



**EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES
ON LEARNING STRATEGIES TOWARDS ESP FOR POLITICAL
EDUCATION: A CASE AT SCHOOL OF POLITICAL SCIENCES,
CAN THO UNIVERSITY, VIETNAMⁱ**

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Abstract:

This study investigates the perceptions and practices of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students regarding learning strategies for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the context of Political Education. The study focuses on six (6) learning strategies of Oxford (1990)'s classification, including (1) memorization strategies, (2) cognitive strategies, (3) compensation strategies, (4) metacognitive strategies, (5) affective strategies, and (6) social strategies. A mixed-methods approach is employed, including questionnaire and interviews. First, 101 items for the questionnaire are administered to investigate the perception and practice of students on learning strategies. Then interviews with students and teachers are employed to capture more details about the participants' perception and practice on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. The study sample consists of 187 EFL students from School of Political Sciences, Can Tho University, Vietnam who are currently participating in ESP for Political Education course named "Specialized English for Political Education Course 2". The findings reveal that the majority of students have positive perceptions of ESP and recognize the importance of learning strategies in mastering this area.

Keywords: perceptions, practices, English learning strategies, political sciences, Can Tho University

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Around the world, ESP has received much interest in study at different stages. In many universities and colleges, ESP is an integral component of the curriculum because ESP helps students who are not native English speakers to improve their English proficiency in a specific field or profession. This enhances internationalization and promotes academic and cultural exchange, thus enriching the academic environment. It is obvious to recognize that ESP is important in the current global context and it could be used to help students develop intercultural competence (Javid, 2013; Zaghar, 2016).

Meanwhile, Political Education is one area where ESP can be particularly useful. In many countries, English is the language of international diplomacy and politics. Thus proficiency in English may be crucial for students who want to pursue careers in politics or international relations. Therefore, having effective learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education is essential. They enable learners to learn more effectively, efficiently, and confidently across a range of political contexts. By developing a strategic approach to learning ESP, learners could achieve their goals and succeed academically and professionally. Thus, it is necessary to examine students' perceptions along with practice in language learning strategies.

In Vietnamese universities and colleges, ESP is a required subject in the general education curriculum, especially for those students who do not specialize English language. Students learn the technical vocabulary used in their field of study or profession. For example, medical students might learn medical terminology, while political students might learn political jargon. Besides, students are taught about the cultural contexts in which their professional communication takes place. They learn how to navigate cultural differences and expectations, and how to adapt their communication style to different audiences. Moreover, students are supported with English skills including speaking, listening, writing, reading, and other English skills. However, little is known about the perceptions and practices of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students toward learning strategies for ESP specifically in the context of Political Education. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring EFL students' perceptions and practices on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education in Vietnamese context.

Understanding EFL students' perceptions and practices towards learning strategies for ESP could have many practical implications for teachers and students. For example, it may help the development of teaching and learning materials that helps students improve their English proficiency in the context of Political Education. Thus, this study is significant because it could contribute to the improvement of ESP programs and the development of better teaching practices that can help EFL students from Viet Nam to acquire the necessary skills to meet the demands of the globalized world.

1.2 Research aims

The present study aimed at investigating how EFL students perceive learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. Simultaneously, the study centred on gaining an in-depth insight into the EFL students' practices in their learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education.

1.3 Research questions

The study is conducted to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do EFL students perceive learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education?
- 2) To what extent do EFL students practice their learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education?

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings from the current study provide valuable information contributing to the field of language research. First, it helps enhance understanding of ESP learning strategies. The study contributes to the enhancement of understanding of the perception and practice of learning strategies in ESP for Political Education among EFL students. Second, the study helps provide insights that could help enhance Political Education among EFL students. Third, the study helps improve language proficiency. Providing insights on effective learning strategies could help EFL students improve their language proficiency in ESP for Political Education. Finally, the study informs teaching practices by providing insights into effective learning strategies for teaching ESP for Political Education to EFL students.

In conclusion, the study is significant because it could provide new insights into EFL students' perceptions and practices on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. It helps inform teaching practices and contributes to the enhancement of critical thinking skills, language proficiency, and Political Education knowledge in EFL students.

1.5 Scope of the study

The participants in this study are EFL students in School of Political Sciences at Can Tho University. School of Political Sciences has three majors which are *Politics, Citizenship Education, and Philosophy*. All three majors are required to take part in an ESP course as a compulsory subject which is namely "Specialized English for Political Education Course 2". This subject is divided into two modules. The study is conducted in the module 2 in order to ensure all the participants have an overview of the course and have general perceptions and practices on learning strategies towards ESP. Thus, this study places emphasis on the perceptions and practices of students on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education.

2. Literature review

2.1 Learning strategies

Every learning process needs an appropriate strategy in order to gain the main purpose of learning. Researchers define the term "learning strategies" in many different ways.

Wenden and Rubin (1987, p.124) state that learning strategies are "*any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information*". To put it simply, learning strategies are skills and methods that learners use to gain, store and retrieve information during the learning process. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) define learning strategies as "*the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information*". They have the same ideas as Wenden and Rubin (1987) when indicating learners use learning strategies in order to learn something successfully. However, O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) definition is more particular and specific. According to them, the skills and methods that learners use for learning strategies are thoughts and behaviors. Richards and Platt (1992) also describe that learning strategies are "*intentional behavior and thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information.*" They transcend the previous definitions to give a more focused one. In addition, Stern (1992) indicates that "*the concept of learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques*". This explanation might be too abstract to understand, so it may be easier to say that learners use learning strategies either intentionally or unintentionally when meeting new information. For instance, learners are likely to face new input and difficult tasks given by their instructors in class. Thus, to find the quickest or easiest way to complete the tasks, using learning strategies is inescapable. In spite of the different phraseology, it can be recapitulated that learning strategies are the particular approaches or techniques that learners utilize them their learning process. To put it differently, effective learning processes refer to techniques and approaches learners use in their learning strategies.

Learning strategies have gained a considerable amount of significance for the important role they are playing in the learning process. Weinstein and Mayer (1986,p.235) indicate that the aim of using strategies is to "*affect the learner's motivational or affective state or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge*". Oxford (1989) expands on this by explaining that "*strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence*". Learning strategies are crucial for helping learners to overcome their areas of weakness and to rely on their areas of competence. Explicitly, learning strategies help ensure that learners are active participants in their learning process. They not only receive new information but also learn how to address all aspects of the learning process. Furthermore, learning strategies help learners develop skills, increase confidence, and build motivation in the learning process. Strategy use enhances independent learning and helps learners take responsibility for their own learning.

In the field of learning strategy research, language learning strategy is one of the most common concerns. Significantly, in the era of globalization, English is used as a popular language among people with different linguacultural backgrounds. English learning strategies, as a matter of fact, become essential and indispensable with English learners. Thus, the next section will focus on the term "English learning strategies".

2.1.1 English Learning Strategies

English learning strategies in particular and language learning strategies in general have been extensively employed in the educational environment. Almost all language learners use language learning strategies either consciously or subconsciously when encountering new information and performing tasks in the language learning process.

Language learning strategies are defined differently by many scholars. Oxford (1989) asserts that language learning strategies are "*the often-conscious steps of behaviors used by language learners to enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall, and use of new information*". Having the same ideas, Cohen (1998) states language learning strategies as "*those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language*". This research is related to the notion of successful language learners. In other words, scholars refer to language learning strategies as methods that help learners enhance language. Besides, according to them, language learning strategies are conscious actions that learners use in their learning process. These strategies can make learning language easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more effective. In addition, Ghani (2003) indicates language learning strategies as "*specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques that students frequently use to improve their progress in foreign language developing skills; these can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval or use of the new language*". Language learners apply language learning strategies as a way to facilitate the achievement and utilization of information they gain, store and retrieve.

In conclusion, language learning strategies are the specific operations used by learners to help acquire, store, retain, use and retrieve new language. Hence, English learning strategies can be inferred as the specific operations used by learners to help acquire, store, retain, use, and retrieve English easier, faster and more effectively. Since there, it is understood that the learning strategies that this topic is aiming at are language learning strategies or English learning strategies.

To illustrate language learning strategies, as well as English learning strategies more clearly, the next topic will concentrate on the classification of language learning strategies.

A. Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies have been classified by many researchers (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978; Rubin, 1981; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Rubin (1975) indicates that successful language learners:

- 1) Are good guessers.

- 2) Have a strong drive to communicate,
- 3) Are willing to appear foolish if reasonable communication results,
- 4) Are prepared to attend to forms,
- 5) Make full use of all practice opportunities,
- 6) Monitor his own and the speech of others,
- 7) Attend to meaning.

Stern (1975) identifies strategies of good language learners:

- 1) Planning strategies: a personal learning style or positive learning strategy;
- 2) Active strategy: an active approach to the learning task;
- 3) Emphatic strategy: a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and its speakers;
- 4) Formal strategy: technical know-how of how to tackle a language;
- 5) Experiment strategy: a methodological but flexible approach, developing the new language into an ordered system and constantly revising it;
- 6) Semantic strategy: constant searching for meaning;
- 7) Practice strategy: willingness to practice;
- 8) Communication strategy: willingness to use the language in real communication;
- 9) Monitoring strategy: self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use;
- 10) Internalization strategy: developing the second language more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it.

Stern's (1975) classification shares some similarities with Rubin's (1975), such as practice strategies (willing to practice), semantic strategy (constant searching for meaning) and monitoring strategy (self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use).

Naiman et al., (1978) indicate five major language learning strategies. They are active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication, management of affective demands and self-monitoring. In a later paper, Rubin (1981) investigates learning strategies into strategies that directly affect language learning (which consist of clarification/ verification, guessing/ inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, monitoring, memorization, and practice) and indirectly affect language learning (which include creating opportunities for practice and production tricks). O'Malley & Chamot (1990) divided language learning strategies into three types, namely metacognitive strategies (which include selective attention, planning, monitoring and evaluation), cognitive strategies (which consist of rehearsal, organization, inferencing, summarizing, deduction, imagery, transfer and elaboration) and social/ affective strategies (which constitute cooperation, questioning for clarification and self-talk).

Even though these classifications have many similarities, but there is no consensus. Therefore, there are still a substantial number of issues to be examined in the field of language learning strategies. The complexities involving strategy definition, context and research methodology, due to different participants and contexts, point to the lack of discussion at that time. However, when the taxonomy of language learning

strategies of Oxford (1990) appeared, the major researchers in the field of language acquisition were attracted. Until now, Oxford (1990)'s classification is the best known. Many scholars use this classification for their research (Aslan, 2009; Akbar, Vahdany, & Arjmandi, 2014; Rahman, 2016).

Oxford (1990) indicates a more detailed classification of language learning strategies based on the synthesis of the previous work on good language learning strategies.

Table 2.1: Language Learning Strategy Classified by Oxford (1990)

Language Learning Strategies	Direct Strategies	Memorization Strategies	Creating mental linkages
			Applying images and sound
			Reviewing
			Employing actions
		Cognitive Strategies	Practicing
			Receiving and sending messages
			Analysing and reasoning
	Creating structure for input and output		
	Compensation Strategies	Guessing intelligently	
		Overcoming limitations in speaking or writing	
	Indirect Strategies	Metacognitive Strategies	Centering the learning
			Arranging and planning
			Self-evaluating
		Affective Strategies	Lowering anxiety
			Self-encouraging
Taking one's emotional temperature			
Social Strategies		Asking questions	
		Cooperating with others	
	Empathizing with others		

Source: Language Learning Strategy Classified by Oxford (1990).

The language learning strategy of Oxford is divided into direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies help language learners learn directly, which include:

- *Memorization strategies:* They help learners store and retrieve new information, such as creating mental linkages, applying images and sound, reviewing, and employing actions
- *Cognitive strategies:* They help learners understand and produce new language, such as, practicing, receiving and sending messages, analysing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output.
- *Compensation strategies:* They enable learners to use inadequate language comprehension, such as grammar and vocabulary. They are subdivided into guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking or writing.

Indirect strategies support learning language without directly involving the language. They are consisting of:

- *Metacognitive strategies:* They help learners to arrange their own learning, such as centering the learning, arranging and planning, self-evaluating

- *Affective strategies*: They enable learners to deal with emotions, motivation, and anxiety, such as lowering anxiety, self-encouraging, and taking one's emotional temperature
- *Social strategies*: They help learners learn the language through interactions with native speakers of the target language, such as asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others.

Thus, based on Oxford's (1990) classification, metacognitive strategies help learners take control of their learning. Affective strategies involve learners' emotional demands, such as increasing confidence while learning whereas social strategies enhance interoperability with the target language. Cognitive strategies are intellectual strategies that learners use to make sense of their learning. Memory strategies are used to accumulate information. Compensation strategies help learners overcome knowledge gaps in order to continue communicating.

In conclusion, studies have demonstrated that learning strategies are accurate predictors of how learners perform on learning tasks and what difficulties they encounter during language learning. Learning strategies, either intentionally or unintentionally used, can help learners select appropriate skills to understand, gain, or retain new knowledge provided in the learning process. This statement implies that if English language learners use a variety of English learning strategies, their English language skills will be enhanced. Developing English skills in cognitive, metacognitive, social and emotional aspects can help to build independence and autonomy in learners so that they can control and improve their English skills, as well as language skills.

2.2 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

ESP or English for specific purposes is a subset of English as a second or foreign language. Robinson (1980) defines ESP as "*the teaching of English to the learners with specific goals and purposes which might be academic, professional, scientific, etc*". The origins of ESP have been developed to help learners who tend to use the English language for academic, professional, or vocational purposes. To clarify, ESP typically refers to teaching the English language to university or college students, or people already in employment, with reference to the particular vocabulary and skills they need for their jobs.

Instead of concentrating on teaching grammar and language structures, ESP focuses on emphasizing language in context. It is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners. ESP covers subjects ranging from computer science to tourism and political science. It integrates subject matter and English language instruction. Thus students are able to apply what they learn in their English classes to their major field of study, whether it be computer science, economics, tourism, or political education.

2.2.1 Learning strategies for ESP

Alqahtani and Alhebaishi (2010) discuss that English language proficiency in ESP classes is strongly correlated with the use of learning strategies. More specifically, affective and social strategies can demonstrate the level of English language proficiency in ESP

whereas memory strategies are evaluated low because language learning is a cognitive process rather than a set of predetermined rules. Nevertheless, the researchers state that memory strategies should not be underestimated. It is also indicated in the study of Ahmadishokouh and Derikvand (2015), who investigate the difference between language learning strategies used by EFL and ESP learners. They find that the most prevalent strategies used by ESP learners are metacognitive, memory and social respectively. Among the three strategies, ESP learners use the memory strategy more frequently. Particularly, the research's findings show that ESP students use the memory strategy more frequently than EFL students do. Additionally, their study's findings indicate that learners do not apply all learning strategies equally. Therefore, it could be argued that language learners need metacognitive strategies for learning effectively, regardless of the status of the language they are learning. The results also show that affective and compensation strategies are among the least strategies employed.

These findings report some significant implications. Firstly, utilizing learning strategies can increase the opportunities for improving ESP learners' language proficiency. Secondly, ESP learners use similar learning strategies as EFL learners to enhance language proficiency. However, ESP learners do not apply all learning strategies equally. They may use some strategies more frequently than EFL learners do and vice versa. Finally, some strategies, such as memory strategies can shed light as a powerful tool to learn a language for ESP learners.

2.2.2 Benefits of Learning Strategies for ESP

Learning strategies bring in several benefits for EFL students who take part in ESP. Due to the demanding amount of information that students have to process in ESP classrooms, students use a variety of learning strategies to complete tasks and process new input. Additionally, learning strategies can help students to face up to emotional difficulties. They focus on making students more active by teaching them how to learn and use what they have learned to succeed.

The advantages of using learning strategies are indicated by many scholars. The production of learners with good communication skills is highly dependent on success in learning strategies. This statement is investigated by Oxford (1990), who claims that language learning strategies are tools for active self-directed movement, which is necessary for establishing communicative competence. Moreover, learning strategies are beneficial for learners' linking and memorizing information. Duncan and McKeachie's (2005) indicate that students who report using organization and elaboration strategies are abler to link information from different sources. Whereas Brown (2006) shows that learning strategies deal with the receptive domain of intake memory storage and recall. These researchers reveal that learning strategies significantly aid in students' acquisition of language skills. Furthermore, Jimenez's (2018) research indicates that learning strategies can be used by bad language learners trying to improve their proficiency. Learning strategies enable learners to achieve academic success if they are self-regulated,

self-motivated and self-directed. Besides, they help learners use the target language in different situations.

The aforementioned literature declares that learning strategies are beneficial for students in ESP classes. Learning strategies help students begin to comprehend the learning process, overcome their areas of weakness and perform at the level at which they are capable. Besides, learning strategies promote flexible thinking and help students shift their approaches to different tasks in ESP classes.

2.3 ESP for Political Education

One of the most critical aspects of ESP is that English is not taught as a separate topic from the students' everyday lives. It is a component of a subject matter field that is important to them. In other words, ESP for Political Education should be emphasized in students studying for graduate work in the political sciences program. For example, it encourages students who want to be ambassadors, leaders, or other public figures to improve their speaking skills. Based on the above explanation, it appears that ESP is goal-oriented because it is customized for individual students based on their academic and developmental needs.

2.3.1 ESP for Political Education at School of Political Sciences, Can Tho University

English has become a top priority for many communities in the world so learning this language would decrease the national barrier. In the Can Tho University context, English is being the center of attention for both students and teachers. They seek to learn the language to gain knowledge, read materials, and do research; as well as be efficient in communicative skills. Thus, students of CTU (exception for Department of English Teaching Methodology and Department of English Language and Culture) are required to complete English language courses specialized in their field.

At Can Tho University, School of Political Sciences has three majors which are *Politics, Citizenship Education, and Philosophy*. All three majors are required to take part in an ESP course which is namely Specialized English for Political Science. This subject is divided into two modules which are Specialized English for Political Education Course 1 (4 credits) and Specialized English for Political Education Course 2 (3 credits). The subject is assigned to use the curriculum "*English for Political Education*".

"English for Political Education" has been developed especially for students of non-English majors at School of Political Sciences. The material is designed to help students familiarize themselves with specialized materials of Political Education in English and develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each unit of the material has the following components:

- 1) Presentation: The presentation part help students comprehend the language and encourage them to practice communication exercises. The grammar structure is also introduced through context.
- 2) Practices: This part includes exercises in speaking, listening, reading, writing and grammar.

3) Skills development:

- Reading and Speaking: Each unit includes at least one reading text which is integrated with a variety of speaking activities. The texts are adopted from newspapers and documents related to the economic-political field.
- Listening and Speaking: pair work, group work, and whole class practice, share information and role play.
- Writing: Every unit suggests writing activities.
- Vocabulary: A wide range of parts of speech, and collocations are provided in an appropriate context.

4) Language review and translation: Every unit includes a check revision section and translation to help students reflect on their progress.

The content structure is designed as the following table:

Table 2.2: The content structure

Unit	Structure
Unit 1	The British Monarchy and Political System
Unit 2	History of American Constitution
Unit 3	Human Rights from Awareness to Action
Unit 4	UNICEF Appeals for Help
Unit 5	The Current State of the American Economy
Unit 6	World Child Hunger
Unit 7	A Visit to a Center for Blind and Orphan Children
Unit 8	The World Trade Organization
Unit 9	Women in Nuclear Family
Unit 10	World Illiteracy
Unit 11	Education Doesn't Happen Only in Schools
Unit 12	Civil Rights
Unit 13	National Independence in Ho Chi Minh Thoughts

Source: CTU's [Undergraduate Programs](#)

2.4 Perceptions

Schmidt (2002) defines perception as recognizing and understanding the event, object, and stimuli through senses including sight, hearing, touch, and so on. It can be assumed that perception is a process of observation of a particular situation or environment. It can be a mental image, concept, or awareness of the environment's elements through physical sensation or physical sensation interpreted in the light of experience and captivity for comprehension. Besides, Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Razavieh (2010) state that not only the senses and understanding, perception can be assessed by giving the indication of agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree, and also strongly disagree for a set of statements about something given to the respondents.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that perception is an act of observing particular situations with senses such as sight, hearing, touch, etc. to identify something around us and be able to relate to the surrounding environment.

2.4.1 Perceptions on English learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education

It is important to understand students' perception of how they learn because it may affect students' willingness to participate actively in their learning process (Cole, 1994).

Nevertheless, it is almost no article and documents related to student's perception on English learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education be found. Thus, this paper will be based on Oxford's classification of learning strategies and the material "English for Political Education", which is used by students of non-English majored at School of Political Sciences, Can Tho University to indicate the student's perceptions. Perceptions on English learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education should be examined by basing on six types of language learning strategies which are memorization strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Moreover, based on the material "English for Political Education", eight components should be considered:

- 1) Listening: Perceptions of using learning strategies to improve basic listening comprehension about political issues, education, social security, political organizations domestically and internationally.
- 2) Speaking: Perceptions of using learning strategies to support speaking skills about topics related to PE.
- 3) Reading: How students perceive their learning strategies in improving basic reading comprehension about political issues, education, social security, political organizations domestically and internationally.
- 4) Writing: Perceptions of writing short essays on PE topics by using learning strategies.
- 5) Vocabulary: Perceptions of using learning strategies on learning and applying vocabulary on Political Education topics.
- 6) Grammar: Perceptions of understanding and applying English basic grammar points by using learning strategies.
- 7) Presentation: How students perceive their learning strategies toward presenting basic issues about PE in English.
- 8) Translation: Perceptions of using learning strategies to support translation skills from English to Vietnamese and Vietnamese to English at a general level of specialized documents.

2.5 Practices

Practice, in general, is the building up of skill through repetition or repeated exposure. In language acquisition, each skill demands practice in order to achieve fluency in the sense of the smooth operation of psycholinguistic processes (Richards & Platt, 1992). In other words, practice is doing an activity or training regularly so that people can improve their skills. It can also refer to active actively engaging in an activity or application of knowledge or skill in order to achieve a desired result. In a broader sense, the practice also includes other activities related to the development of skills such as reading, studying, or performing research.

2.5.1 Practices in English learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education

Practices in English learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education can also be based on the theory of Oxford's classification and the material "English for Political Education" as perceptions. Practices in English learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education will be indicated via six types of language learning strategies which are memorization strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies along with eight components which are listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and translation.

- 1) Listening: Using learning strategies to practice listening comprehension about political issues, education, social security, and political organizations domestically and internationally.
- 2) Speaking: Using learning strategies to support communication skills about topics related to PE.
- 3) Reading: Practice reading comprehension about political issues, education, social security, political organizations domestically and internationally by using learning strategies.
- 4) Writing: Using learning strategies to support writing short essays on PE topics.
- 5) Vocabulary: How students use learning strategies to learn and apply vocabulary on Political Education topics.
- 6) Grammar: Using learning strategies to understand and apply English basic grammar points.
- 7) Presentation: Presenting basic issues about PE in English by using learning strategies
- 8) Translation: Using learning strategies to improve translation skills from English to Vietnamese and Vietnamese to English at a general level of specialized documents.

2.6 Relationship between perceptions and practices

Schmidt (2002) defines perception as recognizing and understanding the event, object, and stimuli through senses including sight, hearing, touch, and so on. In other words, perception refers to how individuals interpret and make sense of the world around them, including the learning process. Thus a person's willingness to practice deliberately and intently can be influenced by how they perceive their own abilities and the effectiveness of different practices. When individuals perceive their abilities in a positive light, they are more likely to engage in practice with enthusiasm and dedication. On the other hand, when they have negative perceptions of their abilities, they may be reluctant to practice or feel that practice is futile. In order to overcome negative perceptions, it is important to work on building a growth mindset, which involves recognizing that abilities can be developed through hard work and dedication. Whereas practice refers to a process of building up skill through repetition or repeated exposure (Richards & Platt, 1992). It plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' perceptions of their own abilities. As individuals engage in deliberate practice, they begin to develop a sense of mastery and confidence in their skills. This can lead to a positive feedback loop, in

which successful practice reinforces positive perceptions of one's abilities, further motivating continued practice.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research questions

The study was carried out with two main objectives corresponding to two following research questions.

- 1) To study EFL students' perceptions towards ESP for Political Education, the first question is formulated namely: How do EFL students perceive learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education?
- 2) To investigate students' practices toward their participation in ESP courses by using learning strategies, the second question is posed namely: To what extent do EFL students practice their learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education?

3.2 Research design

This study applied mix-method in order to not only examine how EFL students perceive their learning strategies but also to indicate how they practice their learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education.

To achieve the aims, this study applies a descriptive design. The descriptive design allowed the researcher to exhaustively understand the EFL students' perceptions and practice of using learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education.

The research includes quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative data from interviews. According to Cohen (2011), the quantitative research approach views human behaviour as an object that can be controlled, ignoring opinions and contributions. Whereas when the theory on the topic is little or rather complex, variables are almost not known, and require a lengthy explanation, using qualitative research methods can help define what needs to be studied (Leedy and Ormrod, 2014), as opposed to quantitative methods that rely on theory to produce data. However, in educational assessments, questionnaires and interviews are frequently used together (Brookhart & Durkin, 2003). The reason is questionnaires can provide evidence of patterns among large populations, whereas qualitative interview data often gather more in-depth insights into participant attitudes, thoughts, and actions (Kendall, 2008). Thus, the study used interviews and questionnaires as mixed methods. The questionnaire in this study is partially based on the classification of Oxford (1990) of language learning strategies and the curriculum "*English for Political Education*" (Lê Thúy Hằng & Trần Thị Bình, 2002). Ninety-six items are included in the questionnaire for students to measure the perception and practice of EFL students toward ESP for Political Education. The ninety-six-item questionnaire is designed bilingually which helps participants to make clear the questions and give appropriate answers. Besides, interviews are also possible tools to investigate students' perceptions and practice. Six interview questions are generated to

explore more data from students about their views on learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education. Concurrently, six interview questions are posed to probe for more information from teachers about their observations of students' perception and practice to ESP for Political Education.

3.3 Participants

The participants in the present study are students at School of Political Sciences, Can Tho University. They are majoring in *Politics, Civic Education, or Philosophy* and they currently participate in the module "Specialized English for Political Science Course 2". The subject "Specialized English for Political Sciences" has two modules which are used the same curriculum which is "English for Political Education". The module "Specialized English for Political Sciences Course 1" mentions Chapter 1 to Chapter 8 whereas the module "Specialized English for Political Science Course 2" discusses the rest chapters of the curriculum. Students are required to pass the module 1 before registering the module 2. Thus, the researcher selects students from the module 2 in order to ensure all the participants have an overview of the course and have perception and practice for the learning strategies for this ESP course. In this study, 183 EFL students from 5 classes are selected to participate in the survey using a questionnaire. At the same time, 15 students are randomly selected from 5 classes (3 students from 3 different majors for each class) in the survey questionnaire and 3 teachers are invited to answer 6 interview questions. All participants answered the questionnaire sincerely.

3.4 Research instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to investigate students' perceptions and practice on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. The questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale containing 96 items is used. There are 5 general questions and two sections included in the questionnaire. The first 5 questions are to know general information from the participants, section 1 is to study students' perceptions and section 2 is to explore students' practice through their learning strategies.

3.4.2 Interview

Alongside the questionnaire, the researcher uses interviews as an instrument for collecting data. The type of interview that is used in this research is a semi-structured interview because the researcher commits to in-depth interviews but it is more freely than structured interviews (Sugiyono, 2010). Thus, the researcher still prepares the questions but it is possible the researcher is not so attached to the prepared question. The duration is from 3 to 5 minutes for each participant.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1. Questionnaire

3.5.1.1. Pilot questionnaire

The pilot study is carried out prior to the implementation of the questionnaire for data analysis to assess if the questionnaire is appropriate for the students' level. The questionnaire is translated into Vietnamese by the researcher and then verified by the supervisor. For the pilot study, the questionnaires are handed to forty participants. Participants for the pilot research are invited randomly from those who are taking part in ESP for Political Education courses.

On the date of the questionnaire piloting, the researcher comes to one class to pilot the questionnaire. To ensure that the students clarified the study's objectives, the entire piloting procedure, including the objective statement, item description, and explanation, was conducted bilingually. To ensure that no questions are overlooked, participants are asked to fill out the questionnaire item by item.

3.5.1.2 Administration

Following the pilot research, the number of items on the official questionnaire is decided. The questionnaire has two research purposes: first, it studies the extent to how do EFL students perceive learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education, and second, to what extent do EFL students practice their learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. The questionnaires are distributed in the middle of the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024 at the School of Political Sciences, Can Tho University. With permissions given by School of Foreign Languages and School of Political Sciences, the researchers come to each class to ask for their participation, and the questionnaires are completed after class time.

As is done in the pilot study, the researcher explains the study's aims to the participants and invites them to fill out the bilingual version of the questionnaire. It takes the participant approximately 15 minutes on average to complete the questions. They are required to review their answers for omitted items ahead of the submission. Totally, 101 questionnaires (including questions about participants' general information) are distributed and returned. There is no missing or incomplete questionnaire.

3.5.2 Interview

3.5.2.1 Pilot interview

Before interviewing the fifteen participants, the interview questions are piloted in the hopes of making some significant modifications for a better outcome from the interviews. The expectations of the pilot interview are to determine the format of the interview, look for ambiguity or bias in the questions, and get some understanding of the interview processes for the researcher.

The samples of participants consisted of six students who are chosen from among the questionnaire respondents. It is one-by-one face-to-face interviews which are asked and answered in English. The respondents are studying "Specialized English for Political

Education Course 2" this semester, hence, it would be easy for the researcher to have direct interactions. The questions are clear enough to the respondents. However, there is only a pilot for students, not a pilot for teachers, since the researcher finds that it is not feasible to approach teachers and ask for their participation in the pilot study because they are busy and can only be interviewed once.

3.5.2.1 Administration

The researchers sent participants (including students and teachers) before interviewing days. After completing the surveys, the researcher interviewed both students and teachers. The researcher interviewed each student and each teacher interviewee directly in each separate interview. There is one teacher who cannot come to the interview due to his/her personal reasons. Thus, the researcher interviews the teacher via telephone interaction. The participants are assured that their responses will be kept confidential and employed solely for the study beforehand to reduce the fear of exposing their personal opinions. The interviewees' real names are encoded before being employed. Finally, the recorded and written data are validated by the supervisor to guarantee the reliability of the data before conducting data analysis.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Questionnaire

The quantitative data about students' extent of involvement and perceptions obtained from the questionnaire are coded and analysed, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Firstly, the researcher runs a reliability analysis test for each cluster of each part and for the whole questionnaire, following the generally accepted rule that reliability above 0.6 demonstrates an appropriate level. Subsequently, the frequency procedure is run to statistically identify the number of students in Cohorts (years), Majors (fields of study) and Groups (classes).

The descriptive statistic is run to measure the perception and practice of EFL students on language learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education. Then, the cross-tab analysis is run and interpreted to determine the relationship between perception and practice through a chi-square test. The significant level for the chi-square test is .05. If the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level, the researchers reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the variables. Meanwhile, if the p-value is larger than .05, the researchers fail to reject the null hypothesis because there is not enough evidence to conclude that the variables are associated (Bryman, 2012).

3.6.2 Interview

Qualitative data presented a detailed understanding of students' perspectives and practice and teachers' observations regarding students' engagement in "Specialized English for Political Sciences 2". The researcher transcribes the interview data which are then verified by the supervisor. The researcher carries out two stages of processing the

interview data such as classifying the responses and analysing those classified responses. First, the responses of the interviewees are classified as similar perceptions, practice or observations. Following that, the categorized responses are analysed. The responses are interpreted in order to illuminate the interviewees' meanings and implications.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Results from quantitative data

To study how do EFL students perceive learning strategies and to investigate to what extent do EFL students practice their learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education, 101 items for students are employed in this present study. The students' responses to two research objectives are gathered and then coded for data analysis. Ninety-six items are coded for data analysis.

Table 4.1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.971	96

The reliability of the questionnaire is computed. The output indicates that the reliability coefficient for the ninety-six items in section 1 and section 2 is relatively high ($\alpha = .971$), which is over an acceptable standard.

4.1.1 Frequencies

The frequency procedure calculates that 40 students in Cohort 45, accounting for 21.4%, and 147 students in Cohort 46, accounting for 78% among 187 students who take part in the survey. The frequency statistics also describe that 38% of the surveyed students major in Politics, 57 (30.5%) students major in Citizenship Education and 59 students major in Philosophy, accounting for 31.6%. Whereas, the number of students who are in group 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of the class "Specialized English for Political Education" make up 16%, 21.9%, 21.9%, 23%, 17.1%, respectively.

4.1.2 Perceptions of EFL students on learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education

Table 4.2: Overall mean of student's perceptions on learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Student's perceptions	187	3	5	4.08	.409

The students' perception of learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education is researched in forty-eight items. The overall mean scores demonstrate the fact that the participants have a positive perception of learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .409$).

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of student's perception toward each learning strategies

Items	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Memorization strategies	187	2	5	4.08	.511
Cognitive strategies	187	2	5	4.09	.527
Compensation strategies	187	2	5	3.98	.511
Metacognitive strategies	187	2	5	4.10	.487
Affective strategies	187	2	5	4.09	.512
Social strategies	187	3	5	4.13	.474

As can be seen in Table 2, six learning strategies including memorization strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies record high levels. The examination of data in Table 3 reveals several noteworthy points. First, taking into account the positive responses shown by participants towards using all strategies, it appears that these learners seemed to have a certain degree of awareness related to the use of the language learning strategies. Second, since the results reveal that the social strategies receive more awareness than other strategies (M = 4.13, SD = .474), it can safely be assumed that the participants are mentally conscious of asking questions, cooperating with others and emphasizing with others. Third, although compensation strategies score the lowest mean among the six learning strategies (M = 3.98, SD = .511), it does not mean the strategies are not preferred in language learning processes.

4.1.3 Practices of EFL students on learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education

Table 4.4: Overall mean of students' practices on learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Students' practices	187	3	6	4.85	.554

The students' practice in learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education is also researched in forty-eight items. The overall mean scores demonstrate that students frequently use different learning strategies for their learning process toward ESP for Political Education (M = 4.85, SD = .554).

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics of students' practices toward each learning strategies

Items	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Memorization strategies	187	2	5	3.95	.571
Cognitive strategies	187	2	5	4.11	.526
Compensation strategies	187	2	5	4.03	.501
Metacognitive strategies	187	3	5	4.05	.558
Affective strategies	187	2	5	4.05	.549
Social strategies	187	2	5	4.09	.559

It can be seen in Table 5 some outstanding points. Firstly, positive responses are shown by participants towards using all strategies. This means that learners are practice

different language learning strategies. Secondly, cognitive strategies are used more frequently than other strategies ($M=4.11$, $SD=.526$), it is provable to claim that the participants are aware of interacting with the material to be learned by manipulating it mentally such as reasoning, analyzing, and summarizing. Thirdly, memorization strategies, such as creating mental linkages, applying images and sound, reviewing, and employing actions are less useful than other strategies to gain academic pursuit ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .571$), despite the fact that these learning strategies are expected at a high level. The result has strengthened a survey done by Jiang (2000) that EFL students used fewer memorization strategies when learning foreign languages.

4.1.4 Cross-tabulation

The cross-tabulation is run to recognize the relations between perception and the practice from which the researchers could identify whether perception affects perception. There are two subjects that are focused on in this study: Perception and Practice.

4.1.5 Chi-square

The relationship between perception and practice is analysed via chi-square test. According to Bryman (2012), if the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level, which is .05, the researchers reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the variables. To put it differently, when the chi-square is less than .05, it can be confident in concluding that there is an association between practice and perception. In other words, student's practice is depended on student's perception. As the chi-square increases above .05 the likelihood is that there is no relationship between the two subjects.

4.2 Results from qualitative data

After gathering data from the questionnaire, fifteen sample respondents are contacted to take part in the interviews. The interviews are developed to capture more details about the participants' perception and practice on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. The main questions focus on the deeper consideration of how they perceive the role of learning strategies and which learning strategies they mostly use in ESP courses, especially when applying to the curriculum "English for Political Education".

The responses reveal that almost all of the participants have positive perceptions of learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. They consider learning strategies as an important and necessary key during their learning process in ESP courses.

In fact, only having a positive perception is not adequate to contribute to the success of ESP for Political Education course, the active participation of students should also be under consideration. The researcher exposes teachers' interviews in order to understand more about students' practice in learning strategies under their observation. Unintentionally, the interviews detect student's difficulties via student and teacher's responses. In addition, thanks to the teachers, suggestions for the course also are investigated accidentally.

4.2.1 Students' perceptions and practices on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education

4.2.1.1 General opinion

The qualitative data from interviews with students were used to reaffirm the quantitative data of students' opinions on their language learning strategies in ESP for Political Education. All of the participants had a positive perception of language learning strategies in ESP for Political Education. Student 3 expressed that,

"I think that learners should have specific and suitable learning strategies for themselves to achieve high results in learning."

Or Student 9 said,

"I actually very much enjoyed trying different learning strategies, because it gives me a chance to discover interesting learning methods which can help me learn better."

And the response from Student 2 was,

"In my opinion, having appropriate learning strategies is very important because it can affect our learning results."

4.2.1.2 The necessity of language learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education

Participants perceived the necessity of language learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education. All the participants replied that learning strategies were essential for the learning process. Most of the responses from participants were covered in Student 1's answer,

"In the current context, English is gradually playing a very important role in most areas of social life. Participating in the ESP course for Political Education is contributing to help students gain new sources of knowledge, and at the same time, creating conditions for students to get closer to intensive English, which can be useful for their future work. Because of the importance of the ESP for Political Education, it is also essential to have appropriate and effective learning strategies. The reason is that learning strategies will make it easier for learners to grasp the lesson and help learners become more confident."

Specifically, eleven students pointed out that learning strategies were necessary due to the benefits of having learning strategies for ESP for Political Education. For instance, five out of the participants indicated that learning strategies elevated their academic results. As Student 7 flashed,

"I am not good at learning vocabulary. Then my friend introduced me memorization strategies. I employed it, I learned vocabulary through flashcards. As good news, my

vocabulary has expanded. I got pretty good results in the previous module. That is why I believe using learning strategies is essential."

Or Student 10 stood out,

"For me, having learning strategies for the learning process is extremely necessary because I understand lessons easier than when I do not have a clear learning strategy orientation. Thus, I could get high scores easier."

In addition to improving learning effectiveness, three out of fifteen interviewees confirmed that learning strategies aided them in creating creativity learning process. As Student 13 claimed,

"I think learning strategies are essential to help students enhance more creativity in learning. I learn vocabulary and grammar by applying it to stories. Thus my creative ability improves significantly."

Student 4 added the evidence,

"I am a creative person. I cannot learn by traditional methods such as writing, then trying to learn by heart. Thus without learning strategies, I am not excited about learning ESP. I learn through group discussions and peer feedback. It allows me to see problems from different perspectives, which can lead to new insights and ideas."

Three other different interviewees noticed the importance of learning strategies in ESP for Political Education. They claimed that students are more excited if they had appropriate learning strategies. Student 15 answered,

"I think that learning strategies directly affect our learning outcomes. Having effective learning strategies will reduce our pressure, increase interest as well as improve learning performance."

And Student 11 responded,

"I think it is very important to have appropriate learning strategies. Because ESP for Political Education gives students lots of specialized vocabulary for political education, which can make students feel bored. Having appropriate learning strategies such as watching videos helps students feel more excited about the lessons."

In short, it can be concluded that the participants have a positive attitude toward learning strategies for ESP for Political Education. Students examine that learning strategies are important and necessary factors that help them learn effectively in learning.

Learning strategies not only support interviewees to elevate learning outcomes but also help them reduce stress, increase interest in learning and create creativity. From what is presented earlier, the researcher observe that students' perception of learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education is thoroughly high.

4.2.1.3 The learning strategies employed in learning English skills toward ESP for Political Education

The researcher asked students to indicate which language learning strategies they frequently used for each specific skills when learning ESP for Political Education.

a. Strategies employed in Listening skills

Participants employed English listening in ESP for Political Education via some learning strategies. Seven out of fifteen interviewees confirmed that they used cognitive strategies to employ listening skills. Student 2 conceded that he/she prefers to find the meaning of vocabulary in listening material,

"I choose to find the meaning of the words in listening exercises as learning strategies for listening skill. I can understand faster and get better results in ESP for Political Education courses."

While Student 10 preferred to find the main ideas of the topic,

"I look for the main ideas. Because when I know the main ideas, I can think of some related words for the listening exercise."

Student 13 responded that he/she took notes while listening,

"I usually take notes whiles listening. It helps me focus on the listening exercise easier."

In addition, six out of fifteen participants used metacognitive strategies for improving listening skill. Student 5 concedes that he/she takes detailed notes of their listening activities to enhance their listening skill:

"To employ listening skill, I make some easy steps such as scheduling, repeating the vocabulary, and evaluating them after I finished learning..."

Similarly, Student 3 self-evaluated listening materials while Student 9 took notes. Student 3 expressed,

"I often evaluate listening exercises such as my good points, parts that I should pay more attention, etc."

Student 9 said,

"I write detailed notes for listening exercises. This makes it easier for me to review the lesson, grasp the important points, and evaluate my ability."

Besides, two out of fifteen participants conceded that they used social strategies in learning listening skill. For instance, Student 1 answered,

"I ask my teacher and my friends if I do not understand some points in the listening exercise."

However, almost all the participants reported that they devoted very short time to strengthening their listening skill. They confirmed that they did not have enough time or they were quite lazy to practice listening. For example, Student 5 also explained,

"...I believe that having a plan for employing listening skill is an ideal way to improve it. However, to be honest, I do not have enough time to do all the steps because I have too much deadlines."

Or Student 6 expressed he/she used metacognitive strategies to employ listening but not often,

"I think learners can improve their listening skill by repeating listening materials many times. I sometimes do it, but not often. Practice listening needs lots of time, but I am a bit lazy."

As the general opinions given above, students perceive or practice listening by using different strategies such as metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies. However, they also claim that they do not spend much time practicing listening skill. It can be explained that listening is not an easy skill. It requires learners to devote a much amount of time. Thus, many students may feel discouraged when spending time but not receiving good results. It leads to the statement that they do not want to spend more time in listening.

b. Strategies employed in Reading skills

From the participants' responses, the researcher revealed that they approached reading skill by using cognitive strategies, compensation strategies and social strategies. Nine out of fifteen interviewees responded that they employed reading skill through cognitive strategies. Student 7 flashed his experience of learning strategies as,

"I try to look for the main idea for the reading text before I read it in more detail."

In the same vein, Student 11 mentioned the strategies that he/she employed as,

"I often skim and scan the text before I read a text. It helps me understand the text and context."

Or Student 8 shared that he/she found the meaning of complex vocabulary after skimming and scanning,

"I skim and scan the text first to get the main ideas. Then I find the meaning of complex vocabulary, especially specialized words of Political Education."

Besides, two students confirmed they applied compensation strategies. Student 12 expressed,

"To be honest, when I meet some unknown words, I just ignore them and continue to read the text."

Four participants shared that they used social strategies to improve their reading skill. They had the same lines as Student 14 did,

"I read a text with my friends. We can talk about it and share what we understand about the text."

Or Student 3 flashed,

"I employ reading skill via lecturer's explanation. He explains the context, structures, main ideas as well as new vocabulary. I understand it better than when I do it by myself."

Reading skill requires learners to use different learning strategies even in a single text. As Griffiths (2008) explains, the learner chooses activities comfortable for them for the purpose of regulating their own language learning as per their capabilities.

c. Strategies employed in Speaking skills

The data revealed that the participants mostly employed affective, compensation, and cognitive strategies in speaking skill. The participants said that speaking in English, especially about Political Education topics was a great challenge for them. However, they employed various strategies to make their speaking skill better. Sharing learning strategy experience in developing speaking skill, four out of fifteen participants explained that affective strategies were an ideal choice for employing speaking skill. Student 7 expressed,

"I try to encourage myself to be confident before I talk about a topic. Then I just talk, do not worry about any mistakes"

In the same vein, Student 2 conceded that:

"I frequently practice speaking about a specific topic to create confidence. When I am confident, I can perform it better."

Meanwhile, eight students indicated that they used compensation strategies to deal with difficulties in speaking. As Student 1 flashed,

"When I want to express my ideas but do not know some words, I will replace it by synonym words..."

Or Student 8 claimed,

"I usually use facial expressions and hand signals when speaking about PE topics. It helps me reduce nervousness and express my ideas better."

Three other participants claimed that they applied social and compensation strategies by translating their ideas into their native language and needs help from teachers. Student 6 confirmed,

"If I cannot express my ideas in English, I will speak in Vietnamese. Then my teachers will support me and teach me how to say these words or these sentences in English."

These accounts express that learners employ speaking in ESP for Political Education by using several learning strategies. Their sharing relates Coffield's (2004) claimed that if learners integrate different learning styles, they will feel better and more comfortable while speaking in English.

d. Strategies employed in Writing skills

In the study, the participants were asked how they get mastery over various writing topics. They agreed that social strategies, cognitive strategies, and affective strategies helped them overcome difficulties in writing skills. Nine out of the interviewees said that they employed writing skill via social strategies. Sharing the strategies for improving writing skill, Student 4 expressed,

"I learn writing skills through pair work and group work in which I worked with my friends. One of us gives a topic and others think about ideas in that given situation."

In the same backdrop, Student 10 and Student 3 added that teachers helped them employ in writing skill. As Student 3 answered,

"Thanks to my lecturer, my writing skills are improved significantly. He points out my incorrect grammar and suggests outstanding ideas."

Meanwhile, four students flashed that they used cognitive strategies. They analyzed writing topics before writing. Most of the responses from participants were covered in Student 15's answer,

"I analyze the topic before writing. I map out my ideas, then I organize them logically. After I finish, I start writing."

Two out of fifteen participants answer that they employed writing by affective strategies. Student 1 responded,

"I try to make myself comfortable before writing. For example, I will drink a glass of water or listen to a song, etc"

From the previous expression, it is obvious to see that social strategies and compensation strategies are the most popular strategies that interviewees frequently use for writing skill.

e. Strategies employed in Presentation skills

The data revealed that most of the participants used the same strategies as in speaking skill. They mostly employed affective strategies and cognitive strategies. Moreover, metacognitive strategies and social strategies were employed in this skill.

Three out of fifteen participants used affective strategies for presentation skill. For example, Student 14 explained,

"I encourage myself to be confident before presenting. I try to think positive things like "I can do it" or "I just share my points to my friends and lecture. Do not worry!". It helps me feel better."

In the same vein, Student 2 conceded that if he/she was confident, he/she could perform better,

"I frequently practice presentation to create confidence. I map out ideas, practice it several times until I feel ready to present. When I am confident, I can perform it better."

Meanwhile, social strategies are popular with seven other students. Student 4 indicated:

"I often need help from my friends. They watch my rehearsal, record my performance and point out my strengths and weaknesses. Many thanks to them."

Or Student 11 conceded that lecturers and friends helped he/she with presentation,

"Lecturers and friends help me a lot in presentation. They give me feedback, point out my strengths and weaknesses. Thanks to their help, my presentation skill is increased."

Four out of fifteen interviewees added that they used cognitive strategies for both speaking and presentation skills. As Student 9 also confirmed,

"I also map out ideas as speaking skills. In a presentation, I believe mapping out ideas is much more important. We should organize our presentation in logical structures."

One student used metacognitive strategies in improving presentation. Student 13 indicated,

"For presentation, I keep in track of presentation habits. I want to be an MC. Thus, I spend more time on practicing presentations. I practice it every day, record it, watch it over and over, then I note my weaknesses and strengths and find the way to improve it."

As the general opinions given above, students perceive or practice presentation by using different kinds of strategies such as cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies and social strategies. Specifically, most of the participants are in favour of social strategies such as asking questions, cooperating with others and emphasizing with others.

f. Strategies employed in learning vocabulary

The participants responded that vocabulary was the core of the language. Wilkins (1972) writes that *"... while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed"*. Realizing this fact, they employed various strategies to help them learn vocabulary. Five participants use memorization strategies in learning vocabulary. Student 13 conceded,

"I order words according to their meaning, part of speech, or topic. Each topic in the curriculum provides us with different vocabulary. For example, unit 12 is about Civil Rights. Therefore, categorizing it into topics helps me follow it easier."

Or Student 15 responded,

"I use words in sentences. It helps me memorize it better."

Two out of fifteen participants used cognitive strategies in learning vocabulary. Student 3 pointed out,

"...Now, I prefer using flashcards to learn vocabulary. It is convenient. I can bring it everywhere."

Especially, students frequently mixed and matched different strategies to support them in learning vocabulary. In this context, five out of a total often used memorization strategies and social strategies to learn vocabulary, Student 10 stated,

"I make a list of words and use them in sentences or stories to memorize them. When there are some uncertain words, I will ask my friends or my lecturer because it is quite hard to find the meaning of some English words about Political Education on Internet."

In the same vein, three other interviewees stated that they learned vocabulary by mixing cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies. Student 7 commented,

"I make a plan before learning anything, including vocabulary such as when I learn vocabulary and how I learn them. For vocabulary, I often make mind-map because our curriculum is divided into units."

Student 15 further added as,

"I listen to many resources like movies, songs, news, etc. I listen to the words and guess the contextual meaning of these words. Sometimes, I talk to my friends to get the appropriate meaning."

The above-mentioned discourses reveal that besides using a kind of strategies, participants use and mix many strategies such as cognitive strategies, memorization strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies, etc to learn English vocabulary about Political Education. This gives a sense that no single strategy is enough and complete in learning vocabulary in English language. It is the same line as Kalati's (2016), she claims that language can be learned employed a combination of various techniques.

g. Strategies employed in learning English grammar

The interviewees felt difficulty in learning grammatical rules and their uses in English language; thus, they employed social, cognitive, compensation, and metacognitive strategies to deal with grammar in English.

Five out of the participants mixed and matched learning strategies when learning grammar. Student 6 shared the strategies for learning grammar as,

"When I learn the core rule of grammar, I try to analyze examples to understand and memorize the rules of grammar. Besides, I often ask my lecturer to look and receive feedback which made me feel a bit confident in learning English grammar."

And Student 8 used cognitive strategies and memorization strategies as,

"I often analyse the examples. Moreover, I also contextualize grammar structures to memorize it better."

Three participants used social strategies and cognitive strategies. They confirmed that they learned grammar through the lecturer's explanation. Student 11 flashed,

"I listen to the lecturer's lessons. If I do not understand, I will ask my lecturer or my friends."

Three out of fifteen participants conceded that they used compensation strategies in learning grammar. As Student 1 expressed,

"When I meet some uncertain answers in grammar exercises, I will skip it. Then I do other questions. Sometimes, I can meet some similar structures. Luckily, I can back to that questions and do it."

Meanwhile, four participants felt comfort in metacognitive strategies. Student 5 flashed,

"I think it is better to have a plan when learning grammar. When I was in high school, I spent more time learning English grammar than other skills. The effective way that I used was having a plan, like which days or how many hours a day I would learn grammar, or which structures that I would learn, etc."

It is obvious to see that students do not shift from one to another or mix various strategies to learn the grammatical structure as they do in learning vocabulary. However, there are still many different strategies used depending on each interviewees' preference.

h. Strategies employed in Translation techniques

The interviewees responded that they employed cognitive and social strategies to deal with translation techniques. Eight participants used social strategies. It was covered by Student 5's response,

"I often translate documents with my friends. It is quite difficult to translate a document by myself. I have Political Education knowledge, but I am not good at English. Therefore, I am not confident with my translation skills"

Three out of fifteen students used cognitive strategies. They used applications and websites to support them. As Student 13 examined that,

"I use synonym words when translating. Besides, when I cannot translate some words or some phrases in a specific place of a paragraph, I will express it at another point, but also in that paragraph."

Four interviewees combined social strategies and memorization strategies by finding help from friends and teachers and reviewing the edited documents. Student 8 explained,

"I just translate it. Then I will ask my friends and lecturers to help me read and edit it. After that, I will review it several times."

From the aforementioned discourses, it is revealed that learners feel difficulty in translation skill. However, they use quite a few strategies to help them. It may be explained that they put less effort and time devoted to translation skills than other English skills. This is understandable because their majors are not related to English language. Besides, according to the program distribution and the curriculum, the translation section seems to take up less time than other skills.

In conclusion, throughout the students' interviews, the researcher notices four outstanding points. Firstly, all participants have high perception and practice in learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education. Secondly, depending on individual needs and preferences, learning strategies will be selected. It has the same line with Griffiths' (2008), who claims that learners select comfortable activities to control their own language acquisition in accordance with their abilities. Thirdly, combining different types of strategies can lead to better learning outcomes. English can be employed by the combination of various strategies (Kalati, 2016). Finally, the participants do not put much effort and time into some skills. The reasons may be related to distribution and curriculum. At the same time, the researcher accidentally reveals that students encounter some difficulties with learning strategies. The next part will show more clearly.

4.2.1.3.1 Student' difficulties in ESP course for Political Education towards the learning strategies

These are unintentional findings. After processing and reviewing the interview data, the researcher finds that the students have many difficulties in applying the learning strategies.

a. Memorization strategies

Lack of motivation is the main difficulty for students. Two students pointed out that they could not use memorization for a long time because they did not have the motivation to memorize new words. Student 3 explained in employing vocabulary that he/she did not

use memorization in learning strategies because they could not motivate him/her in learning,

"I used to categorize words to learn. However, I am not actually motivated to learn or remember specialized words of Political Education, I am less likely to put in the required effort and time required to memorize them. Thus, I try to use other learning strategies, which helps me feel interesting..."

b. Cognitive strategies

One student revealed difficulties in using cognitive strategies. He/she had a hard time with planning. In fact, many cognitive strategies require planning and organization, which can be challenging for students who struggle with executive functioning skills. Student 5 responded that he/she faced difficulty when using cognitive strategies in Presentation skills,

"I often map out ideas before the presentation. But it is quite hard, I do not know how to plan and organize it in a logical way."

c. Compensation strategies

In fact, compensation strategies often require additional resources or accommodations. Thus two out of fifteen students expressed that they could not use compensation strategies frequently. As was covered by Student 1's answer, who used compensation strategies in Speaking skills,

"...However, I do not use it very often. I could not find many synonyms words for specialized words of Political Education."

d. Metacognitive strategies

Three out of the total revealed in their answers that they have difficulties with self-reflection. Student 13 responded in Presentation skills as,

"...I used to have a hard time with this strategy. I cannot self-reflect. But after a persistent time, I overcome it. I realize that it is truly my ideal learning strategy."

Or Student 3 reflected in Listening skills as,

"However, sometimes this strategy also causes me some difficulties. For example, if I get too many questions wrong, or if the mistakes I get in each exercise are nearly the same, I will not be able to evaluate myself."

e. Social strategies

One student claims that he/she less used social strategies although he/she knew that they were effective strategies due to shyness and social anxiety. Student 10 flashed when answering about learning strategies used for learning grammar,

"...To be honest, I reveal that I make progress when discussing with my friends. However, I less use this strategy. I am not good at communicating. I feel uncomfortable or anxious about interacting with others."

From the aforementioned above, there are three important points. Firstly, the discovery of students' difficulties is coincidental because it is not the main purpose of the research. Secondly, based on the students' interview results, it can see that EFL students are facing many difficulties in practicing learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education. Finally, because of this accident, not all strategies are found the difficult points. Nevertheless, that does not mean that students do not have any difficulties with these strategies.

4.2.2 Teachers' observations

4.2.2.1 General observations

All three teachers expressed that it was necessary to have learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education. Teacher 1 explained that learning strategies could help students use language correctly in different situations and build confidence which leads to better communication skill,

"Political language is highly specific, and learners need to learn how to use it in a natural and effective way. Having learning strategies can help students to use language and terminology correctly and appropriately in different situations, and with different audiences. They can also help students to build confidence in using the language, leading to better communication skills and improved performance."

Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 had the same lines that learning strategies affect student's emotions. They could increase joy and excitement and positive emotion for students. Teacher 2 commented,

"For learning strategies, especially in ESP for Political Education, I think it's very important and necessary. Because when students know which strategies are appropriate and necessary for themselves, they will learn more positively and excitedly in an effective way."

Based on their observation, Teachers also indicate the reality about practice of EFL students on learning strategies. Besides, they flash some student's difficulties as well as some suggestions for ESP for Political Education Course.

4.2.2.2 Students' practices on learning strategies under teachers' observations

Teachers made clear that students put their efforts into their learning strategies. Under their observation, students used various learning strategies to support their learning process. Teacher 3 explained that students frequently used memorization strategies and compensation strategies for learning,

"EFL students in ESP for Political Education courses make an effort in using various learning strategies to support their learning. From what I observe, memorization strategies and cognitive strategies are frequently used. Students memorize new vocabulary, grammar, or sentence structures quite well. Moreover, they are also flexible in using methods to support them when facing difficulties. For example, students often use hand gestures, facial expression in speaking skills, which help them express ideas clearly and confidently."

Teacher 2 added that besides memorization and cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies were also favourable choices for many students,

"They often use memorization and compensation strategies, of course. Besides, students frequently use metacognitive strategies. They pay attention to my explanation and other student's performance. I am so pleased about it because I know that they are interested in the lessons and excited about Political Education knowledge."

Meanwhile, Teacher 1 claimed that students might have used many other learning strategies that we do not realized, social strategies, as an example,

"I believe they use various strategies to learn English for Political Education. I see their efforts. For example, at break time, they also take advantage of learning vocabulary or review lessons. They often share and learn with friends. They also ask me about sentence structure, vocabulary."

Teachers are appreciating students' efforts. They observe that they use various learning strategies to support for their learning progress. However, as teacher's sharing, it seems that students are facing many difficulties. This point will be introduced in the next part accidentally.

4.2.2.2.1 Implementation of students' difficulties

Although the questions asking about student's difficulties did not include in the interview questions, Teachers shared the students' difficulties voluntarily with the hope that via this research, some suggestions could be mentioned to help EFL students overcome difficulties and improve the quality of the ESP for Political Education courses at Can Tho University.

Different from difficulties in using learning strategies as students' responses, teachers analyzed student's difficulties and reasons for them. Teachers did not think that the students were having a hard time using the strategies. From their observation, they used learning strategies quite flexibly. On the contrary, they had difficulties because of a number of reasons that perhaps only as a teacher, they could observe.

With respect to the qualitative data garnered from interviews, it was revealed that all three ESP teachers stated that their students had difficulties in learning vocabulary, they could not understand accurately the meaning of the unknown words. The reason was that their English foundation was not substantial enough to understand the content of ESP reading texts. For example, Teacher 3 explained,

"Students understand the issues related to Political Education, but some of them do not have a firm foundation of knowledge in English. That leads to uneven level in the class. Listening and writing skills are the most difficult for students, because they have little practice when they were still in high school, which makes them astonished when participating in the ESP for Political Education course."

In the same vein, Teacher 1 flashed that due to their weak English foundation, they had hard time with learning strategies,

"The most difficult thing in students is that their foundation is quite weak. For speaking and presentation skills, they are trained in class. For grammar or reading skills, they have all come into contact with them when they were in high school. However, to improve listening skills, they need a very long process with much efforts. A few ESP courses are not enough to support them. They have basic knowledge in English, but not enough. To attend the ESP for Political Education, they have to put efforts than that. However, in general, I recognize their efforts. They are ready to learn as. They use many strategies such as memorization or social strategies for academic pursuits."

Teacher 2 also agreed with the other two teachers. Teacher 2 supported that students also get difficulty in vocabulary and translation skills because the curriculum contained too many new words and information,

"According to my observation, students actually use various methods as well as strategies to support their study. However, they still get into troubles. Vocabulary and translation are two skills that students face many difficulties. Normally, mastering English vocabulary is not easy, whereas learning specialized English vocabulary is even more difficult. Moreover, translation skill is not easy to overcome. Translation requires learners to have enough English knowledge of reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar as well as enough specialized knowledge of Political Education. For example, in the curriculum "English for Political Education", students have the hardest time from

unit 7 to unit 12. Vocabulary is multiple and difficult, and students also rarely encounter these Political Education topic."

Thus, all teachers acknowledge students' efforts. They recognize that students use many learning strategies in the learning process. However, they are facing many difficult things. The reason for the difficulties is their English foundation and the inappropriate curriculum. In addition, students have not had much exposure to English. These reasons lead to the difference in level and difficulty in learning ESP for Political Education.

4.2.2.2 Teachers' suggestions

The qualitative data from interviews with teachers showed that students faced many difficulties in ESP for Political Education. Hence, Teachers suggested some ways in order to help students overcome such difficulties and elevate the quality of ESP for Political Education courses.

Teacher 1 assumed that it was necessary to recompile the curriculum and separate 3 ESP courses for each major,

"I think the immediate need is to recompile the curriculum because, with the current level, this curriculum cannot support them much. Next, it is necessary to separate 3 ESP courses for three majors in Politics, Citizenship Education, and Philosophy. About students, they need to make more efforts, find appropriate learning strategies, to support their basic and specialized English learning."

In the same vein, Teacher 3 claimed that recompiling the curriculum is important. Besides, students should put more effort into their learning in ESP for Political Education courses,

"In the immediate future, recompiling the curriculum is important. It should be focused on the parts that really matter to students. Because with some ESP courses but give them too much knowledge, they cannot absorb it all. At the same time, reclassifying the lesson level from easy to difficult is necessary. Currently, the units in the curriculum are not evenly divided. In addition, I believe that students should put more effort into class. An effective curriculum should go with effort students."

On the other hand, Teacher 2 suggested that students should be required to complete Basic English course or have B1 in English (Vietnamese English standards) before taking part in ESP courses,

"It is imperative that students complete the basic English course or have a B1 level to participate in the ESP courses. The ESP for Political Education course is at higher level than Basic English course. They contain specialized vocabulary, new structures as well

as knowledge about Political Education. Thus, having a prior knowledge of English will bring advantages for them to join in ESP course."

In conclusion, in order to elevate the quality of ESP for Political Education courses, it is important to recompile the curriculum, separate three ESP courses for three majors, and stipulate certain conditions before taking part in ESP courses. In addition, students should devote more time and effort to learning.

4.3. Discussions

4.3.1 Students' perceptions on learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education

One of the major aims of this study is to determine students' perception of learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education. From the short review above, key findings indicate that students have a positive perception of learning strategies ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .409$). Among six (6) language learning strategies in this current study, social strategies receive higher fondness than other strategies ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .474$). In other words, students are mentally conscious of asking questions, cooperating with others and emphasizing with others. It has the same vein as Hardan (2013), who examines that social strategies are one of the best strategies in language learning. Although other strategies score lower mean than social strategies, it does not mean that these strategies are not preferred in language learning processes. From the statistic above, the mean of all learning strategies is at a high level ($M > 3.9$, $SD > .480$). In addition to the data from questionnaires, analysis of students' interviews is in the consistency that students all had a positive attitude toward learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education.

A number of students reveal that learning strategies are necessary. Moreover, they could get benefit from these learning strategies. The students recognize the significance of learning strategies as crucial components that aid in effective learning. These strategies not only assist the participants in achieving better learning outcomes but also have the potential to reduce stress, increase motivation, and foster creativity. Based on earlier observations, the researcher notes that the students hold an overwhelmingly positive opinion regarding the role of learning strategies in English for Specific Purposes learning with a focus on Political Education. It has the same vein as Brown (2006), who demonstrates how learning strategies significantly assist students in developing their language skills. This is due to the fact that learning strategies deal with the receptive domain of intake memory storage and recall.

Furthermore, as additional reasons for why students have positive perceptions of learning strategies, teachers highlight their significance of them. According to the teachers, in the ESP context, learning strategies play a crucial role in enhancing the students' confidence in using the language, resulting in better communication skills and overall performance. Additionally, when students are aware of the strategies that are suitable and essential for their individual needs, they tend to be more enthusiastic and learn more effectively.

In conclusion, all participants have a positive perception of learning strategies because of their importance, necessity as well as benefits for the ESP for Political Education course.

4.3.2 Students' practices on learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education

An investigation of students' practice of learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education is conducted in section 2 of the questionnaire. After examining the aforementioned findings, it can be concluded that all six types of language learning strategies are utilized by the participants to learn the target language ($M = 4.85$, $SD = .554$). This aligns with previous studies which suggest that there is a strong correlation between English proficiency and the type of strategies employed by learners. Further research has revealed that students who perform well in language have reported using a wider range of strategies and frequently use multiple strategy categories (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Green & Oxford, 1995; Jiang, 2000; Tim, 2013; Yuan et al., 2018). This finding is also supported by Brown (2003), who believes that the involvement of learners in the process of recognizing and utilizing effective language learning strategies is a critical factor in achieving success in foreign language learning.

The results have some opposition to Ahmadishokouh and Derikvand's (2015) findings. First, Ahmadishokouh and Derikvand (2015) find that the most prevalent strategies used by ESP learners are metacognitive, memory, and social respectively. Among the three strategies, ESP learners use the memory strategy more frequently. Meanwhile, the current results show that students less use memorization strategies than other strategies ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .571$). The reason why memorization strategies are less in favor than other strategies is that language learning is a cognitive process rather than a set of predetermined rules (Alqahtani & Alhebaishi, 2010). However, the results have the same line with Ahmadishokouh and Derikvand (2015) when indicating that metacognitive and social strategies are frequently used by learners. Second, Ahmadishokouh and Derikvand's (2015) findings indicate that learners do not apply all learning strategies equally. To contrast, the current results show that ESP learners apply all learning strategies fairly equally. From the data, the mean of student's practice on all learning strategies is high ($M=4.85$, $SD=.554$) Besides, the mean gap among strategies is very small and the mean of other strategies is fairly high ($M>3.9$) which shows that the learning strategies used by the students are quite even. Finally, from the results, cognitive strategies, instead of memorization strategies, are shed light as a powerful tool to learn a language for ESP learners. Cognitive strategies have become the most widely used strategies by the participants ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .526$). The high use of cognitive knowledge indicates that the participants may develop internal procedures that enable them to perform tasks that are complex. This is in line with what has been revealed by Gagné (1974), cognitive strategies are organized internal capabilities, which can help learners in the learning process, the process of thinking, solving problems, and making decisions.

When being interviewed, participants also show that they use different strategies to employ the learning process toward ESP. Besides, the researcher also reveals that

depending on individual needs and preferences, learning strategies will be selected. For example, students choose different strategies to suit different English skills. Moreover, they also combine various strategies to fit their personal needs. It has the same line as Griffith (2008), who claims that learners select comfortable activities to control their own language acquisition in accordance with their abilities. Another important revelation is that combining different types of strategies can lead to better learning outcomes. Mix and match different learning strategies help students gain benefit from a variety of strategies and keep them engaged. According to Kalati (2016), English can be employed by the combination of various strategies. Last but not least, the participants practice all skills on different learning strategies, but they do not put much effort and time into some skills. This is an issue of concern and should be explored further in another study.

4.3.2.1 Students' difficulties

The researcher accidentally reveals students' difficulties. In general, there are two main problems that students are facing. First, students are dealing with difficulties of learning strategies. Some of the main reasons are due to lack of time, lack of motivation, not enough knowledge of learning strategies, and dominant emotions. Nevertheless, because of this accident, the researcher is unable to focus on the problem deeply. Second, the most important issues are revealed by Teachers' interviews. Even though the interview questions did not specifically inquire about the students' difficulties, the teachers willingly share this information with the aspiration that certain recommendations could be made to assist EFL students in overcoming these challenges and enhance the quality of the English for Specific Purposes course focused on Political Education at Can Tho University. The primary difficulties faced by the students are related to their foundational knowledge of English and an unsuitable curriculum. Due to inadequate English knowledge, some students possess varying levels of proficiency, leading to an imbalance in the classroom. Additionally, the current curriculum does not seem to be appropriate for the course. Furthermore, the students have not had enough exposure to English, and as a result, some may not put forth sufficient effort and time towards learning English for Specific Purposes in Political Education. These factors have resulted in a disparity of proficiency levels and difficulties in comprehending and learning the course material.

5. Conclusions

The results shed new light on the language learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. Learning strategies certainly play an important role in language education. In this perspective, students can approach them in order to gain benefits and effective learning. Meanwhile, English is the language of international diplomacy and politics in many countries. However, it seems that the topic has not received much interest from other scholars. Thus, students' perception and practice on language learning strategies should be grasped in order to contribute to increasing the quality of both teaching and learning ESP for Political Education through the use of learning strategies.

One of the aspects of the research is the investigation of students' perceptions of learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. Broadly speaking, students have the positive perception of learning strategies toward ESP for Political Education ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .409$). As it is believed in the interviews, EFL students participating in ESP for Political Education courses claim that learning strategies are necessary. Moreover, they state that they could get benefit from these learning strategies. Another aspect of the research is to determine how students practice learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. The data flashes that students practice on learning strategies quite actively. Participants show that they use different strategies depending on their needs and preferences to employ the learning process. Moreover, some students respond that they mix and match different learning strategies to help them gain better benefits. However, they do not put much effort and time into some skills. This is an issue of concern and should be explored further in another study.

5.1 Limitations

This study is carried out to measure the perception and practice of EFL students on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. Unfortunately, the researcher could not avoid some shortcomings during the research process. The unavoidable limitations of this study are as follows: First, the difference in the number of participants between cohorts was also one of the limitations. The majority of participants for the research are students in Cohort 46. Most of the students of Cohort 45 completed ESP for Political Education courses whereas there is no participation from Cohort 47 and 48 in the research because they have not registered for the ESP for Political Education courses yet or they are not within the scope of the study because they are currently taking part in the module 1 whereas the study focuses on the module 2 of the course.

Second, the theories as well as the related studies for the research are limited. Due to the fact that it is a fairly new approach in the field of ESP. Along with that, Political Education is a sensitive issue and it is not the same for other countries in the world, leading to the problem that there is little research on this topic. Third, the research instrument is another limitation of this study. This research limit understanding of each learner's educational background. More in-depth findings may be obtained if the current study uses extra research instruments, such as observation. Fourth, the findings of this study only assist students in the next courses because of the available time for this study. The study is accomplished when students closely complete the courses. For that reason, the current participants do not benefit from the results revealed in this study.

5.2 Suggestions

The study focuses on indicating the perception and practice of EFL students on learning strategies towards ESP for Political Education. Based on the results, there are some suggestions to help students gain better practice on learning strategies as well as elevate the quality of ESP for Political Education course at Can Tho University. First, the university board should consider and set the prerequisite that students have to take

General English courses or achieve English level B1 or higher before being allowed to participate in ESP courses, including ESP for Political Education. By establishing a solid foundation for English language proficiency among students before embarking on the ESP for Political Education course, students could achieve a more balanced level of proficiency, leading to better classroom engagement and learning outcomes.

Second, Board of School of Foreign Languages and Board of School of Political Education should design and recompile the curriculum. They should remodify the current curriculum "English for Political Education" of the ESP for Political Education course and adjust it to align with the students' existing skill sets and knowledge of the English language. Besides, separating three ESP courses for three majors should be put into consideration. Third, Teachers should introduce and guide students to many learning strategies in order to help them find out appropriate strategies. By educating the students on the benefits of learning strategies, teachers may help students to develop and implement these strategies independently for better learning outcomes.

Last but not least, students should devote more time and effort to their learning process towards ESP for Political Education course. Besides, they should actively find learning strategies that help them engage with and use English inside and outside of the classroom environment to improve their exposure to the language.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

It is obvious that there are many limitations. However, it is quite difficult to give recommendations to overcome some of them, such as the number of research participants in each Cohort, or too few research articles. Nevertheless, the researcher hopes that further researchers may have new research directions with multiple perspectives according to the following suggestions. Firstly, further researchers could go in-depth findings by using extra research instruments, such as observation. Secondly, future studies should be conducted at the beginning of the school year so that participants can gain some benefits from the findings of the study. Finally, the researcher would love to notice some new research ideas from the current topics. Scholars may conduct further studies on the effectiveness of specific learning strategies for EFL students pursuing ESP for Political Education, such as peer tutoring, task-based learning, and self-evaluation, to determine which strategies are most effective. Besides, investigating the difficulties of EFL students pursuing the ESP for Political Education course is also an issue of concern.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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