



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***USE OF MALAYSIAN ENGLISH DISCOURSE PARTICLES
IN FACEBOOK AMONG CHINESE MALAYSIAN YOUTH***

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FBMK 2014 6



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IN FACEBOOK AMONG CHINESE MALAYSIAN YOUTH**

By

TAY LI CHIA

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts**

January 2014

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Tay Chang Song who supported me to achieve my goals.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia
in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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Chairman: Dr. Chan Mei Yuit, PhD

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The informal variety of English spoken by a large section of society in Malaysia is known as Malaysian English (ME). ME is generally believed to have evolved partly due to the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual composition of Malaysian society as evidenced by the many words and particles from the local languages incorporated into the variety of English that is not considered to be the standard form.

This study seeks to examine the use of discourse particles (DPs) among Chinese Malaysian youth in the context of computer-mediated communication. It aims to investigate the types and frequencies of the DPs used and their pragmatic functions. This study also examines differences in DP use by the Chinese Malaysian youth with that by Singaporeans, taking the study of DPs in Singaporean English by Low and Brown (2005) as the basis for the comparison.

The data for the present study consists of 200 Facebook conversations obtained from the wall posts of twenty Chinese Malaysian youth. Ten male and ten female Facebook profile owners and 200 conversations containing DPs were selected through purposive and quota sampling methods. This study is located within the pragmatic framework and the data are analysed using the typology and scheme of DP pragmatic functions adopted from Low and Brown (2005).

In this study, the use of DPs appears to play important communicative functions in computer-mediated communication (CMC). The findings of the study reveal that the DPs ah, eh, hor, lah/ la, lor/ lo, ma/ mah, meh, what, leh, one, de, geh, o, wor, ke/kah, kan, wei, gua, bah, ya, and nah are used by young Chinese Malaysian Facebook users. The DPs lah/ la, lor/ lo and leh are the most frequently used DPs by Chinese Malaysian youth in their Facebook conversations. Besides

that, ME DPs are multi-functional and convey attitudinal meanings such as to soften an order or an advice, to establish rapport, to express resignation, to point out what a speaker deems obvious, to express surprise or disbelief, to soften a warning and so on. It was found that DPs serves to indicate social distance, relationship and attitudes among the interlocutors. This study reveals that ME DPs are used systematically and understood by its speakers in the community. All the Singaporean English DPs from the DP framework by Low and Brown (2005) which are ah, eh, hor, la/ lah, lor, ma/ mah, meh, and what were also used by Chinese Malaysian youth in their conversations, and lah/ la is the most frequently used DP in Malaysia and Singapore. It is interesting to note that more types of DPs were found in the Malaysian data, probably due to a more diverse population in Malaysia. Further research could focus on comparing the use of DPs in face-to-face and computer-mediated communication among Chinese Malaysian youth.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah master Sastera

**PENGGUNAAN PARTIKEL WACANA BERBAHASA INGGERIS
MALAYSIA DALAM “FACEBOOK” DALAM KALANGAN
REMAJA CINA MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Jenis bahasa Inggeris tidak formal yang diucapkan oleh sebahagian besar masyarakat di Malaysia dikenali sebagai Bahasa Inggeris Malaysia (BIM/ME). Pada umumnya BIM dipercayai berkembang sebahagiannya kerana komposisi masyarakat Malaysia yang pelbagai etnik dan pelbagai bahasa. Ini terbukti dengan adanya banyak perkataan dan partikel yang berasal daripada pelbagai bahasa tempatan dimasukkan ke dalam jenis bahasa Inggeris yang tidak dikira sebagai bentuk yang standard ini.

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memeriksa penggunaan partikel wacana (PW) dalam kalangan remaja Cina Malaysia dalam konteks komunikasi yang menggunakan komputer. Untuk itu kajian ini menyiasat jenis dan kekerapan PW yang digunakan serta fungsi-fungsi pragmatiknya. Kajian ini juga memeriksa perbezaan PW yang digunakan oleh remaja Cina Malaysia dengan remaja Cina Singapura dengan menggunakan kajian PW dalam bahasa Inggeris Singapura oleh Low dan Brown (2005) sebagai asas perbandingan.

Data bagi kajian ini terdiri daripada 200 perbualan yang diletakkan di dinding “facebook” dua puluh remaja Cina Malaysia. Pemilik profil “facebook” terdiri daripada sepuluh lelaki dan 10 perempuan dengan 200 perbualan yang mengandungi PW di pilih menggunakan kaedah persampelan kuota dan bertujuan. Kajian ini terletak dalam kerangka kerja pragmatik dan data yang dianalisis menggunakan tipologi dan skema fungsi-fungsi pragmatik PW yang diambil daripada Low dan Brown (2005).

Dalam kajian ini penggunaan PW dilihat memainkan peranan penting dalam komunikasi menggunakan komputer. Hasil kajian menunjukkan PW ah, eh, hor, lah/ la, lor/ lo, ma/ mah, meh, what, leh, one, de, geh, o, wor, ke/kah, kan, wei, gua, bah, ya, dan nah digunakan oleh pengguna 'facebook' remaja Cina Malaysia dengan PW yang paling kerap digunakan dalam perbualan mereka ialah lah/ la, lor/ lo dan leh. PW dalam BIM mempunyai pelbagai fungsi dalam menyampaikan makna sikap seperti melembutkan nada sesuatu arahan atau nasihat, membina hubungan baik, menyatakan kekesalan, menjelaskan lagi apa yang dinyatakan penutur, menyatakan rasa terkejut atau tidak percaya, melembutkan nada amaran dan lain-lain. PW didapati menunjukkan jarak sosial, perhubungan dan sikap dalam kalangan interlokutor. Hasil kajian menunjukkan PW digunakan secara sistematik dan difahami oleh remaja Cina Malaysia. Semua PW bahasa Inggeris Singapura daripada kerangka kerja PW Low dan Brown (2005), ah, eh, hor, la/ lah, lor, ma/ mah, meh, dan what juga digunakan oleh remaja Cina Malaysia dalam perbualan mereka. Lah/ la adalah PW yang paling kerap digunakan di Malaysia dan di Singapura. Perlu diambil perhatian bahawa terdapat lebih banyak lagi jenis PW yang ditemui dalam data pengguna Malaysia yang mungkin disebabkan oleh populasi yang lebih pelbagai. Kajian selanjutnya boleh difokuskan untuk membandingkan penggunaan PW dalam komunikasi bersemuka dengan komunikasi yang menggunakan komputer dalam kalangan remaja Cina Malaysia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my chair, Dr. Chan Mei Yuit, and my two committee members, Prof. Madya Dr. Yap Ngee Thai and Prof. Madya Dr. Wong Bee Eng. Their keen insights have helped to achieve the objectives of this research. They have been good role models and mentors throughout the duration of this research. Their unflagging belief in me as well as their caring, cheerful nature greatly contributed to the successful completion of my thesis.

Secondly, I would like to convey a special thanks to my peer, Mr. Tan Wee Chun for his knowledge imparted, guidance given, and support rendered.

Last but not least, I would also like to extend my special thanks to my husband, Mr. Chew Han Chuan whose support and sacrifice have seen me through to the end. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for the endless support given by my beloved family members especially my parents, Mr & Mrs. Tay Kim Juay and of course my godfather, Mr. Chua Peng Teck. Their thoughtful insights and words of encouragement have also contributed to the completion of this dissertation.



I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 28th January, 2014 to conduct the final examination of Tay Li Chia on her master's thesis entitled "Use of Malaysian English Discourse Particles in Facebook among Chinese Malaysian Youth" 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 degree of Master of Arts.

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