NEGOTIATING AND LEARNING GRAMMAR IN SYNCHRONOUS ON-LINE CHATS AMONG MALAYSIAN TERTIARY ESL STUDENTS

By

EBRAHIM SAMANI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014
In The Name of ALLAH, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful

Dedicated
To

Those who have enhanced my life in many untold ways
NEGOTIATING AND LEARNING GRAMMAR IN SYNCHRONOUS ON-LINE CHATS
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Chairman: Nooreen Noordin, PhD
Faculty: Educational Studies

Taking into consideration the importance of using negotiated interaction over grammatical structures through computer-mediated communication (CMC), conflicting results of attitude toward CMC, and the nature of CMC environments, the current study attempted to examine immediate and long-time effect of negotiated interaction on students’ achievement in grammar in Malaysian context. The study also sought to evaluate opinions of participants in this study regarding CMC. Furthermore, it focused on gaining more in-depth and detailed picture of learners’ beliefs and experiences of their interaction over grammatical structures in written synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC). Finally, the aim of this study was also to analyze the discourse patterns of text-based CMC in terms of negotiation functions.

These aims were addressed using an experimental research design. Fifteen students from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) participated in the study. All of these students were undertaking Bachelors of Education undergraduate program, with specialization in teaching English as a second language (TESL). The students were involved in written interaction via text-chat over sentence combining activities with an aim to practice preselected grammatical structures.

Pretests, posttests, and delayed posttests were administered to measure students’ achievement in grammar. Findings of the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences on the outcomes of pre, post, and delayed posttests for the students who involved in negotiated interactions over preselected grammatical structures. The second major finding was that participants’ attitude toward computer-mediated communication (CMC) did not show any significant changes.

Furthermore, results from the interview conducted indicated anonymity, feedback, durability, involvement in learning, individualized instruction, time, comfortable
environment, and contextualized instruction as the beneficial effects of involving in negotiated interaction over preselected grammatical structures through the medium of written SCMC. In terms of negotiation functions, the most frequent function was confirmation check and the least frequent one was reply confirmation. The beneficial effects of negotiated interactions through written SCMC were confirmed according to the findings of this study. This clearly shows that negotiated interactions via CMC can indeed be an effective pedagogical tool for teachers to improve students’ grammatical knowledge.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

RUNDINGAN DAN PEMBELAJARAN NAHU DALAM PERBUALAN PENDEK ATAS TALIAN SECARA ‘SYNCHRONOUS’ DI KALANGAN PELAJAR MALAYSIA LEPASAN MENENGAH ESL

Oleh

EBRAHIM SAMANI

Mei 2014

Pengerusi : Nooreen Noordin, PhD
Fakulti : Pengajian Pendidikan

Dengan mengambilkira kepentingan penggunaan interaksi rundingan struktur nahu melalui komunikasi berasaskan komputer, percanggahan keputusan mengenai sikap pelajar terhadap komunikasi berkomputer dan persekitarannya, tujuan kajian adalah untuk mengkaji kesan jangka pendek dan jangka panjang interaksi rundingan terhadap pencapaian nahu pelajar dalam konteks Malaysia. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk menilai pendapat subjek berkenaan komunikasi berasaskan komputer. Selain itu, fokus kajian juga adalah untuk mendapatkan gambaran lebih terperinci dan mendalam tentang kepercayaan dan pengalaman pelajar berkenaan penulisan struktur nahu dan interaksi berasaskan komputer secara ‘synchronous’. Akhir sekali, tujuan kajian ini juga adalah untuk menganalisa gaya wacana teks komunikasi berasaskan komputer dari segi fungsi rundingan.


Selain itu, dapatan hasil dari temubual yang dilakukan menunjukkan ‘anonymity’, maklum balas, ketahanan, penglibatan dalam pembelajaran, arahan secara individu, masa, persekitaran selesa dan arahan dalam konteks sebagai kesan-kesan berfaedah
dalam penglibatan interaksi rundingan struktur nahu terpilih yang dilakukan melalui penulisan perbualan pendek atas talian secara ‘synchronous’. Dari segi fungsi rundingan, semakan pengesahan merupakan fungsi yang paling kerap digunakan dan jawapan pengesahan merupakan fungsi yang paling kurang digunakan. Faedah kesan interaksi rundingan melalui penulisan perbualan pendek atas talian secara ‘synchronous’ adalah sahih berdasarkan dapatan kajian ini. Ini jelas menunjukkan bahawa interaksi rundingan melalui komunikasi berasaskan komputer mampu dijadikan alat pedagogi efektif untuk guru memperbaiki pengetahuan nahu pelajar.
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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 27 May 2014 to conduct the final examination of Ebrahim Samani on his thesis entitled "Negotiating and Learning Grammar in Synchronous Online Chats among Malaysian Tertiary ESL Students" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

**Roselan bin Baki, PhD**  
Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Mardziah Hayati binti Abdullah, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
Faculty of Modern Language and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

**Rosnaini binti Mahmud, PhD**  
Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

**Peter Albion, PhD**  
Professor  
University of Southern Queensland  
Australia  
(External Examiner)

\[Signature\]

**NORITAH OMAR, PhD**  
Associate Professor and Deputy Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 18 August 2014
This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the supervisory committee were as follows:

**Nooreen Noordin, PhD**  
Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Jayakaran Mukundan, PhD**  
Professor  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Arshad A. Samad, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD**  
Professor and Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

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DECLARATION

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Name and Matric No.: Ebrahim Samani/Gs29884
Declaration by Members of Supervisory committee

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Signature: ____________________________
Name of Chairman of Supervisory Committee: DR. NOOREEN NOORDIN
Senior Lecturer
Dept. of Language Education and Humanities
Faculty of Educational Studies
43400 Universiti Putra Malaysia

Signature: ____________________________
Name of Member of Supervisory Committee: PROF. DR. JAYAKARAN MUKUNDAN
Profesor
Jabatan Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Kemanusiaan
Fakulti Pendidikan Pendidikan
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 Serdang, Selangor.

Signature: ____________________________
Name of Member of Supervisory Committee: ASSOC. PROF. DR. ARSHAD ABD. SAMAD
Dept. of Language & Humanities Education
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 Serdang, Selangor D. E.
Tel No: 03-89487278 Fax No: 03-89480119
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