



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY USE  
AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG STUDENTS IN MALAYSIAN  
INDEPENDENT CHINESE SECONDARY SCHOOLS***

**LYE CHE YEE**

**FPP 2012 83**

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY USE  
AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG STUDENTS IN MALAYSIAN  
INDEPENDENT CHINESE SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**By**

**LYE CHE YEE**

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

**February 2012**

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment  
of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY USE  
AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG STUDENTS IN MALAYSIAN  
INDEPENDENT CHINESE SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

By

**LYE CHE YEE**

**February 2012**

**Chairman: Associate Professor Arshad Abdul Samad, PhD**  
**Faculty: Educational Studies**

Literature on language learning strategy use indicates that high and low proficiency language learners use strategies differently and that these differences are related to differences in their language proficiency. However, to date, no study has been done in the Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS) to examine the relationship between language learning strategy use and language proficiency. The current study is timely and relevant as it examined the language learning strategies employed by high and low language proficiency students, as well as the relationship between language learning strategy use and language proficiency.

The participants in this study were 517 Senior One MICSS students selected based on cluster sampling. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire developed by Oxford (1990) was used to elicit data on language learning strategies. The SILL questionnaire consisted of six groups: Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective and Social. The SILL

questionnaire was translated into Chinese language using the parallel translation method so that low English language proficiency students understand the content of the questionnaire. Language proficiency was determined using the Junior level Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) English language test. In order to find the answers for the differences of strategy group and specific strategies employed by high and low language proficiency students, the mean scores of the six groups of strategies and the mean scores of the 50 specific strategies were first examined and then compared between high and low language proficiency groups by using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). Furthermore, in order to examine the relationship between language learning strategy use and language proficiency of high and low language proficiency students, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) method was used. A two-step approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1998) was used to construct the measurement and structural models. The structural models were also compared using the multi-group analysis.

The results of the study show that high language proficiency student employed the six strategy groups significantly more frequent than the low language proficiency students. The study also found that high language proficiency students employed a wide range of strategies in their learning of English. While the rank order of the strategy group use did not differ much between the two groups, high language proficiency students often used the specific strategies listed in the SILL questionnaire significantly more frequent than low language proficiency students. The SEM results showed that while language learning strategies consist of six groups, the MICSS students combined four groups of strategies when learning English. The combination of Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive and Social strategy use contributed significantly highly to the Grammar performance of low language proficiency

students. However, the use of Compensation strategies brought significant moderate adverse effects on the Grammar performance of low language proficiency students. SEM results also showed that the contribution of the combination of Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive and Social strategy use to Grammar performance of low language proficiency students was significantly higher than high language proficiency students.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi syarat untuk ijazah Master Sains

**HUBUNGAN ANTARA PENGGUNAAN STRATEGI PEMBELAJARAN DAN  
KEMAHIRAN BAHASA DI KALANGAN PELAJAR DI SEKOLAH-  
SEKOLAH MENENGAH PERSENDIRIAN CINA MALAYSIA**

Oleh

**LYE CHE YEE**

**Februari 2012**

**Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Arshad Abdul Samad, PhD**  
**Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan**

Sorotan kajian lepas mengenai penggunaan strategi pembelajaran menunjukkan pelajar-pelajar yang berkemahiran bahasa tinggi dan rendah menggunakan strategi pembelajaran secara berlainan dan perbezaan ini adalah berkaitan dengan kemahiran bahasa mereka. Walaubagaimanapun, sehingga kini, penyelidikan mengenai hubungan antara strategi pembelajaran dan kemahiran bahasa masih belum dijalankan di Sekolah-sekolah Persendirian Cina Malaysia (MICSS). Kajian ini dijalankan tepat pada masa and sesuai untuk dijalankan kerana ia mengkaji penggunaan strategi pembelajaran oleh pelajar-pelajar berkemahiran bahasa tinggi dan rendah, di samping mengkaji hubungan di antara strategi pembelajaran dan kemahiran bahasa.

Peserta-peserta kajian ini terdiri daripada 517 pelajar Senior Satu MICSS yang dipilih melalui persampelan kelompok. Soal selidik 'Strategy Inventory for Language Learning' (SILL) yang dihasilkan oleh Oxford (1990) telah digunakan

untuk memperoleh data mengenai penggunaan strategi pembelajaran. Soal selidik SILL terdiri daripada enam kumpulan: Memori, Kognitif, Kompensasi, Metakognitif, Afektif dan Sosial. Soal selidik SILL telah diterjemah kepada Bahasa Cina dengan menggunakan kaedah penterjemahan selari supaya pelajar berkemahiran rendah dapat memahami soalan-soalan yang dinyatakan dalam soal selidik SILL. Kemahiran bahasa pula ditentukan oleh Peperiksaan Bahasa Inggeris 'Unified Examination Certificate' (UEC) tahap Junior. Untuk mengetahui jawapan kepada persoalan-persoalan mengenai perbezaan strategi kumpulan dan strategi khusus yang digunakan oleh pelajar berkemahiran bahasa tinggi dan rendah, min skor enam kumpulan strategi dan 50 strategi khusus telah dikaji dan seterusnya dibandingkan di antara pelajar berkemahiran bahasa tinggi dan rendah dengan menggunakan 'Multivariate Analysis of Variance' (MANOVA). Di samping itu, kaedah 'Structural Equation Modelling' (SEM) telah digunakan untuk mengetahui jawapan kepada persoalan-persoalan mengenai hubungan antara penggunaan strategi pembelajaran dan kemahiran bahasa. Kaedah 'dua langkah' yang dicadangkan oleh Anderson dan Gerbing (1998) telah digunakan untuk menghasilkan model-model pengukuran dan struktur. Model-model struktur yang dihasilkan telah dibandingkan dengan menggunakan kaedah analisis pelbagai kumpulan.

Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelajar-pelajar berkemahiran bahasa tinggi menggunakan enam-enam kumpulan strategi dengan lebih kerap dan signifikan berbanding dengan pelajar berkemahiran bahasa rendah. Kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa pelajar-pelajar berkemahiran bahasa tinggi menggunakan pelbagai strategi pembelajaran dalam mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris. Walaupun susunan kedudukan enam kumpulan strategi tidak jauh berbeza, pelajar-pelajar berkemahiran bahasa tinggi menggunakan strategi khusus yang dinyatakan dalam soal selidik SILL dengan

kekerapan yang lebih tinggi dan signifikan berbanding dengan pelajar berkemahiran bahasa rendah. Keputusan SEM menunjukkan bahawa walaupun strategi pembelajaran bahasa terdiri daripada enam kumpulan, pelajar-pelajar MICSS menggabungkan empat kumpulan dalam mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris. Penggunaan penggabungan strategi Memori, Kognitif, Metakognitif dan Sosial memberi sumbangan yang besar dan signifikan kepada prestasi Tatabahasa bagi pelajar-pelajar berkemahiran bahasa rendah. Walaubagaimanapun, penggunaan strategi Kempentasi memberi kesan negatif yang signifikan dan serdehana kepada prestasi Tatabahasa bagi pelajar-pelajar berkemahiran bahasa rendah. Keputusan SEM juga menunjukkan penggunaan strategi gabungan Memori, Kognitif, Metakognitif dan Sosial memberi sumbangan yang lebih besar dan signifikan kepada prestasi Tatabahasa bagi pelajar-pelajar berkemahiran bahasa rendah berbanding dengan pelajar berkemahiran tinggi.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My most sincere gratitude to Associate Professor Arshad Abdul Samad, Ph.D, the chairman of the committee, for his invaluable guidance and supervision in writing this thesis.

My sincere gratitude is also addressed to Zoharah Omar, Ph.D, the member of the committee, for her patience in correcting this thesis and giving helpful comments and suggestions, especially in using the Structural Equation Modelling approach to analyze the data.

My sincere gratitude to the Curriculum Department and Examination Department of United Chinese School Committee's Association of Malaysia for allowing me to get the information and data needed for this study.

My sincere thanks are also addressed to Professor Rebecca Oxford, Ph.D for allowing me to use the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire in this study.

My sincere thanks also go to Lee Soo Chee for his willingness to translate the SILL questionnaire into the Chinese language.

My sincere thanks are also addressed to Tan Yik Wah for her willingness to proofread my thesis.

Last but not least, my sincere and special gratitude is due to my family members, for their constant love and support to the fulfillment of this study.

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 17 February 2012 to conduct the final examination of Lye Che Yee on her master's thesis entitled "Relationship between Language Learning Strategy Use and Language Proficiency among Students in Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools" in accordance with Universities and University College 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 Master of Science.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

**Bahaman Abu Samah, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Fauziah Hassan, PhD**

Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

**Tan Bee Hoon, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

**Noor Lide Abu Kassim, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Institute of Education  
International Islamic University Malaysia  
(External Examiner)

The thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

**Arshad Abdul Samad, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Zoharah Omar, PhD**

Lecturer  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)



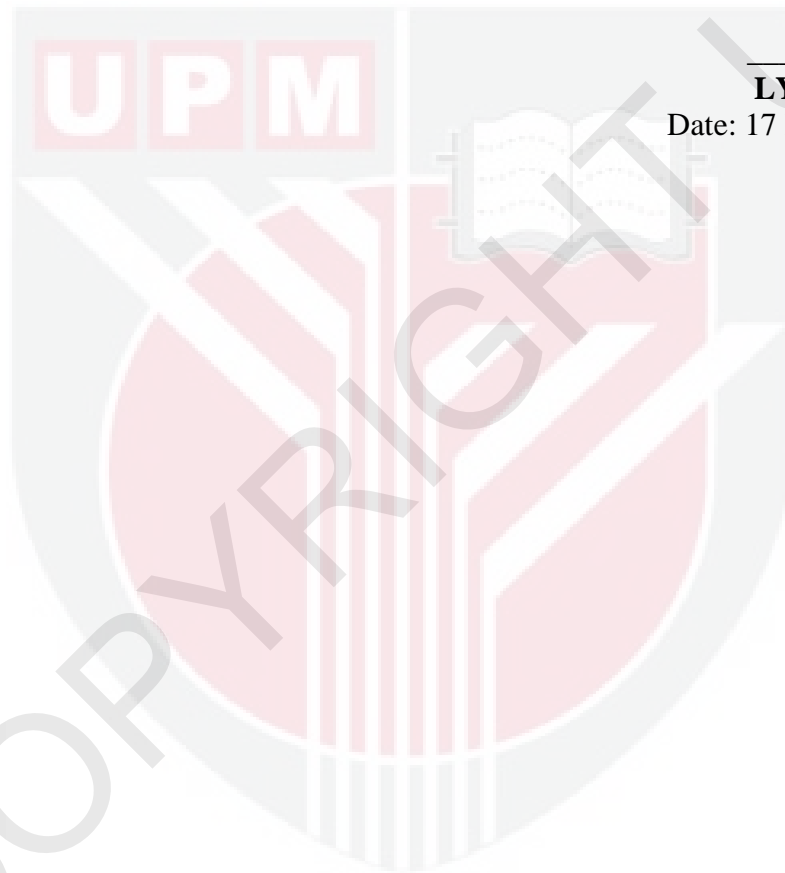
---

**BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD**

Professor and Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
Date:

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.



**LYE CHE YEE**

Date: 17 February 2012

## TABLE OF CONTENT

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	ii
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	viii
<b>APPROVAL</b>	ix
<b>DECLARATION</b>	xi
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xv
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xviii
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATION</b>	xix
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATION (FOR VARIABLES IN MODELS)</b>	xx

### CHAPTER

<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of Problems	4
1.3 Purpose of the Study	8
1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses	8
1.5 Significance of the Study	10
1.6 Definition of Terms	11
1.6.1 Language Learning Strategies	11
1.6.2 Strategy Group, Direct and Indirect Strategies	12
1.6.3 Language Proficiency	13
1.6.4 High and Low Language Proficiency Respondents	15
1.7 Limitations of The Study	16
1.8 Structure of Thesis	17
<b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Definition and Classification of Language Learning Strategies	19
2.3 Issues Related to Language Learning Strategies	32
2.4 Research on Language Learning Strategies	35
2.4.1 Research in Finding the Characteristics of Good Language Learner	35
2.4.2 Language Learning Strategies and Language Proficiency	39
2.4.3 Research in Language Strategy Use in Language Skills and Tasks	47
2.5 Research in Language Learning Strategies – The Malaysian Context	49

2.6	Theoretical Framework	54
2.7	Summary	58
<b>3</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	
3.1	Introduction	60
3.2	Research Design	60
3.3	Target Population and Sample for the Study	62
	3.3.1 Target Population	62
	3.3.2 Sample and Sampling Technique	63
3.4	Language Proficiency Measurement	65
3.5	Instruments - Questionnaires	67
3.6	Data Analysis	71
	3.6.1 Respondent Background Information	71
	3.6.2 Language Learning Strategy Use	71
	3.6.3 The Relationship between Language Learning Strategy Use and Language Proficiency	74
	3.6.4 The Measurement Model	75
	3.6.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis	75
	3.6.6 Normality Assessment	77
	3.6.7 Evaluation of Overall Model Fit	79
	3.6.8 Reliability and Validity	79
	3.6.9 The Structural Model	79
3.7	Data Analysis Procedures	81
3.8	The Pilot Study	82
3.9	Summary	83
<b>4</b>	<b>RESULT AND DISCUSSION</b>	
4.1	Introduction	85
4.2	Respondent Background Information	85
4.3	Strategy Group Use (Objective 1)	86
4.4	Specific Strategy Use (Objective 2)	91
	4.4.1 Strategy Used at a High Rate of Frequency by High Language Proficiency Respondents but a Low to a Moderate Rate of Frequency by Low Language Proficiency Respondents	92
	4.4.2 Strategy Used at a Moderate Rate of Frequency by High Language Proficiency Respondents but a Low to a Moderate Rate of Frequency by Low Language Proficiency Respondents	94

4.4.3	Strategy Used at a Low Rate of Frequency by High Language Proficiency Respondents but a Low to a Moderate Rate of Frequency by Low Language Proficiency Respondents	97
4.5	Language Learning Strategy Use and Language Proficiency (Objective 3)	99
4.5.1	The Measurement Model of Language Learning Strategies	99
4.5.2	The Structural Model Regarding the Relationship between Language Learning Strategy Use and Language Proficiency	113
4.5.2.1	High Language Proficiency Group	114
4.5.2.2	Low Language Proficiency Group	117
4.6	Differences in the Relationship between Language Learning Strategy Use and Language Proficiency (Objective 4)	121
4.7	Discussion	125
4.7.1	Strategy Group Use of High and Low Language Proficiency Respondents	125
4.7.2	Specific Strategy Use of High and Low Language Proficiency Respondents	129
4.7.3	Language Learning Strategy and Language Proficiency: the Separate Group Analysis	133
4.7.4	Language Learning Strategy and Language Proficiency: the Multi-group Analysis	135
4.8	Summary	136
<b>5</b>	<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	
5.1	Introduction	137
5.2	Summary	137
5.3	Conclusions	139
5.4	Implications	141
5.5	Recommendations for Future Research	143
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	145
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	153
	<b>BIODATA OF STUDENT</b>	168