons (68.12 %, 66.67 %) respectively. They carried out English self-directed learning using English newspapers (2.90 %) and English journals (2.90 %) the least.

In the view of the students with average English proficiency, learning materials selected the most was English movies or cartoons (67.42 %) followed by English textbooks (55.06 %), English games (55.06 %) and English songs (55.06 %). The students in this group learned English using other kinds of learning material such as English articles the least (2.25 %).

For the last group, the low English proficiency students, they mainly selected English textbooks (54.92 %) and English movies or cartoons (54.92 %). The second-most selected learning material was English songs (52.46 %), and the proportion of using English newspaper as English self-directed learning material was the lowest (3.28 %)

Discussion

The results of the study can be discussed as follows:

1. From the findings of self-directed learning behaviors in first three aspects : learning objective setting, learning method selecting and learning evaluating, the overall mean score was in quite low level ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35). It meant that the students rated their performance of self-directed learning at 'sometimes' or once a week. For the mean scores of each aspect, they were not different so much. The samples responded with 'often' or twice a week to the aspect of evaluating learning outcomes, and they rated 'sometimes' to setting learning objectives and selecting learning methods.

These results corresponded to the study of Williamson [17] which studied development of self-rating scale and self-directed learning of first year and final year undergraduate nursing students in five broad areas: awareness, learning strategies, learning activities, evaluation and interpersonal skills. It was shown that most first year students responded with 'seldom' and 'sometimes' to all areas. However, these findings did not agree with the study of Thuwadaratrakul [16] studying characteristics and readiness of self-directed learning of Mathayom Suksa 2 students at Sacred Heart College, Chiang Mai Province. Thuradaratrakul found that the Sacred Heart College students had self-directed learning characteristics at high level in six areas : openness to learning opportunities, self-concept as an effective learner, acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning, love of learning, positive orientation of future and ability to use study and problem-solving skill.

2. On the account of self-directed learning English behaviors in the aspect of selecting learning sources and materials, for learning sources, the students responded to learn through the internet the most. Perhaps it might be discussed that most respondents possessed notebook computer, tablet or smart phone, and Wi-Fi network are available throughout the university, and, nowadays, there are various kinds of online media such as movies, songs, news, games, etc. provided on websites, so they can surf the internet any time and for any things they want.

This result was supported by the study of Jandeang [7] which examined reading behaviors of undergraduate students of University of Phayao, and it was found that the students mostly spent their free time using the internet and reading digital materials. Jandaeng claimed that this was probably because most students owned notebook computer and both wire and wireless internet access provided in University of Phayao. They, therefore, could connect the internet conveniently.

For learning materials, the items mostly selected by the samples were English movies or cartoons and English songs, and from the examination of correlation between each kind of learning materials and self-directed learning behaviors, the materials which helped promote autonomous learning were general English books, English movies or cartoons, English songs as well as English newspaper.

The findings revealed that most items were entertaining media helping students autonomously learn English with relaxation and joyfulness. This agreed with one basic educational principle of humanism which claimed that the learners would be able to learn autonomously when they were not threatened to be anxious or nervous about learning [9 & 13].

3. In the perspective of comparison of English self-directed learning behaviors in setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods and evaluating learning outcomes of students with three different levels of English proficiency : high, average and low, the responses of the respondents disclosed that the students with high English proficiency were more self-directed than the ones with average and low English

proficiency. Also, the average proficiency students were more self-directed than low proficiency students. This indicated that the learners with higher English proficiency appear to be more self-directed in their learning. Moreover, it demonstrated that learning achievement correlated with self-directed learning behaviors.

This finding agreed with concept proposed by Donna Leach Could [8] which claimed that there was positive correlation between learning achievement and self-directed learning. The individuals who had characteristics of self-directed learner can be the ones who succeed in learning, too.

Furthermore, this result accorded with the study of Fukham [6] comparing English writing ability and autonomous learning of the learners with three different levels of English proficiency. Fukham's study exposed that writing ability and the autonomy of learners with different English proficiency were significantly different, and there was high correlation between levels of English writing ability and learners autonomy. The students with higher scores in writing had more responsibilities in their learning process, tried harder to find their learning techniques than the ones with lower writing ability. Additionally, the autonomous learning of the students in upper-intermediate group was higher than the ones in the group of intermediate and pre-intermediate, and intermediate students had higher level of autonomous learning than the pre-intermediate students.

In the view of comparison of selecting learning sources and materials of students with different level of English proficiency, there was no remarkable difference of English self-directed learning behaviors among three groups of them.

The students in all groups selected to learn English via the Internet the most.

The result can be discussed that most students can access the Internet easily because of laptops, tablets or smartphones they owned and Wi-Fi network provided almost everywhere both inside and outside the university. It also agreed with the discussion from Jandeang's study [7] shown that the undergradate students of University of Phayao mostly spent their free time using the internet and reading digital materials.

For learning materials, the responses of the respondents in every group were in the same manner. They chiefly learned English from English movies or cartoons, English songs and English textbooks.

The finding can be discussed that English movies or cartoons and English songs are entertaining media assisting students autonomously learn English with enjoyment. This result was in accordance with one basic principle of education proposed by humanism which claimed that the learners would be able to learn autonomously when they were not threatened to be anxious or nervous about learning [9 & 13].

For English textbooks, it might be discussed that it was because the context in the textbooks can help the students understand the subject better, and they may also need to get a good grade in English subject.

This result corresponded with the study of 2005 Publishers Association [2]. From the student survey of this study, it was shown that 91 % of the samples realized that textbooks were important for their learning. The students also perceived textbooks as learning materials providing them meaningful context for their learning and enhancing their comprehension of the subject.

Conclusion

This study unveiled that the average of students' English self-directed learning behaviors was quite low. It meant that they occasionally learned English autonomously. Therefore, an English lecturer who play very important role in students' learning should encourage them become more self-directed in English learning by having them do the tasks which emphasize learning autonomy.

Furthermore, the results also suggested that the Internet is the most preferable learning source, and the students prefer self-directed learning using English movies or cartoons, English songs and English textbooks. Hence, to motivate the students conduct more English self-directed learning behaviors, the lecturers should assign them to learn from their favorable learning sources and materials. However, the teachers should select appropriate learning aids and sources which promote and correlate with self-directed learning in order to make their learning meaningful and useful for them. In case of having the student to learn from the Internet, the teacher should recommend suitable websites before giving them an assignment because there are both good and bad sites and media on the Internet.

Acknowledgement

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