The Validation of Student's Self-Motivated Strategies Scales for Learning English in Thai Context

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Abstract

The quality of English curriculum in Thai education has been discussed. The student's individual factors are the key factor for the effective English learning outcomes, including they self-motivation, and self-regulated. Based on the cognitive learning theory, the students' self-motivated strategies for learning are one of the important factors that may affect the quality of the education as the whole. This study aims to validate the students' motivated strategies scales for English learning in Thai education by using the Motivated Strategies Learning Questionnaire, MSLQ. Data was collected from 522 students in private university in Thailand. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to test the hypothesis. It aims to generalize the MSLQ instrument in Thai context. The results revealed that the MSLQ, developed by Pintrich et. al. (1993), provide an empirical base for specification of linkages between individual differences in the students' motivational factor and their cognitive engagement and self-regulation in a classroom setting. However, it is still ambiguity in term of inadequate model-data fit. The findings will lay the groundwork for the future use of the MSLQ in research in students' self-motivation and self-regulation for English learning in Thailand.

Keywords: MSLQ, self-motivation, self-regulated, the Aviation Personnel Development Institute, Thailand

1. Background/ Objectives and Goals

Thai students' level of English proficiency is low in comparison with many countries in Asia (e.g., Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore) and Thai students cannot use English as the desired standard in real-life situations (Foley, 2005). English language proficiency based on TOEFL scores, Thai students ranked no. eight among nine ASEAN students (Prapphal, 2002). The English curriculum in Thai universities has been questioned. Indeed, education in the 21st century favors student-center methods. Students are the most important component and must be encouraged. Hence, Thai educational institutes have to focus more on the students' proficiency of learning.

The cognitive learning theory is a theory that focuses on the brain and its functioning in learning through processing, memory, thinking, and mental functions such as planning, organizing, and categorizing. This theory explains that human processes information based on prior experience, memory, and logic. Then when they want to retrieve the information, they use the same memory, categories, and plan of organization to find it and use it later (Sullivan, 2009). Cognitive theories are mentioned in the several models of learning, but they are given varying importance. Research on learning through mental processing has a long tradition in educational psychology (Feiz, Hooma, & Kooshki, 2013). There are many models of learning have been used in educational psychology to clarify the answers of researchers. It might shed light on such questions as for how do students learn effectively? Or, what is happening in this classroom that facilitates learning better than in another classroom?

The student's self-motivation and strategies scales for learning, MSLQ (Pintrich, Smith, Gracia, & McKeachie, 1993) is an extensively used instrument in research on students at the college and university level. According to Duncan and McKeahie (2005), it was developed from some correlation studies on the students' motivation and self-regulated learning at the National Centre for research for improving Postsecondary Teaching and Learning, USA. Furthermore, MSLQ has been verified in the different context, e.g., Estonian (Saks, Leijen, Edovald, & Õun, 2015), Iranian (Feiz, Hooman, Kooshki, 2013), Turkey (Erturan Ilker, Arslan, & Demirhan, 2014), and the USA (Cook, Thompson, & Thomas, 2011).

The MSLQ has been translated into more than 20 different languages, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Russia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Its reliability and validity have been only tested in Spanish and Chinese apart from English (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005). They commented that MSLQ had been used to study across a wide range of contexts such as undergraduate students, chemistry, social studies, and physical education. However, there is still an inadequate data model-fit (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005; Dunn, Lo, Mulvenon, & Sutcliffe, 2012).

Although MSLQ can be either used on its entirely or its subscale (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005), the existing evidence found, MSLQ has been tested in Thai context (Samruayruen, 2013) for 88 online learning students. From the study of Samruayruen (2013), there were only five subscales of MSLQ used, including an intrinsic goal, self-efficacy, test anxiety awareness, cognitive strategy, and study management. The findings showed the overall correlation between the learners' motivational components and the learners' self-regulation strategies had a correlated significantly, in which supported the findings of Pintrich and De Groot (1990).

This study aims to explore the students' self-motivated strategies scales for learning English in Thailand by using the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, MSLQ. It will investigate the students' factors of English learning, including self-motivation and self-regulated factors.

2. Methods

This quantitative research will be conducted in one of the private university in Thailand. The data were collected from 1,000 undergraduate students by pen and pencil of MSLQ. The 522 completed questionnaires were returned, which was 52.2% rate of response. To avoid the comprehension stage of the response process of items and context ambiguity of data collection, Tourangeau, Rips, and Rasinski, 2000 suggested that participants should be asked to remind themselves of their particular, English, course.

The measurement scale was adopted from MSLQ (Pintrich, Smith, & McKeachie, 1993). The word 'this class' has been changed to 'this English class.' The MSLQ was developed by Pintrich, Smith, and McKeachie (1993). There are 81 items, the 31 items of the motivation factor and the 50 items of the learning strategies factor. The original version of MSLQ was developed in English. It was translated into Thai. According to van Widenfelt, Treffers, de Beurs, Siebelink, and Koudijs (2005), the translated version will be tested for validity and reliability in a small group of 30 participants before collecting larger datasets. This procedure is useful for the cross culture translated measurement.

The MSLQ consists of two constructs, motivation factor, and learning strategy factor. There are six subscales within the motivation, section, and nine subscale within the learning strategy section. The structural relations of MSLQ subscales for motivational and learning strategies components were explored by using confirmatory factor analysis, CFA. This study used the assessments of model fit suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) that indicated by CFI, SRMR, and RMSEA (>0.95, <0.08, and <0.06) respectively.

The demographic information was obtained from 522 students. The participants were 24.5% (n = 128) male and 24.5% (n = 394) female. Five (1%) of them were on the second year, 62.4% (n = 324) were on the third year, 36.4% (n = 189) were on the fourth year, and four were reported missing. The average GPA of students was 3.04 as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Description of the samples

	Gender		Year			GPA
	Male	Female	2	3	4	
Total	128	394	8	324	189	3.04
Percentage	24.5%	75.5%	1.5%	62.1%	36.4%	

The 7-point Likert scales of MSLQ measurement were designed by the researchers as a measurement instrument to investigate the nature of student motivation and learning strategies. Students rate themselves on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 (not at all true of me) to 7 (very true of me). From existing study, the MSLQ's Cronbach's alpha was reported in good internal reliability (Artino, 2005). Guillemin, Bombardier and Beaton (1993) suggested that the English original version of MSLQ should be translated by at least two translators. Therefore, it was translated into Thai by two Thai professional English translators. They both have agreed on the literal and cultural translation (Van Widenfelt, Treffers, De Beurs, Siebelink, and Koudijs, 2005). The reliability for this study is 0.95. The sample items of the MSLQ are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Dimensions, scales and example items of MSLQ

Dimension	Scales	Items
Motivational Dimension	Intrinsic goal orientation	In this English class, I prefer course material that really challenges me so that I can learn new things.
	Extrinsic goal orientation	Getting a good grade in this English class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.
	Task value	It is important for me to learn the course material in this English class.
	Control learning	If I study in appropriate ways, then I will able to learn the material in this English class.
	Self-efficacy for learning and performance	I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this English class.
	Test anxiety	When I take tests I think of the consequences of failing.

Table 2: Dimensions, scales and example items of MSLQ (Cont.)

Dimension	Scales	Items
Learning Strategies Dimension	Rehearsal	When I study for this English class, I practice saying the material to myself over and over.
	Elaboration	When I study for this English class, I pull together information from different sources, such as lectures, readings, and discussions.
	Organization	When I study the reading for this English class, I outline the material to help me organize my thoughts.
	Critical thinking	I often find myself questioning things I hear or read in this course to decide if I find them convincing.
	Meta-cognitive self-regulation	When reading for this course, I make up questions to help focus my reading.
	Time and study environment	I usually study in a place when I can concentrate on my course work.
	Effort regulation	I work hard to do well in this English class even if I don't like what we are doing.
	Peer learning	When studying for this English class, I often try to explain the material to a classmate or a friend.
	Help seeking	I ask the instructor to clarify concept I don't understand well.

3. Results/ Conclusion/ Contribution

The results support the theoretical structure of the MSLQ. There are two important factors that involve with English learning in Thai private education institute, including the motivational factor, and learning strategies factors. Motivational factor composes of value component – the students' orientation of their goals, expectancy component – students' task value control and self-efficacy for learning. Learning strategies factor composes of affective component – concern with students' anxiety, elaboration, organization, critical thinking and meta-cognitive self-regulation, and resource management strategies – involve with time and study environment, effort regulation, peer learning, and help to seek.

To examine the relationship of the scales of MSLQ, Table 3 displayed the internal correlation of each scales. It is shown that all scales are significantly correlated in this study. Among the motivational dimension, the correlated value was in ranged from r =.11 (between an intrinsic goal and test anxiety) to r = .81 (between an intrinsic goal and task value). The results confirmed the study of Pintrich et. al. (1993) that the scales are valid measures of motivational and learning strategies constructs. However, this current study has not revealed the negative relationship between positive motivation, an intrinsic goal, task value, control of learning, and self-efficacy as the previous, but their correlations tended to be very low (r =.11, .32, .16, .28, and .10 respectively).

The confirmatory factor analysis, CFA, has been performed based on the assessments of model-data fit suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999). It was indicated by CFI, and RMSEA (>0.95, and <0.06), this study reported the model-data fit at CFI = .95, and RMSEA = .09 which was poor fit. According to Pintrich et. al. (1993), a X^2 / df ratio is less than is five considered to be "indicative of a good fit between the observed and reproduced correlations matrices" (p. 807), this study reported higher value than that statement, so it indicated poor fit. Furthermore, this result supported that there was still an ambiguity of using MSLQ in the different culture context as reported earlier in the study of Duncan and McKeachie (2005), and Dunn, Lo, Mulvenon, and Sutcliffe (2012).

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlations of the scales

Scales	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. intrinsic goal	21.31	3.64	1														
2. extrinsic goal	21.86	3.83	.55	1													
3.taskvalue	33,07	5.24	.81	.62	1												
4.control learning	21.50	3.50	.65	.57	.72	1											
5.self-efficacy	40.61	6.63	.71	.59	.74	.56	1										
6.test anxiety	23.20	4.76	.11	.32	.16	.28	.10	1									
7.rehearsal	19.60	3.59	.51	.34	.53	.44	.58	.13	1								
8.elaboration	29.86	5.17	.56	.40	.58	.44	.60	.12	.76	1							
9.organization	19.06	3.72	.48	.37	.49	.40	.54	.18	.73	.72	1						
10.critical thinking	24.12	4.52	.45	.31	.47	.40	.46	.17	.64	.66	.60	1					
11.regulation	58.16	8.67	.52	.45	.54	.53	.33	.72	.76	.71	.72	.65	1				
12.effort regulation	18.21	3.54	.15	.20	.14	.16	.15	.43	.28	.34	.32	.38	.51	1			
13.peer learning	14.27	2.71	.43	.34	.46	.38	.54	.21	.67	.67	.67	.57	.68	.40	1		
14. help seeking	19.85	3.22	.44	.35	.45	.40	.41	.32	.54	.61	.50	.52	.69	.53	.52	1	
15. study management	37.87	5.77	.36	.32	.38	.30	.41	.34	.59	.65	.59	.54	.74	.56	.57	58	1

n=522, all scales are significantly related at the 0.01 (p < 0.01).

This study will provide the suggestion to improve students to self-motivate and self-regulate for learning English. It is highly important to measure their aptitude to self-motivation and self-motivated. The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, MSLQ, is an important instrument that measures the use of learning strategies and the level of students' motivation and strategy. This current study will describe the adaptation of the MSLQ to assess students' English learning in Thai context and explore the psychometric properties of the adapted questionnaire.

According to the Office of Educational Testing in Thailand (1999a, 1999b), there were very few students passing the criterion of English testing. The self-motivation strategies for learning help the teacher to notify and familiar with the factors that influence students' abilities. Understanding the factors outside the faculty members' control can have a significant impact on the development of Thai students' abilities to self-motivate and self-regulate to learn English. For example, how students choose to approach and monitor their learning is consistent with their preferred or desired social identity (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, and Roberts, 2011).

English is become the international or global language. It has played a major role as the medium of communication among people from the different non-English speaking countries, including Thailand. English is not just the only subject to be learned in the classroom, but it is also necessary for social practices (Foley, 2005). The role of English in Thailand is important as it is in many other countries and it is the first foreign language that Thai students must study in the school. Many Thai companies have embraced cooperation regionally and internationally since the economy downturned in 2007. English is used for communication, negotiation, and execute transactions by participants that show the significance needs and wants of English in the workplaces. For Thai students, the high English using proficiency enhances students' opportunity to get good jobs in urban areas such as Bangkok, Rayong, Chonburi, Chang Mai, Phuket, Nakorn Ratchasima, Khon Khan (Foley, 2005).

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