UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

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

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By

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Chairman: Associate Professor Arshad Abdul Samad, PhD
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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
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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. Walau bagaimanapun, 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

Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelajar-pelajar berkemahiran bahasa tinggi menggunakan kenam-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
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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.

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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
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Date: 21 May 2012

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