INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG EFL STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

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In the global context of internationalization, English has become an essential tool for employees in various fields of work. To foster students' English learning, governments have implemented measures to improve the quality of English teaching and learning. Nonetheless, studies have revealed that graduates often face high unemployment rates due to their poor communication skills and limited command of English (Lim & Bakar, 2004; Siti Zaidah et al., 2019). In the Vietnamese context, despite the wide range of English language programmes offered by English learning institutions, the level of English language proficiency remains low and uneven, especially among non-English major students (Trinh & Mai, 2018; Nguyen & Habók, 2021). In order to better understand how learners become masters of their own learning, the theory of self-regulated learning (SRL) was developed in the 1980s (Zimmerman, 2001). However, there are not many studies that have investigated self-regulated learning strategies and the relationship between self-regulation and language proficiency among university-level language learners, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. This study aims to investigate the SRL strategies employed by Vietnamese EFL learners in university setting and their relationship with language proficiency. The participants of the study were 140 university students randomly selected from different levels of English proficiency and learning backgrounds. They completed a SRL questionnaire including 50 items, which consists of two parts. Part 1 collected the personal information from the participants such as their age, major of study, length of time learning English and English level based on the results of international tests. Part 2 measured the frequency of SRL strategy usage among the participants. Quantitative methods were used to collect data, and descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis were conducted to explore the relationship between self-regulated learning and the learners' language proficiency. The data was analyzed using SPSS software version 26. The results showed that the questionnaire is reliable. Students made extensive use of various self-regulation strategies for language learning. The three most commonly applied strategies were elaboration, help seeking, and time and study environment management, while critical thinking and effort regulation were the least employed by the participants. Moreover, a significant positive relationship was observed between students' self-regulated learning strategies and their language proficiency. It was evident that language proficiency had the highest significant correlation with elaboration strategy, while the lowest correlation was found with effort regulation. It can be concluded that more proficient EFL learners tend to rely on self-regulation and employ more self-regulated learning strategies compared to less proficient learners.